

Nike Insights

Unedited Seminary Lecture Notes

Origin of the Bible

How Our Bible Came to Us



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2 Timothy 3:16

**All Scripture is breathed out by God and
profitable for teaching, for reproof, for
correction, and for training in righteousness,**

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By the Grace of God

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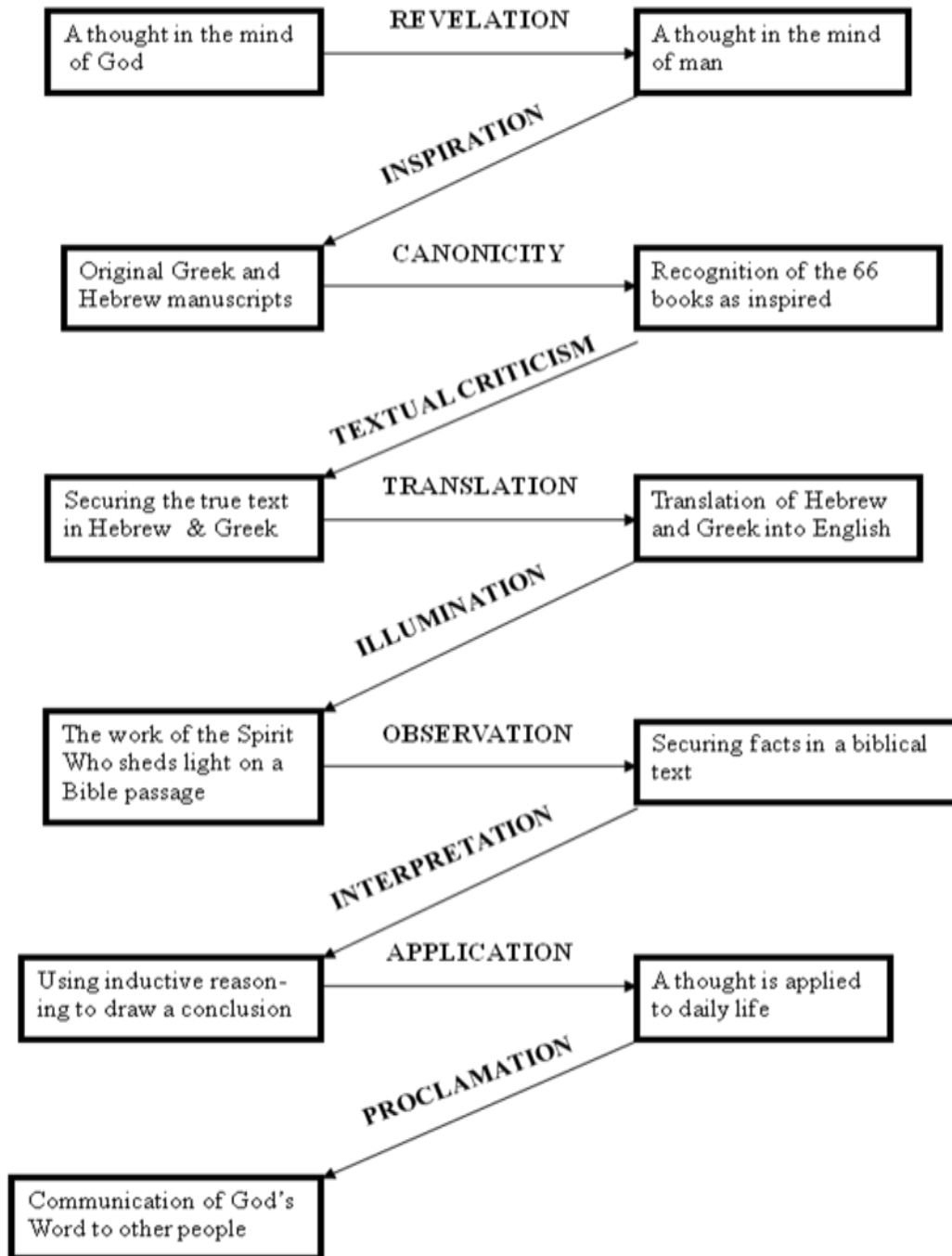
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HOW THE BIBLE CAME TO US



Dr. Brooky Stockton, ©

PREFACE

I am forever grateful to my mentors who never doubted God's Word and who treated it with the highest respect. But, I am not a fideist, and like empirical Thomas, I had to examine the evidence regarding the historicity of the Bible and its claim of Divine inspiration. I was not disappointed.

This work is a compilation of my seminary lecture notes on how our Bible came to us. It is composed of two decades of hand written notes, early computer scripts on three or four different computers using different styles, headings, and fonts. Though unedited, and awkwardly compiled, students asked for a copy of these lecture notes. So, as we say, "here it tis, as it tis."

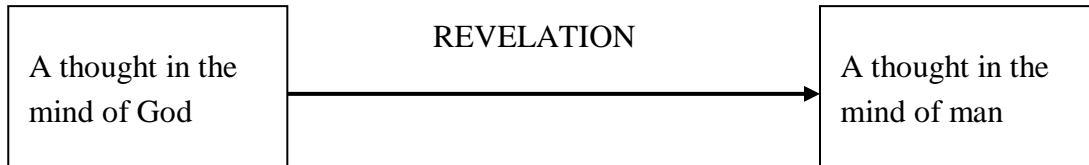
Who should read this book? These lecture notes were given to post graduate students, but will be of interest to any pastor, professor of Biblical studies, and serious seminary students. Though technical, these notes could be turned into sermons for churches. It took me decades to do this research, but through it all, I became more and more convinced the Bible is indeed the veritable Word of God and fully, completely trustworthy on which a man can rest his faith. After 40 plus years of studying the Holy Scriptures, you will never convince me this Book is merely a product of man. Its history, grand truths, ethics, lofty ideals, practicality, clarity, artistic beauty, simplicity, and efficiency is nothing short of amazing. It is the work God.

At one time, only churches and elite scholars had access to the Bible. But, with the invention of the printing press, access to a Bible is available to ordinary men. It has been the vision of Christian organizations to place this amazing Book into the hands of common man. And while it is wonderful indeed that a common man can own a Bible, it is not wonderful when that man views the Bible as a common book. Because the American society is swimming in Bibles, sort of speak, there is evidence that men, especially secular men, view the Bible as an ordinary, flawed, human work. If our culture loses sight of the fact that God has spoken and the record of His revelation is the Sacred Scriptures, then opinions of men rush in to fill the void.

These lectures remind us that the origin of the Bible is not the mind of man, but the mind of God; that the Bible has a history, a real, genuine history—a history which every Christian needs to understand and appreciate. It is a tragedy indeed when people fail to appreciate the historical struggle to protect and provide the Word of God for the common man. And while common man may possess this uncommon book, let us understand its Divine origin and treat it for what it is, the Holy Scriptures, the endearing and precious Word of God.

Professor Brooky Stockton

1 RESTING IN REVELATION



1 Corinthians 2:10 But God hath revealed *them* unto us by His Spirit:

1.1 Introduction

On every American coin is the phrase, “In God we trust.” But, who is this God? Does He have a name? And, can He be known?

We live in a day of religious pluralism where America prides itself in its political correctness and religious tolerance. Religious beliefs abound. Atheists do not believe there is a God. They believe that man is a product of Time + Chance. Agnostics do not know if there is a God. The Romans’ belief in many gods explained the contradictions in the universe based on wars between gods. Hindus believe that it is impossible to separate God from nature. Moslems believe there is one God and that his name is “Allah” and Mohammed is His prophet. Many Jews believe there is a God and that the Torah came from God, but they do not believe that Jesus is from God or of God. Christians advance the concept of one God Who exists in a triune Being known as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Mormons believe that as “man is God once was, and as God is, man shall become.” Many are so confused they do not know what to believe.

A minister was talking to a Jewish man who embraced a form of pantheism, the idea that God is a part of nature. In the debate, the minister asked the pantheist if he thought he was injuring God when he pruned his trees. The Jew responded, “Well, you have pointed out the one aspect of my theology which makes me uncomfortable. Every time I mow the grass, I feel like I am hurting God.”

What you believe about God will determine your destiny. All religions are not the same, and it matters what you believe. In some religions, people honor their parents and in others, they eat

their parents. One religion allows the man to have multiple wives but does not allow wives the same indulgence. Another allows the woman to have multiple husbands, but does not permit the man to have multiple wives. Radical Moslems think nothing about arming themselves with explosives and blowing themselves up, and the Amish will not take arms even to defend themselves. “Where do men get their knowledge and on what is their faith based?” has become one of the great issues of our time.

The great questions are these: Is there a God? Has He spoken? What does He want man to know about Himself? For the Christian, these questions are answered by the **Doctrine of Revelation**. The fundamental premise of this work is that the origin of the Bible is the mind of God.

1.2 The Subject of Revelation

The subject of revelation is the study of whether or not God has spoken to men and revealed himself to men in a way they could know and understand his communication with them. This study seeks to investigate the question, “Has God revealed Himself to man, and if so, how and when?”

The Christian asserts that God has, at various times in various ways, spoken to men. *His faith is based on the presumption that the Bible is an accurate record of that revelation.* His knowledge of the Trinity, salvation, heaven and hell, the eternal judgment, and the age to come is not based on human reason, nor natural revelation, but on words germane to the Word of God.

1.3 The Possibility of Revelation

Men who reject the Bible do so because they possess a certain anti-supernatural bias. Rationalists flat refuse to accept the possibility of divine intervention into human affairs. Obviously, if God does not intervene, then there is no such thing as the Doctrine of Revelation. But, this presupposition appears to be arbitrary and unwarranted, deeply rooted in a philosophical bias that does not support the facts of history.

If there is an infinite God Who has created this universe and man with all his complexities, we can assume He is able to reveal Himself to mankind in a way that man can learn about Him. The Scripture asserts this possibility when it says, “All things are possible with God” (Mark 10:27).

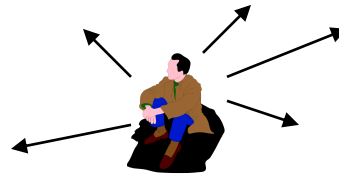
1.4 The Necessity of Revelation

The universe is infinite and man is finite. If an infinite God created an infinite world, how can tiny, finite man ever hope to discover God on his own power? For example: If this infinite God lives in Galaxy 237,519,189, on Planet 217, how could a man travel there to find Him? Man cannot start with Himself in his effort to know God. The Eternal Being must step into the world of our humanity and reveal Himself in a way that we can comprehend Him. Without revelation, man is left to navigate his investigation in the space of the universe.

Infinite God



Finite Man



Edward Carnell correctly observed (1948, p. 156), “Unless, therefore, He who made us tells us how He will dispose of us, happiness cannot be perfectly enjoyed. Revelation, then, is a condition *sine qua non* for our soul’s well being.” Resting in the fact of Revelation is really the only way any soul can have peace.

Man cannot begin with himself and conclude any satisfactory reason for his existence that does not end in despair. Men have had the light of reason to guide them for centuries and no two philosophers have arrived at the same conclusion about the reason for man’s existence. Democritus and Epicurus were materialists whose materialistic philosophies were the direct opposite of Plato and Aristotle. Kant was a theist, Spinoza a pantheist, Haeckel an atheist, and Dewey a humanist. All such positions degenerate into atheism, skepticism, and moral degeneracy. None have arrived at the lofty ideals and hope found in the Christian faith (Keyser, 1945).

Psalm 18:28 For Thou wilt light my candle: the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.

“Without revelation, there is not truth; for revelation is the light in which we see light” (Carnell, 1948, p. 156).

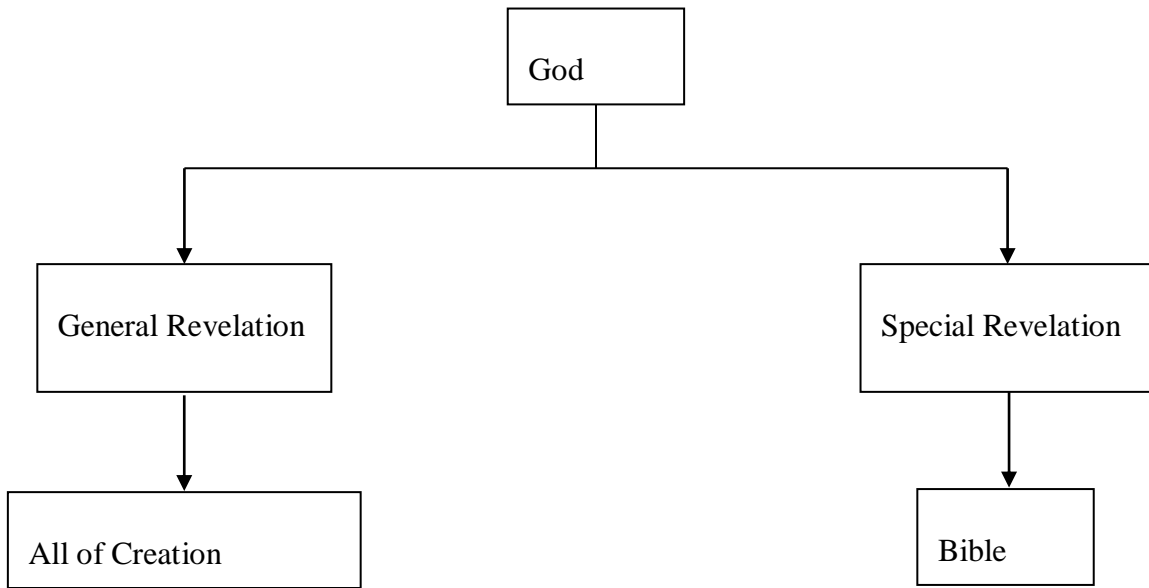
1.5 The Probability of Revelation

Men are personal beings. It is only reasonable to assume that if man is a creation of God, then his nature is a product of divine will. If fathers who are made in the image of God love to communicate with their children, it is only logical that God Who is greater than men, would love to communicate with His creatures. If God loves His creation, we would expect Him to communicate with them and make Himself know to them in a way they could understand and appreciate Him.

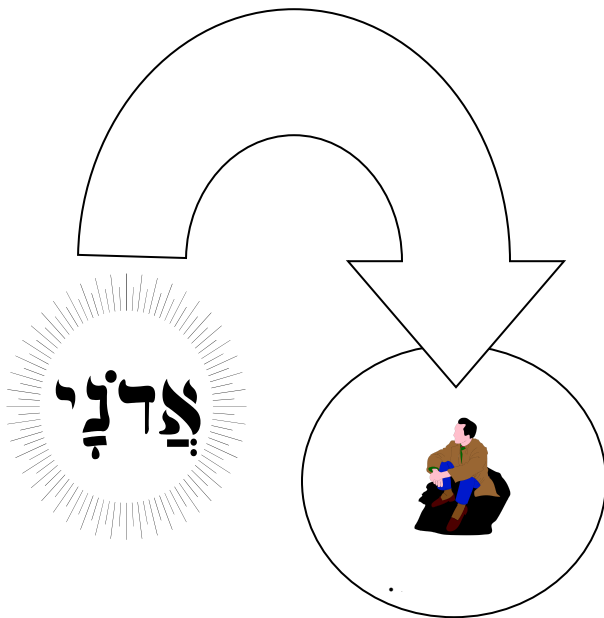
If God does exist and has not revealed Himself to men, He must be very cruel indeed. If God cannot reveal Himself to mankind above the natural order, He must be a very limited being. If this great universe is in the hands of a helpless being, we are, of all creatures, the most miserable and most confused. For this reason, the psalmist delighted in the knowledge of God saying, “For with Thee is the fountain of life; In Thy light we see light.” (Psalm 36:9).

1.6 The Classification of Revelation

The Christian faith holds that not only can God reveal Himself, but He has revealed Himself in at least two ways: by general revelation (creation) and by special revelation (the Scriptures).



1.7 The Fact of Revelation



The Bible offers its own theory regarding its origin. God has spoken! Jesus recognized over 22 times certain books in the Old Testament (OT) as Scripture under the expressions “Scripture” and “It is written.” In the wilderness, Jesus overcame the Adversary by quoting to him the words, “It is written” (Ge,graptai), a perfect passive verb referring to the Scripture. The Greek word *gegraptae* is a word that was lost in time until discovered from the papyri.

If two men wanted to enter into a contract, they went to an officer of the court to create a contract. The officer wrote the contract and read it to the two parties. Once agreed upon, the attorney would write across the top of the contract

the words, “GEGRAPTAΕ” in uncial letters. In our times, we would call it an *Attested Copy* establishing the fact that no man had the authority to change a word in the document. Jesus used this word many times to emphasize the authority and changeless character of the Bible.

The English word *Bible* never appears in Scripture. The word *Bible* comes from the Greek word *biblion* and the Latin word *biblia* which means “scroll” or “a little book.” *Biblion* is derived from *biblas*, the bark of the papyrus plant, a reed grown in warm countries like Egypt. The word *biblos* refers to any book from this plant. The first word in the Greek New Testament, Matthew 1:1, is the word “bible” (Bi,bloj). The Bible is called “The Scripture” (Acts 8:32), “The Scriptures” (Matthew 21:42), “The Holy Scriptures” (Romans 1:2), “The Oracles of God” (Romans. 3:2; Hebrews 5:12), and the “Word of God” (Mark 7:13; Romans 10:17).

The Biblical affirmation is that God stepped into time and space and revealed himself to men through a series of revelations. In these revelations, He exposed Himself to finite creatures. It is important, however, to distinguish between **general revelation**, and **special revelation**, the Word of God. God has revealed many things, but not all of them were intended to be included in the Scripture. Scripture is the result of special revelation.

1.8 The Definition of Revelation

The word “revelation” comes from the word “reveal” which means “to remove the veil;” “veal” is “veil.” The imagery before us is that of sculpture hidden underneath a piece of cloth ready to be exposed to the eyes of the public for the first time. In the Bible, God has uncovered His mind so we can know Him.

In relation to the Written Word, “revelation” is *a thought in the mind of God accurately revealed and placed into the mind of man*. Revelation does not refer to the thoughts of man that are communicated to other men, but to God’s thoughts communicated to the mind of a man, namely a biblical author. The Bible is founded on one fundamental principle, that God has spoken and men have heard God speak.

Further, God led men to record that Revelation to become part of the Holy Scriptures. While God has revealed many things to men, it is the “inspired” writing that form the canon of Revelation. If there were no revelation, there would be no Bible. If there were no Bible, there would be no Judaism or Christianity. If there were no Christianity, there would be no rest for our souls.

2 INTERNAL EVIDENCE OF REVELATION

2.1 Genesis

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely . . ." (Genesis 2:16).

It only makes sense that if God created man He would speak to men. From the very beginning of creation, we have a record of God speaking to the Adam, the head of creation. That record was recorded and passed down through history.

In the Book of Beginnings, we see very early that God spoke to Noah (Genesis 9:8), to Abraham (Genesis 12:1, 13:14, 17:1; 18:1), to Isaac (Genesis 26:2), to Jacob (Genesis 28:13), to Joseph (Genesis 37:6), and to Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3). In fact, there is evidence that this revelation was committed to writing very early in the history of man when we see the term, "book" (sepher) in Genesis 5:1: "This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God." Again, in Exodus 17:14, we have God commanding Moses to write down the events of his time and to put them into a book. These ancient records were preserved through the line of Shem and eventually compiled by Moses in what is known as the "Books of Moses," or "The Torah," or "The Pentateuch."

2.2 Exodus

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write (*bto'K.*, cathav) this in a book (*rp, SeêB*;', sepher) as a memorial (*'!ArK'zI*, zikkaron), and recite (*~yfiPW*, sim) it to Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven" (Exodus 17:14).

Israel experienced a great victory over Amalek. Because God wanted this victory preserved, He commanded Moses to write it down in a book (sepher) as a memorial, a thing to be remembered,

and to recite (sim = appoint, assign, set) it to Joshua. This document was the beginning of the written revelation we know as the *Torah*. Further, we have an editorial comment, possibly by Joshua, that said, “Moses . . . wrote down all that the LORD had said” (Exodus 24:4; Joshua 24:6).

Deuteronomy 13:1-3 If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

Deuteronomy 18:21 And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? ²² When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that *is* the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, *but* the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.

Anyone could claim to be a prophet or to have a message from God. But, in Israel, Moses placed a severe penalty on the man who claimed to have a revelation from God, but did not. If a prophet predicted a certain event, and it did not come to pass, then he was a false prophet. God gave Israel a proof test of 100% accuracy. If a prophet was not 100% accurate, he was not God’s prophet.

2.3 Deuteronomy 29:29

The secret things (*rt;s'*, satar) belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed (*tl{g>Nlh:w>*, gala) belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law (*hr'iATh;*, Torah) (Deuteronomy 29:29).

The word “secret” (*rt;s'*, satar) refers to something that is hidden or concealed. The term *reveal* (*hl'G"*, gala) is used in its root about 180 times in the OT. It means “to uncover” or “go into exile;” that is, it refers primarily to the fact that the land of Canaan was uncovered because its people were removed from its occupation by forced exile. Here it is the Torah that is exposed

and revealed to Israel. There is infinite amount of knowledge that man does not possess. He does not fully understand the past, knows nothing of the future, is limited in his quest to understand outer space, and confused about his inner space. These, and other things, are impossible to know apart from the revelation of God. They are the “secret things” referred to in Deuteronomy 29:29. They belong to God. Yet, this verse also teaches that there are some things that God chooses to reveal to men. These truths are the subject of special revelation.

2.4 1 Samuel 3:7, 21

Now Samuel did not yet know (*[d;y"*, yada) the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him (Niphal). And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD **revealed** Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD (1 Samuel. 3:7, 21).

The duty of preserving the Torah fell upon Samuel, Israel’s priest, judge, and prophet. But, there was a time when Samuel had no personal knowledge of God, and there was a day when he gained a personal knowledge of the LORD. The means of this knowledge was not intuition, but revelation (*hl,îG"yl*, gala). God spoke directly to him.

2.5 Psalm 103:7

He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel (Psalm 103:7).

The word “known” is yadah (*[;ydl/A*: Hiphil) in Hebrew. The verbal implies intensive action, that is, that God causes Himself to be known. The idea is not just cognitive, but relational. That is, one can know God and commune with Him personally.

2.6 Isaiah 1:3

The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: *but* Israel doth not know, My people doth not consider (Isaiah 1:3)

A severe criticism by YHWH was that oxen were smarter than Israel because the ox knew his master, but Israel did not know YHWH. The assumption here is that God can be known, and that only stupid people fail to recognize Him.

2.7 Jeremiah 36:1-2

And it came to pass in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, *that* this word came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day.

Jeremiah is commanded by God to write down the revelation given to him and to put it into a book. Jeremiah's words are not attributed to his own genius or initiative, but to the command of God.

2.8 Daniel 2:19

Then was the secret **revealed** (*yli_gj*, gala) unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven (Daniel 2:19).

King Nebuchadnezzar had a disturbing dream and wanted it interpreted. To know whether the interpretation was true, he refused to share the events of his dream with his wise men. Not only did he demand an interpretation, but knowledge of the facts of his dream. Daniel was able to interpret the dream because God made known the exact dream story to him through a vision, that is, it was revealed (a Piel verb) to him.

2.9 Amos 3:2

You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities (Amos 2:2).

The "you" refers to Israel. The word "known" implies impartation of knowledge and the privilege of relationship. Other nations did not possess this knowledge. Israel had the knowledge of the true God because Israel was God's chosen vessel to receive His revelation. The nation was God's beachhead: that is, His base for establishing His truth and revelation among men. Israel had the responsibility to know, preserve, and act on that knowledge. Punishment followed disobedience.

2.10 Matthew 16:17

And Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal (avpeka,luye,n, apokalupto) *this* to you, but My Father Who is in heaven (Matthew 16:17).

Jesus asked Peter, "Who do people say that I am?" And, then he asked, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter's answer was that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God, demonstrated perspicuity uncommon to the Jewish world in which he lived. Peter's answer is not attributed to Peter's intelligence, logic, nor intuition, but to the fact that the Father disclosed the truth to Peter.

2.11 Luke 1:70

As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old— (Luke 1:70).

Zechariah testifies after being filled with the Holy Spirit the wonders of God's grace. In His prophesy, he declares that God spoke through His holy prophets to reveal his mind to men.

2.12 Luke 10:22

All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and Who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son **will reveal** Him (Luke 10:22).

Jesus claims esoteric knowledge of Israel's God. In the context, Jesus admits religious truth is hidden and that it cannot be discovered based on empirical investigation of the natural order. How does one really come to know this God in a personal way? Only by revelation! God must make Himself known. One does not inherit a relationship with God by being born into a Christian family, but by being "born again," that is, enlightened as to the truth of Christ. Every Christian understands that there was a day when he did not know God, and that there was a day when God revealed the truth of His salvation to him (John 1:10-13).

2.13 Galatians 1:11, 12

“The gospel which was preached of me is not after man . . . but through a revelation (avpokalu,yewj) of Jesus Christ” (Galatians 1:11, 12).

Paul claims his gospel, which he taught the Galatians, did not come from men or originate with men. He did not obtain his knowledge of the gospel from other apostles. He did not obtain his knowledge by meditation, but by revelation. God exposed His thoughts to Paul in a way that Paul could know and learn them. As an apostle, he saw the Lord (1 Corinthians 9:1).

2.141 Corinthians 2:9-12

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." But God hath **revealed** (avpeka,luyen) them unto us (the apostles) by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For who among men knows the *thoughts* of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the *thoughts* of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. ¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the **Spirit** who is from God, **that we might know** the things freely given to us by God.

The Greeks prided themselves in their knowledge. But, Paul wanted this young church to be established, not on the prescience of men, but upon the power of God (2:2). He informs the Corinthians that their knowledge of the Christian faith was not rooted in the science of men or the knowledge of this age, but upon revelation; that is, special knowledge that can only be obtained when God intersects history and exposes Himself to mankind. The plural pronoun, “us” refers to the Apostles. The gospel Paul taught to this church did not originate with man, but with God. Their knowledge, therefore, of the gospel came through revelation.

2.15 Ephesians 4:4-7

And by referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it **has now been revealed** to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; *to be specific*, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus

through the gospel, of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power (Ephesians 4:4-7).

In the OT, God gave the nation of Israel the promises of His covenant. They belonged to Israel and to Israel alone (Deuteronomy 29:14, 15). But, through the gospel, the Gentiles became partakers of Israel's promises and member of the messianic community. The fact that the Gentiles would participate in Israel's spiritual inheritance was not revealed in the OT. It was revealed to NT apostles and prophets.

2.161 Timothy 3:15, 16

I write so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth. ¹⁶ And by common confession great, is the mystery of godliness: He who was **revealed** in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Beheld by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory.

Paul rehearses the tenets of the faith. One of those tenets is the fact that Jesus was revealed in the flesh; i.e., He was the Son of God promised in the OT that appeared in history to live, serve, suffer, and to die for the sins of humanity. The appearance of Christ in time is not attributed to biology, or to natural flow of human progeny, but to a revelation of God.

2.171 Timothy 1:8-10

Who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own **purpose and grace** which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity but now has been **revealed** (fanero,w) by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, Who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher.

What is revealed? Here Paul attests to the fact that salvation was revealed. It took the appearing of Christ to unveil the grace of God. It was through the appearing of Christ that death was defeated and it is through the proclamation of the gospel that men participate in the riches of God's grace.

2.181 Peter 1:10-12

As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that *would come* to you made careful search and inquiry, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. It was **revealed** to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven-- things into which angels long to look (1 Peter 1:1-12).

The OT predicted the coming of Christ and the feast of salvic blessings. But, the prophets wanted to know “when” Christ would appear and endow men with the riches of salvation. Peter says the prophets learned through revelation that they were not serving themselves but that the things they were predicting were for Christians (“you”).

2.19 Hebrews 1:1-3

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners **spake** in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days **spoken** unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; Who **being** the brightness of His glory, and the **express image** of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they (Hebrews 1:1-3).

The author informs us that God has indeed spoken to men at various times and in different ways:

By a voice from heaven (Exodus 20:1-19).

By the Angel of the Lord (Genesis 16:21, 22; Jude 2, 6, 13).

By prophets (Isaiah-Malachi).

By His Son (Hebrews 1:1-3).

The Scripture is the objective revelation of God. But, in the days of the apostles, God dumped knowledge on Israel through His ultimate, subjective Revelation, His Son. Jesus is called the,

“express image” (carakth.r) of God, that is, “the cut, mark, or exact representation” of God. He is said “to be” in the image of God. “Being” (w'n) stands in contrast “to becoming.” The term “image” (u`posta,sewj) refers to His representation of the essence of God. Jesus is the substance, the foundation, the fullness of what God wants us to know about Him. Jesus, therefore, is God’s greatest revelation of God to man.

There is a story about a farmer who was sitting by his fire on a cold winter night when he heard birds crashing on his window. They were trying to escape the storm. The farmer went outside, opened up his barn, and tried to herd them into his barn, but no matter what the farmer did, the birds would not cooperate. He thought to himself, “If only I could be come a bird and show them the way to the barn . . .” Well, this is what God did in Christ. Christ became a man in order to show us the way to eternal life.

But, how do men get this knowledge? It can only come by revelation. For example: The birth of the Son of God is the greatest event in history. But, how many people knew or understood the meaning of the first Christmas?

If we look at the Christmas story, we find the following people knew about the birth of Christ: Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, the wise men, Zechariah and Elisabeth, Anna, and Simeon; that is, about 12 to 15 people. How did these people come to know about the birth of the Jewish Messiah? Only by revelation! It was revealed to them in dreams and by angels. Today, you may know Christ as your Savior and Lord. How did you come into this knowledge? Only by revelation! God revealed it to you.

2.20 The Character of Revelation

The Bible is truth. Jesus prayed that the Father would sanctify His people by His truth. Then Jesus stated the source of that truth, “Thy word is truth” (John 17:17). Since God is true and cannot lie, and the Bible is God’s revelation to mankind, then the Bible is truth.

The Bible is complete. “In these last days, He has spoken to us in His Son” (Hebrews 1:2). With the entrance of the Son into history, the revelation about God was complete. All that God wants man to know about Himself can be found in the Logos, the Word made flesh as recorded in the Word of God.

The Bible is sufficient:

^{NAS} 2 Peter 1:3 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.

Everything a person needs to be godly is contained in Christ and the source of knowledge about Him, the Word of God. One does not need a library of books to become godly. All one needs is God's Word. One does not need psychologists, therapists, philosophers, psychics, sociologists, or spiritual gurus to guide him to truth. "Thy Word is truth" said Jesus.

2.21 The Evasiveness of God

And finally, having discussed the fact of revelation, we must re-consider why revelation is necessary in the first place.

Verily thou *art* a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour (Isaiah 45:15).-

The necessity of revelation is built on a fundamental reality and that reality is that truth about God is hidden. One has to question the validity of any religion that does not affirm the hiddenness of God. **A true religion must also offer an explanation of God's lack of self-disclosure.** Twenty-six times we are told that **God hides His face from men** in Scripture (Deuteronomy 31:17-18; Job 13:24; Isaiah 54:8; 59:2; Jeremiah 33:5). Job was frustrated by the hiddenness of God (Job 9:11-12). To Jacob (Genesis 32), the Angel of the Covenant came to Him under the cover of darkness. David's greatest fear was that God would hide himself and not answer him in a time of need (Psalm 4:1, 54:2).

And, we are told why God hides himself, "But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden *His* face from you, so that He does not hear" (Isaiah 59:2). God is holy and man is sinful. What skunk scent is to the nostrils of man, sin is to a holy God. Furthermore, the Scripture declares, "There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God" (Romans 3:10). He does not seek truth. That is, man is self-absorbed, self-occupied, and selfish. Like a ball of twine, man is all wrapped up in himself. Only by the grace of God can selfish man be delivered from the dark cave in which he hides from God. And, this is what God's revelation is about—the relentless pursuit of God for lost man (Luke 19:10).

3 EXTERNAL EVIDENCE OF REVELATION

One would expect that if the Bible is a product of revelation from a true God that its contents would be true. Though one could write a book on this subject, consider the following briefs:

Geographical Evidence: When the Bible talks about Jerusalem, Hebron, Samaria, Capernaum, Damascus, Egypt, Moab, or Jericho, or ancient Ai, it is talking about real places, some of which, like Capernaum and Ai, have just been unearthed in our time and discovered to fit the facts of the biblical story with amazing accuracy.

Topographical Evidence: When the Bible mentions cities, hills, mountains, rocks, streams, wells, springs, the Jordan River, the Sea of Galilee, and military battles taking place at a certain site upon which the stories of the Bible took place, these places are real; i.e., they happened on the landscape of history when and where the Bible says they took place.

Archaeological Evidence: For years critics have doubted certain events in the Bible. But, through the work of archaeologists, discoveries were made that verified disputed stories. For example, historians doubted the existence of Pilate, Governor of Judea, because no records could be found showing he actually existed until a plaque was discovered at Caesarea Maritima, with the inscription, "Pontius Pilate, Prefect of Judaea," now in the museum of archaeology in Jerusalem.

Historical Evidence: When the Bible mentions events like the fall of Jericho, or the fall of Ai, or the building of Solomon's temple, the invasion by Babylon in 589 BC, or the rebuilding of the second temple in the time of Zerubbabel, or Jesus' birth in the time of Caesar Augustus, the temple colonnade, or the spread of Christianity into the Roman world, it speaks of human events that can be proved by historical investigation.

Cultural Evidence: If the Bible were the product of the second or third century church, certain customs like eating, washing, and sitting that were peculiar to the times of Christ would never have been described with such accuracy had they been written centuries after the event.

Traditions and customs performed at Jewish feasts, weddings, and social gatherings are described with supreme detail and accuracy.

Prophetic Evidence: The Bible predicts the ruin of Tyre, Sidon, Samaria, Jerusalem, Syria, Assyria, Babylon, Thebes-Memphes, Petra-Edom, Gaza-Askelon, and Moab-Ammon, or the coming of Christ with such precision, one can only conclude that the prophecies were written after the event or they came by revelation from an omniscient God.

Theology and Ethical Evidence: Truths like the Trinity, sovereignty and free will, justification, redemption, propitiation, substitution, sanctification, the divinity of Christ, faith, and the doctrines of grace have kept men and women spellbound and in hot pursuit to grasp the wealth of biblical ideology.

Ethical Evidence: One would think that if the Bible is from God, it would contain lofty moral and ethical precepts, and it does! As one looks at the Ten Commandments, the prophetic rebukes, the Sermon on the Mount, and the epistolary admonitions, one will see that they contain the highest, most unified ethical precepts known to man bar none! No nation in antiquity or in modern times has a book in its possession that contains a more dignified and balanced oratory of ethics and morality than the Holy Scriptures. All that is good and noble in our culture can be attributed to the influence of the regal virtues within the Christian rules of conduct. By comparison, all that is wrong with our society including, but not limited to fraud, theft, abortion, pornography, homosexuality, teen pregnancy, terrorism and the like can be attributed to the influence of humanistic atheism and false religions influencing our culture.

3.1 The Testimony of Josephu

“How firmly we have given credit to these books of our own nation is evident by what we do; for during so many ages as have already passed no one that been so bold as either to add anything to them, to take anything from them, or to make any change; but it is become natural to all Jews, immediately and from their very birth, to esteem these books to contain divine doctrines, and to persist in them, and if occasion be, willingly to die for them” (Flavius Josephus, Against Apion, i. 8).

3.2 A Testimony of Influence

The Bible is the greatest traveler in the world. It penetrates to every country, civilized and uncivilized. It is seen in the royal palace and in the humble cottage. It is the friend of emperors and beggars. It is read by the light of the dim candle and amid Arctic snows. It is read in city and country, amid crowds and in solitude. Wherever its message is received it frees the mind from bondage and fills the heart with gladness (A.T. Pierson, quoted by Bill McRae, Bible Tape, Colorado Springs).

It cannot be questioned that the most published book in the world is the Bible, in part and as a whole . . . It was the first work translated from one language to another . . . It was the first printed book . . . It is the most valuable book in the world (referring to the Gutenberg's Bible paid for by the British (Ramm, 1953, p. 227).

3.3 A Testimony of Authenticity

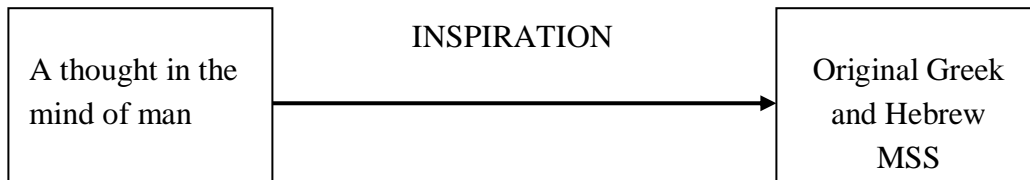
Quoting Bishop J. C. Ryle, "The view which I maintain is that every book and every chapter, and verse and syllable of the Bible was given by inspiration of God. I hold that not only the substance of the Bible, but its language; not only the ideas of the Bible, but its words; not only certain parts of the Bible, but every chapter of the Book—that all and each are of divine authority" (Keyser, 1945, p. 138).

Rousseau, the French skeptic, said about the Bible: "Peruse the works of our philosophers, with all their pomp and diction, how mean, how contemptible they are compared with the Scriptures! Is it possible that a book, at once so simple and so sublime, should be merely the work of man? Is it possible that the sacred Personage whose history it contains should Himself be a mere man? Do we find that He assumed the tone of an enthusiast or an ambitious sectary? What sweetness, what purity in his manner! What sublimity in His maxims! What profound wisdom in His discourses! . . . Where is the man, where the philosopher, who could so live and so die, without weakness and without ostentation? . . . Yes, if the life and death of Socrates are those of a sage, the life

and death of Jesus Christ are those of God” (Quoted by Keyser, 1945, pp. 100, 101).

In conclusion, reason has failed us. With so many ideas and opinions about God, there is a need for an authoritative source on the knowledge of God. That source lies in God’s Revelation, the Holy Bible. While God has revealed many things to man (**general revelation**), the testimony of Scripture is that its contents are the results of **special revelation**, the endearing and enduring Word of God. The ultimate revelation of God is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He is the physical manifestation of the invisible God, the express image of His Person. Through Him we can know the truth about God and His salvation. We can find rest for our souls by resting in His Revelation.

4 TRUSTING INSPIRATION



“All Scripture is inspired by God” (2 Timothy 3:16)

4.1 Introduction

In our last study on revelation we observed that man cannot begin with himself and discover the truth about God. He cannot reason his way to God. Some things can never be learned by human reason nor solved by human logic. The infinite God must step into the experience of finite man and reveal himself to man. The Christian faith rests on the premise that God is and that He has spoken. Further, the Christian relies upon the premise that God has spoken to men and that He guided biblical authors in writing down that revelation in the original autographs. This guidance is called “inspiration.”

The difference between the revolution in France and the American Revolution of 1776 is the difference between the French Enlightenment and the Reformation. The former was based on human reason and the latter was based on the Word of God. The difference between Mexico and the United States is not one of natural resources, but the difference between Catholicism and Protestantism.

Simply put, what has made America great is its biblical base. But, in the last fifty years, we have seen the erosion of that base and the Bible has been under assault by evolutionists, feminists, historians, archaeologists, abortionists, homosexuals, liberal theologians, liberal politicians, and arrogant movie stars. Its veracity has been challenged.

For this reason, we need to investigate the questions: Can we trust the Bible? Is it accurate? Is it inspired?

4.2 The Historical Problem

While it is not within the scope of this paper to iterate all criticisms the Bible has received, a short list having to do with inspiration may suffice: The secularist looks at the Bible as a product of human imagination.

Some Levantine scholars believe some parts of the Bible are from God, but other parts are not; that the Bible's theology may be correct, but the historical sections are untrustworthy. Others assert the Bible is inspired if it speaks to you. Many think the writers were inspired, but the text itself cannot be trusted. Some suppose the events of the Bible were inspired, but not the text. Some suppose the thoughts of the biblical writers were inspired, but not their words. These ideas fly in the face of the clear teaching of God's Word about inspiration.

4.3 Biblical Definition of Inspiration

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16)

The word "*Scripture*" is in the singular because it refers to the whole of inspired text. The term "inspired" (qeo,pneustoj) is made up of two Greek words, "Theos," which is the Greek word for God, and "pneustoj," which means "wind" or "spirit" or "breath." Paul is saying that all Scripture is "God breathed." When you are close to someone, you can hear them breathing. The terms "inspiration," "perspiration," and "respiration" all end with "spiration" indicating some form of breathing.

Terms like pneumatic drill (run by air), pneumonia (a disease that affects the breath) and pneumatology (a technical word for the doctrine of the Holy Spirit) come from the biblical word "breath." The word "inspire" refers to inhaling or receiving some kind of breath, and the word "expire" refers to exhaling or losing breath. Paul is saying that God was so close to the biblical authors when they wrote the Scriptures that the breath of God is on the text; i.e., the Scripture is a product of God's breath.

4.4 What Inspiration Does Not Mean

By inspiration, Paul is not saying that all revealed knowledge from God is inspired. God has revealed many things to men, but not all knowledge became part of the Scripture. What is inspired? **All Scripture** is inspired.

By inspiration, Paul is not saying that all authors were inspired, but that their *autographa* was God-breathed. Inspiration is not a boost of emotional energy associated with a musician who may be motivated to write a great song. Inspiration is not about motivation or genius. The **emphasis is on the authority of the text**. Verse 16 occurs at the end of chapter three because Paul warned against a “falling away” in the last days. Only by having the text as one’s anchor of faith can a believer keep his fellowship with God from drifting away. One can be a motivated genius and still be in error. biblical authors were not emotionally charged to write. They were inspired in the sense they were guided by the Holy Spirit to write God’s ideas accurately in a text.

By inspiration, Paul is not saying that the translations of Scripture are inspired. Only the original autograph is inspired.

By inspiration, Paul is not saying that the author’s thoughts were inspired, but that the words of the original text were inspired. Thoughts must be put into words. Since words are the ships that carry thought-cargo, it is the words that become the vehicle of thought. To suppose that thought-cargo is guided by a Captain’s compass, but not the ship, does violence even to the thought-cargo. If a ship is not properly guided, its cargo will not reach port. Likewise, if words are not inspired, they will not accurately convey thoughts.

By inspiration, Paul is not saying that some parts are more inspired than other parts. While some portions of the Bible may be more important than other parts, all of Scripture is equally inspired, the historical portions as well as the doctrinal portions.

Paul is not saying that the Scripture is inspirational in the sense that a reader may feel good when he reads the Bible. While the Bible certainly generates great ideas and motivates people to serve God, this is not what we mean by inspiration. We must make a distinction between inspiration of the text, and the excitement of a reader of the text; between inspiration and illumination; between inspiration and motivation.

By inspiration, Paul is not saying that the Bible contains “inspired concepts,” “inspirational themes,” and “motivational ideas.” While the Bible does do all these things, inspiration has to do with the transfer of God’s thoughts through a human instrument to a parchment.

By inspiration, Paul is not saying God inspires the events of the Bible, but that God inspires the text. Some scholars are saying the Passover, and the exodus, the giving of the law, ordination of the Jewish sacrifices, and the conquest of Jericho were inspired; i.e., the event behind the text is inspired. If the event is inspired and not the text, then interpretive authority resides within the interpreter and not the text. But, this is not what Paul meant by the term *inspiration*. Inspiration refers to God’s superintendence over the inscription of the text (Sailhamer, 1995, pp. 36-86).

By inspiration, Paul is not saying that everything a biblical author wrote was inspired, nor does he mean that when the author was writing Scripture that at times he was inspired. For example, Paul wrote many letters, but not all of them were instruments of revelation. Only certain letters were of divine origin and they are contained in the NT. Likewise, every word in Paul’s autographs is inspired, not just part of the words.

By inspiration, Paul is not affirming a doctrine of dictation. God did not dictate each word for the author to write. God used the human author’s mind and vocabulary to inscript His Word. In this sense, the Word of God, like Christ, has both a divine nature and human nature.

Contrast the Bible’s claim of inspiration with the Book of Mormon, which claims to be a dictation from God to Joseph Smith. According to the Joseph Smith story, God’s words appeared on some golden plates. He would write them down exactly as they appeared on the plates and they would not go away until Smith wrote them down correctly. If this were the case, then there should be no errors in any of the Mormon documents. However, this is not the case. The Book of Mormon contains thousands of spelling, grammatical, and historical blunders¹ of which, the Mormon leaders have diligently edited for the past 150 years.

¹ The marks in the following pages represent the changes which would have to be made to the original 1830 edition to bring it into line with the current 1981 edition. The changes are marked in ~~strikeout~~ font for words and characters deleted and red font for words and characters added. The following is taken from the PLATES OF NEPHI: Wherefore, it is an abridgment of the ~~R~~record of the ~~P~~people of Nephi; and also of the Lamanites; ~~---w~~Written to the Lamanites, ~~which~~ **who** are a remnant of the ~~H~~house of Israel; and also to Jew and Gentile; ~~---w~~Written by way of

4.5 Theological Definition of inspiration

The term “inspiration” may be defined as the work of the Holy Spirit whereby he aided biblical authors to accurately transfer God’s thoughts to the original parchment. By inspiration we refer to God’s superintendence over the writing of the text in the original autograph. That is, we affirm the inerrancy of Scripture in the autographa. Hence, biblical scholars have coined the terms “verbal, plenary inspiration” inferring that ALL of Scripture has a divine origin and that every word can be trusted.

But, such a definition does not mean that our modern translations are inspired or that copies are 100 % accurate. We have no originals—only copies. And as with any copy of any work of antiquity, age, time, human use impact the quality of manuscripts . . . and this is true for all manuscripts whether we are referring to Biblical texts or the texts of Greek, Roman, Hebrew, or Chinese origin. There is no such thing as a perfect copy of any work of antiquity!!

commandment, and also by the spirit of Pprophecy and of Rrevelation--Written, and sealed up, and hid up unto the LORDord, that they might not be destroyed;--tTo come forth by the gift and power of GODod; unto the interpretation thereof;--sSealed by the hand of Moroni, and hid up unto the LORDord, to come forth in due time by the way of the Gentile;--tThe interpretation thereof by the gift of GODod. aAn abridgment taken from the Book of Ether.

Aalso, which is a Rrecord of the Ppeople of Jared, which who were scattered at the time the LORDord confounded the language of the people, when they were building a tower to get to Hheaven:--wWhich is to sheow unto the remnant of the House of Israel how what great things the LORDord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the LORDord, that they are not cast off forever;--aAnd also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that JESUS is the CHRIST, the ETERNAL GOD, manifesting Hhimself unto all nations.--And now, if there be are faults, it be they are the mistakes of men; wherefore, condemn not the things of GODod, that ye may be found spotless at the judgment-seat of CHRISThris.

TRANSLATED BY JOSEPH SMITH, JUNIOR,

AUTHOR AND PROPRIETOR.

(Source: <http://www.connect-a.net/users/drshades/archives/000prefa.htm>, October 2003)

4.6 Supporting Claims of Inspiration

Very few books claim to be of divine origin, but the Bible does. It claims to be a book inspired by God Himself. The words, “Thus saith the Lord,” are found over 2000 times. God has disclosed Himself and that revelation has been inscripturated. Let’s take a look at some of the biblical claims.

“I will be with your mouth, and teach thee what you shall say” (Exodus 4:10-12).

When God called Moses, Moses knew he was not a skilled in orator, and he questioned God’s judgment. He asked a question on how he was going to be able to persuade the people of God. God told Moses that He would be with him and teach him what to say. Because of this inquiry, we know that Moses spoke as he was guided by YHWH.

2 Samuel 7:2-5 That the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains. 3 And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in thine heart; for the LORD is with thee. 4 And it came to pass that night, that the word of the LORD came unto Nathan, saying, 5 Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the LORD, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in?

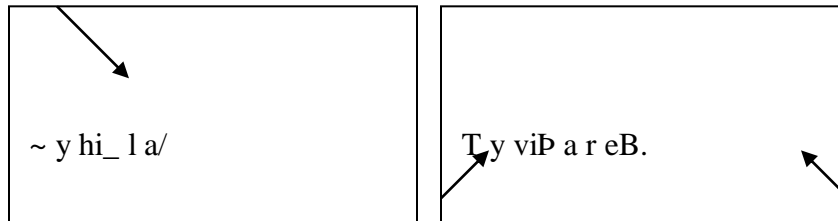
Because God brought David to the throne, his love for the Lord was overflowing. He consulted Nathan, his court advisor. Nathan advised him to follow his heart. That night God spoke to Nathan. The next day, Nathan came to David, and said, “Thus saith the Lord . . .” The point of the incident is that there is a difference between Nathan giving his personal opinion and Nathan speaking under the inspiration of the Spirit; that is, speaking *ex cathedra*.

The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word *was* in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men *must be* just, ruling in the fear of God. (2 Samuel 23:2-3).

David declares that he was an instrument whereby the Spirit of the Lord communicated God’s Word to men. He claims that God’s words were on his lips and God at times spoke to him directly. This is a claim for inspiration.

For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot (ivw/ta) or one tittle (kerai,a) shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled (Matthew 5:18).

The word “jot” is a reference to the smallest Hebrew letter known as a yod (*y*), which looks like an English apostrophe. The word tittle (Latin: *titulus*) refers to any jut or angle or small mark (*B*).



Jesus said that every word of the sacred text will be fulfilled. By saying this, Jesus affirmed the inspiration and authority of the text.

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* (1 Corinthians 2:13).

The apostle said “the things” we (apostles) spoke were taught; i.e. God’s revelation did not come in a mechanical way nor was the revelation dictated to him. Further, it was not concepts or ideas that were inspired but the very words themselves. It was not the apostles who were inspired, but the text.

If any one thinks he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord (1 Corinthians 14:37).

Paul uses the present tense of the verb “to write” (gra, fw) saying at the time when he was writing his letter his imperatives were a direct command from the Lord. Paul claims his words are not his own, but the Lord’s. Further, he expected the “saints” (1:2), “prophets,” and the “spiritual” in Corinth to acknowledge his inspired letter and to respond to its authority.

“ . . . we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God's message, you accepted *it* not *as* the word of men, but *for* what it really is, the word of God . . .” (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

Paul makes it clear that when the Thessalonians received his message, they received more than the word of men. They received the Word of God. Paul seems to be cognizant that he had become a human instrument whereby the Word of God was inscripturated.

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets (evn toi/j profh,taij) in many portions and in many ways (Hebrews 1:1).

The text reads this way, “In many times and in many ways, God spoke. . .” Note the certainty, “God spoke!” And he has in at least four ways: (1) directly (2) indirectly through the angel of the Lord, (3) indirectly by the prophets, and (4) directly through the Son. The phrase “by the prophets” could be translated “by the prophets” or “in the prophets.” God was the speaker and the prophets were His instruments of revelation.

For the word of God is living (*zoe*) 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. (Hebrews 4:12).

Notice the term, “living” or “quick” in the KJV. It comes from the Greek word, “zao” (Zw/n) from which we get the term eternal “life.” There are two Greek words for life. One is *bios* which refers primarily to the life of the body, and **zwh**, (*zoe*) is the life of God. Look at Genesis 2:7: “And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the ***breath of life***; and man became a ***living soul*** (LXX = yuch.n zw/san). The LXX’s term for describing the life within man is *zosan*. It is the same word used to describe the Word of God. Just as man is alive because of the breath of God, the Bible is alive because of the breath of God.

By using *zoa* the author informs us that the Bible takes on the characteristics and perfections of God. “The Father has life (*zoa*) in Himself” (John 5:26). For this reason, we can depend on the Word of God to discern our thoughts and help us achieve the purposes of God for our lives. While there are many good books in print, none is living nor do they have divine power like the Bible.

For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God (2 Peter 1:21).

The word, “*prophecy*” refers to the OT Scriptures or the Word of God. The term “will” is a dative noun (instrumental) and the word “man” is in the genitive, which shows source or origin. Peter, speaking about apostasy, informs us that the OT is not of man. He affirms a fact, “men were moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.” The word “moved” (fe, rw, phero) is a present, passive, participle.

The passive indicates that the Holy Spirit acted upon men.

The participle can be translated “carried,” “lifted up,” “guided,” “while being moved,” or “sustained.”

The image before us is that of a ship being driven along by the winds. I compare it to men on a ship without a rudder being blown by the wind. The men have a certain amount of freedom to move around on the ship, but they can’t steer the ship. Likewise, inspiration involves the Spirit using men, their vocabulary, and their personality, but it was the Spirit who moved the ship from port to port.

And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction (2 Peter 3:15-16).

When Peter identifies Paul’s letters and “the rest of Scriptures,” he identifies Paul’s writings as Scripture. He links all of Paul’s letters with the Scripture affirming to us the plenary nature of inspiration, and the fact that the Apostolic age was an age of inscripturation.

4.7 Implications of Inspiration

First, God’s superintendence over the autographs affirms the doctrine of the verbal, plenary inspiration of Scripture. If the Scripture is inspired as a whole and its very words and letters come from God, then the doctrine of the verbal, plenary inspiration of Scripture is also true. By plenary we mean the whole of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation is God breathed. By verbal we mean that every word can be trusted.

Second, the very nature of inspiration implies that the Bible is *infallible* and *inerrant*; that is, it is not false, mistaken, nor defective. If the Bible is “God breathed” and God cannot lie, then the Bible is true and does not lie. This conclusion is logically consistent. God cannot lie (Titus 2:3), and if He breathed out the Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:16), then the Scriptures must be true (John 17:17). Every word of Scripture can be trusted. If God’s thoughts have been accurately transferred to the original autographs, then inspiration implies perfection. If fallible human instrumentality precludes an infallible autograph, then we must logically conclude that the whole of Scripture is errant and fallible. If, however, we preclude the Holy Spirit was at work making human instrumentation infallible, then we can properly conclude the Scripture is inerrant and infallible. **The Holy Spirit is not the author of error.**

Third, the inspiration of Scripture asserts the authority of Scripture. The Bible is not like Pilgrim’s Progress. While Pilgrim’s Progress is a brilliant work and worth reading, it is not inspired, nor are its words authoritative. Because the Bible is inspired, it is the authoritative source for doctrine and practice on the subjects in which it speaks. For example, when Jesus was arguing about the resurrection with the Sadducees on whether there was going to be a resurrection, He quoted Exodus 3:6 where YHWH said to Moses, “I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob ’.”

Jesus reasoned with the Sadducees, that “He (YHWH) is not the God of the dead but of the living” (Matthew 22:32). Jesus based His whole argument for the resurrection on the present, active tense of the Greek verb, “Egw, eivmi” (I am). In so doing He affirmed the accuracy of each word in the Tanach.

But, not only is its doctrine inspired, but so is its history. When the Pharisees argued with Jesus and demanded a sign from Him, Jesus said, “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” (Matthew 12:40). In referencing Jonah, Jesus asserts the historicity of the Book of Jonah and the fact of his three-day and three- night imprisonment in the belly of the whale. Further, Jesus affirmed that Jonah’s ordeal was a type of Christ and that the suffering of Jonah would find its ultimate fulfillment in the death and resurrection of Christ. Based on this text, I’ve concluded that Jesus’ death did not take place on Good Friday but sometime on a Wednesday or a Thursday.

4.8 The Benefits of Scripture

In our primary text, 2 Timothy 3:16, Paul asserted four benefits of learning the Scripture: *teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness*. The word “profitable” (wvfe,limoj) refers to a positive advantage or benefit of Scripture in contrast to the teachings of men which usually lead to debauchery. The first benefit is “teaching.” The word “teaching” refers to “instruction” or “doctrine.” In other words, the Bible tells us what is right and true.

The second benefit is “correction.” The word “correction” can be translated “rebuke” or “conviction.” It rebukes evil thinking and behavior. Not only does the Word of God tell us what is true, it tells us what is wrong with our lives.

The third benefit mentioned is “correction.” The word “correction” (evpano,rqwsin) is a medical word meaning “to set straight.” When a person fractured a limb, he would need a physician to set (evpano,rqwsin) the broken bone. We get the word “orthopedics” from this word (See usage in Titus 1:5). The Word of God can straighten out the bent, broken parts of our lives.

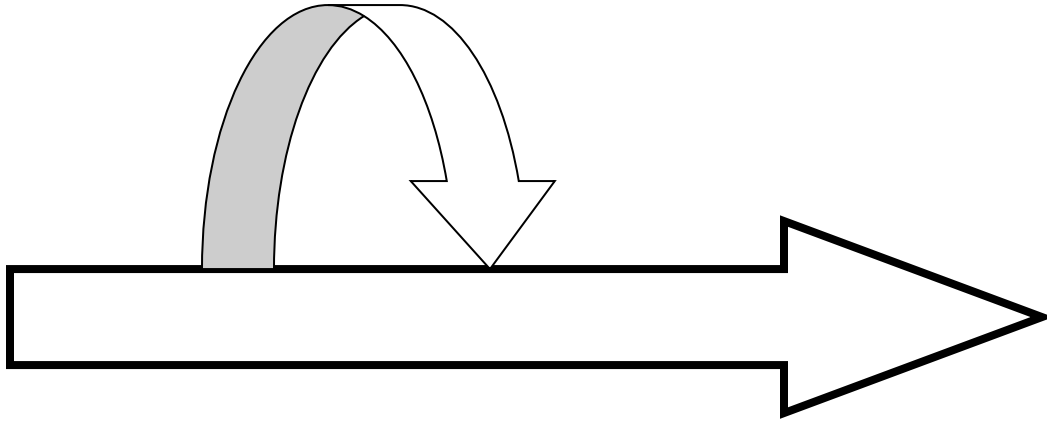
The fourth benefit is “training in righteousness” (pro.j paidei,an th.n evn dikaiosunh). The word “training” refers to childhood instruction by a tutor who is assigned the duty of bringing a youth to maturity so he or she can assume the responsibility of an adult. The Word of God acts like a tutor to train us in righteous living.

Doctrine: The Bible tells us what is right and true.

Reproof: The Bible tells us what is wrong and untrue.

Correction: The Bible tells us how to correct what is wrong and untrue.

Instruction: The Bible tells us how to do what is right and true.



All this is to help the “man of God” or “woman of God” (anthropos) to become perfect, that is, “mature” in the faith. Someone brought to my attention this formula in 2 Timothy 3:15-17 when I was a young Christian, and it stuck:

$$15 + 16 = 17$$

The child of God (v. 15) + the Word of God (v. 16) = a man of God (v. 17)

4.9 Historical Confirmation of Inspiration

Consider the following views from early church fathers. The following comes from George Duncan Berry’s Book (1919), The Inspiration and Authority of Holy Scripture. A Study in the Literature of the First Five Centuries which are quoted by Harold Lindsell (1976), The Battle for the Bible. Other sources is so noted.

Josephus: Barry wrote of Josephus, “In speaking of Moses, Josephus describes him as a prophet in so exalted a sense that his words are to be regarded as the Words of God himself” (Lindsell, p. 46).

Clement: “You have carefully studied the Sacred Scriptures, which are the true utterances of the Holy Spirit” (Lindsell, p. 47).

Justin Martyr: Lindsell says of him, “We are told the writers ‘received from God’ the knowledge they were taught” (p. 47).

Irenaeus: Barry says, Irenaeus “insists most strongly” that the writers of Scripture “were filled with perfect knowledge on every subject . . . for they spoken by the Word of God and His Spirit” (Lindsell, p. 49).

Tertullian: Barry writes, “It would be difficult to overstate the reverence paid by Tertullian to the Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments Tertullian did not hesitate to say that the very phrases of Holy Scripture are the result of Inspiration . . .” (Lindsell, p. 49, 50).

Origen: Barry writes, “To Origen, the Holy Scriptures and the teaching of the Spirit were the final and absolute spring of Divine truth . . .” and that Origen said, “The sacred volumes are fully inspired by the Holy Spirit, and there is no passage either in the Law or the Gospel or the writings of an Apostle, which does not proceed from the inspired source of Divine Truth” (Lindsell, p. 51).

Martin Luther: In Luther’s confession at Worms, he unabashedly said about the Scripture, “Here I Stand!” Luther was contrasting the authority of the Catholic Church with that of the Bible.

John Calvin: “The Holy Spirit” declares Calvin, “dictated to the prophets and the apostles” the writings of sacred Scripture. “God was pleased to commit and consign His word to writing . . .” (Calvin: Institutes, III, 163.)

John Wesley: He believed in the full inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible (J. Wesley, “Preface,” Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament, pp. 10-11).

It was not until modern times and particularly those of the Wellhausen School that inspiration came into question. Wellhausen (1844-1918) was a brilliant, radical, rationalistic German theologian that simply said, “miracles do not happen,” and began to radically depart from the traditional dating of OT books. Wellhausen humanized the Bible and launched the movement known as “Higher Criticism.” Essentially, much of modern, evangelical scholarship has been

aimed at reaffirming the inspiration of Scripture and answering Wellhausen's critical movement, which is still rippling through our universities and institutions. We will discuss the subject of higher and lower criticism later.

In conclusion, while we have not proved inspiration, we have demonstrated that the Scripture claims to be inspired. Furthermore, the church fathers have consistently affirmed the authority and perfection of Scripture. We are on solid ground when we hold fast this confidence.

First, we assert the Bible is no ordinary book. It is a living book that has the power to save souls and change lives.

Second, inspiration applies to the original autography and not to translations. Our translations are only a witness to the autography.

Third, the Bible is verbally inspired; that is, every word is important and issues may be decided on the representation of a single word.

Fourth, the Bible as a whole is inspired; that is, there is a canon of sacred literature, which is limited to inspired books. There are many fine books in the world, but only one has a divine stamp.

Fifth, because the Bible is inspired, scholars assert the infallibility of the original text; that is, the autography is without error and can be fully trusted. When we read the Scripture, we rely upon the premise that God guided the writing of the sacred text.

5 CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH

Jude 1:3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

5.1 Introduction to the Controversy

The Southern Baptists are recognized as a non-creedal people with a cliché, “NO creed but the Bible” and have **generally** remained faithful to the Scriptures. But, students of Higher Criticism infiltrated the denomination and the DENOMINATION was embroiled in a Battle for Inerrancy over the last half of the 20th century.

For example, what is wrong with this statement? “The Broadman Press ministers to the denomination in keeping with the historic Baptist principle of the freedom of the individual to interpret the Bible for himself, to hold a particular theory of inspiration of the Bible which seems most reasonable to him {sic}, and to develop his beliefs in accordance with his theory” (Quoted by the Sunday School Board in defense of Professor Elliot and the publication of a deviant book on the Old Testament).

Does this mean anyone can continue to be a Southern Baptist and deny the virgin birth, or the deity of Christ, or the inspiration of Scripture? These were the issues facing the denomination only a few years ago. To appreciate the subject of inspiration and canonicity, the student of the Bible must understand something of the historical struggle involved in the formation of the Canon and the challenge mounted against the inspiration of Scripture over the last three hundred years.

Jude exhorts the believers saying it was necessary for him to write and call the saints into action so they might ban together and contend for the faith. The word “contend” comes from a compound infinitive *epagonizomai* (evpagwni,zesqai) and means “to contest” or “to agonize.” The word *agonize* is already a strong word meaning “to strain every muscle,” but Jude adds the preposition “epi” to *agonize* in order to strengthen the challenge. The preposition “epi” is used when a speaker wants to pile on additional responsibility. For example, Paul says to the

Colossians “*put on love*” but he begins his exhortation with “*epi all*” which is translated “above all things;” i.e, “above all *things put on love.*” The translators added “earnestly” to emphasize *epi*, “above all things earnestly fight and scrape for the faith.” And, the most fundamental possession for which we must fight is for the ground upon which our faith rests, the inspiration of Scripture.

5.2 Inspiration Through History

5.2.1 Early Church History (35-475)

The original autographs of the OT were penned between 1400 BC and 400 BC and the NT autographs were written between 45 AD and 90 AD. After the first century, the gospel spread throughout the Roman Empire challenging the corruption of Rome and impacting the culture. It was during this period the Canon of Sacred Scripture was argued and debated, and eventually recognized as what we know as the Holy Bible.

Heretics with their pseudepigraphic writings abounded engulfing churchmen in an all out effort to identify the works appearing to be inspired and to formulate the tests for canonicity.

Recognition of the OT Canon was in place around 400 BC. Around 400 AD the entire Church culled out spurious religious literature and unanimously recognized the 27 books of the NT. No votes were taken. No decrees were made. No councils were formed to determine the canon. No committee selected the books from a mass of literature. Lists formed in many churches around the Mediterranean of which all or most of our present NT appeared on those lists. Such lists appeared at the Council of Laodicea (363), the Council of Damascus at Rome (382), the Councils of Hippo (393), and the Councils at Carthage (397, 419). For a thousand years the same opinion prevailed.

5.2.2 The Middle Ages (476-1492)

After the fall of the Roman Empire, travel, commerce, and knowledge declined along the Mediterranean shores. Like an evening thunderstorm, darkness swept over Europe leaving the Church holding the candle of truth as it entered the Middle Ages. While the Church was engulfed in superstition and yielded to allegorical and mystical interpretations of the Bible, she did not criticize the Bible nor doubt its origin and divine character. The difficulty the medieval churchmen had with the Bible was not with inspiration, but with interpretation. Cities, places,

historical events were often spiritualized, leaving the Church without a proper understanding of what the Bible said.

5.2.3 The Reformation (16th Century)

During the Middle Ages, the Church, with its popes and councils, struggled with how to interpret the Bible. The average Christian did not possess a Bible and knew nothing of God's Word except what a priest told him. As opinion shifted and churchmen doubted the interpretation of the Bible, authority for interpretation shifted from the Bible to the interpreter. Rulings by popes and councils became more important than the Bible itself.

With the invention of the printing press in 1450 by Johann Gutenberg, of Mainz, Germany, and the emergence of the Protestant Reformation, a back-to-the-Bible movement swept over Europe. As reformers studied the Bible, they began to challenge church dogma and papal authority. Interpretation, not inspiration, was the main issue of the day. At no time did any doubt the inspiration of Scripture.

During the Reformation, the Bible became more than a Book of doctrine, it became spiritual food—a source of comfort and inspiration to the European Christians. But, heat was produced as the Protestants sought to reform the Church and bring it back under the authority of the Holy Scriptures. Because of his interpretation of James 2 on the relationship between faith and works, Luther questioned the canonicity of James. He understood justification by faith in Romans, but could not reconcile James 2 and the relationship of works to justification.

Luther, however, was too busy studying the doctrines of the Bible to engage himself in studying canonicity. Further, it was during the Counter Reformation, in a desperate attempt to be different than the Protestants, that 53 Roman Catholic prelates, none of whom were scholars, fought to unify their constituents at the Council of Trent (1546) by adding the Apocrypha to the Bible and to revere the Apocrypha as the Word of God. “Anathema” (cursed) was pronounced on any who did not accept this decision.

As the fires of the Reformation swept over Europe, violent controversy erupted, and the Church entered into a period that called for strict definition regarding canonicity, the Bible and its authority. Out of the flames of the Reformation, the Protestants affirmed the following: (a) **the inspiration and infallibility** of the Scriptures (not the pope); (b) **the divine authority of the Scriptures** as the sole rule of faith and practice (*sola Scriptura, sola fide, sola gratia*); (c) **the formal identification of the canon** (the rejection of the Apocrypha); (d) **the sufficiency of**

Scripture for salvation and sanctification (rejection of communion, works, and church practice); (e) the **perspicuity of Scripture**; i.e., it is self explanatory (as opposed to the RC church canons, dogma, and decrees); and, (f) the **efficacy of Scripture** as a means of grace and power to save and sustains souls.

Calvin said, “We owe to the Scripture the same reverence which we owe to God, because it has proceeded from Him alone, and has nothing belonging to man mixed with it” (Miller, 1960, p. 70).

5.3 From the Reformation to Modern Times (1650-2000)

5.3.1 English Deism (1624-1750)

In England, the Reformation was not about reform, but about a revolt and separation from the Roman Catholic hierarchy. The English reformers lacked the grandeur and spirituality of the German reformers. With few exceptions, the upper clergy exploited power and wealth. Among the lower clergy, ignorance, immorality, and drunkenness prevailed leaving the church defenseless against the ugly giant of deism that devoured the English for over 100 years.

Deism confessed the existence of God but denied the existence of written revelation about Him. Deists claim that God created the world, withdrew from the universe, and left it under the control of natural law. Though most deists were familiar with the Bible, they rejected the authority of Scripture, the deity of Christ, and miracles. The deists (Hume, 1711-76; Gibbon, 1737-74) were “Freethinkers” and “Naturalists” **who elevated Reason over Scripture**. Deists differed only in degrees from these views. Consequently, England plummeted into intellectual stagnation and immorality.

5.3.2 French Atheism (1700-)

In France, English deism mated with French skepticism and produced bastard atheistic children including, but not limited to, Voltaire (1694-1788) and Rousseau (1712-78). Voltaire spent years studying in England. It was said of him, “He left France a poet, literateur, and wit: he returned the declared and determined foe of Christianity” (Quoted by Miller, 1960, p. 72). *The French Encyclopedia* (1751-72), a product of the deist’s revolution, expunged all knowledge of the Scripture and excluded any references to God. The result was the bloody, decapitating, guillotine slashing French Revolution of 1789-95).

5.3.3 German Rationalism (1750-)

In Germany, the people who had been freed from the papacy entered into a period of anti-authoritarianism and antinomianism. The people became lethargic, covetous, and undisciplined. While the Bible was considered authoritative, German clergy were iconoclastic, sectarian, and controversial. Spiritual starvation entered the nation and left the people unprepared for the devastating 30 Years War (1618-48). Confused and bewildered by the death and carnage, the Germans sought to recover the Bible from the scrap heap of philosophical debris and the assault on its authority by English Deism and French Atheism.

History now entered a period called “German Rationalism,” an effort to save Christianity, that paved the way for Modernism. But what began as an effort to protect Christianity degenerated into an assault on the authenticity of the Bible.

The father of German Rationalism was **Semler** (1725-1791). He developed the **Accommodation Theory**. Unable to resist the skepticism of the French and the assertion by English deists that miracles do not happen, Semler alleged that Christ knew there was no such thing as demon possession, but in order to accommodate the people’s superstition and not to offend the people, Christ and His disciples talked as if they believed it. Miracles, Christ’s resurrection, and inspiration were likewise treated.

Following Semler came **Eichhorn** (1752-1826), the **father of Higher Criticism**. Eichhorn said that miracles do not happen, cannot happen, and indeed, never happened. He believed every event in the Bible could be attributed to natural phenomenon; that ancient people errantly attributed inexplicable, natural events to the supernatural; that early civilization exaggerated things they could not understand; that they were too quick to attribute phenomenon to God. From Eichhorn evolved **six evil progenies**:

Professor Paulus (1761-1851), De Wette who attributed miracles to **Hallucination Theory**; i.e., the apostles suffered from delusion, illusion, and hallucination;

Professor De Witte (1780-1849) could not attribute the biblical miracles to mental instability, so he launched the **Myth Theory**, i.e., biblical history was really the product of fables and folklore.

Jean Astruc (1684-1766), the immoral French physician and free thinker, speculated regarding the Myth Theory that the OT books were not products of authors of their own time, but composed by late, post exilic writers.

Professor Graf (1815-69) and **Professor Kuenen** (1828-91), a Dutch agnostic, speculated the Pentateuchal laws were not written by Moses, but were written by authors living during the post Babylonian Exile (586-400 BC)

Wellhausen (1844-1918) picked up on Darwin's Theory of Evolution and applied it to the Bible. Wellhausen postulated "miracles do not happen," that historical sections of Scripture could be attributed to an early date and the passages containing lofty insights could be attributed to a late date; that Moses knew nothing of one God; that Yahovah became a tribal god; that monotheism evolved in Jewish history out of heathenism.

These theories evolved into the **JEPD Theory**, also known as the **Documentary Hypothesis Theory**. It holds the view Moses did not write the Pentateuch. The theory postulates the OT was made up of four pieces written much later in history. The letters stand for the supposed authors writing at various periods in history:

J The "J" stands for the "Jehovist Document" supposedly dated 850 BC.

E The "E" represents the "Elohism" document" supposedly written about 750 BC.

P The "P" stands for the "Priestly Document" supposedly written around 500 BC.

D The "D" represents the "Deuteronomist Document" supposedly written about 620 BC.

This school uses the Historical-Critical Method of biblical research, which follows an evolutionary model, discounts miracles, and treats the stories of the Bible as myths and fables developed over time by men. The people that use this method are the ones who teach that the crossing of the Red Sea was caused by an earthquake and a landslide; that Jesus only looked like He walked on water because He knew where the sandbar was located; that Jesus caught the fish because He knew of a warm spring bubbling out of the Sea of Galilee and that the schools of fish would be located there during the cold winter months; that the feeding of the five thousand resulted in everyone sharing their lunches due to the young boy's generous example of giving away his loaf of bread and two fishes. While most Evangelical scholars reject this approach, it is nevertheless prevalent in many circles.

5.3.4 Higher Criticism Infiltrates America

English Deism, French Skepticism, and German Rationalism also infected America, and its fruits are very evident even today. A touch of deism can be seen in the Declaration of Independence when it refers to the “laws of nature and of nature's God.” Our founding fathers were very much impacted by Rationalism, which can be noted in the order of the words in our Constitution, “life, liberty, and property.” Rationalism jumped in bed with “scientific evolution” and the German Wellhausen School of Higher Criticism to produce the War of all Wars, *Fundamentalism vs. Liberalism*, between 1910-1930. No blood was shed, but preachers shouted, pounded pulpits, and shook the pews.

No denomination was unaffected. Denominations were split and pastors were fired as congregations looked on in dismay and confusion at the debacle. Between 1910 and 1960, the church was hammered by “Higher Criticism;” i.e., destructive criticism that assaulted the historical veracity of God’s Word. Christians lost confidence in the Bible, and the church fell into a state of decline. The Scopes Trial in law and science; Freud, Rogers, and Adler in the pseudo sciences; the Great Depression in history; two world wars; and Keynes Theory of Economics in economics; Deweyism and Humanism in education; the “God is Dead Movement” in theology; Katherine Kenyon in the field of archaeology; the usurpation of the doctrine of the “Separation of Church and State” in the courts; the seizure of the public schools by big government; the rise of feminism, abortion, pornography, teen pregnancy; and, ordination of homosexuals in churches are a few of the weeds that sprang up by “progressives” sowing the seeds of liberalism.

Liberalism put the church in a hammerlock of pseudo intellectualism causing many Christians to abdicate the authority of the Word of God . . . and its impact is still being felt.

5.4 Revivalism in America

More impressive than the progenies of atheism, however, has been the ability of the Bible to survive and thrive. Following Luther and Calvin, a back to the Bible movement snowballed all over Europe. For the first time, people were learning exactly what the Bible says.

The early settlers in America were firmly committed to the faith of the Reformation.

The Puritans adopted covenant theology and believed upholding God’s law in society was a means of procuring God’s grace.

While the winds of the Enlightenment, or maybe we should say, “The Endarkenment,” engulfed Europe, Calvinistic Preachers such as Theodore Frelinghuysen (1691-1747), Dutch Reformed Church, Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) of Massachusetts, and itinerant preachers such as George Whitfield and John Wesley preached effective messages on justification by faith and delivered the hearts of Americans from sterile, religious orthodoxy.

The flames of the Great Awakening (1730-1770) burned in the hearts of average Americans and prepared the colonialists for their fight for independence and the theological event of the Declaration of Independence and the formation of the united States Constitution. America’s freedom did not rest on reason, or the power of government, but upon unalienable rights bestowed by the Creator. As history rolled on, Bible believing Christians started churches and sent missionaries all over the world-- hospitals, orphanages, and rescue missions--impacting both the individual and society.

When “Higher Criticism” reached America, liberalism infected the church. But even though Bible believing Christians lost the *Fundamentalist-Liberal Debate* in early nineteen hundreds, the *tenacious* Bible-believing Christians became victors. Having been “kicked out” of mainstream denominations, they were forced to start new churches and new denominations and to enter the academic fields to scrape and fight for what they knew was true. Today, the fastest growing churches in American are Bible-based. Liberal churches are in downward decline in membership. Textual critics, Bible scholars, archaeologists, and scientists are demonstrating and providing material evidence, even in the light of heavy criticism, that the Bible is authentic, accurate, and trustworthy.

The Southern Baptist were not among the denominations that were seriously affected by the Modernist-Fundamentalist Movement partly because the Southern Baptists are “self-contained” in that the denomination is large enough and powerful enough to supply all its own educational materials. The 1925 Statement of Faith reads

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is the record of God’s revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, *without any mixture of error, for its matter* (Quoted by H. Lindsell, 1966, *The Battle for the Bible*, p. 90).

There is no doubt that the Southern Baptists stood firmly on the inspiration and infallibility of Scripture.

However, Higher Criticism did impact some in our ranks to threaten our reliance upon the infallibility of Scripture as can be seen by the following:

Robert Allen, Ph.D., Professor of Religion at the University of Richmond denied the infallibility of Scripture when he wrote, “While some persons may continue to hold that ‘the historic Christian belief in biblical infallibility and inerrancy is the only valid starting point and framework for a theology of revelation, such contentions should be heard with a smile and incorporated in the bylaws of the Flat Earth Society” (Quoted by H. Lindsell, 1996, p. 92).

Howard Colson, editorial secretary of the Sunday School Board published an article in which he wrote, “What is the nature of error of which the Bible message is completely free? We have said that the truth, which constitutes the biblical message is religious or spiritual truth. By a like token, we men now say that the error from which biblical truth is completely free is spiritual error” (Quoted by H. Lindsell, 1996, p. 93).

During the 1970’s and 1980’s, the Southern Baptists waged war over the doctrine of inerrancy, and on June 14th the convention stood by the 1925 statement of faith when it said, “The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God’s revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter.”

In the year 2000, the SBC stated the following:

The Scriptures

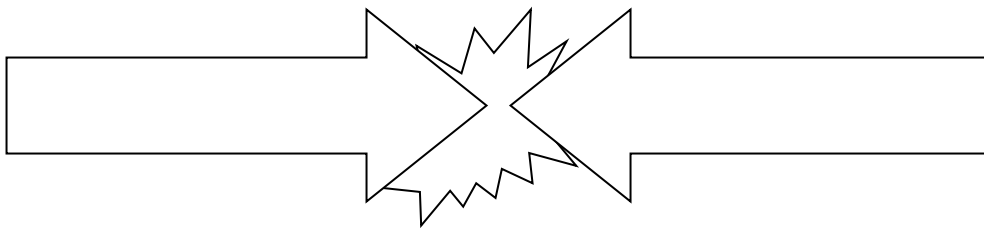
The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God’s revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11;

Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

This war is not over, but in my opinion, infallibility is a hill worth dying on. For example, the only way the Episcopal Church could ordain a New Hampshire homosexual bishop in July, 2003 was to deny the infallibility of Scripture. Once a church removes itself from underneath the authority of Scripture, it leaves itself open to all kinds of corruption.

5.5 A collision of world views

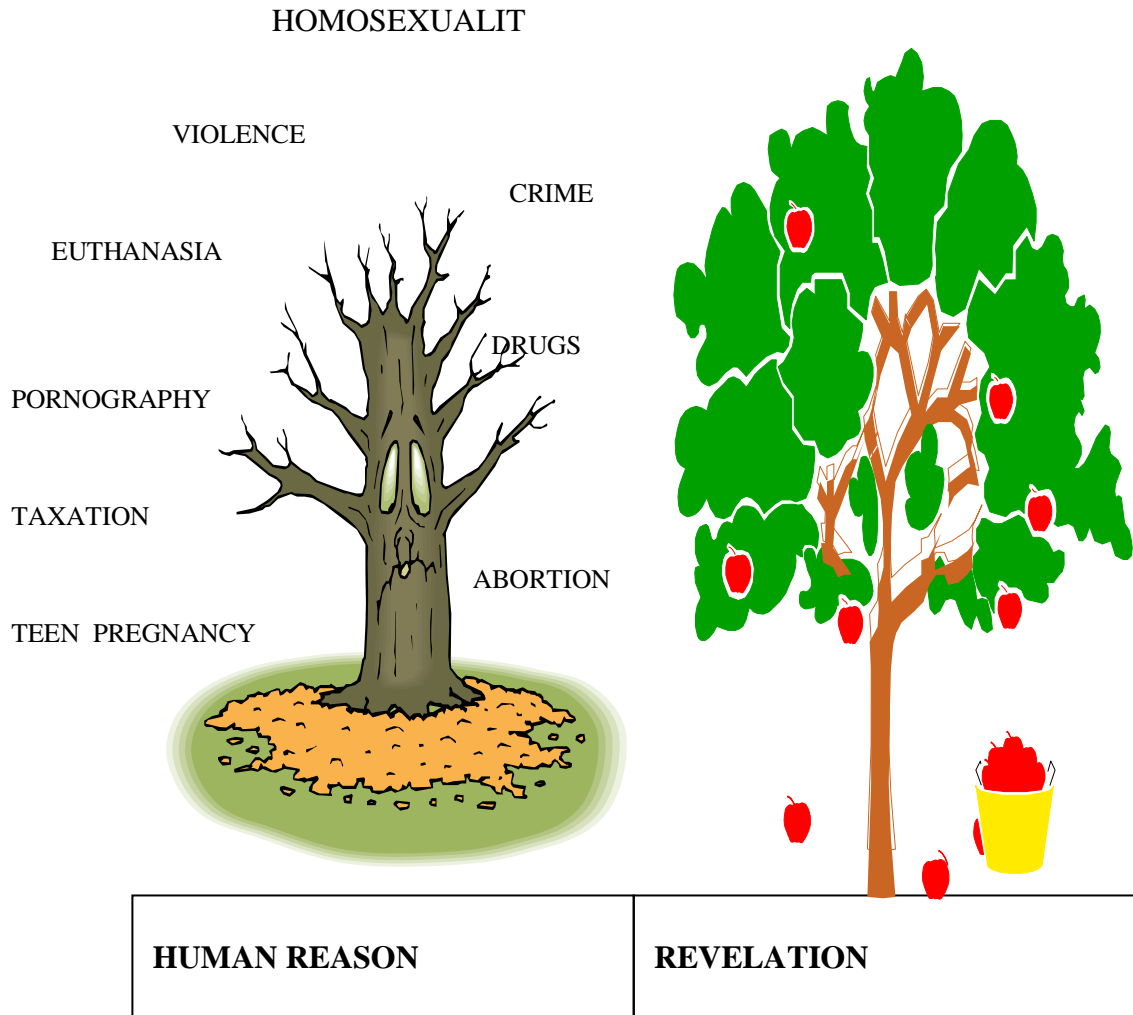


We find ourselves in a cultural war where the Scripture is being replaced by godless French skepticism, German rationalism, and atheistic humanism. Abortion, pornography, and homosexual marriage are simply the fruits. This attack is not random, but is aimed at the foundation of our faith. Reading from bottom up, look at the two world views.

Illustration A

Degenerate Society	Growth and Progress
Evil Fruits	Fruits of the Spirit
Self Actualization	A life of love and holiness
Relativistic values	Moral absolutes
It does not matter how I live	It matters how I live
There is no hope	There is hope
The grave is the end	Christ rose from the dead
I am my own master	Jesus is Lord
HUMAN REASON	GOD'S REVELATION

Illustration B



In Paul's defense (apologetic) before the powerful politician and king, notice Paul's presupposition and how he articulated his world view (Acts 26:1-28). He began with, "It is because of my hope in what God promised our fathers that I am on trial today" (26:6). To Paul, God had spoken (revelation), and as a result of that revelation, he had hope. At the center of his

hope was a resurrected Christ now ascended into heaven as Lord and Master (25:23). His hope brought him into a collision course with the Roman worldview wherein he was jailed. Paul did not apologize for his starting point (revelation). In fact, he challenged men “that they should repent and turn to God” (26:19); i.e., he challenged men to give up their flawed reason, to turn from their dark mind, to give up their proud thoughts, to renounce antagonistic reasoning, and to embrace a new system of thought based on the Word of God.

UPPER STORY: YOUR HIGHEST AUTHORITY

LOWER STORY: THINGS IN SUBMISSION TO AUTHORITY

In the Christian worldview, there is nothing higher or more authoritative than the Word of God.

Scripture

Reason

Furthermore, the biblical worldview will bring Christians into a collision course with proud, arrogant men who exalt something above revelation. The fundamental problem in our culture is that men place something above the Word of God as more authoritative than the Word of God. The liberal exalts reason above God’s Word.

The abortionist puts his agenda above the Scripture.

The scientist puts his theories above the Scripture.

The humanist puts his feelings above the Scripture.

The Catholic Church puts church canons above the Scripture.

Mormons put the Book of Mormon above God's Word.

The inevitable result of exalting something above the authority of Scripture is corruption.

Reason. Feelings. Science. Canons. Man-made laws. Government

Scripture

The Bible is the believer's starting point and final standard for faith and practice. The Bible must be our ultimate and indisputable foundation on which we live, argue, and die.

The Bible was Jesus' starting point when facing the devil (Matthew 4:7).

Christ designated Himself as "the truth" (John 14:6).

He called the Word of God "truth" (John 17:17).

He alone is the "Amen" (Revelation 3:14).

He taught with authority (Matthew 7:29).

Jesus' words stand in judgment over men (John 12:48-50).

Jesus explained that to hear Him was to hear God (Luke 10:10-16).

Jesus declared it to be a blessing to hear the Word of God (Luke 11:28).

The problem is not a lack of factual evidence, but a hard heart (Luke 16:31).

God's Word is clear and authoritative, beyond reasonable doubt (Luke 16:31).

Jesus rebuked men for not believing God's Word (Luke 24:24-27).

The final standard by which all will be tried is the apostolic word (I John 4:2-3).

Every thought must be taken captive to the Word of God (2 Corinthians 10:4-5).

To reject God's Word is to invite ruin and destruction (Matthew 7:26-27).

The Christian, therefore, must challenge men to repent of their arrogance, pride, reason, and disdain of Scripture and challenge them to surrender, yield, and submit to the clear, authoritative Word of God. What is the starting and finishing point for the Christian must be the starting and finishing point of the non-Christian.

In conclusion, let us review the premise upon which the evangelical community approaches the study of Scripture by using a simple syllogism:

Major Premise: God is true (Romans 3:4)

Minor Premise: God breathed the Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:16)

Conclusion: The Scriptures are true (John 17:17).

Furthermore, saith not!

6 RECOGNIZING THE CANON

Men of all ages have asked the question, "Is there a God and has He spoken to men?"

If God has spoken, it would be comforting to know that men revered His Revelation enough to preserve it for the next generation. But, with so many voices claiming to have divine light, how can we recognize what is of God and what is of man? These questions and more have been asked and answered by men of antiquity. The result is the Holy Bible, the Canon of Sacred Literature.

6.1 Meaning of the Word Canon

The word “canon” (kanon) is derived from the Hebrew word *kaneh* (*qaneh*), meaning a “measuring rod” or “a rule” or “measuring tool.” A *kaneh* was a bar or tool used to mark distances or a tool used as a straight edge. The term is used five times in the NT and can be translated “rule” (2 Corinthians 10:13-16; Galatians 6:16, Philippians 3:16). Metaphorically, the word *canon* refers to any standard or test for ethics, religion, music, rhetoric, or logic. In textual criticism, the term *canon* refers to the test or standard for admittance into the body of Sacred Literature we know as the Bible. Bishop Athanasius (296-373 AD) first used the term *canon* in a letter circulated around 367 AD called *The Decrees of the Synod of Nicea*, number 18 (Kaiser, 2001, p. 30).

6.2 The Need for a Canon

We must distinguish between what is human and what is divine. If God has spoken, it makes sense that this message be recognized and preserved for posterity. Furthermore, with so many great literature works, and with so many not so great works claiming to be light, it is necessary to distinguish between what is human and what is divine.

Both the OT and the NT have their separate canonical history. Generally speaking, the early church recognized the NT letters as canonical between 100 and 400 AD. During this same period of history, the pseudepigraphical writings were culled from canonical list by the early church. Today, the NT Canon is universally accepted among Christian scholars.

Because of the age, and especially the creation story, the OT has come under severe criticism and its authenticity challenged, we will use this study to address the canonicity of the Old Testament.

6.3 The OT Canon

6.3.1 The Formation of the Canon

A council did not determine what books were canonical. The books of the OT were recognized by the authors as inspired while being spoken/written and were treated as such by the first generation of readers. It simply is not true that the OT is simply a collection of the earliest writing of Jewish literature and that the OT canon resulted from surviving Jewish works. We know that Abraham came from Ur of Chaldea, an advanced civilization. At Ebla, archaeologists

found over 5,000 clay tablets containing business contracts, deeds, and transactions. We know that the Egyptians were an advanced civilization that developed an alphabet and inscribed hieroglyphics on the tombs and monuments.

We know that Moses was literate in all the knowledge of Egypt (Exodus 17:14: 24:4; Number 33:2; Deuteronomy 31:9, 24). Furthermore, we know that Joshua, Samuel, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others possessed literate competency and that their writings appear to have been recognized as inspired from their inception by the readers. To assume that the only literature ever written and collected by Jewish people was Sacred Literature is a false assumption. Fifteen non-canonical books are mentioned in the OT ²

We know that by Roman times, an abundance of books were collected and preserved in Roman libraries. By 300 AD an abundance of uninspired, spurious literature appeared. Roman Emperor Diocletian ordered all the sacred books of Christians burned in 302 AD, it became necessary for the church to know what books bore the mark of inspiration, to identify and preserve them for generations to come. And, this they did. During the reign of Constantine, the first “Christian Emperor,” Constantine ordered fifty copies of the Scriptures to be prepared and dispersed for use in the church in Constantinople. At this time the question arose, “What writings are Sacred Scriptures?”

6.3.2 The Hebrew Bible

First, we need to understand how the OT books were organized.

The OT Hebrew Bible contained 24 books, or 22 books depending on how they were combined, which Jewish people call the “Tanach.” The Tanach has the same 39 books of the OT we

² See the following: (a) the Book of the Wars of Jehovah, Numbers 21:14; (b) The Book of Jasher, Joshua 10:13; (c) The Book of the Acts of Solomon, 1 Kings 11:41; (d) The History of Nathan the Prophet, 1 Chronicles 29:29; 2 Chronicles 9:29; (e) The History of Gad the Seer, 1 Chronicles 29:29; (f) The Prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, 2 Chronicles 9:29; (g) The Visions of Iddo the Seer, 2 Chronicles 9:29; (h) The History of Iddo the Seer, 2 Chronicles 12:15; (i) The Commentary of the Prophet Iddo, 2 Chronicles 13:22; (j) The History of Shemaiah the Prophet, 2 Chronicles 12:15; (k) The Book of Jehu, son of Hanani, 2 Chronicles 20:34; (l) The History of Hozai, 2 Chronicles 33:19; (m) The Commentary of the Book of the Kings, 2 Chronicles 24:27; (n) The Book of the Kings of Israel, 1 Chronicles 9:1; 2 Chronicles 33:18; and (o) The Book and/or the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah, 1 Kings 14:29, 1 Kings 14:29.

possess; howbeit, the Hebrew Bible is arranged differently and at times were combined differently than the Christian order.

The Torah: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The Jews called these books “Five-fifths of the Law,” and the Greeks called the first five books “the Pentateuch.”

The N’bhiim (Prophets): Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings (The former prophets); and Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel (the Latter Prophets), and the twelve Minor Prophets which were counted as one book. These books contain the God-guided history of a God-selected people. They contain the history of the Jewish people as well as a divine commentary on the history of Israel through the end of the theocratic kingdom (586 BC). The Minor Prophets are called “Minor” not because they are any less inspired than the other books, but because of their brevity in length. Likewise, the “Major” Prophets were called “Major” not because of their greater importance, but because of their greater length.

The **K’tubhim** (Writings): Psalms, Proverbs, and Job; Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther; Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, Chronicles. The Greeks called this section of Tanach the Hagiographa or “Holy Writings”. The poetical section was generally called “the Psalms.” The second section was called the “Megilloth” (Five Rolls) because they each had its own separate roll for use as a reading at one of the Hebrew feasts³. Men who had the prophetic gift but did not have a prophetic office wrote Daniel and the other works. Furthermore, it should be noted that the last three books are primarily historical.

Look at Luke 24:44.

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.”

Notice how Jesus divided Sacred Literature into three divisions: Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms. This is the division mentioned above: **The Torah, the N’bhiim, and the K’tubhim.**

³ Hebrew feasts and the Megilloth: Passover (Song of Solomon); Pentecost (Ruth); Feast of Tabernacles (Ecclesiastes); Feast of Purim (Esther); Anniversary of the Destruction of Jerusalem (Lamentations).

Why was the Tanach divided this way? Conservative scholars believe the division can be explained by the status and official position of the writers: (a) The **Torah** comes first because of the status of Moses, the great lawgiver of the OT; (b) The **N’bhiim** is composed of books written by authors who had the prophetic gift and the prophetic office; (c) the **K’thubhim** was written by authors who had the prophetic gift, but not the prophetic office.

Kaiser (2001) says this grouping was recognized as early as 200-180 BC in the Apocrypha writing of Ecclesiasticus also known as the Wisdom of ben Sirach (Sirach 49:8-10, 44-50) which showed the OT organized under three groups: the Law, the Prophets, and “the others that followed.”

6.3.3 False Assumptions About Canonicity

False conclusions about canonicity developed over time, and some readers may possess a false assumption about what is considered a canonical test for acceptance into the canon. Some have incorrectly assumed that the test of canonicity is age, or the survival of certain texts, or books written in the Hebrew language, or literature that expresses conformity to the Torah, or that only books with a religious element were selected into the Canon. The problem with these theories is that other books written in Hebrew with a religious bent are mentioned in the OT, but only the inspired books found their way into the Sacred Canon. The test for canonicity is not age or literature containing Hebrew, but authentic revelatory, inspired text.

6.3.4 The Tests for Canonicity

In order for a book to be considered canonical, four tests were applied by the stewards of the Scripture.

Divine authorship: Is the work inspired? Does the work claim to be inspired and was it given by God through His Spirit, or was it germane to the mind of man?

Human authorship: Was the work written, edited, or endorsed by a man of God, a prophet of God, or someone who had a religious authority?

Genuineness: Is the work genuine; i.e., does it bear the character of the age in which it claimed to be written? Does the work, words, events, places, and cultural inferences fit the time in which the work was written?

Authenticity: Is it true? Are the facts contained in the work true? Is the work a record of actual facts?

6.3.5 The Formation of the Canon

6.3.5.1 The Testimony of Josephus

It was after the Babylonian Exile (586 BC) that Jewish people realized that their crown jewel was not their temple, Jerusalem, nor even the Holy Land, but the Sacred Scriptures. The survivors of the exile saw the words of their prophets fulfilled before their very eyes and the nation, and a revival broke out to identify and preserve their Special Treasure. Ancient tradition attributes Ezra and his band of scribes known as “the Great Synagogue” as the ones responsible for identifying, forming, and preserving the OT Canon (Ezra 7:6). After the Return (536 BC), the Jews arrived in a barren land ravaged by war. They returned for the purpose of honoring and preserving the Sacred Trust endowed to them by the Holy Spirit. Since Malachi was the last book written (425 BC), it is generally accepted the Canon was fully identified and completed by 400 BC. Josephus, the great Jewish historian (100 AD), mentioned 22 books in the Canon that they were identified as such during the reign of Artaxerxes I (465-424 BC)

We have . . . 22 books, which contain the record of all time; which are justly believed to be divine. And of these, five are the books of Moses, which contain the laws and the traditions from the origin of mankind till his (Moses) death. This interval of time is a little short of 3000 years. But as to the time from the death of Moses till the reign of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, who reigned after Xerxes, the prophets who were after Moses wrote down what was done in their time in 13 books. The remaining 4 books contain hymns to God and precepts for the conduct of human life (Josephus, *Against Apion*, I, 8).

Josephus went on to say that as time passed, “no one has been so bold as either to add anything to them, to take anything from them, or to make any change in them; but it becomes natural to all Jews, immediately and from their very birth, to esteem those books to contain divine doctrines, and to persist in them and, if occasion be, willingly to die for them.” (Josephus, *Against Apion*, I, 8).

6.3.5.2 The LXX

We also know the Septuagint Version (LXX), a Greek translation of the OT Scriptures from Hebrew into the Greek language, began somewhere around 280-250 BC and was completed about 150 BC. Because all 22 books are contained in the LXX version, we can assume the Canon was recognized and completed as Josephus indicated around 424 BC.

6.3.5.3 Editing and Additions

We also can note that certain sections of the OT have been edited for clarification and that there has been an expansion of the original text:

Deuteronomy 34 speaks about the death and burial of Moses.

Numbers 12:3 mentions the humility of Moses, which seems unlikely to have come from Moses himself.

Proverbs 25:1 speaks of proverbs added by the scribes of King Hezekiah.

Proverbs 30:1 is attributed to the “saying of Agur.”

Proverbs 31:1 mentions King Lemuel.

Proverbs 24:23-24 are declared “saying of the wise.”

Jeremiah 36:32 mentions a second book written by Jeremiah after his first work was destroyed.

Editors seeking to clarify certain texts can explain some of these expansions. It appears obvious that Joshua added an explanation about Moses’ death, for the Scripture says he wrote in the Law of God (Joshua 24:26). Hezekiah, having found the Book of the Law of God, appears to have ordered the sacred text to be collected and compiled. Possibly, some editing might have occurred during this period (Proverbs 25:1). Further, after the captivity (586 BC), Ezra the scribe leads an educational movement and during this period, Nehemiah and Ezra appear to work together in collecting and preserving the Word of God (Ezra 7:10).

6.3.6 The Apocrypha

A question arises, what about the Apocrypha and the Catholic Bible?

The Apocrypha contains the following books: 1 Edras, 2 Edras, Tobit, Judith, The Rest of Esther, The Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Baruch with the Epistle of Jeremiah, The Song of the Three Children, The History of Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, The Prayer of Manasses, 1 Maccabees, and 2 Maccabees.

The word “Apocrypha” means “concealed” or “hidden.” It received its name because of its esoteric nature. The books were written in code for members of a Jewish sect and were not meant to be understood by those outside the sect; Thus, it had the mysterious character associated with a cult. The Apocrypha contains 14 books that were written during the Intertestament Period (400 BC- 40 BC). Though these books have been useful for understanding the nature of this cult and most of the history during the Silent Years, the Apocrypha has been rejected from enlistment into the Sacred Canon for the following reasons (Miller, p. 117, 118):

No Apocrypha book ever made its way into the Jewish Canon. Furthermore, all of the OT books were each provided with a Targum,⁴ a translation or paraphrase of an OT Scripture into Aramaic. But, this same courtesy is not generally extended to the Apocrypha writings.

No Apocrypha book claims to be inspired. In fact, inspiration is disclaimed by some of them.

Augustine, the great Catholic theologian, made a powerful distinction between the *proto-canonical* works as we understand the OT canon and the *deuter-canonical* or *controverted apocryphal books*. He limited the OT canonical books to the 22 books contained in the Tanach.

⁴ The word *Targum* comes from the Aramaic term, *targem* meaning “to interpret, explain, or translate.” The Aramaic word *targem* is translated as “interpreted” (~*G'ir>tum.W*) in Ezra 4:7. A *methurgam* was a translator who was also called a *targoman*, a word, which has been modernized into “dragoman” (Miller, 1960, p. 216).

The Apocrypha was not recognized as part of the Canon until the Council of Trent in 1546 AD where 53 prelates, without the expertise of a single German scholar, inducted the Apocrypha into the Catholic Canon by an emotional decision in reaction to the Protestant Reformation. In other words, the Apocrypha was not a scholarly decision, but an emotional reaction associated with the Counter Reformation.

The Apocrypha is neither quoted nor endorsed by Christ.

The Apocrypha is neither quoted nor endorsed by the Apostles.

The statement by Josephus included the canonical 22 books and excluded the 14 Apocryphal writings.

Philo, the great Jewish philosopher from Alexandria (20 BC – 50 AD), wrote prolifically and quoted from the OT. But, he never quoted from the Apocrypha.

None of the 14 Apocrypha books found its way into any canonical lists before 400 AD.

Jerome (4th century) listed the 14 books separate from the OT Canon and emphatically rejected their authority.

None of the authors of the Apocrypha say, “Thus saith the Lord,” or speaks a revelatory message from Israel’s God.

These books contain many historical, geographical, and chronological errors and distortions of the OT narratives; i.e., they contradict themselves, OT history, and secular history.

The Apocrypha sanctions suicide, assassinations, and general terrorism in contradiction to OT ethical standards for Jewish behavior.

The Apocrypha is characterized by deficiencies in literary style and originality. It is stiff and artificial compared to the canonical books.

Many of the stories and miracles are fanciful, legendary, absurd, and silly.

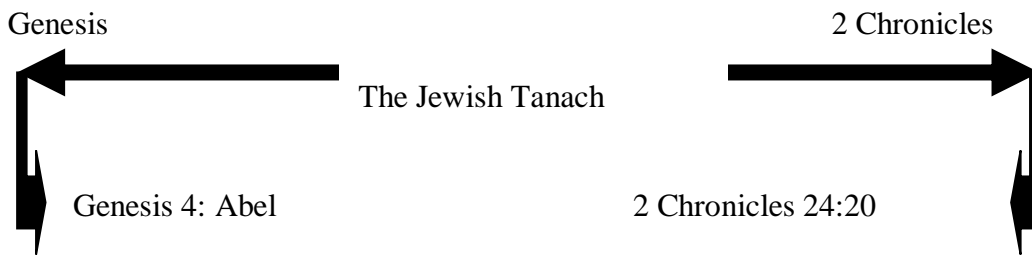
The ethical content does not rise to the level of the canonical books.

The Apocrypha was written between 100 and 200 years after the closing of the OT Canon.

6.3.7 Jesus and the Canon

Finally, the LXX and the OT Canon was endorsed by Jesus in His sweeping statement when He stated,

“From the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against this generation” (Luke 11:51).



The reader should take note--this quote contains a reference to Abel who is mentioned in Genesis 4 and Zechariah who is mentioned in 2 Chronicles 24:30, the last book in the Tanach. Squarely, Jesus placed His stamp of approval on the genuiness and authenticity of the OT Jewish Canon by this statement.

6.3.8 Jesus and the OT Canon

The Lord Jesus was a Man sent from God (John 3:2). His works credentialed Him as a prophet (John 2:18, 5:36; 6:30). His words are divine and authoritative (John 12:44-60). In Him rested the Spirit of wisdom and knowledge. In Him was the fullness of God (Colossians 3:9, 10). He knew the OT Scripture. He used the LXX version of the Jewish Tanach. He loved it, believed it, quoted it, preached it, and called it the Truth, God’s Truth, and God’s Word (Luke 4:4-12; 16-21; John 17:17). He was silent as to any error, contradiction, fabrication, corruption, inaccuracy, myth, legend, human contamination, or forgery. If there is an error in the OT and the Lord Jesus did not know about it, then He is not omniscient. If He is not omniscient, He is not God. If He is not God, then He is not the Savior. If He is not the Savior, we are lost in our sins. If there is an

error in the OT and Jesus knew about it, but did not tell us, then He deceived us. If He deceived us, He is an impostor. If He was in imposter, He was dishonest. If He was dishonest, he was a sinner. If He was a sinner, then He is not the Savior. If he is not the Savior, we are lost in our sins (Miller, 1960, p. 51).

In conclusion, the Bible is undoubtedly the most studied, criticized book in the world. It has measured up to the rigorous standards of church scholarship as well as endured the criticism of skeptics. You may not have absolute certainty that the Holy Scriptures are divinely inspired, but you can have certainty beyond reasonable doubt the Bible you have in your hand bears the marks of revelation and has been recognized as such by the best scholars, both Jewish and Christian, throughout the ages. When you sit down with your Bible tonight, thank God for the Canon, and understand that you have in your hand the very Word of God.

6.4 The NT Canon

6.4.1 Relationship of the Church to the Canon

It is important to understand the distinction between God’s agency in inspiration and human agency in determining the canon. The Church does not establish the canon, rather, the canon establishes the Church. The authority for the canon is not in the Church, the authority for the Church is in the canon. Norman Geisler, 1999, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, Baker Book House, sees it this way

INCORRECT VIEW	BIBLICAL VIEW
Church determines the canon	Church discovered the canon
Church is the mother of the canon	Church is a child of the canon
Church is magistrate of the canon	Church is minister to the canon

Church is regulator of the canon	Church is the recognizer of the canon
Church is judge of the canon	Church is witness of the canon
Church is master of the canon	Church is servant of the canon

6.5 Brief History of Canonicity

6.5.1.1 The First Century

The NT Canon contains 27 letters written between 45-90 AD. The first century was a period of revelation and it is evident the NT writers spoke and wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The NT writers were eyewitnesses of the resurrection and their works carry a special authority. Paul recognized the authority of Luke (1 Timothy 5:18) and Peter recognized the writing of Paul as inspired (2 Peter 3:15-16). As early as 96 AD Clement of Rome quotes the Lord Jesus Christ from Matthew and Luke, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, 1 Timothy, Titus, Hebrews, and 1 John.

6.5.1.2 The Second Century

The second century was a time of recognition of the NT Canon. Various churches under the leadership of the Church fathers keep various lists of NT works and began quoting them for their authority in their letters. Miller (1960) catalogues the Church fathers and their quotes as follows:

Polycarp (69-155) quotes from Matthew, Luke, John, Acts, ten of Paul's epistles, with 11 references to I John.

Justin Martyre (100-165) quotes from Matthew 43 times, Luke 19 times, John, Mark, Acts, six of Paul's epistles, I John and Revelation.

Irenaeus (125-192?) wrote his great work, “Against Heresies”, and has over 1800 quotations from the NT including the four Gospels, Acts, thirteen of Paul’s epistles, 1 Peter, 1 John, and Revelation.

Clement of Alexandria (150-217)- the scholar, bishop, and teacher- acknowledges the four Gospels, Acts, Pauline Epistles, Hebrews, James, Jude, and Revelation. He quotes 1 Peter more than 20 times and I John 12 times. He calls the NT books “the divine Scriptures” and “the Holy Books.”

Tertullian (150-220), the great North African teacher quotes over 1800 passages from the NT, which includes 7200 references with 3800 from the Gospels. He uses the phrase “the New Testament” and references 22 to 23 books of the NT.

Various versions were in use by the end of the second century. The Old Latin version, made about 150 AD for North Africa and used by Tertullian, contained 26 books, but omitted 2 Peter and questioned James. The Syriac version, used for churches in Syria, contained 22 books and questioned 2 Peter, 2 & 3 John, Jude, and Revelation. Tatian’s Diatessaron, or “Harmony of the Gospels, demonstrates the acceptance of all four Gospels.

6.5.1.3 The Third Century

The Third century, sometimes called “The Age of Origen” (185-254), was the age of formal recognition of the NT canon. Origen was a great scholar and traveled extensively for the purpose of acquainting himself with biblical literature. He divided the works of the NT into three categories:

Undisputed books: the four Gospels, Acts, 13 of Paul’s epistles, 1 Peter,

1 John, and Revelation. Twenty-one in all.

Disputed books: Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2 & 3 John, and Jude.

Rejected books: certain NT period Apocrypha books.

During this same period, Dionysius the Great of Alexandria (190-265), a lawyer and writer, acknowledge all the NT books except 2 Peter and Jude. Cyprian (200-258), bishop of Carthage, Africa, quotes from all the books of the NT but shows no signs of knowing Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2 or 3 John, or Jude.

6.5.1.4 The Fourth Century

This period began with the horrible persecution by Roman Emperor Diocletian (285-305) who tore down churches, persecuted the Christians, and hunted down church leaders. Eusebius (270-340) lists most of the NT books but doubted James, 2 Peter, 2 & 3 John, and Jude. Cyril of Jerusalem (315-386) enumerated all 27 books and called them “the well of salvation.” Chrysostom (347-407), bishop of Constantinople lists 22 books but omitted 2 Peter, 3 John, Jude, and Revelation. Jerome (340-420) author of the Latin Vulgate (382?) acknowledge all 27 books in the NT as inspired. Augustine (354-430), Bishop of Hippo in North Africa, held to the inspiration of our present 27 books.

The growth and recognition of the NT Canon was a slow, non-compulsory development that took place over four centuries. Individual churches in the various sections of the Roman Empire had different lists of undisputed and disputed NT books and apocrypha writings.

By the end of the 4th century, the entire church unanimously recognized our 27 books as inspired. No synod or council or church decree engaged its formation. For the next one thousand years the Church accepted the 27 NT books without disputation until the Catholic Counter Reformation and the Council of Trent (1546), which added the OT Apocrypha to its body of literature. However, there was no dispute between Catholics or Protestants concerning the NT books or what should be considered canonical.

Driving the formation of the NT canon were the great heretics and heretical teachings that faced the church. Sectarians sought to change doctrine and the text to fit their own heresies. This powerful influence caused church leaders to take note of their authority and to secure the texts upon which doctrine was based. When Constantine came to power and made Christianity the state religion, he ordered 50 copies of the Holy Scriptures to be made and used in the churches in Constantinople, the capital of the empire. This forced the church to identify and unite and edit their lists of inspired works.

6.5.2 Four Classes of NT Books

Just as the OT had its classes of books, four classes of books appear regarding the NT Canon.

Homologoumena: These twenty NT books were generally undisputed and were confessed by all the churches as inspired works: the four Gospel, Acts, 13 Pauline Epistles (Romans-Philemon), 1 Peter, and 1 John.

Antilegoumena: These seven books were disputed because of concerns over authorship or doctrine or importance to the Church: Hebrews because of authorship, James because of doctrine, 2nd & 3rd John because of importance, Jude because of its reference to Enoch, and Revelation because of authorship, style, and theology.

Apocrypha Writings: these books, like the Epistle of Barnabas, contain some true and some spurious information about the life and times of Christ. These works had an immediate fascination, but upon further scrutiny were eventually rejected as a whole because, as a whole, they lacked the integrity and lofty virtue of NT works.

Pseudepigrapha: The fourth class of books are books like “The Gospel of Andrew” and the “Acts of Philip” that claimed or pretended to be written by a biblical personality but were never adopted as canonical by the church fathers. These works are generally considered fictitious with fanciful legends and questionable history. Their silly, childish stories expose their character as beneath the dignity of inspired literature.

6.5.3 NT Tests of Canonicity

Six tests of canonicity were applied to the volume of religious literature controlled by the church:

Apostolicity: Did the work come from an authoritative, eye-witness authority in the first century? Did miracles and acts of God accompany the writer (2 Corinthians 12:12)? Fundamentally, the writer had to have some kind of attestation from God so the Church could recognize authority. This is Paul’s argument in Galatians chapter one: He was a man sent from God. Further, a prophet had to be 100% accurate in his predictions (Deuteronomy 18:22). Questions of authorship arose, which clue us in to why Hebrews was a disputed book. No one doubted its wealth and doctrine. But because the authorship was uncertain, Hebrews was a disputed book.

Universality: Did the church fathers read and preach from a book in the empire as a whole? The church fathers were not concerned about separate readings of particular apocrypha works, but whether the majority of the churches read all the books of the NT. There is something about unanimity that affirms truth.

Recognition: Were the books used and recognized by bishops in the empire? For example, though I Peter was disputed by Eusebius, he finally accepted the work because other bishops

used and respected the letter as genuine. Likewise, some apocrypha works fell into repute because the majority of bishops and their rebuttals prevailed against certain heretical works. Second Peter was disputed because of the difference in style between 1 Peter and 2 Peter. Church fathers prevailed in showing the difference could be accounted for by two factors: (a) a time lapse between the two, and (b) the fact that I Peter was written by an amanuensis (5:12).

Faith: The churches had a rule of faith and the church fathers wanted to know, “Does the work support the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ?” “Is a work consistent with the OT and what Jesus taught?” Because heretics attacked the persona and history of Christ or promoted sectarian practices, the question of veracity emerged. While modern Christians ask, “Does the doctrine agree with Scripture?” The church fathers had to ask, “Does the work agree with doctrine?” The church fathers had to wrestle with the questions, “What is true?” and “What is virtuous?”

Edification: One test of canonicity was, “Does the work inspire the saints, build faith, inspire character, promote good deeds?” This was not the primary consideration, but it was a factor in choosing certain books over others.

Inward Testimony: The church fathers wanted to know if the work was from the Spirit. Did the Spirit inspire the work? The fathers wanted personal peace and assurance that a particular work bore the marks of inspiration. The Spirit who inspired His work could also be a witness to His work. The God-given agreement by so many Christians throughout the centuries and their assurance that a particular letter was God-given was a major consideration in the formation of the NT Canon.

In conclusion, Christ and His victory over the grave have infused millions with faith. The eyewitness testimony surrounding the life of Christ, His teachings, and the apostolic witness regarding His resurrection are undoubtedly the greatest truth claim in history.

The gospel arouses hope, grants certainty about life after death, and brings out the best in men.

Without dispute, the NT is the greatest body of literature to ever emerge among men. The church did not create the canon, but it did witness the fact that God has spoken through his Son and it took seriously its duty to collect and preserve that body of literature we know as the New Testament. As you read your Bible, you can have the assurance that the Bible you possess has been more studied, more scrutinized, and more analyzed than any work in history; that the NT has measured up to the most rigorous standards ever applied to any literary work. Because the recognition of the NT Canon was not taken lightly, you can take the NT seriously.

7 THE VALUE OF GOD'S WORD

7.1 The Sevenfold Perfection of God's Word

7.1.1 Psalm 19

	TITLE	CHARACTER	BENEFIT
1	Law	Perfect	Conversion
2	Testimony	Sure or faithful	Wisdom
3	Statutes	Righteous	Joy
4	Commandment	Pure/Clear	Light
5	Fear of the Lord	Clean/pure	Eternal
6	Judgments	True	Warning (10-12)
7	Judgments	Righteous	Reward (10-12)

7.2 A Deeper Look at Psalm 19

7.2.1 1. The Word of God is perfect

Psalm 19:7 The law (*tr;AT*, torah) of the LORD *is* perfect (*hm'yimT.*, *taw-meem*), converting (*tb;yvim*, *shuv* or *shuwb*) the soul: the testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple.

The word “law” is the Hebrew word “Torah” (*tr;ŪAT*), which refers to the first five books of the OT.

The word “perfect” means “whole or complete or wholesome.” The Bible is the complete revelation of God to man. It began with God speaking to Adam and was completed during the apostolic age shortly after the Son of God appeared in history. Nothing more needs to be added. It is a completed, finished work of inspiration.

The word “converting” comes from the Hebrew word *shuwb* (*bWv*), a Hiphil participle, which means “to turn,” “to bring back,” or “to refresh.” It is translated “turn” 185 times. In Genesis 42:5, *shuwb* is translated “restored” in the story of Joseph where Joseph predicted that the chief butler in Pharaoh’s court would be restored to his former position. In Exodus 4:7. Moses’ leprous flesh was turned (*shuwb*) back to normal. In

2 Samuel 14:3 *shuwb* is translated “fetch home again.” David called for Absalom, his estranged son, and brought him home again. In Proverbs 25:13, *shuwb* is translated “refresh” where the text says a good servant refreshes his master. In Ezekiel 14:6 *shuwb* is translated “repent.” When a person repents, he turns from his sin back to God. David is telling us that the Word of God is complete, and the Hiphil verb (causative) tells us that the Bible has the power to convert the soul. A sinner who will read the Word of God can experience the “new birth” (regeneration). A straying Christian who will read the Word of God can be turned back to Christ because the Word of God can transform the heart.

7.2.2 2. The Word of God is Sure

Psalm 19:7b The testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple.

The word “testimony” refers to the Torah, particularly to the Ten Commandments, because the Ten Commandments are a witness to the character of God. The Torah is about God’s law. Because the law is based on the character of God and comes as a direct reflection of the character of God, the law is, therefore, absolute and unchanging.

The word “sure” (*h'n'm'a/n<*, aman) is a Niphal verb implying that the Word of God has been acted upon so that it is made “sure.” The word “sure” means “faithful” or “trustworthy” or “reliable.” The word *aman* is translated “believe” (Genesis 15:6), “verified” (Genesis 42:20), “amen” (Numbers 5:22, under an oath), “nursing father” (Numbers 11:12), and “faithful” (Numbers 12:7). The Bible can be trusted because it is inspired by God and not man-made.

The word “wise” (*~k'X'*, chakam) is the word for *wisdom*. It is translated "cunning" ten times (See 1 Chronicles 22:15 and 2 Chronicles 2:7, 14). The word "subtle" and is used to describe Jonadab's plot to rape Tamar. *Chakam* is translated “wise” 102 times in the OT. The psalmist is saying that the Word of God can make its reader sharp, intelligent, wise, and discerning.

7.2.3 3. The Word of God is Right

Psalm 19:8 The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes

The word “statutes” (*ydeWQPi*, paqad) refers to the legal regulations by God established in Israel. The word “right” (*~yrlv'y*, yashar) is the word “righteousness” or “straight” in Hebrew. It is translated “please” in 2 Chronicles 30:4, “straight” in 2 Chronicles 32:30), “upright” in Job 1:1, and “righteous” in our present text. It means *straight or true*. The analogy before us is that of a plumb line used to construct a wall. The Bible is our plumb line for what is right.

The word “rejoicing” is “samach” (*ble-yxeM.f:m*), a piel participle implying intense joyfulness. It is translated “be glad” 34 times in Scripture. It is used of Jonah's glad heart over the relief he found under the shade of a gourd. In Exodus 4:14, the term is used of Aaron's joy in seeing Moses after a forty year separation. It is translated “be merry” one time in I Kings 4:20. In the wonderful prosperous times of Solomon’s reign, the people were eating and drinking and making merry.

7.2.4 4. The Word of God is Pure

Psalm 19:8b “the commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes.”

The word “commandment” is the Hebrew word *mitzvah* (*tw:c.m*, mitzvah), which refers to a code or law given by God. The word “pure” (*hr'B'*, bar) is the word for *clean or clear*. It is translated “cleanness” in 2 Samuel 22:21 when David talked about clean hands. The idea here is that God’s word is like water that cleanses the eye so a man can see clearly. So often people say, “Well, the Bible is just too hard to understand.” This is not true because the Bible is clear on what it says and what it means. If there is a cloud surrounding the Bible, it is in the heart of man. The word “enlightening” (*tr:yaim*, ore) means to light up as in when God lit up the universe on the day He set the lights in the sky (Psalm 97:4). It is translated “clear” in Amos 8:19 where Amos speaks of a “clear day.” It is translated “shine,” “break of day” (2 Samuel 2:32), “kindle,” and “set on fire.” All these words refer to the giving of light so man can see clearly. The Bible is like water in that it cleanses the eyes. It is like a lamp in that it gives light so the eye can see.

7.2.5 5. The Word of God is Clean

Psalm 19:9 The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring for ever:

The word “fear of the Lord” (*hw"hy> ta:r>yl*, yarat Yavah) is another title for God’s Word. Fear is an effect of reading God’s Word. A man should be afraid to disobey His commandments. The word “clean” (*hr'Ahj*, tawhowr) means pure and unpolluted. It is translated “clean,” “pure,” and “fair.” It is pure because it is God’s Word is inspired. Though His Word came through sinful men, He superintended its inscription in such a way as to protect its purity. Because it is pure, it has a cleansing effect on those who read it. David could say, “Create in me a clean heart” (Psalm 51:10). A man can be clean by taking the soap of God’s Word and applying it to his heart (Psalm 119:9-11).

Further, God’s Word “endures forever.” Because the Torah is a reflection of God’s character and because God’s character is unchanging and immutable, God’s Word is permanent. Because it “endures for ever” it is absolute. Because it is absolute, it perpetuates moral absolutes and cleanses men of the moral relativism that infects this age.

7.2.6 6. The Word of God is True

Psalm 19:9 The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the LORD *are true and righteous* altogether.

The Bible is called “the judgments of the LORD.” The Hebrew word for “judgments” is *misphat* (*hw"ihy>-yjeP.v.mi()*). The Bible is called the *Misphat of the Lord* because the Bible is a record of God’s judicial decisions on what is right and what is wrong. Like a court recorder keeps a record of the judge’s decisions in the court record, the Spirit created the court record of God’s decisions. The word “true” (*tm,a/, 'emeth*) refers to something that is firm or faithful. In this case, “true” refers to the faithfulness of God’s Word. In other words, when the Bible talks about believers going to heaven and unbelievers going to hell, you can count on God’s Word; i.e., you can take it to the bank and cash in on it. You can rely on it because it is faithful.

7.2.7 7. The Word of God is Righteous

Psalm 19:9 The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the LORD *are true and righteous* altogether.

The Hebrew word for “righteous” is *tsadaq* (*qd:c*) and it is different than the word “right” in the previous verse. *Tsadaq* means “just;” that is, it is balanced. Because it is balanced it can meet the needs of every person. No matter what you need, the Bible addresses your need. If you need hope, encouragement, comfort, strength, wisdom, or discernment, the Bible can minister to you.

7.2.8 The Word of God is Valuable

Psalm 19:10-12 More to be desired *are they* than gold, yea, than much fine gold: **sweeter** also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is thy servant warned: *and* in keeping of them *there is* great reward. Who can understand *his* errors? Cleanse thou me from secret *faults*.

Having given a sevenfold description of God’s Word, the psalmist now estimates its value. It is more to be desired than gold. Throughout history all cultures have esteemed this precious metal as a commodity, as a mineral, and precious object. Terms like “Gold fever,” “Gold rush,” “Good as gold,” “Golden anniversary,” “The golden years,” and “Go for the gold,” clue us in to the historical lust men have for gold. It has been a symbol of power, wealth and success. It has provoked greed and lust. It has been hoarded and unspent, and it has been spent and dispersed as

a man's greatest expression of love. Over gold, brides have been won, and wars have been fought. Man's love for gold and relentless pursuit of this precious metal is well founded in history.

On January 24, 1848, John Sutter smashed a rock that did not break and upon further investigation he discovered the rock was soft and yellow. It was Gold! With this chance discovery of a few, small gold nuggets on the American River, everything changed in California. The news spread like wild fire. Men, women, and youth forsook their families and homes and comforts and headed to California. They came from the east coast, Alaska, China, Chili, Mexico, Spain, and Britain in search of gold. They traveled in ships, covered wagons, on horseback, and on foot. They worked 18 hours a day enduring the cold rainy months and the long, hot dry summers. Why? Because of unquenchable lust for gold.

What is your estimation of this Book?

Do you view this Book as gold? Silver? Copper? Iron? Rock? Clay? Or common dirt? Are you so infected with gold fever that you've got to mine ore from God's Word every single day, or are you so sane that you can go weeks, months, even years without touching this Book? It is sad to say, but most men will labor forty, sixty, even eighty hours a week in there pursuing their gold equivalent, but they won't spend even five minutes a day pursuing true wealth. I hope your Bible shows signs of digging and scratching for golden nuggets of truth.

Not only is the Word more valuable than gold, it delights the soul more than honey excites the taste buds. Some people don't understand this, but in New Mexico, restaurants will serve sopaipillas and honey for dessert. There is nothing like a hot sopaipillas and some mesquite honey for dessert. What s sopaipillas and honey are to Mexicans, the Word of God is to the hungry heart.

Moreover by them is thy servant warned: *and* in keeping of them *there is* great reward. Who can understand *his* errors? cleanse thou me from secret *faults*.

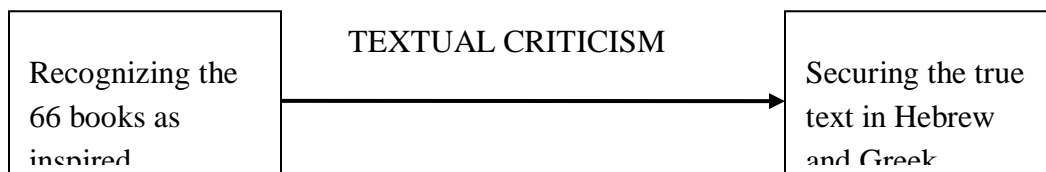
The psalmist informs us of two benefits for studying God's Word. First, the Bible warns (*rh'z>n*, *zahar*) the man of God of impending danger. As I travel America, I notice road signs like "Deer Crossing" or "Falling Rocks." These signs help us to avoid danger. Like a shofar, God's word announces the advancement of enemies. Like warning label on cigarette cartons, God's Word warns of moral dangers. Second, the Bible rewards. The word "reward," (*bq,[e, eqeb*) has the adjective "great" before it, which means "abundance" (*br*) in Hebrew. It is translated by the

phrase “ten thousand,” “abundance,” “chief,” “much” and “multitude.” Not only does keeping God’s Word have an eternal reward, the Word rushes into our lives with thousands of gifts.

The psalmist ends with a question and a prayer. The psalmist realizes that sin creeps and crawls into our minds, heart, and emotions to infect us. In desperation, he cries out to God for cleansing from the secret, hidden, obscure faults that cripple and defeat us. Only by the Word and prayer can any man ever hope to overcome his bad programming.

8 LOOKING AT OT TEXTUAL CRITICISM

8.1 Introduction to Textual Criticism



The great questions that arise are questions like the following: How accurate are our copies? The transmission of the text over thousands of years is certainly a cause for great concern. Who copied these texts? What methods did they use? What safe guards did they have in place to preserve the integrity of the text? Are our copies reliable?

God has, at various times in history, assigned different duties to the people of God. In our day the duty of interpretation and proclamation seems to be the great task to which God has called the church. But, in times past, the task of copying fell upon a handful of scribes. Likewise, as manuscripts (hereafter: MSS) multiplied, aged, and fell into disrepair, the duty to secure the text of the Bible has fallen upon Greek and Hebrew scholars, not only among Christian people, but among Jewish people. The paramount duty of securing the text is called *textual criticism*.

8.1.1 The Definition of Textual criticism

Textual criticism is a science that aims to trace the history of a given biblical text and by comparing and analyzing all MSS in the original language and ancient translations (or versions) to ascertain the precise wording of the original autograph. The word *manuscript* means, “hand written.” And, by modern standards concerned with mathematical accuracy anything hand written appears to be unscientific. Because it requires judgments about the earliest forms of the texts, the analysis must be done in the original languages. This science of textual criticism is often called “lower criticism.” It is a true science and one of the most interesting, eye-straining, mind-bending, detailed, monumental, and important disciplines of all of the sciences.

Understanding the Problem

Having done years of evangelism in the field, skeptics have said to me that the Bible is not reliable because the MSS have been changed, edited, and corrupted over thousands of years of copying. Because we do not have any original autographs of any of the books of the Bible, the question arises, “Can we trust the Bible?” Or, “How can we be sure that the original text has not been corrupted and modified through generations of copying ancient MSS. These are honest, genuine questions and they can be answered through the science of textual criticism.

First, we should understand that the Bible, like Jesus Christ, is both divine and human. Jesus was the eternal Logos made flesh. As God He was morally perfect; as a man he was subject to all the aches and pains of humanity: hunger, thirst, weariness, sweat, and pain.

Illustration One (Jesus Christ)

DIVINE

Jesus is the Eternal Logos (Word) Who was with God and was God.

HUMAN

The Word was made flesh. Jesus was a man with a body that experienced all the needs and limitations of humanity.

Because the Bible is divine, we should expect it to come to mankind without error. Because it has been entrusted to men to be multiplied and copied, we should expect to find evidence of human imperfection in copying process. The Bible has a real, genuine, human history. It was not put into a glass case enclosed by nitrogen to be preserved and untouched by mankind. It was written on vellum that would crack and age. It was put into the hands of fallible men. The question is not whether there are copyist’s errors, but how many and to what extent have they

been committed. It is the job of the textual critic to do the work of a bloodhound and to sniff out these errors and to determine to the best of his ability the best rendering of the original autograph.

Illustration Two (the Word of God):

The Word of God is perfect and eternal.

DIVINE

HUMAN

The Word of God was written on MSS subject to ravages of time and use, and copied by imperfect men in real time and history.

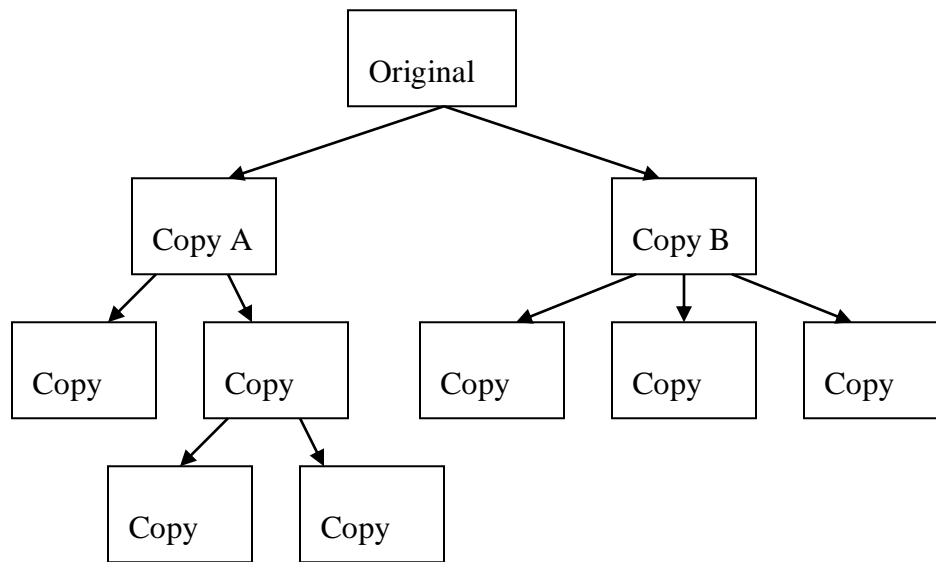
Second, we should understand that the church does not possess any original autographs.

Furthermore, scholars do not have the original MSS of any of the Greek classics. We only have copies of the original text. These copies are called “witnesses” because at best they can only provide a testimony to the precise word in any given text.

The textual critic does not look for analytical proofs regarding the original documents; i.e., mathematical, theoretical proofs regarding the wording of the autograph. Rather, he looks for synthetic proof; i.e., legal evidence that can be used in a court of law to establish factual and material certainty regarding a claim. In other words, the textual critic is to the science of textual criticism what an investigative lawyer is to the field of law.

As a lawyer snoops out the facts to draw legal conclusions, the textual critic investigates the facts to draw legal conclusions about the original MSS. Each manuscript family takes on various

characteristics and by comparing MSS, the textual critic can identify a family of errors and trace them back to the earliest documents in order to ascertain the best representation of the original document.



Third, we should understand the voluminous task of the textual critic. Unlike textual critics of the classical Greeks who only have a few MSS to work with, the biblical textual critic has the opposite problem. With the NT alone, there are over 24,000 MSS copies: 5,488 Greek MSS (1992); 10,000 Latin Vulgates; 8,300 other earlier versions and translations in Syriac, Egyptian, Arabic, Ethiopian, Armenian, Persian, Gothic, and Slavonic to name a few.

There are over 32,000 quotations from the patristic fathers, and all but 11 verses of the NT could be reconstructed from this volume of information. On top of this are thousands of church lectionaries used to educate Christians throughout the centuries about the Scripture. Contrast this with the following: Aristotle (philosopher) only has 5 surviving copies; Caesar (historian), 10; Catullus (a poet), 5; Herodotus (historian), 8; Plato (philosopher), 7; Sophocles (playwright), 100; and Tacitus (historian), 20.

Fourth, we should understand the difficulty of the task. The textual critic must know Hebrew, Greek, Latin and other languages. He must be familiar with different styles of letters in the various stages of each language history, grammatical constructions, kinds and conditions of MSS, the history of those MSS, smudges, glosses (marginal commentary) punctuation marks, abbreviations and contractions, palimpsests documents (where the original text has been erased and a later text superimposed on a MSS), and variants in the copies. Furthermore, he must be able to detect whether a MSS is genuine (true as to its origin and authorship), and authentic (true to the facts presented). A book may be genuine without being authentic, and authentic without being genuine.

While the work of a textual critic is unbelievably detailed and painstaking, there is an apologetic certainty that has come out of the research of textual criticism. Humanity should have the confidence that not only has every word in the Bible been researched, but every letter, comma, question mark, and vowel pointing has been scrutinized, verified, and authenticated. This makes the Bible the most criticized, studied, cataloged, and researched book in the world, bar none!

8.2 OT Textual Criticism

8.2.1 Languages of the OT

Phrases like “This is the account of the heavens and the earth”(Genesis 2:4), “This is the book of the generations of Adam” (Genesis 5:1), and “Now these are the records of the generations of Shem” provide evidence that God’s revelation was preserved in writing from the time of Adam, Noah, Shem, and Abraham.

The question arises, “In what language did God’s Revelation first come to man?”

The Levant was dominated by two groups of languages called *Semitic and non-Semitic languages*. The word *Semitic* is derived from the name *Shem*. About a dozen dialects of these languages which have the same “family” characteristics spread throughout Mesopotamia, Assyria, Babylon, Palestine, Arabia, and Egypt. The “Mother Language” from which all the dialects are derived comes from the language of Shem, which scholars have labeled “Proto-

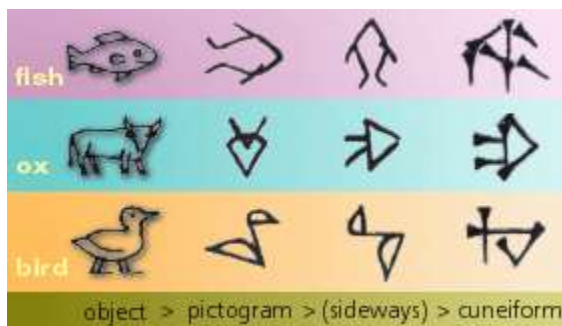


Semitic.” The second group of languages common in the Levant is called *non-Semitic*, which are more a part of the Indo-European family of languages.

One possibility into which God’s Revelation was first inscribed is the oldest written Semitic language, the Babylonian-Assyrian language also known as *cuneiform*. Cuneiform was the written language of the *Sumerians*, also known as the *Akkadians*. The written form was called *cuneiform* because of the *wedge* like inscriptions. The Latin word for “wedge” is *cuneus*. Scribes would take “a portable, hand held communications inscriber” called a *stylus* to chisel one of 560 wedge-like letters into a clay tablet.

The Sumerians used this language from the time of Sargon I (3800 BC) till the 1st century BC. The Assyrians (1500 BC-612 BC), the Hittites (2000 BC-800 BC), the Egyptians, and the Indo-European Medes (700 BC) also used the language. About 320 clay tablets written in a Palestinian cuneiform dialect were discovered at Tel-el-Amarna in 1887 in upper Egypt. One of these tablets contained a frantic appeal from Palestinian governor-kings, including Jerusalem, to Pharaoh complaining about hostile attackers known as the Habiru (Hebrews) who invaded the land around 1380 BC. The cuneiform not only substantiates the conquest of Joshua around 1400 BC, but supports the belief that cuneiform was the official language of Palestine during this period.

Cuneiform: Courtesy of <http://www.upenn.edu/museum/Games/cuneiform.html>



The Code of Hammurabi, written by the king of Babylon, was found inscribed in cuneiform on 300 clay tablets. These tablets were styled between 2123-2025 BC leading us to conclude that Abraham was familiar with cuneiform. If this were the case, it is possible that God’s Revelation was inscribed on clay tablets and that these tablets were passed on from Shem to Abraham, from Abraham to Isaac, and from Isaac to Judah and his brother Joseph, visier in Egypt. Eventually,

these tablets must have been given to Moses who was schooled in all the wisdom of Egypt to edit, translate, and pen the Pentateuch.

A second possibility is that God's Revelation could have first been scribed in Aramaic.

Aramaic, derived from Aram, one of the five sons of Shem, became the dominate language of Syria (Genesis 10:22).

It was the language of Mesopotamia (Padan-Aram) in Laban's time (Genesis 31:47), the spoken language in the native country of Abraham. The Assyrians, the Hebrews, Hezekiah's courtiers (2 Kings 18:26), Jeremiah (Jeremiah 10:11), Daniel (Daniel 2:4-7) and Ezra (Ezra 4:8-6) spoke Aramaic. Aramaic dominated Palestine for about 1000 years.

The language prevailed as the common language of the people in Israel during the time of Christ. Possibly, Abraham received the ancient inscriptions and translated them into Aramaic and passed them down through his family where they ended up in the hands of Moses who then translated these documents into Hebrew.

Aramaic Script (Nabataean Script)

כ	ג	ד	ה	ו	ז
'	b	g	d	h	w
ח	ט	י	כ	ל	מ
z	h	t	y	k	l
נ	ס	ע	פ	צ	ק
m	n	s	'	p	š
ר	ש	ת	י	כ	ל
q	r	š	t		

A third possibility is that God's Revelation was first penned in Hebrew. Hebrew appears to be the native language of Palestine during the time of Abraham (Genesis 14:30; 40:15; 41:12). Hebrew is a Semitic language derived from Eber, the ancestor of Abraham (Genesis 10:21, 22, 25). The word *Hebrew* means "to cross over." It is a reference to Abraham, the man that *came-across* the other side of the Euphrates River. Hebrew was called the Jews' language (2 Kings 18:26, 28; Nehemiah 13:24) and is closely related to Canaanite, Moabite, Ugaritic, and Phoenician inscriptions.

Because Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi wrote in Hebrew, we know that Hebrew dominated communications after the return of the Jews to Palestine in 536 BC. While Aramaic was the language of the people during the time of Christ, Hebrew was the property of the priesthood and the educated in Palestine. John makes a special effort to draw attention to the use of the Hebrew at set times during the life of Christ (John 5:2; 19:13; 17, 20). By 70 AD, Aramaic dominated Palestine. A large part of the Talmud, the post-biblical works of the Rabbis, was written in

Aramaic. By the 6th century, an Aramaic translation/paraphrase of the Tanach came into being which is called *the Targum*.

t v r q c p [s n m l k y j x z w h d g b a

8.2.2 Modern Hebrew Alphabet

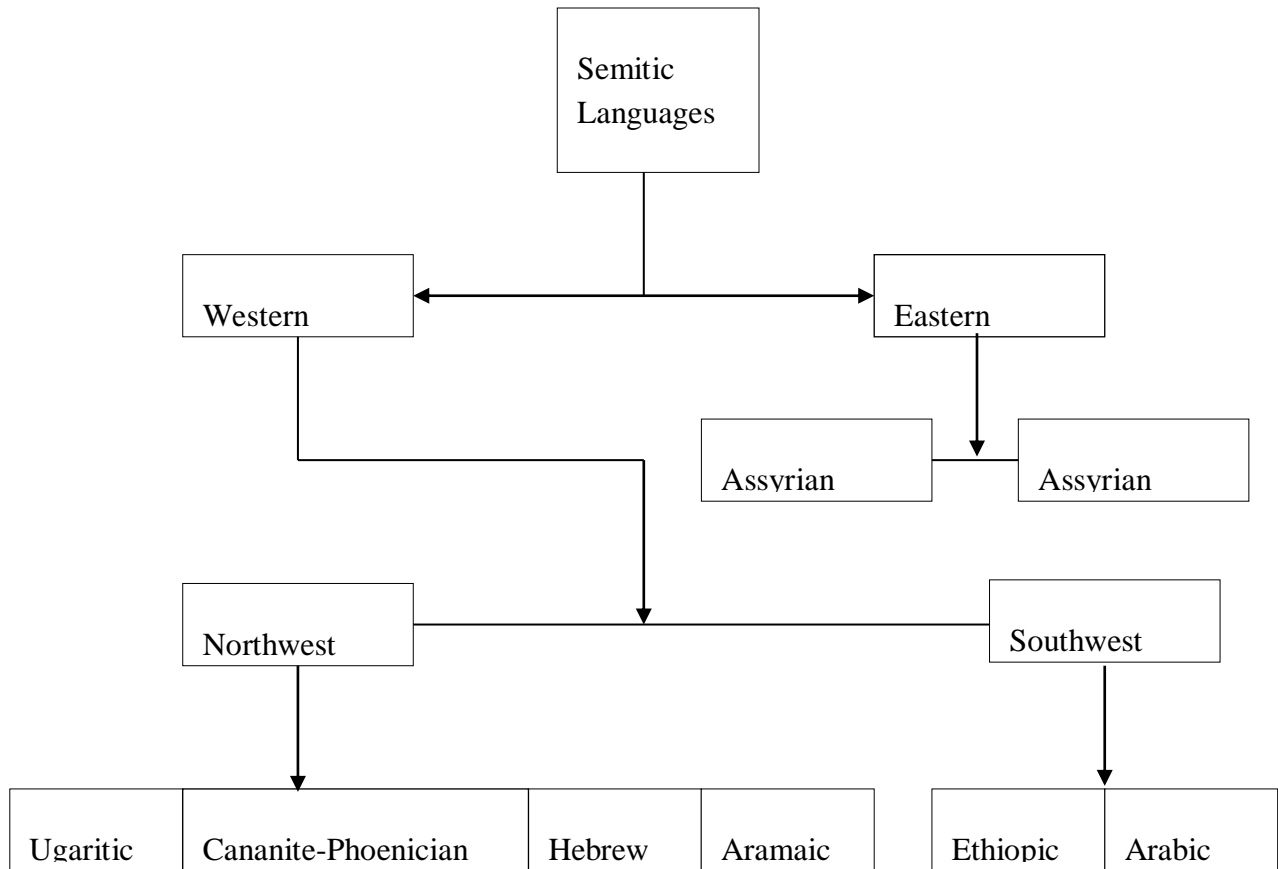
Name	Sound	Character	Final
alef	/glottal stop/	א	
bet	/b or v/	ב	
gimel	/g/	ג	
dalet	/d/	ד	
he	/h/	ה	
vav	/v/	ו	
zayin	/z/	ז	
chet	/kh/ ¹	ח	
tet	/t/	ט	

yod	/y/	י	
kaf	/k or kh/	כ	ך
lamed	/l/	ל	
mem	/m/	מ	ם
nun	/n/	נ	ן
samech	/s/	ס	
ayin	/guttural ² /	ע	
pe	/p or f/	פ	ף
tsadi	/ts/	צ	ץ
kof	/q/	ק	
resh	/r/	ר	
shin	/sh or s/	ש	

tav	/t/	ת	
-----	-----	---	--

Whether God’s Revelation was first penned in cuneiform, or Aramaic, or Hebrew, we do not know for sure. What we do know is that from the time of Moses the OT has come to us in Hebrew.

8.2.3 Origin of ancient Hebrew



8.2.4 Four Phases of the Hebrew language



Biblical Hebrew is also known as Classical Hebrew. We believe the earliest biblical texts were written in Proto-Canaanite or Paleo-Hebrew script as appear on amulets dated to the mid-seventh-century BC. These amulets contain Hebrew consonants with no spaces between the letters (Kaiser, 2001, p. 41).

Rabbinical Hebrew, also known as “Late Hebrew,” was used to write the Mishna⁵, Talmud⁶, and the Midrash⁷ around 200-400 AD.

Medieval Hebrew sprang up during the Middle Ages to dominate the great theological and philosophical works written during this period. The Masoretic Text provides the greatest witness regarding the integrity of the OT. The best witness comes from the hands of Aaron Ben Asher in the tenth century BC.

The Hebrew alphabet contains 22 letters, all of them consonants. Four of these letters can be used as vowels. Because the vowel system is rather complicated, the Massoretes (600-700 AD) developed a vowel pointing system for fixing and preserving the pronunciation of Hebrew as it was spoken during biblical times.

⁵ The Mishna or Oral Law refers to the copious rules and regulations accumulated by scribes and rabbis since Moses that were so prevalent during the NT period.

⁶ The Talmud is the large collection of writings which embodies the religious and civil laws of the Jewish People.

⁷ The Midrash refers to any of the rabbinical commentaries and explanatory notes on the Scriptures, written between 586 BC and 1200 AD.

Genesis 1:1 (Note the vowel pointings)

׀ִ#r,a'(h' taeîw> ~ylm:βV'h; taeî ~yhi_l{a/ ar'äB' tyviPareB.

Modern Hebrew is the development of the modern Hebrew language presently used in Israel today.

8.3 Preservation of the Hebrew Text

8.3.1 Ancient MSS

Four great MSS survive. First, there is the **Leningrad Codex**, which is also called the “Codex Babylonicus.” It was written on vellum with three columns of twenty-one lines to a column and is dated about 916 AD-1008 AD. It is preserved in the Royal Library of Leningrad Russia. It bears the Massoretic vowel pointings and is attributed to the tradition of the Ben Asher family. This manuscript is the basis of our modern Hebrew Bibles. A huge project was initiated to copy and photograph this work a few years ago and the editors of the project said the following:

The plethora of editors and photographers employed to produce the facsimile edition of the Leningrad Codex attests both the importance of the codex and the scale of the project. The Leningrad Codex (L) is the oldest complete Hebrew Bible manuscript extant, and as such it can fairly claim to be the most valuable witness to the text available (David Noel Freedman, general editor; *The Leningrad Codex: A Facsimile Edition*: <http://rosetta.reltech.org/TC/vol03/Freedman-et-al-ed1998rev.html>).

Second is the **Firkowitsch Collection** which is dated to about 1010 AD and is now preserved at the Royal Library of Leningrad.

Third: There is a copy of the Pentateuch on vellum known as **Oriental 4445**, which is believed to have been copied around 820-850 AD. It can be seen in the British Museum in London.

Fourth: There is the copy of Isaiah, which is part of the **Dead Sea Scrolls Collection** (DSS) found in 1947 by a Bedouin shepherd boy named Muhammad in a cave near Qumran. It is believed this text was penned around 125 BC. When the most recent copy of the Isaiah text was compared to the DSS, it was found to be more than ninety-five percent accurate. To the

astonishment of textual critics, the variations, smudges, and slips of the pen did not alter the meaning or interpretation of a single passage.



An Exhibit at the Library of Congress, Washington, DC

(Courtesy of <http://www.ibiblio.org/expo/deadsea.scrolls.exhibit/intro.html>)

8.3.2 Cave #4 Qumran

8.3.3 The Sacred Text



Deuteronomy 4:2 Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish *ought* from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.

Few of us can appreciate the esteem the Hebrews possessed for the Word of God. But, understanding the lofty view they held for Scripture can help us to understand the integrity of the OT. As early as 1400 BC, Moses recognized his writings as inspired and pronounced a warning about adding to them. The Hebrew verb “shall not add” is a Hiphil and refers to any human initiative to change the text. The text, “which I command you,” contains a Piel verb indicating the intensity of YHWH’s command. For this reason, every Jewish Scribe took his job seriously.

Proverbs 30:5-6 Every word of God *is* pure: He *is* a shield unto them that put their trust in Him. Add thou not unto his words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.

Agur, a contributor to the Book of Proverbs, appears to be a man who understood that he was dealing with inspired writing. Agur said the every word from God is pure (refined and smelted). His respect for revelation was so profound that he warned others to not “add” to God’s words (Proverbs 30:5-6). This view seems to have prevailed all during Israel’s history. Yet, we know that as biblical authors were themselves inspired to write sacred texts, these texts found their way into the divine library. For example, Joshua 24:6 says, “And Joshua recorded these things in the Book of the Law of God.” Eventually, a whole body of inspired writings were recognized and preserved as holy by the Jewish people.

Because Hebrew does not have vowels, a word must be learned by its consonants. To preserve the pronunciation of the consonants, the Massoretes added vowel pointings, but ***they dared not change the consonants!*** The consonants were so sacred no scribe would dare change them. Emanuel Tov illustrated how important Scribal precision was when he quoted from the Talmud this word from Rabbi Ishmael:

My son, be careful, because your work is the work of heaven; should you omit {even} one letter, the whole world would be destroyed. (B. Sota 20a; quoted by Kaiser, 2001, p. 43).

8.3.4 Preparation of a MSS

The OT and NT were written on assorted materials such as large and heavy animal skins, papyrus rolls, thin and fine animal skins known as *vellum*, thick course parchment, and paper made from hemp, flax, or linen. Sometimes old lettering was scraped off and the original material recycled into a fresh manuscript. These works are called *palimpsest*.

There are two classes of OT MSS: Synagogue rolls and private copies. The Synagogue rolls were professionally prepared and used for official readings in public services. Private copies were unofficial documents penned by individuals for private use.

The Jews revered the Word of God and established very strict rules for copying MSS (Miller, 1960, p. 185).

Each parchment had to be made from the skins of clean animals.

The parchment could only be prepared by a Jew.

Each column must have no less than 48 and no more than 60 lines.

Each copy had to be lined and if any words were not written on the line, the copy was considered worthless.

The ink used for each MSS had to be black and made from a special recipe.

A new MSS could not be penned unless the Scribe had in front of him an official copy of the text.

No word could be written from memory and each word had to be pronounced before it was written.

Strict rules existed for the size of letters, style of letters, spaces between letters, color of the parchment, and use of the pen.

When the scribe came to the name of God, he had to wipe his pen.

When the scribe came to the name of Jehovah, he had to wash his hands before he penned the sacred name.

The roll had to be scrutinized for errors within 30 days or the MSS was considered worthless. If one mistake was found on a page, the page was condemned and destroyed. If three mistakes were found on a page, the entire document was destroyed because of the carelessness and incompetence of the scribe.

The scribes copied the OT one letter at a time. Every word and every letter was counted to be sure the text was copied correctly. For example, they knew that there were 78,064 Hebrew letters in the Book of Genesis. They knew how many letters from the beginning of a book to the end of the book and which letter was exactly in the middle of the book. If after counting the ends to the middle, the numbers did not match up, the MSS was destroyed by fire.

When a text was worn out, the Hebrews had to dispose of the copy. They so revered the Word of God that they would have a ritual burial ceremony and dispose of the manuscript by placing it in a storage room called a *genizah* (hidden) until enough MSS could be collected to justify a ritual burial.

8.3.5 The Integrity of the Text

Kaiser comments about the integrity of the text:

The state of purity in some of the DSS⁸ is nothing short of spectacular. For instance, in one complete Isaiah scroll, only three words exhibiting a different spelling were found for a book that runs about one hundred pages and sixty-six chapters in our English texts (2001, p. 45).

Why were they so meticulous about copying a MSS? I believe the answer lies in the following texts:

“The Law of Yahweh is perfect” (Psalm 19:7) said the Psalmist. Because the Word of God is perfect, the Jewish scribe believed his MSS had to be perfect.

“You shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish *ought* from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you”

⁸ DSS refers to the Dead Sea Scrolls.

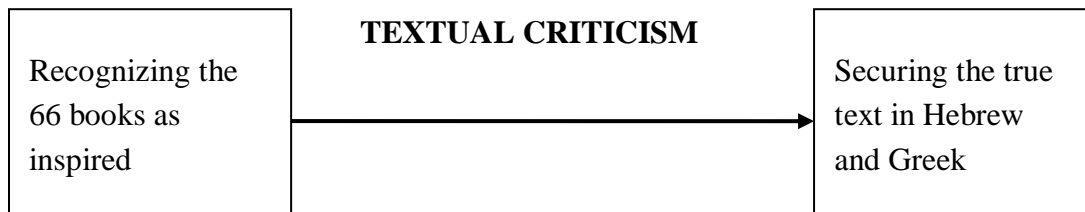
(Deuteronomy 4:2). The Jewish scribe feared the judgment of God for deliberately adding or taking away a consonant from the Word of God.

The poet declared, “The Law of the Lord . . . is more desired than gold, even the finest gold” (Psalm 19:10). To the Jew, possession of the Revelation of God was more valuable than material wealth. Because the Jew esteemed the Word of God so highly, he was compelled to treat the text with ultimate honor and dignity. Copying demanded excellence and the scribe channeled all his mental energy and physical skill into producing a perfect work.

The questioner was asked, “What advantage is there in being a Jew?” (Romans 3:1). All Jews knew Paul’s answer, “A great deal, in every way. First of all, it was to the Jews that the message of God was entrusted (3:2).” Scribes knew their national treasure was not physical wealth, the land, nor even their beloved temple. Into their hands had been committed a sacred trust—the words of the Creator of the universe. And, they knew they had no right to change them (Deuteronomy 4:2).

These rules may seem absurd and silly to you and me. But, the Jews were dead serious about the work of a scribe. And, it is because of their minute, detailed, meticulous work of copying that you and I can have the confidence that the Old Testament is the most accurately translated work of antiquity. We can have the assurance that we have in our hands the endearing and enduring Word of God.

9 LOOKING AT NT TEXTUAL CRITICISM



9.1 Introduction to NT Textual Criticism

Colossians 4:16 And when this letter is read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and you, for your part, read my letter *that is coming* from Laodicea.

9.1.1 Introduction

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is undoubtedly the greatest event in history. There is no greater claim by any religion than death was defeated through Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Because, this claim comes to us via ancient documents that have been copied and recopied. And since our faith is founded on this historical claim, we must ascertain if the records are accurate or if they have been altered and modified to perpetuate a fraud upon humanity. The reliability of the NT, therefore, is of utmost importance.

9.1.2 Evidence

Because theology is built on the historicity of Jesus Christ, and because the historicity as well as theology comes from the NT, we want to know if the NT documents we possess are reliable. But, we must ask, “What counts as evidence?” Because the NT is religious in nature, there are people who regard any biblical claims as *ipso facto* under suspicion and hold the Bible to a higher standard than ordinary secular writings. But, from the viewpoint of an historian, the same

standards that apply to secular works must be the same standards that apply to religious works. Otherwise, we create a double standard.

F.F. Bruce says, “We do not quarrel with those who want more evidence for the New Testament than for other writings . . . because the universal claims which the New Testament makes upon mankind, are so absolute,” and he goes on to say, “because in point of fact there is much more evidence for the New Testament than for other ancient writings of comparable date” (1981, p. 10).

9.1.3 The Definition of Textual criticism

We have said that textual criticism is a science that aims to trace the history of a given biblical text by comparing manuscript with manuscript to determine the most accurate rendering of the original autograph.

While the difficulty for the OT critic is the scarcity of ancient MSS, the difficulty for the NT textual critic is the abundance of MSS. There are over 24,000 MSS which contain thousands of spelling and punctuation errors, about 150,000 different variants. At first glance, this may seem numerous and may stir up a certain amount of doubt regarding the accuracy of the NT record. But, a knowledge of the science and history of NT criticism can relieve fear and restore confidence that we have in our hands the most studied, most accurate translation of any book in the world.

When we discuss variants, we are talking about variants in the Greek text. How do we account for all of them? Do we have any assurance regarding the accuracy of transmission of the Word of God through the centuries? To answer these questions, the student must understand a little about the history of NT textual criticism.

9.1.4 NT Textual History

9.1.4.1 The Age of Proclamation(30-50 AD)

Following the resurrection of Christ from the dead around 30 AD, the apostles were scattered around the world. They went everywhere proclaiming what they had seen and heard. It was inconceivable to them that they should take valuable time to write down their testimony. They wanted to share the good news face to face, eyeball to eyeball, and heart to heart with every man, woman, and child that would listen. The need was to proclaim the good news to every creature

and the long, arduous work of writing was simply a luxury they could not afford. Their work was preaching, not writing.

9.1.4.2 The Age of the Original Autographs (50-100 AD)

However, as Christianity spread around the Mediterranean and churches cropped up all over the empire and as the circle of living witnesses grew smaller and smaller, the apostolic witnesses saw a need to draw up an accurate narrative of the life and times of Jesus Christ. It was during this period, that the need for writing replaced the need for preaching. Between 50 to 60 AD, Mark penned Peter's account of the life of Christ which we know as the **Gospel of Mark**. Bishop Eusebius, the church historian (270-340), quotes John the Elder to inform us that Mark was the amanuensis of Peter and that he sought to accurately record Peter's testimony regarding the life and death of the Savior.

Matthew penned his gospel around 58 AD. In scribing his work on the King, he could have easily drawn from his own memory and the memory of the other living apostles.

Dr. Luke was a physician and a companion of the Apostle Paul who traveled extensively all over the Roman world. He was not an apostle nor an eyewitness of the resurrection. But, there is absolutely no doubt he was an excellent historian. He interviewed Mary the Mother of Jesus, the other apostles, and many surviving witnesses to pen his historical account of the life of Jesus Christ (Luke 1:1-4) around 59 AD. He probably wrote his works while Paul was imprisoned at Caesarea around 64 AD.

Traditionally, it is believed that **John** wrote his account of the Life of Christ around 90 AD. The fact that John is the author of the Gospel of John is confirmed by Eusebius who quotes Clement of Alexandria. However, there is some evidence that John's gospel may have been much earlier, even before 70 AD. Furthermore, we know that Paul was converted around 35 BC, traveled extensively throughout the Roman Empire, and that he had occasion to write his epistles between 50 AD and 67 AD.

Peter and Jude, along with the author of Hebrews, penned their works, **Jude, I & II Peter**, and **Hebrews**, between 63-68 AD.

And, the Book of **Revelation** came into being by the Lord's command sometime between 68 and 90 AD along with **1, II, III John**. It was during the latter half of the first century that all twenty-seven books of the NT were written and the Sacred Canon closed.

9.1.4.3 The Age of Persecution and Protection (100-400 AD)

When a church received a letter from an apostle, the church would copy the letter and distribute it to area churches in order to extend the influence and spread the benefit among God's people. It was inevitable that such handwritten copies would contain greater or lesser differences than the original. It was during this age that most divergences occurred.

Several factors influenced the production and quality of reproductions. First, the church suffered from enemies within as well as enemies without. The church was hungry for the Word of God and because the threat of persecution was common, the church relied on the spoken word. Larger churches had the best MSS, but they were also the first to be persecuted.

Because animus toward the church was common, the best MSS were always at risk of being destroyed. When a church possessed a manuscript, the emphasis was on protection, not copying and accurate transmission. Churchmen compensated for this threat by hiding their texts and doing the work of copying in secret. On the other hand, enemies within threatened the integrity of MSS. Heretics like Marcion, who denied the humanity of Christ, tended to edit the text. For example in Marcion's copy of Luke, chapters 1-3 are missing.

Second, in the beginning, copying was not done by professionals working in a Scriptorium. Remember, Christianity was a poorer class religion made up of slaves and serfs. A professional copy of the Book of Luke, for instance, would cost a year's wage. Because many of the scribes were not professionals and did not follow strict rules to govern their translations, most of the variants occurred during this period.

Third, by the end of the second century, people spoke Latin rather than Greek. Scribes felt free to update the language, smooth out translations, modernize the text, and write marginal notes (glosses) on the MSS. In one sense, the New Testament was a living document adapting to the standards of the age. Much, like modern English, has replaced the King James English and "you" has replaced "thee" and "thou."

The Greek text was updated to adapt to the language changes occurring around the Mediterranean. This adaptation of the NT as a living text made it easy for evangelism and church growth, but it complicated matters in the arena of textual criticism. What was a dream for the early bishops became a nightmare for the later textual critic. While the upgrading of textual readings were helpful to current day teachers, these conversions make it difficult for the modern textual critic to determine the exact rendering of the original autograph.

9.1.4.4 Age of Transmission (400-1516 AD)

During the period of the Middle Ages, many, many copies of the NT were produced on vellum. Three factors influenced the production of the NT. First, Constantine legalized Christianity, thus paving the way for professional translations of the NT.

Second, Latin became the dominant language during this period. Latin translations multiplied all over Western Europe. The Greek text, however, was the main text in Constantinople, and empowered a thousand years of standardized Greek translation in the East. It was during this period that minuscules (lower case letters) replaced the uncials (upper case letters).

And, third, the influence of Islam had a detrimental impact on the church. When Muslims conquered a Christian community, they burned Christian libraries. It was during this period that the great libraries of Alexandria were destroyed and the copyist's center at Antioch was forced to surrender its translation industry. Notwithstanding, hundreds of copies have survived to this day. This period can be called the Age of Transmission because the emphasis was on production of NT copies, not critical review and classification.

Furthermore, toward the end of this age, the invention of the printing press changed everything. Johann Gutenberg's forty-two-line Latin Bible was first published between 1452 and 1456 in Mainz, Germany. Following this great production, over 100 Latin editions appeared, as well as the entire Bible, in German, French, Italian, and other languages. However, it would be another 75 years before a printing of the Greek text appeared.

9.1.4.5 Age of the Textus Receptus (1516-1633)

The spread of Islam into Asia Minor in what is now called *Turkey* forced the monks to pack up their Greek texts and flee into Europe. Because Europe was dominated by the Latin texts, resurgence in the interest of the Greek text surfaced in the scholarly community. Professors in universities became curious about the original Greek text and a race to complete and publish the Greek text erupted among scholars.

This period is marked by two textual productions: the *Complutensian Polyglot* and the *Textus Receptus*.

The Complutensian Polyglot was a translation production of the Bible into three languages, including a Greek translation of the NT. It is called the *Complutensian Polyglot* because the

work originated from Complutum, the Latin name of the town of Alcala de Henares, the seat of a university in the district of Guadalajara, a few miles northeast of Madrid. This text was completed in 1522 and later conceived other reprints and editions such as the Antwerp Polyglot (1571-72), and the great Paris Polyglot (1630-33).

The most important work during this period was Erasmus's Greek New Testament (GNT) called the "Textus Receptus" (TR). Because the TR is the basis of the King James Bible of 1611 and the subject of hot debate, it is important to understand its history. As the wave of interest in Greek rolled over Europe, and as rumor about the Spanish polyglot surfaced, Froben, a publisher of Basle, resolved to be the first printer of the GNT. On March 15, 1515, Froben contacted Erasmus about producing a Greek NT. Froben hired Desiderius Erasmus⁹, the Dutch humanist of Rotterdam, in August 1515 to execute the task of producing the Greek NT. To say that Erasmus rushed to complete the project may be the understatement of the decade. The work was printed on March 1, 1516, only six months after Erasmus was commissioned to do the task, and it was labeled, "The Received Text."

Because of the speed and haste in which Erasmus raced to complete the Greek version, it contained many, many errors. So much so, Vincent quotes Dr. Scrivener: "Erasmus's first edition, in respect of typographical errors, is the most faulty book I know" (Vincent, 1903, p. 51). But, haste was not the only problem with Erasmus's Greek text. Erasmus's Greek resources were extremely limited. He relied on MSS of the twelfth/thirteenth centuries, which represented

⁹ Erasmus is considered one of the great scholars of his time. A man of the Renaissance, he lived in a period of profound changes. The unparalleled popularity he acquired made him, in his thirties, an eagerly sought after guest of kings and emperors, popes and cardinals, archbishops and bishops, lords and towns councilors, university heads--in other words, people who moved in the most distinguished circles of the day. His best known work is the *Praise of Folly* that he wrote on his way back from Italy, a pamphlet mainly directed against the behavior of ruling classes and church dignitaries while exposing the irony of mankind's vanities. He devoted himself to the defense of elegance and purity of Latin, the international and cultural language at the time, the revision of Christian traditions, fighting for a clearer and more humane approach of religion, and the renewal of the educational system from the publishing of grammars, and treatises on children education to the creation of the "Trilingual College" in Leuven. He is best known, however, for his hurried Greek New Testament, the Textus Receptus.

the late Byzantine Imperial text, the poorest of the various NT texts. Yet, this Greek text became the basis of the English 1611 KJV and of most English translations for the next 300 years.

Age of Discovery and Research (1633-1831)

Meanwhile, as Islam sliced and hacked its way to power, monks fleeing to safety brought their Greek texts into Europe and exposed the paucity of Greek knowledge among Europeans. It was during this period that MSS were collected, registered and classified, and merits attached.

Synoptic textual criticism was born and pioneers like Johann Albrecht Bengel (1687-1752), Johann Jakob Wettstein (1693-1754), and Johann Jakob Griesbach (1745-1812) led the way.

In 1633, the following words were printed in the flawed work of Erasmus of the TR: “What you have here, then, is the text which is now universally recognized: we offer it free of alterations and corruptions.” This was anything but the truth, and it would take another 300 years to unseat the TR and to synthesize the best witnesses and produce the most scholarly, accurate production of the GNT.

9.1.4.6 Age of Constructive Criticism (1831-1881)

As more MSS were compared and variant readings were discovered, the quest for the original text began. Karl Lachmann (1793-1851), a professor of classical philology at Berlin, led the political crusade to unseat the authority of the TR and to return to the MSS of the fourth century. Constantin von Tischendorf (1815-1874) deciphered the Codex Ephraemi Syri Rescriptus (C), a palimpsest, and discovered many MSS. The most famous MSS discovered was the Codex Sinaiticus (*a*) in the monastery of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai.¹⁰ From the work of these two men

¹⁰ Codex Sinaiticus: This brief article is an expanded version of the article which appeared in the Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible, (James Adair, JR).: Written on fine vellum, 390 leaves were discovered by Tischendorf, though it originally must have contained more than 730. Most of the missing leaves are from the OT, with the majority of Genesis - 1 Chronicles now missing. A substantial portion of 1 Chronicles curiously appears in the middle of Esdras B (= Hebrew Ezra-Nehemiah), probably as a result of a misplaced quire in the exemplar. The remaining historical books (in the LXX order) are in tact, concluding with 1 and 4 Maccabees. The major and minor prophets follow, with a lacuna of probably 56 leaves from the middle of Lamentations to the end of Micah, which presumably followed Hosea and Amos. The rest of the minor prophets are

came a critical apparatus for determining the correct text. Tischendorf was particularly helpful in cataloging texts and rendering precise, accurate and reliable citations.

9.1.4.7 Age of Certainty (1881 to the present)

As new quantities and qualities of MSS were unearthed, catalogued, and classified, the textual critics like Brooke Foss Westcott (1825-1901) and John Anthony Hort (1828-1892), professors at Cambridge, were able to form a scholarly edition of the GNT (1881). Since the time of Westcott and Hort, modern textual critics have been able to improve upon the GNT and to determine with great certainty exact renderings of the GNT. New critical editions have appeared with footnotes marking the reason for textual decisions. Handbooks, manuals, and copies of MSS have been produced to aid the textual critic in his quest to determine the text of the original autograph.

9.1.5 Type of MSS

When Caspar Rene' Gregory went to study under Tischendorf at Leipzig, he found him deceased. Gregory accepted the mantle and became professor of NT at the University of Leipzig.

followed by the usual poetical and wisdom books, concluding with Job. The New Testament is complete, with a bonus: after Revelation, the Epistle of Barnabas and the first quarter of the Shepherd of Hermas appear. There is no way to know whether the manuscript originally ended with Hermas or contained other works.

The story of the modern discovery of Sinaiticus by Tischendorf in St. Catherine's monastery at the foot of Mt. Sinai is compelling, particularly as related by Tischendorf himself in a brief monograph. After procuring the manuscript for Czar Alexander II in 1859, the majority of the leaves of Sinaiticus passed into the possession of the British Museum, which purchased the volume from the leaders of the new Soviet Union shortly after the revolution. In 1975 the monks at St. Catherine's monastery discovered a room whose ceiling had collapsed centuries ago and which contained perhaps as many as 4000 leaves and fragments of manuscripts, including several leaves of Genesis quite possibly belonging to Sinaiticus. Unfortunately, they have not yet been published

In 1900, he published his own textual apparatus of the GNT. By this time, numbering MSS by using Greek or Hebrew letters was no longer sufficient to label all the MSS in existence. In his third volume, Gregory undertook the enormous task of developing an entirely new system of listing MSS.

9.1.5.1 The Papyri

The papyri are fragments of the NT written on parchment or vellum that have survived the ravages of time. They are designated by the letter “P” printed in Old German or other distinctive type as \mathcal{P}^1 , \mathcal{P}^2 , \mathcal{P}^3 , \mathcal{P}^4 , and so forth. In Aland’s GNT, 4th edition, 97 papyri are listed along with their contents, location, and dates.

Manuscript	Contents	Location	Date
\mathcal{P}^1	e (gospels)	Philadelphia	III (century)
\mathcal{P}^2		Florence VI	e
\mathcal{P}^{10}		Cambridge, Mass. IV	p (Paul)
\mathcal{P}^{29}		Oxford	a (Acts) III

Papyrus codes containing John 18:31-33, 37-38 now in the John Rylands Library, Manchester, are dated around 130 AD (Bruce, 1981, p. 12).

9.1.5.2 The Uncials

The uncials are MSS that have the Greek NT written entirely in capital Greek letters with no spacing between words. Usually, they are in the three-column style. Each manuscript has been given a number to include those MSS already designated by alphabetical letters. Aland's GNT, 4th edition, lists 300 uncial MSS and classifies them A 02, B 03, C 04, D 05 . . . 048, 050, 057, 058 and so forth. Aland lists the uncials by manuscript, contents, location, and date. The distinctive Greek capital letter style can be by imitating John 3:16.

OUTWSGARAGAPHSENOQEOSTONKOSMONWSTETONUIONTONMON
OGENHEDWKENINAPASOPISTEUWNEISAUTONMHAPOLHTAIALLAEC
H|ZWHNAIWNIONÅ

Ou[twj ga.r hvga,phsen o` qeo.j to.n ko,smon(w[ste to.n ui`o.n to.n monogenh/
e;dwken(i[na pa/j o` pisteu,wn eivj auvto.n mh. avpo,lhtai avlIV e;ch| zwh.n
aivw,nionÅ

FORGODSOLOVEDTHEWORLDTHATHEGAVEHISONLYBEGOTTENSON
THATWHOSOEVERBELIEVETHINHIMSHOULDNOTPERISHBUTHAVEE
VERLASTINGLIFE.

9.1.5.3 Minuscules

Toward 8th & 9th century, the Greek style changed from capital letters to lower case Greek letters. These MSS are designated *minuscules* and are catalogued by Arabic numerals, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and so forth. Aland, 4th edition, lists the more important minuscules between 1 and 2344.

9.1.6 Four Important Texts

As the demand for copies of the Word of God increased, scriptoriums emerged at Alexandria, Caesarea, and Antioch with each having its own style of copying and translation. These traditions gave birth to the existence of manuscript families.

9.1.6.1 Alexandrian Text

These MSS are called "local texts" because they appear to come from Alexandria in Egypt. Alexandria became a copying center and their MSS were distributed to local churches in the region. This group is headed by \mathcal{P}^{75} and \mathcal{P}^{66} (225 BC) in Paul, \mathcal{P}^{72} (275 BC) in Peter and John,

Codex B (325 BC) and the citation of Roigne (225-250 BC). They are considered the best texts because they are rough, less harmonized, and generally more difficult to read. When these scribes made an alteration in the text, they did so with intent and purpose. These “neutral texts” as they are sometimes called remain the best witnesses regarding the original autographs, One of the most important of these texts is the Codex Vaticanus. The *Codex Vaticanus*, designated as B 03, is so named because it is now found in the Vatican Library¹¹. (H. Greenlee, 1964, Introduction to NT Criticism, Eerdmans, p. 86).

9.1.6.2 The “Western” Text

The “Western” text describe a group of MSS headed by Codex D and can be found in North Africa, France, and Italy and can be traced by to the 2nd century. It was used by Marcion, Tatian, Irenaeus, Tertullian and Cyprian. Its presence in the Egypt is shown by the papyri P³⁸ (about A.D. 300) and P⁴⁸ (about the end of the third century). From these MSS came the Latin text. These MSS are a product of smoothing out of the texts and harmonization to make the document more readable and acceptable to the public. But, what was good for the public was bad for the textual critic. Because these MSS have harmonistic tendencies and display editing, they are considered the least reliable when it comes to being a witness to the original GNT.

9.1.6.3 The Byzantine

The Byzantine Imperial text sometimes called the “majority text” or “Koine text” or “Lucian text” or “Syrian Text” or “Ecclesiastical Text” and makes up about 80% of all MSS. These texts were produced after 260 AD following the persecutions under Decius and Valerian (250-260 AD) and are associated with the work of Christians from the church of Antioch. Apparently, the earliest manuscript came from Alexandria, was copied, and then developed its own particular transmission history.

The Codex Alexandrinus (in the Gospels; not in Acts, the Epistles, or Revelation), the later uncial manuscripts, and the majority of minuscule manuscripts represent the Byzantine text.

¹¹ The codex has been in that place since 1481, although nobody knows how it got there in the first place! The *Vaticanus* is arguably the most important and probably the earliest (early fourth century) of all the New Testament manuscripts. The New Testament is not complete however, as everything after Hebrews 9:14 is lost.

These Greek texts proliferated throughout the Byzantine world and eventually dominated the market place in the Greek Orthodox Church in Constantinople.

The framers of this text sought to smooth away any harshness of language, to combine two or more divergent readings into one expanded reading (called conflation), and to harmonize divergent parallel passages. Because professionals working at a scriptorium produced these MSS, there is general uniformity of text-form existing in these MSS. During the period from about the sixth to seventh century down to the invention of printing with moveable type (A.D. 1450-56), the *Byzantine* form of text was generally regarded as *the* authoritative form of text and was one of the most widely circulated and accepted.

9.1.6.4 Caesarean Text Type

Vans Soden who found evidence that they were produced at Caesarea discovered the MSS. This family of MSS is characterized by lucidity and completeness and does not include long additions and long paraphrases and, therefore, lie mid-way between the Alexandrian Text and the Western Text. The Caesarean text, which seems to have originated in Egypt (attested to by Chester Beatty Papyrus P⁴⁵), was brought to Caesarea, perhaps by Origen, where it was used by Eusebius and others. From Caesarea it was carried to Jerusalem, where Cyril and his followers used it until the Islamic invasion. Armenian missionaries carried the Caesarean text to Georgia, where it influenced the Georgian version as well as an uncial Greek manuscript of about the ninth century (Θ, codex Koridethi). With the invasion of Islam, these texts moved into the Byzantine Empire (Aland and Aland, 1989, The Text of the New Testament).

10 PRINCIPLES OF TEXTUAL CRITICISM

10.1 MSS and time

As mentioned earlier, the problem with NT criticism is not a paucity of MSS, but the abundance of MSS in existence. By comparing manuscript with manuscript, the textual critic seeks to identify, classify, and resolve textual discrepancies. Someone may ask, “How can we be certain we have an accurate transmission of the text?”

At **least two factors** are involved that help the textual critic ascertain the true text of any ancient literature: (a) the numbers of MSS (witnesses) available, and (b) the quality of the manuscript including the date of the manuscript. That is, the more time that separates the original from a copy will result in a greater margin of error. To appreciate the New Testament, we should compare it with other ancient works.

Comparing Other Major Historical Sources

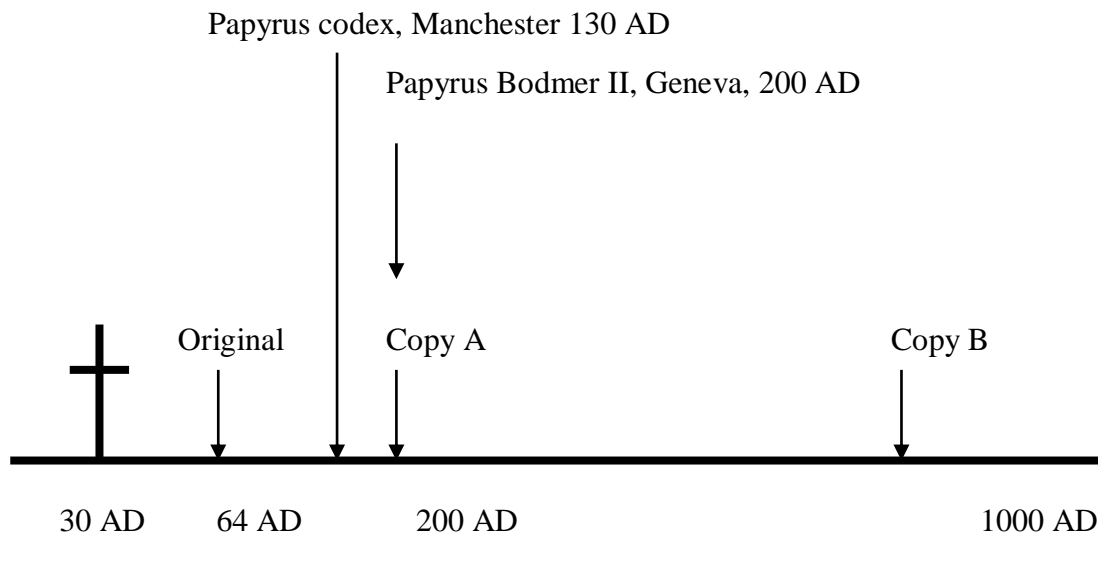
Author	Date of the Original	Date of Earliest Copy	Number of Copies	Time Span
Aristotle	384-322 BC	1100 AD	5	1400
Caesar	58-54 BC	900 AD	10	1,000
Catullus	54 BC	1550 AD	3	1,500
Demosthenes	382-322 BC	1100 AD	200+	1,400

Euripedes	480-406 BC	1100 AD	9	1,500
Heroditus	480-406 BC	900 AD	8	1,300
Horace	65 BC	900 AD	Few, if any	900
Plato	427-347 BC	900 AD	7	1,200
Sophocles	496-406 BC	100 AD	100	1,400
Seutonium	75-160 AD	950 AD	8	900
Tacitus	100 AD	1000 AD	20 in part	900
Thucydides	460-400 BC	900 AD	8	1,300
10.2 <u>New</u> <u>Testame</u> <u>nt</u> Fragments Whole Books Whole NT Grk MSS Total MSS	45-90 AD			
		200-400 AD	75+ 100	75-200
		300-900 AD	200	300-700
		300-1000 AD	400	300-900
		300-1300 AD	5200+	125-1400
		150-1400 AD	24,000+	75-1400

To my knowledge no one has seriously questioned the validity of Plato or Aristotle though they have fewer MSS and a time gap 1,200 years between the original and the earliest copy. The problem with ascertaining the original text of the NT is not the lack of MSS, but the abundance of MSS. With over 5000 Greek MSS in existence, the textual critic is assigned the task of comparing manuscript with manuscript and verse by verse. Because there are so many MSS, the variants in the texts are, of course, multiplied. So, what kind of errors can a textual critic expect to find?

The second important factor for insuring integrity is the time gap between the original autograph and the earliest copy. As you can see from the illustration, a manuscript copied nearer the original would generally be considered more reliable than a late manuscript. The NT not only exceeds other ancient MSS by thousands, existing witnesses to the original autograph exist anywhere from 75 years to 300 years after a biblical author penned the original¹².

10.3 Confronting the



¹² Bruce, 1981, p.12.

10.3.1 Confronting the Variants in the MSS

It is estimated that there are over 200,000 variants in NT MSS. Why are there so many? First, there are over 5000 Greek MSS. The more copies one has to compare, the more differences there will be. Second, initially, copying of the NT was not restricted to professionals who followed strict rules.

Many private copies and “unofficial” copies were made for personal use. These copies are part of the world’s manuscript collection. Third, in counting variants, if a word is misspelled then copied 3,000 times, then this counts as 3,000 variants. Spelling variants count for the majority of variants in MSS because in many cases one scribe to another dictated the letter.

10.3.2 Principles of Textual Criticism

As a textual critic faces variants in manuscripts, he must make a judgment about what reading is the best witness to the original text. Over time, the textual critic has discovered principles that help guide that decision. The following principles of textual criticism are promoted by Westcott and Hort’s New Testament in Greek and are mentioned by Miller, 1960, p. 290 and Epp and Fee, 1993, pages 157-8. References in parentheses are to sections of Hort’s *Introduction*, from which the principles have been extracted.

10.3.3 Critical Rules of Westcott & Hort

1. Older readings, MSS, or groups are to be preferred. ("The shorter the interval between the time of the autograph and the end of the period of transmission in question, the stronger the presumption that earlier date implies greater purity of text.") (2.59; cf. 2.5-6, 31).
2. Readings are approved or rejected by reason of the quality, and not the number, of their supporting witnesses. ("No available presumptions whatever as to text can be obtained from number alone, that is, from number not as yet interpreted by descent.") (2.44).
3. A reading combining two simple, alternative readings is later than the two readings comprising the conflation, and MSS rarely or never supporting conflate reading are text antecedent to mixture and are of special value (2.49-50).
4. The reading is to be preferred that makes the best sense, that is, that best conforms to the

grammar and is most congruous with the purport of the rest of the sentence and of the larger context (2.20).

5. The reading is to be preferred that best conforms to the usual style of the author and to that author's material in other passages (2.20).

6. The reading is to be preferred that most fitly explains the existence of the others (2.22-23).

7. The reading is less likely to be original that combines the appearance of an improvement in the sense with the absence of its reality; the scribal alteration will have an apparent excellence, while the original will have the highest real excellence (2.27, 29).

8. The reading is less likely to be original that shows a disposition to smooth away difficulties (another way of stating that the harder reading is preferable) (2.28).

9. Readings are to be preferred that are found in a MS that habitually contains superior readings as determined by intrinsic and transcriptional probability. Certainty is increased if such a better MS is found also to be an older MS (2.32-33) and if such a MS habitually contains reading that prove themselves antecedent to mixture and independent of external contamination by other, inferior texts (2.150-51). The same principles apply to groups of MSS (2.260-61).

10.3.4 A Look at Unintentional Errors

10.3.4.1 Errors of the Eye

By errors of the eye, the textual critic refers to errors that occur because of the vision of the scribe. These would include repetitions of letters or words, omissions of letters, transpositions of letters, differences in spelling, mistaken letters (one letter that is mistaken one for another letter), or insertions of letters from glosses and marginal notes. While the following errors regard the NT MSS, it is important to keep in mind these kinds of errors happened in copying of all ancient documents.

A wrong division of words: Because the uncials have no break in the text or accent marks, a scribe might mistakenly divide a word. Take for example Suter's famous English illustration:

“HAVEYOUEVERSEENABUNDANCEONTHETABLE?”

This could be divided as follows: “Have you ever seen **a bun dance** on the table?” or “Have you ever seen **abundance** on the table?”

Another example: How do you read the following, “HEISNOWHERE”? Did you divide the word “He is no where” or “He is now here?”

An example of this kind of wrong word division can be found in Mark 10:40. δ incorrectly reads “alloij” (another or other) instead of dividing the word as follows: “avllV oi-j” (but to those).

MSS A B² C² correctly reads Mark 10:40 but *it shall be given to them* (avllV oi-j h`toi,mastai) for whom it is prepared, but MSS δ B D L read “to another” (allois) without accents or space in between.

Omission of a letter or word: Sometimes the Scribe will omit a letter, word, or even an entire line in a column. A missing line is called a *homoeoteleuton*.

Example: *lutai* mistaken for *luetai*

Example: Notice the King James puts the entire line of 1 John 2:23 in doubt because the last line was missing from the Latin text. Upon further research, it was discovered the Scribe committed a *parablepsis*, an error of the eye. This particular error is called a *homoeoteleuton*, an error of the eye that slips due to the similarity of endings of two lines in a column.

^{KJV} **1 John 2:23** Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: *(but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.*

^{NAS} **1 John 2:23** *Whoever* denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also.

Transposition of words or letters: Sometimes a scribe would transpose two letters like “ie” for “ei” or two words.

For example: In φ^1 A C L Matthew 1:18 reads *Ihsou/ Cristou/* (Jesus Christ) while B Origen and Jerome reads *Cristou/ Ihsou/* (Christ Jesus).

Difference in spelling: We can see how a difference of spelling or abbreviating words can cause problems: Notice the similarity between *luo* (loose) and *louo* (wash), between *eipon* and *eipan*, and *lelukasi* and *lelukan*. We can see this spelling problem with mistaken abbreviations in Romans 12:11:

א, A, 81, 104 read: “tw/| kuri,w| douleu,ontej”, “serving the Lord.”

D F, G read: “kairw/” translated “serving with due measure” or “opportunity.”

Repetition of words: A good illustration of this can be found in Matthew 27:17 which says, “Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?” MS C reads it, “ŴVIhsou/n to.nĐ Barabba/n h' VIhsou/n” (Jesus Barabbas or Jesus), but MS B reads it, “to.n Barabba/n h' VIhsou/n” (Barabbas or Jesus).

Misreading similar letters: One letter is mistaken for another. This can be caused by the rough lines in parchment:



For example, notice how similar the Q (Theta) is to the capital O (Omicron), F (Phi) and W (Omega). Now imagine being a scribe seeking to read a worn manuscript or a parchment with all kinds of rough, coarse reed-like threads in them with letters laid over the top of the rough parchment.

Insertions: Sometimes scribes would make marginal notes and another scribe would come along and insert the note into the text. This is what happened in Romans 8:1 where our the Latin text reads, “*There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, *who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*”

A and D read: “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

א and B C ² and G do have the phrase.

10.3.4.2 Errors of Hearing

When scriptoriums came into being, texts were read aloud by one scribe and copied by another. This was the cause of many variants in the NT. We can see an example of this kind of variant in Revelation 1:5, which reads: “And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first

begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto Him that loved us, and *washed us* from our sins in His own blood.”

\mathcal{P}^{18} , \mathcal{A}^2 , A, and C read “lu,santi h`ma/j” meaning “having loosed us” but the TR and 205 209 1006 read “lou,santi h`ma/j” meaning “washed us.”

10.3.4.3 Errors of Memory

Sometimes the scribe heard the words but wrote the thought. For example in Matthew 18:28, one text reads, “pay that what you owe” (Apo,doj ei; ti ovfei,leij), another says, “pay me what you owe” (VApo,doj moi o[(ti crewstei/j). The unconscious working of the mind had something to do with some variants. Errors of the mind account for many word reversals and the use of synonyms in transcription.

10.3.4.4 Errors of Speech

Just as there is a difference between a British accent and an American accent, there was a difference in Greek dialects, both regional and personal. Differences of pronunciation, spelling of words, and grammar contribute to the variants. We can appreciate this difference by looking at the differences in spelling and style of the words in the Declaration of Independence:

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America. When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

10.3.4.5 Errors of Assimilation

Sometimes scribes would be so familiar with one passage that they would automatically insert familiar words into the text. This is true of the Lord's prayer. Scribes tended to harmonize Luke with Matthew and vice versa. Take for example the textual problem in the Matthew 19:17 regarding Jesus' response to the Rich Young Ruler: “There is *only* One who is good:”

C, W, and D read: “Ti, me. le,geij avgaqo,n ouvdei.j avgaqo.j ei, mh, ei-j(o` Qeo.j” Or, “Why do you call me good? There is none good except one, God”

Δ and B² read: “Ti, me evrwta/lj peri. tou/ avgaqou/È ei-j evstin o` avgaqo,j\” Or, “Why do you ask me regarding the good? One is good.” (The preferred text)

From this example we can see that the scribe copying C, W, and D is obviously familiar with Luke’s version of the story which reads, “Ti, me le,geij avgaqo,nÈ ouvdei.j avgaqo.j eiv mh. ei-j o` qeo,jÅ” (Why me dost thou call good? No one *is* good, except One -- God;). The insertion “except God” was obviously taken from Luke and inserted into Matthew. The textual critic left out “except God” because he knew the scribe was assimilating Luke into Matthew.

Another example of assimilation can be seen in Mark 10:40, “but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.” Some translations insert, “but it is for those for whom it has been **prepared by My Father.**” The phrase “by My Father” is an insertion into Mark’s passage that comes from Matthew 20:23: “avllV oi-j h`toi,mastai u`po. tou/ patro,j mouÅ”

10.3.4.6 Errors of the Pen

These errors are similar to errors of the eye. A slip of the pen could distort one letter and make it look like another. A Theta and an Omicron can easily be confused.

10.3.4.7 Errors of Judgment

Sometimes scribes would insert marginal notes into the text. In one minuscule, 2 Corinthians 8:4-5 reads, “it is found thus in many of the copies.” This was obviously an error in judgment and should have never been inserted into the text.

10.3.5 Intentional errors

A class of errors known as “intentional errors” has been identified. When a Scribe or proofreader intentionally altered the text, he did so to make an improvement on the wording, grammar, or spelling in order to make the text more readable. The Scribe may also have made a change based upon the conviction that the previous scribe had misconceived a word or made a revision in the text, which the present scribe believed was incorrect.

10.3.5.1 Linguistic Corrections

These include changes of spelling, inserting a letter for the sake of euphony, smoothing out a text for easier reading, and changing rare forms of words into more usual forms. We can see this in

Mark 1:14 where the scribe updated “gospel” to “kingdom of God” in order to bring the unusual Markan phrase into conformity with the “kingdom of God” expression.

The original text: “preaching the gospel of God” (khru,sswn to. euvagge,lion tou/ qeou/).

The Scribe’s correction: “preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God” (khru,ttwn to. euvagge,lion th/j basilei,aj tou/ Qeou/).

10.3.5.2 Historical Changes

A scribe might make an historical change he thought was incorrect because of what was written by other witnesses. These improvements were not always improvements because the scribe may not have been a good student of history. An example of this kind of intentional error can be seen in John 19:14 where the scribe changed “sixth” to “third” in order to bring it into conformity with Mark 15:25. He failed to notice that Matthew was using Jewish time and John was using Roman time.

10.3.5.3 Translation Changes

Some MSS contained a Greek version and a Latin version on the same text. In order to make the columns match in size and length, the scribe would shorten a sentence or paragraph in order to make the columns correspond.

10.3.5.4 Harmonistic Changes

Scribes were always tempted to harmonize the gospels and to make one text conform to another. This is particularly true of the Lord’s prayer. We can see an example of harmonization in Matthew 9:13 and Luke 5:32 where Matthew’s text was made to conform to Luke’s text.

Original text (Matthew 9:13): “I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.” (ouv ga.r h=lqon kale,sai dikai,ouj avlla. a`martwlou,j.).

Luke’s version (5:32): “I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.” (ouv k evlh,luqa kale,sai dikai,ouj avlla. a`martwlou,j eivj meta,noianÅ)

Scribal harmonization: “I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” (Dio,ti de.n hv|lqon dia. na. kale,sw dikai,ouj avlla. a`martwlou,j eivj meta,noianÅ)

A set of harmonistic changes can be seen in Luke 11:2-4 in Luke's rendition of the Lord's prayer. A scribe was tempted to make Luke's version to harmonize with the more popular version in Matthew 6:9-13.

Acts 9:5-6 was made to conform more literally with Acts 26:15-25.

Since Paul listed the "thou shall nots" of the Ten Commandments, some scribe decided to add "you shall not bear false witness" to the list. But, the command is not found in \mathcal{P}^{46} A B D F or G.

10.3.5.5 Smoothing the text

Some texts are not smooth or end rather abruptly. The tendency of the Scribe was to smooth out the text in order to make it clear to the people of their times. An example of this can be found in Mark 1:27 where the verse reads: And they were all amazed, so that they debated among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him."

The original reading: "What is this? A new teaching according to authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him." (Ti, evstin tou/toÈ didach. kainh. katV evxousi,an)

The smooth reading: "What thing is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority he commands even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him." (Ti, ei=nai tou/to ti,j au[th h` ne,a didach,(dio,ti meta. evxousi,aj prosta,zei kai. ta. avka,qarta pneu,mata(kai. u`pakou,ousin eivj auvto,n)

10.3.5.6 Doctrinal Changes

The Scribes were constantly aware of the doctrinal diversity of their age and tended to clarify or update a text according to orthodoxy. These changes are rare, but they do exist. Take the following examples:

Acts 8:37 Contains the following text, "And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" but this phrase is not found in $\mathcal{P}^{45 74}$ \mathcal{A} B C 33 or 81.

I John 5:7 reads in the KJV, “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one,” but the phrase “the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one” is not found in any ancient MSS—an inclusion of orthodoxy.

Romans 10:17 contains the phrase “the Word of God” which was substituted for the rare form, “The Word of Christ,” in order to make it harmonize with Luke 3:2, John 3:24, Ephesians 6:17, and Hebrews 6:5. But, the phrase “the Word of Christ” is found in $\mathcal{P}^{46\text{vid}} \mathcal{A} \text{ B C D 81 1739}$.

Luke 22:17-20 contains two textual renditions of the cup-bread-cup. The longer version of the cup-bread-cup text is included in most ancient versions. There is overwhelming evidence of the longer text reading. However, the shorter version, or Western text omits verse 19b and 20. Because textual critics prefer the shorter version, some believe the longer version was an addition made to accommodate the order of the Latin Eucharist; i.e., the importance the Latin Church placed on bread first and the cup second.

1 Thessalonians 3:2 reads in the KJV that Timothy was *a minister of God* and *fellow worker* in the gospel with Paul. Some text omit *minister* and include the term *fellowworker*. Other texts ($\mathcal{A} \text{ A P}$) omit *fellow worker* and read it *minister of God*. The bold designation *minister of God* was considered objectionable by some and possibly replaced with the term *fellow worker*.

10.3.6 Percentage of Variants

Christian Debater¹³ notes that we are about 97.3% certain regarding the words of the New Testament. Consider the following sample facts:

The Book of Matthew has 1,071 verses, which contain 18,111 Greek words with 523 words in question resulting in 97.1% accuracy.

The Book of Mark, excepting 16:9-20, has 661 verses, which contain 11,051 Greek words with 392 words in question resulting in 96.5% accuracy.

¹³ (<http://www.biblequery.org/ntmss.htm>), 2003.

The Book of Luke has 1,151 verses, which contain 19,581 Greek words with 532 in question resulting in 97.3% accuracy.

The Book of John has 879 verses, which contain 15,436 Greek words with 322 words in question resulting in 97.9% accuracy.

The Book of Acts has 1007 verses, which contain 18,460 Greek words with 478 words in question resulting in 97.4 accuracy.

The Book of Romans has 433 verses, which contain 7,30 Greek words with 198 words in question resulting in 97.2% accuracy.

The Book of Ephesians has 155 verses, which contain 2,385 Greek words with 43 words in question resulting in 98.2% accuracy.

The Book of Hebrews has 303 verses, which contain 4,888 Greek words with 82 words in question resulting in 98.3% accuracy.

The Book of Revelation has 404 verses, which contain 9,667 Greek words with 127 words in question resulting in 98.7% accuracy.

10.4 Scholarly Certainty

How significant are these variants? Brooke Westcott and Fenton Hort, in their standardized text of the NT, The New Testament in the Original Greek, estimated that only about 12.5% of the variants have any weight (involve more than spelling or style). They said only about 1.7% are more than trivialities which led them to conclude that the text is more than 98.3% pure. Phillip Schaft wrote in his Companion to the Greek Testament and the English Version that of the 150,000 variants known in his day that only about 400 affected the sense and of these only 50 were of real significance, and of this total not one affected “an article of faith or precept of duty which is not abundantly sustained by other and undoubted passages or by the whole tenor of Scripture teaching.”

Furthermore, the variants in the MSS have had a positive affect on the search for the true text. The variants have caused scholars to compare MSS to search out the best witnesses to ascertain the text in the original autograph. *Variants such as spelling raise questions, and question lead to research, and research leads to certainty.*

Having considered the types of errors that have been observed and catalogued, it should be noted that the majority of these have been discovered and corrected so that our modern Greek text contains the centuries of scholarship leading us to believe that we have the very best text that scholarship can decipher as a witness to the original. Consider the following statements (Quoted by Collins, 1991, *Championing the Faith*, p. 79):

Frederic C. Kenyon, the great textual scholar and archaeologist, stated, “The last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written have now been removed. Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established.”

F.F. Bruce, University of Manchester, said that it “is doubtful whether there is any reading in the New Testament which requires it to be conjecturally emended. The wealth of attestation is such that the true reading is almost invariably bound to be preserved by at least one of the thousands of witnesses.”

The evidence for our New Testament writings is ever so much greater than the evidence for many writings of classical authors, the authenticity of which no one dreams of questioning (1981, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?*, p. 10).

A.T. Robertson, one of the great Greek scholars and linguists, says: “There are some 8000 MSS of the Latin Vulgate and at least 1,000 for the earlier versions. Add to that over 4,000 (Now over 5,200) Greek MSS and we have 13,000 manuscript copies of portions of the New Testament. Besides all this, much of the New Testament can be reproduced from the quotations of early Christian writers.”

Warwick Montgomery, English Barrister, law professor, historian, and Christian apologist, has this to say about the integrity of the NT: “To be skeptical of the resultant text of the New Testament books is to allow all of classical antiquity to slip into obscurity, for no documents of the ancient period are as well attested bibliographically as the New Testament.”

This study of NT criticism does not solve all the textual problems that have surfaced since so many manuscripts found their way into Europe after Erasmus, but this study should acquaint the reader with the task of textual criticism, the progress in the field, and the Herculean amount of labor that has been spent by scholars to determine every word and letter of the NT. Because of

the efforts of textual critics, the Christian can rest assured that the NT is the consummation of the best scholarship in history.

In this life, nothing is 100% certain. The best we can do is to examine the evidence and determine beyond reasonable doubt what is true. If scholarship has demonstrated that our present text is 98.7% sure and that the remaining doubt about the text does not affect any article of faith or precept of practice, will you read the NT and try to grasp the main message of the Bible?

The main message of the Bible is gospel of Jesus Christ.

Man's fundamental problem is death. All of us are going to die and after this, the judgment (Hebrew 9:27)! Is there any evidence that death can be overcome or that there is life and existence after death? Yes, there is. That evidence is found in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which is recorded in the New Testament record. The reason we have spent so much time ascertaining the certainty of the New Testament is that the New Testament contains the hope of history—life from the dead by the power of God. If Jesus conquered death and solved man's fundamental problem through a literal, tangible, physical resurrection, then He is Lord and God. If He is God, then He can solve your fundamental problem. And, he will solve your fundamental problem if you will confess Him as your Lord and your God.

Romans 10:9 that 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;

The Scripture asks the question, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation" (Hebrews 2:3)? Saying the NT document are not reliable will not hold up in a court of competent record nor will this excuse hold up before the One who will judge "the dead, small and great," where men will "stand before God" and "the books *will be* opened" (Revelation 20:12). It would be an eternal tragedy to miss the main message of the Bible because one uses textual variants as an excuse not to investigate the gospel of Jesus Christ.

11 SEEING THE SACRIFICE

11.1 The Drama of the English Bible

Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces? (Jeremiah 23:29)?

The heroic struggle to produce an English Bible is nothing short of spectacular. One cannot fully appreciate his own Bible until he understands the dedication of great saints to get the Bible into the hands of common Englishmen, the resistance of the Roman Church to anything but Latin, and the blood, sweat, and tears that was shed to produce the Bible in English. Once the Bible was translated into English, it burned the ecclesiastical rubble, set the course of history on fire, demolished the stone structures of the church, and broke the political rock of kings and monarchs.

11.1.1 Bede

Christianity came to Great Britain as early as the second century. Despite the illiteracy of the masses, the gospel spread via proclamation of the truth among the commingled languages on the island. Out of these dialects, a form of English emerged in the seventh century. One venerable old monk from Jarrow named Bede (673-735) was determined not to leave this earth until he left his followers the truth about Christ. As he was dying, he translated the Book of John. All day long, lying in mortal weakness, he coughed and choked out the John's Gospel. By evening only one chapter remained. As he was dying, his sobbing scribe urged him on. Finally, he whispered, "Master, there is just one sentence more." Bede muttered, "Write quickly." The scribe wrote saying, "See, dear master, it is done." Lowering Bede down on the pavement of his cell, he past into eternity with "Gloria" being the final words on his lips.

With the Norman invasion of England in 1066, the Anglo-Norman language dethroned the Anglo-Saxon language in the courts and schools. Translation worked ceased. Only one notable manuscript survives to testify of the expansion of the Word of God, a paraphrase of parts of the Gospels and Acts (1215). Between 1320 and 1340, two biblical scholars, William Shoreham and Richard Rolle, created a Psalter that became widely distributed creating a hunger to know more

about the Bible. It was into this climate of hunger and thirst for the Word of God that John Wycliffe was born.

11.1.2 John Wycliffe

John Wycliffe (1324-1384) was born in, a period between the Medieval times and the Renaissance. Educated at Oxford, he earned a high place among scholars. His knowledge of languages and of the common man prepared him for the great work of his time. Wycliffe gravitated toward the great ecclesiastical controversies that divided Great Britain and desired to expose the corruption of the Roman Church. During the 14th century, the lavish expenditures of Rome depleted the ecclesiastical treasury causing the Pope to demand funds from England to replenish their funds. Parliament refused to accede to such lusty orders. Wycliffe, already a staunch opponent of the pompous, wealthy clergy agreed with the government.

A pamphleteer, Wycliffe circulated his assaults against the abuses of Rome with zeal and conviction. In the lecture hall, he had no peer. Swept into the center of controversy, Wycliffe's clear, logical, biblical argumentation made him the number one adversary of Rome and its corrupt practices. His power, however, lay not so much in his enthusiasm, but in his knowledge of the Bible, his personal purity, and deep spirituality.

Wycliffe taught that the Bible is the supreme authority, that there is no basis for the doctrine of transubstantiation, that infant baptism does not save the soul, that clergy should own no property, that the priesthood should be Christ's servants and not dictators, and that marriage for priest was an honorable state, that homosexuality was a sin, and that abortion among women was wicked and evil. Wycliffe's doctrines were condemned in 1377 by Pope Gregory XI, who called for his arrest, though nothing much came of it, perhaps because Wycliffe was so strongly backed by powerful supporters in the courts of both John of Gaunt and the King, Finally in 1382 the Archbishop of Canterbury condemned him and his writings, but Wycliffe himself remained undisturbed and continued to write until his death in 1384.

Sometimes called the "forerunner Baptist," Wycliffe understood the great gulf between the high church and the common people. He realized that if England was going to clean house of Rome's corrupting influence, the people needed to know the Word of God. He saw better than any other man the authority of Scripture. Since only the wealthy and upper clergy had access to a Latin Bible, Wycliffe was determined to get the Bible into the hands and language of the common people. He saw that true emancipation of the soul could not come from government, but from men with a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. Wycliffe began his life's work. In 1380, he

completed a copy of the NT in Middle English from the Latin Vulgate, and by 1382, the whole Bible appeared in Middle English for the first time. Today, we call it the “**Wycliffe Bible.**”

When Wycliffe gained support for his vision of an English Bible translated from the Latin, he led a handful of Oxford scholars in the Bible's translation and copied the methods of St. Francis and the Friars. As a practical part of his work, Wycliffe organized a religious order of common men and trained them to read, study, and preach the Word of God.

From Oxford, Wycliffe sent out "poor priests" into the highways and byways, cooperating with churches where possible to win the souls of the neglected. Clad in brown robes of homespun wool, without sandals, purse, or scrip, a long staff in their hand, and dependent for food and shelter on the good will of their neighbors, Wycliffe's "poor priests" soon had an impact in the land.

Their enemies dubbed them “**Lollards,**” meaning "mumblers"¹⁴. It is said that Wycliffe taught his Lollards four basics: (a) the gospel of Christ, (b) the authority of Scripture, (c) how to preach (d) how to live by faith and to die with dignity. They carried a few pages of the reformer's Bible and sermons as they went throughout the countryside preaching the Word of God. The Lollard Movement was powerful, but short lived. Wycliffe became the chief enemy of Rome. The Lollards were hunted down, expelled from Oxford, killed, or forced to renounce their views. The prison in London called the Lollard's Tower was so named because of the great number of these Bible-believing people who were tormented behind its walls. "The Lollards' tower still stands a monument of their miseries, and of the cruelty of Rome.

¹⁴ The origin of the term "Lollard" is obscure. It apparently originated as a pejorative label, taken from the Middle Dutch word "lollaerd," meaning a babler of nonsense. Its first recorded use in English is in 1382. While this is the term's most likely origin, many erudite, orthodox contemporaries of the movement believed that the word derived from the Latin "lolium," a wild weed or vetch (often translated as "tares") which can choke out wheat, as in the parable in Matthew 13:24-30. As with most medieval etymologies, however, this one tells more about the writer than the word. The medieval church of the later Middle Ages believed that their crop had to be constantly watched and regularly weeded--sometimes, if necessary, with fire--to avoid heretical infestations. The Lollards soon took to the term in the same way that many groups take on pejorative labels, however amorphous the group, or poorly the labels may fit. The movement [spread throughout England](#), and lasted until the English Reformation (Lollard Society).

The great theme of Wycliffe's life was summed up in his glorious statement, "The sacred Scriptures be the property of the people, and one which no party should be allowed to wrest from them." Consider the following beliefs of Wycliffe:

"The authority of the Holy Scriptures infinitely surpasses any writing, how authentic soever it may appear, because the authority of Jesus Christ is infinitely above that of all mankind."

"The authority of the Scriptures is independent on any other authority, and is preferable to every other writing, but especially to the books of the Church of Rome."

"I am certain, indeed, from the Scriptures, that neither Antichrist, nor all his disciples, nay, nor all fiends, may really impugn any part of that volume as it regards the excellence of its doctrine. But in all these things it appears to me that the believing man should use this rule—If he soundly understands the Sacred Scripture, let him bless God; if he be deficient in such perception, let him labour for soundness of mind. Let him also dwell as a grammarian upon the letter, but be fully aware of imposing a sense upon Scripture which he doubts the Holy Spirit does not demand."

"We ought to believe in the authority of no man unless he say the Word of God. It is impossible that any word or any deed of man should be of equal authority with Holy Scriptures. ... For the laws made by prelates are not to be received as matters of faith, nor are we to confide in their public instructions, nor in any of their words, but as they are founded in Holy Writ, since the Scriptures contain the whole truth."

"That the New Testament is of full authority, and open to understanding of simple men, as to the points that are most needful to salvation. ... That men ought to desire only the truth and freedom of the holy Gospel, and to accept man's law and ordinances only in as much as they are grounded in Holy Scripture... That if any man in earth, either angel of heaven teacheth us the contrary of holy Writ, or any thing against reason and charity, we should flee from him in that as from the foul fiend of hell, and hold us steadfastly to, life and death, the truth and freedom of the holy Gospel of Jesus Christ, and take us meekly men's sayings and laws, only

in as much as they accord with holy Writ and good consciences, and no further, for life neither for death."

Further, Wycliffe believed the Bible to be the Word of God without error from beginning to end. He testified, "It is impossible for any part of the Holy Scriptures to be wrong. In Holy Scripture is all the truth; one part of Scripture explains another" (Fountain, *Wycliffe*, p. 48).

The priests condemned Wycliffe saying that it was a vulgar thing to read the Word of God in the common tongue, but Wycliffe responded saying, 'such a charge is a condemnation of the Holy Ghost, who first gave the Scriptures in tongues to the Apostles of Christ, to speak that word in all languages that were ordained of God under heaven'" (Eadie, *History of the English Bible*, I, p. 81).

Wycliffe did not live to see the best fruits of his work for he died 1384 of a stroke and paralysis. His work was continued, we believe, by a man named **John Purvey**, a former curate of Lutterworth. Wycliffe's Bible became popular among readers enthusiastic for reform, but hated among the high clergy. Between 1408 and 1414 **Archbishop Thomas Arundel** made it a penal offense to read any of Wycliffe's writings or translations within the province of Canterbury decreeing that all who should read the Scriptures in the mother tongue should "forefeit land, catel, lif, and goods from the heyres for ever."

The *Constitutions of Arundel* made this brash demand:

"WE THEREFORE DECREE AND ORDAIN THAT NO MAN SHALL, HEREAFTER, BY HIS OWN AUTHORITY, TRANSLATE ANY TEXT OF THE SCRIPTURE INTO ENGLISH, OR ANY OTHER TONGUE, by way of a book, libel, or treatise, now lately set forth in the time of John Wyckliff, or since, or hereafter to be set forth, in part of in whole, privily or apertly, upon pain of greater excommunication, until the said translation be allowed by the ordinary of the place, or, if the case so require, by the council provincial" (Eadie, I, p. 89, Quoted by <http://wayoflife.org/articles/johnwycliffe.htm>).

This was the first English statute for the burning of heretics (though Bible-believing Christians had been burned before this), and it was not repealed until 1677, or 276 years later. This is Arundel's estimation of the Bible translator:

This pestilential and most wretched John Wycliffe of damnable memory, a child of the old devil, and himself a child or pupil of Anti-Christ, who while he lived, walking in the vanity of his mind . . . crowned his wickedness by translating the Scriptures into the mother tongue" (Fountain, *John Wycliffe*, p. 45; Quoted by <http://wayoflife.org/articles/johnwycliffe.htm>).

Today, only about 30 of Wycliffe's original translations survive. Wycliffe's English translation did not come from the original languages, but from Latin. Nevertheless, the secrets of the Word were exposed and men gobbled it up like a Thanksgiving Day feast. But the Lollard Movement was short-lived.

The Roman Church so hated Wycliffe that they expelled him from his teaching position at Oxford, and 44 years after he died, the Pope ordered his bones exhumed and burned. Intense persecution stamped out his followers and teachings. It would be hundreds of years before men like Martin Luther resurrected the reforms of which Wycliffe dreamed.

11.1.3 William Tyndale

William Tyndale has been called the "Father of the English Reformation" and "The Apostle of England." To appreciate the work of Tyndale (1484-1534) one must understand his times. In the 15th century, Feudal society was crumbling. Populations were moving to the new cities. The Renaissance manifested itself in Italy and a spirit of free thinking blanketed the continent. Leonardo de Vinci and Copernicus graced the arts and the sciences. Columbus discovered America. Bold navigators took to the seas to conquer the straits of Megellan and to round the Cape of Good Hope. Guttenberg invented the printing press and the first book he printed was a Latin Bible (1453-56), a run away best seller. English printing began with Willaim Caxton in 1470.

Rome dominated Europe as a despot ruler and Luther challenged Rome's corruption nailing his 95 Thesis to the Wittenberg Door. An interest in Hebraic studies surfaced in universities. Erasmus produced his GNT. The Turks captured Constantinople (1453) with vicious brutality. As monks poured into Europe bringing their Greek MSS with them, a new interest in the original language emerged in the scholarly community. A spirit of freedom swept over Europe declaring that men had rights to choose teir own destiny unhampered by government, pope, or tyrant. None articulated the hope of freedom better than the Protestants, "for freedom did Christ set us free."

Tyndale, though his church affiliation is not known, appears to have had many sympathies with the Baptists. On baptism, Tyndale wrote the following in his Prologue to the Book of Leviticus: "If baptism preach me the washing in Christ's blood, so doth the Holy Ghost accompany it; and that deed of preaching through faith doth put away my sins. The ark of Noah saved them in the water through faith." Furthermore, Tyndale had a deep love for Scripture and was opposed to the abuses of Rome.

An Oxford-Cambridge scholar who knew seven languages (Hebrew, Greek, Latin Italian, Spanish, English and French), Tyndale was addicted to Erasmus' Greek New Testament.

In a heated discussion over a religious controversy with unthinking clergy, Tyndale said, "If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth a plough shall know more of the Scriptures than thou doest."

With opponents outnumbering him, Tyndale moved to London. There he hoped to persuade **Bishop Tunstall** to support him in an endeavor to produce a translation into English from the Greek New Testament. A friend, Humphrey Monmouth, and alderman of London, took up Tyndale's cause but ended up in the Tower of London for his kindness. A country boy, Tyndale soon learned there was no place for him to work on an English translation:

"I . . . vnderstode at the laste not only that there was no rowme in my lorde of londs palace to translate the new testament, but also that there was no place to do it in all englonde."

In April, 1525, he went to Cologne to put into print his translation of the New Testament. There he met Quentel, a professional printer, and began his work. However, anti-Reformationist spies, vigorous enemies of Luther, got wind of the endeavor and plotted Tyndale's demise. Hearing a report, Tyndale and his amanuensis grabbed their printed sheets and escaped up the Rhine to the city of Worms, famed for its Lutheran sympathy. **In 1556**, the work was complete and three thousand copies of the **Tyndale New Testament** were smuggled into England.

As soon as his copies hit the street, there was a great demand for Tyndale's English translation by the common man that he might read it and by ecclesiastical authorities that they might destroy it. **Archbishop Warham** issued a decree to confiscate and destroy Tyndale's English New Testament. By order of ecclesiastical authorities, the books were bought and burned. But, clandestine shippers smuggled the New Testament into England past the authorities from the Continent. The battle to disseminate Tyndale's New Testament on one side and the other to

confiscate and to annihilate Tyndale's New Testament raged. The zeal to distribute the Testament and fierceness to destroy them became one of the strange anomalies of history.

Bishop Tunstall order a merchant of Antwerp named **Packington** to buy all the books Tyndale produced at any price in order that he might burn them. When Packington asked to buy the books from Tyndale, Tyndale objected because he knew they would be burned. The two men worked a deal. The Bishop had the New Testaments, Packington the thanks, and Tyndale THE MONEY!

With the money, Tyndale financed more copies of the New Testament, some to be burned and others to be smuggled into England. Every trick in the book was used by Tunstall to find, locate, confiscate, and destroy Tyndale's work. No machination of the court was spared. So fierce was the Bishop's campaign of destruction, there remains only one fragment of Tyndale's Bible began at Cologne and completed at Worms. The fragment remains in the Greenville Library in the British Museum. A sample of the spirit of Tyndale can be found in his "Introduction to the *Five Books of Moses*."

Which thing only moved me to translate the New Testament. Because I had perceived by experience, how that it was impossible to establish the lay people in any truth, except the Scripture were plainly laid before their eyes in their mother tongue, that they might see the process, order, and meaning of the text: for else, whatsoever truth is taught them, these enemies of all truth quench it again . . . that is with apparent reasons of sophistry, and traditions of their own making; and partly in juggling with the text, expounding it in such a sense as is impossible to gather of the text itself (Tyndale, Introduction to Five Books of Moses).

Tyndale's work was important because it was not a translation (English) of a translation (Latin), but a translation of English from the Greek. He was the master of simple, forceful literary style. Tyndale went on to translate a portion of the OT into English and to revise his English translation.

So hated was Tyndale, that he dared not return to England. The bitterness of the opposition grew so hot that Romanist were able to persuade Henry Philips to befriend and betray Tyndale into the hands of Emperor Charles V, who seized him, shackled him, and imprisoned him into a dungeon in Vilvorde Castle near Brussels. On October 6, 1536, Tyndale was brought to trial, convicted as a heretic, and condemned to death. Tied to a stake to be burned, Tyndale uttered his last prayer, "**Lord, open the King of England's eyes.**" He was then strangled and burned.

No sooner had the ashes of Tyndale's body grown cold and his spirit entered into the joy of the Lord, than the One Who causes all things to work together for good was at work answering Tyndale's prayer.

11.1.4 Myles Coverdale

The Spirit of God left Tyndale's burned body, that he rested on Myles Coverdale (1488–1569) who was a friend of **Thomas Cromwell**¹⁵, Secretary of State, and King **Henry the VIII**.

It was under the encouragement of Cromwell, that Coverdale, an Augustinian friar and graduate of Cambridge, began his translation of the NT. Within a year after Tyndale's death, Coverdale issued **the first complete Bible in English**.

Though it was not a pure translation from the Greek or Hebrew into English, people gobbled it up because they were hungry for the Scriptures. Unlike, Tyndale, Coverdale was able to obtain a license for the printing and credited it to the gracious favor of the king: "Set forth with the King's most gracious license." Unknown to the king, much of Coverdale's work was based on Tyndale's translation. With the printing of the Coverdale Bible, probably in Zurich, translations and revisions were hot items.

During his last days in Vilvorde Castle, Tyndale turned over his work to **John Rogers**. In possession of Tyndale's translations, he completed Tyndale's work from Genesis to II

¹⁵ Thomas Cromwell was as great a statesman as England has ever seen and, in his decade of power, permanently changed the course of English history. Thomas Cromwell was sympathetic to the new ideas of Martin Luther. He and Thomas Cranmer gave the king some radical advice regarding King Henry's recent denial of annulment from the Pope: if the pope does not grant the annulment, then split the English church off from the Roman church. Rather than the pope, the king would be the spiritual head of the English church. If the King wants an annulment, then the King can grant his own annulment. It was through this advice that England broke away from Rome, to establish the Anglican Church, with the King as head of the clerics. Henry married Ann Boleyn, who was already pregnant with his second daughter, Elizabeth. In 1534 Parliament denied all contributions to the Roman Church by English clergy and lay people and, in the same year, gave Henry complete control over all church appointments. Despite all this storm of activity, the English church didn't really change. The average person going to church would see almost no change in the practices or dogma of the church. It was still for all practical purposes a Catholic church; the only real difference that anybody would notice was the use of English Bibles in the church. In 1539, Henry reaffirmed his commitment to Catholic practice by passing into law the **Six Articles** (<http://www.wsu.edu/~dee/REFORM/ENGLAND.HTM>;).

Chronicles and reissued Tyndale's New Testament exactly like it had been printed without Tyndale's name on the cover. In the place of Tyndale's name, was the name "Thomas Matthew," either a pseudonym for John Rogers or William Tyndale. It was called the "**Matthew Bible.**" Henry the VIII, with the urging of Cromwell, authorized the publication and sale of the Matthew Bible, not knowing it was the work of Tyndale. Due to Tyndale's prayer, two Bibles were given free course to be sold in England, the Coverdale Bible and the Matthew Bible (all Tyndale's work).

Cromwell, a shrew politician and thoughtful churchman, recognized the disparities between the two translations and secured the services of Coverdale to prepare a revised Bible free of objections to the two already authorized seeing to it that the new translation was faithful to the text of Scripture. Though not a Greek or Hebrew scholar, Coverdale was an excellent editor in command of the English language. In 1539, he finished his work, "**The Great Bible,**" nine by fourteen inches, setting forth the King's authority.

It was the first official Church of England Bible. It was in the language of the people and set up in every church in England. Interestingly, the Great Bible was a slight revision of John Roger's "Matthew" Bible identical to the Tyndale Bible. Tyndale's work, which was publicly burned in 1526, was in 1538 published under a different name sanctioned by royal decree. The decree ordered the Great Bible to be put in every parish church in the land. The paper of 1539 declares,

"Englishmen have now in hand, in every church and place, the Holy Bible in their mother tongue, instead of the old favulous and fantastical books of the 'Tabel Round,' 'Lancelto du Lake,' 'Bevis of Hampton,' 'Guy of Warwick,' etc., and such other, whose impure filth and vain fabulosity the light of God has abolished utterly" (Hoare, p. 194: Quoted by Maurice price, the Ancestry of our English Bible, 1934, p. 278).

On the third and fifth title page are the names of Tunstall and Heath, who once burned Tyndale's Bible, endorse the publication of the Great Bible. It is estimated by one study that 90% of I John in the KJV Bible is exactly the same as Tyndale's translation of I John.

So excited were church attendees at hearing the Bible read in English, they discussed the readings in church, in homes, and in the local pubs. No sooner did a preacher start reading the Scriptures in English that churchmen began to discuss the text. This common disruption caused Henry VIII to issue a warning outlawing public reasoning admonishing the Christians to humble reverence while the Scriptures were being read

Among the Roman Catholics, there was no small stir. They wanted the head of Cromwell and the banishment of the Great Bible from England.

The Reformation in England against Romanism lacked true piety and spirituality and resulted in iconoclastic anarchy. With shrines and images and religious symbols were desecrated, the Catholics prevailed upon Henry VIII to expunge the Bible from England. Henry VIII, forced by political pressure, issued a decree that every Bible, **except the Great Bible**, be confiscated and burned (1546). Anti-Reformationists burned Bibles by the hundreds.

Though sanity prevailed after the death of Henry VIII during the short reign of Edward VI, terror struck England when Mary¹⁶, Henry's first child by Catherine of Aragon, came to the throne in 1553 and reigned until 1558. Mary earned her nickname, "**Bloody Mary**," because during her reign, more than 300 persons were burned at the stake for heresy. With England back into the hands of Roman Catholicism, Mary inaugurated a reign of terror confiscating Bibles and burning men like John Rogers and Archbishop Cranmer at the stake. But, Mary's vile persecution aroused anger and animus among Englishmen.

Coverdale and other scholars fled to the Continent. It was during this period that the English met **Beza**, the most notable biblical scholar of the day, and **Calvin** the great Swiss reformer. With their help, the English worked day and night to improve the "Great Bible," brought it up to Greek standards, and called it "**The Geneva Bible**."

After the Geneva Bible was published and printed in 1560 and dedicated to **Queen Elizabeth** (1558-1603) who gave her silent consent to its distribution. It did not replace the Great Bible, but it did become very popular among the Protestants. The popularity of Geneva Bible did not please ecclesiastical authorities. The religious authorities wanted an official acceptable version. In

¹⁶ Edward died only six years into his reign. He was succeeded by Mary (1553-1558), who was Henry's first child by Catherine of Aragon. Mary had been raised in France and was devoutly Catholic. When she assumed the throne of England, she declared England to be a Catholic country and assertively went about converting churches back to Catholic practices. Images and altars were returned, the *Book of Common Prayer* was removed, clerical celibacy was reimposed, and Eucharistic practices reaffirmed. She met opposition with steely-eyed defiance; because of the sheer number of executions of Protestant leaders, the English would eventually call her "Bloody Mary." Had she lived longer, England would probably have reverted to Catholicism for another century or so (<http://www.wsu.edu/~dee/REFORM/ENGLAND.HTM>).

1563-64, Archbishop Parker, a notable scholar, took steps to revise the Great Bible, which eventually was titled, “**The Bishops Bible.**” The authorization of the Bishop’s Bible by the bishops was enough to replace the Great Bible for public use.

While Protestant refugees fled Mary’s reign of terror and produced the Geneva Bible, the ascension of Queen Elizabeth¹⁷ to the throne forced Catholics into the background. Some migrated to the Continent causing the Romanist to invest in a Catholic Bible translated from Latin into English. Produced in Douai in 1582, the work is known as the **Douai Version.** Its title page says, “The Holie Bible, Faithfully Translated into English out of the Authentical Latin.” The translation is so literal that even its Latin confusions are faithfully carried over into English says Price, 1934, p. 267.

11.1.5 The King James Bible of 1611

During the later part of the 16th century, from the seeds of genius sprouted great literary wits such as Shakespeare, Spenser, Bacon, Hooker, Johnson, and Richar Hakluyt. These intellectuals combined with the religious forces stirred to achieve a high standard of excellence in English.

After **King James** ascended the throne in 1603, he summoned a conference to hear the grievances of the Puritans in his kingdom. A student of the Bible himself, he had a great love for Scripture. Though not sympathetic towards the Puritans, they were able to persuade him to exercise his authority to produce a Bible that was true to the Greek Text that every Englishman could read and appreciate. James saw this as an opportunity to do a popular and permanent work on the Bible.

¹⁷ Mary was succeeded by Elizabeth, the daughter of Ann Boleyn. Henry had executed Ann as an adulterer and Elizabeth was declared a bastard child. Nevertheless, she assumed the throne in 1558 and reigned until 1603. Elizabeth was perhaps the greatest monarch in the history of England, and possibly the greatest and most brilliant monarch in European history. Elizabeth understood that her country was being torn apart by the warring doctrines. While she repealed Mary’s Catholic legislation, she did not return to Edward’s more austere Protestantism. Rather, she worked out a compromise church that retained as much as possible from the Catholic church while putting into place most of the foundational ideas of Protestantism. The pope excommunicated her and this created intense internal difficulties in England. For it was incumbent on any Catholic to attempt to assassinate or overthrow her if possible, and a large part of the English nobility was Catholic. Despite this, she managed to avoid assassination because of her brilliant political skills and her pervasive network of spies. The Catholic plots on her life finally met their end when she executed her cousin, Mary, Queen of Scots, in 1587 (Ibid).

On July 22, 1604 the King summoned a committee to appoint scholars from all walks of life to participate in this monumental task. **Fifty-four scholars** were selected from Anglicans, Puritans, and churchmen. Standards were set, rules put in place, the work divided, and revisers assigned to the task. Competency was undisputed. The great task was finished in 1611, and though the work has gone through many revisions, it was a tour de force in England impacting the English world for the next 300 years. The original title page read, “The Holy Bible, Contayning the Old Testament and the New; Newly Translated out of Original Tongue; & with the former Translations diligently compared and revised by his Majesties speciall Commandment, Appointed to be read in the Churches.”

The **King James Bible** and its influence on England and America is nothing short of amazing. From the Pilgrims that landed on Plymouth Rock in 1620 to the delegates of 1787 Convention, the KJV had a profound impact on the foundation of this country.

Reformationists under the influence of John Calvin literally founded America says Dr. E. W. Smith (Eidsmoe, 1987, p. 18). Colonists lived under the shadow of the reformation and the King James Bible. Donald S. Lutz and Charles S. Hyneman reviewed 15,000 items, pamphlets, books, newspaper articles printed between 1760 and 1805 to try and discover what literary works most influenced the American Revolution and its founding principles. They discovered that while the Founding Fathers of our country quoted from writing of the Enlightenment, Whig, Common Law, the classics, and the Bible.

The most cited authors besides the Bible were Montequieu (8.3%), Blackstone (7.9%), and Locke (2.9%) and all of these men were heavily influenced by Christianity and the King James Bible. Out of the 3,154 references to other sources, Lutz and Hyneman found that 34% of their quotation for advancing liberty, law, and freedom came from the Bible (Eidsmoe, 1987, p. 51).

Consider the place the KJV Bible had in American History.

Joseph Alleine, the Puritan, expressed the attitude of the Pilgrims: “O ye saints, how you should love the Word, for by this you have been converted . . . tie it about your neck, write it upon you hand. Lay it in your bosom. When you go let it lead you, when you sleep let it keep you, when you wake let it talk with you (1975. The Golden Treasury of Puritan Quotations. Moody Press).

“The Congress of the United States approves and recommends to the people *The Holy Bible* for the use in schools,” Congress 1782, (Barton, 1989, p. 150).

“The Bible is worth all other books which have ever been printed” (Patrick Henry: Quoted by Federer, 2000, p. 289.).

“It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible” (George Washington: Quoted by Barton, 1989, p. 150).

The Bible is the cornerstone of liberty . . . perusal of the sacred volume will make us better citizens” (Thomas Jefferson: Quoted by Barton, 1989, p. 150).

“The moral principles and precepts contained in the Scriptures ought to form the basis of all our civil constitutions and laws” (Noah Webster: Quoted by Barton, 1989, p. 150).

At Gettysburg, Abraham Lincoln spoke of “. . . **that government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth.**” But, where did this phrase come from? Most of us think that Lincoln invented this expression, but he did not. The phrase came from **John Wycliffe's introduction** to his translation of the Bible in 1382: "**This Bible is for the Government of the People, by the People, and for the People.**" It was Wycliffe's vision to have a government by the people and for people instructed from God's Word.

11.1.6 Summary

The Bible on which America was founded and the Bible our Founders cherished was the King James Bible.

Let's review:

1382 Wycliffe Bible: Middle English Translation from Latin.

Tyndale Bible: a translation from Greek into English.

Coverdale Bible: The first translation of the Bible into English from Latin.

Mathew's Bible: The Work of John Rogers.

The Great Bible: The Work of Miles Coverdale

The Geneva Bible: The work of Puritans, a revision of Tyndale's Bible

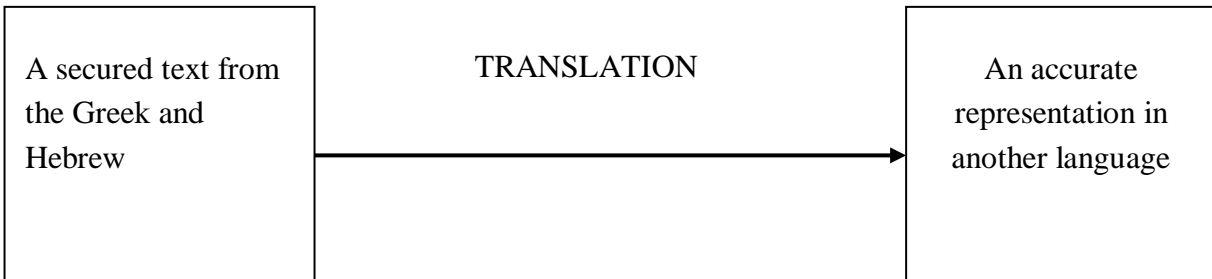
The Bishop's Bible: Replaced the Great Bible as the official Bible in England

King James Bible: A revision of Tyndale's Bible by 54 scholars.

In conclusion, the Bible is the book that "breaketh the rock in two." It cracks men's hard hearts, smashes ungodly ideas, and crushes evil entrenched in political and ecclesiastical institutions.

The next time you hold your Bible, remember that owning a Bible was only a dream for many Christians in history, and those who dared to dream and give themselves to the task of Bible translation suffered untold hardship, even burning at the stake. It is indeed a great privilege to own Bible. Let us make sure that the blood, sweat, and tears shed by Wycliffe, the Lollards, Tyndale, Coverdale, John Rogers and others was not in vain. They took great risks to publish the Bible in the language of common man. *It would be a great tragedy in history, indeed, if the Holy Bible now in the hands of common people would be treated as a common book.*

12 UNDERSTANDING TRANSLATION



12.1 Understanding Translation Types

12.1.1 Formal Equivalence (FE)

FE is the attempt by translators to achieve the highest word-for-word correspondence between Greek and English. All the words in a source text are translated and if words are added to promote readability, the words are generally italicized. Since words are the foundation of thought and communication, a formal equivalent text is much preferred over a thought-per-thought translation. A translation of this sort seeks to be accurate and true to the words of the Greek or Hebrew and allows the reader full liberty in textual interpretation.

The disadvantage of FE is that a word-for-word translation is not always readable and smooth. Idioms and slang phrases are not easily recognized and understood. Imagine how someone who does not know English would interpret “smellin’ like a rose” or “under the weather,” or “sitting on thorns,” or “easy as pie.” FE translations are not as friendly when it comes to reading through entire passages. The student may become bogged down in the analysis of words, tenses, and grammatical structures.

FE translations receive a green light for interpretation and a yellow light for readability.

12.1.2 Dynamic Equivalence (DE)

DE is the attempt by translators to be true to the thought in a sentence. DE attempts to find the dynamic cultural equivalent word or phrase that best communicates the idea of the text. The strength of DE is that the text is more readable, fluid, and flowing. These translations provide an advantage to the non-student, and to those who are seeking to become familiar with the Bible without having to wrestle through the difficulty of a word-for-word translation.

The disadvantage of DE is that the words in the English text do not always appear in the source text. In general, these added or omitted words are seldom italicized or in any way distinguished from the words of the source text. In addition, the nouns, verb tenses, and grammatical structures are often ignored in order to achieve the highest form of readability. Because this method involves a consider amount of interpretation on the part of the translator, the English reader becomes dependent on the interpretation of the translator; i.e., by reading a thought-per-thought translation, the interpreter places maximum trust in the translators for his interpretation of the text, and allows the translator to prejudice his theology.

The disadvantage of DE is that the Bible interpreter cannot depend on the English text to be equivalent with the source text and, therefore, he cannot depend on the English translation for an accurate precise interpretation of a passage.

DE translations receive a green light for readability and a yellow light for the interpretive process.

12.1.3 Paraphrases (PARS)

PARS are produced to make the English text as easy to read and understand as possible. A paraphrase translation takes a “global” or “big picture” approach to translation. PARS want the reader to catch the general idea of the passage. PARS are great for “big concepts” for the one who is trying to get the “big idea” of a story or passage in the Bible.

The disadvantage of PARS is that they cannot be depended upon for any type of interpretive work. Words that appear in PARS probably do not appear in the source text. The translators have taken great interpretive liberties to form their paraphrase translation and you should be very, very cautious about relying on them interpretive authority.

PARS receive a green light for reading through books at one setting, a yellow light for any type of Bible study, and a red, red light for any specific interpretation of a passage of Scripture.

12.2 Understanding the Source of the Textual Problem

12.2.1 The Majority Text (MT)

The MT is so-named because it is developed with the assumption that whatever appears in the majority of MSS is the best witness to the original autography; i.e., majority rules. The weakness of this view is that it fails to take into account the quality of those MSS.

12.2.2 The Textus Receptus (TR)

The TR is a Greek Text compiled by Erasmus around 1516. Erasmus used a few late MSS as the basis of his Greek Text. Because it was promoted as “the received text,” it became the preferred text for translation work. Simply put, Erasmus was unaware of the wealth of Greek MSS in the world during his time. This is the text on which the KJV is based. In general, the TR is a worthy source, but it is not the best source. For those doing interpretive work the rule is “check it out, but don’t throw it out;” that is, if the text is in question, one must look at the Critical Text.

12.2.3 The Critical Text (CT)

This Greek CT was developed by textual critics on the assumption that the older papyri, uncials, and minuscules are more accurate than the late MSS. Choice of words in the Greek text is selected by comparing manuscript with manuscript. Because textual criticism involves evaluating the history and integrity of a particular manuscript, the CT is the best source that scholarship can provide. This text can and should be relied upon as the best authority for interpretive work. Critical Texts produced by scholars like Nestle and Aland are readily available for the Greek reader.

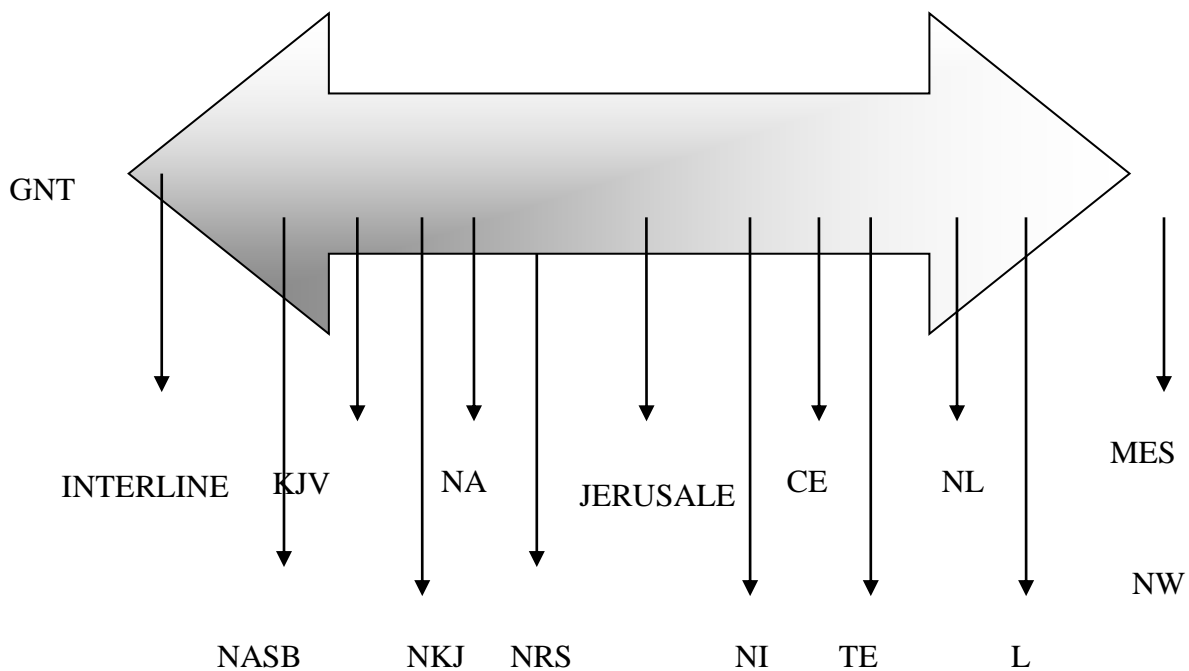
Knowledge about the basis upon which a translation is made will be helpful for reaching a precise interpretation of a particular passage for a growing Bible student, and it is absolutely essential for anyone doing scholarly work.

Therefore, the MT and TR receive green-yellow light for interpretation and the CT receives a green light for interpretive work and for textual criticism.

12.3 Translations and Money

The reader needs to understand the place of money in translation. There is no doubt that recruiting worthy scholars is expensive. At times, during the translation work, the translator will have to make a decision between absolute accuracy and sale ability of the translation he is producing. For example, Psalm 23:1 literally says, “Yahwey is my shepherd, I shall not want.” Because of the dominance of the KJV, the translator may choose to retain the King’s English and translate the text, “The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want” so people will buy the translation. If a work does not appeal to the public, it will not sell. If a translation does not sell, the investment is lost.

12.4 Understanding Translations



In this next section, we will take a look at several translations to determine their translation type, and to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. In my opinion, there is not and should not be any “official translation.” Each translation has value, and each has limitations. Ultimate authority

rests on Hebrew and Greek source texts. Once you know the strength and weaknesses of each translation, you can draw from it intelligently.

While all translations can be rated for accuracy and for readability, and while most have value, there are two translations that should be avoided.

First, the New World Translation published by the Watch Tower Society should be avoided because the translation expresses a deliberate bias towards Arianism, and is, therefore, considered corrupt by Greek scholars.

The second translation that should be avoided is the Living Bible written by Ken Taylor and endorsed by Billy Graham. It expresses an intentional distortion towards orthodoxy, but at times it bears no resemblance to the source text. The LB makes little or no attempt to accurately represent the GNT. Because these two translations are off the charts, they should be avoided.

12.5 The Interlinear

An interlinear is a word-for-word translation from the Greek into another language. The advantage of an interlinear is that of extreme accuracy. Interlinears are a necessity for the serious Bible student because the translators are making an honest attempt to interpret every word into English.

The disadvantage of an interlinear translation is that they are not very readable or smooth. Look at this word-for-word translation of John 3:16, and you will see the difficulty of reading interlinears. Interlinears are not made for reading, but for Bible study.

Ou[twj ga.r hvga,phsen o` qeo.j to.n ko,smon(w[ste to.n ui`o.n to.n monogenh/
e;dwken(i[na pa/j o` pisteu,wn eivj auvto.n mh. avpo,lhtai avllV e;ch| zwh.n
aivw,nion

Thus for loved God the world, so as the Son the unique He gave, in order that everyone, the one believing into Him not may perish BUT may have life eternal.

12.6 The New American Standard Bible (NASB)

The New American Standard Bible was the project of the Lockman Foundation, which sought to produce an accurate, readable translation. The NASB is an accurate translation and the verbs and

nouns more true to the original Greek than any other translation. This is an excellent translation for the serious Bible student.

The NASB, however, does not have the majesty of the KJV. Its drive for accuracy has led to some grammatical and syntactical peculiarities when reading aloud to audiences. The Psalms are stiff. It is my first choice for a study Bible and my second or third choice for public reading.

12.7 The King James Bible (KJV)

In the 16th century, England was reeling from the earthquake of the Reformation and England became a battleground between Catholics and Protestants. But with the death (beheading) of Mary Queen of Scots, a Catholic, England banished the rule of Rome. In the 17th century, the issue changed. The battle for supremacy raged between the entrenched Anglicans and the radical Puritans who sought freedom from the political and religious structures of the Anglican Church.

The KJV originated with the Puritans. One day a handful of Puritans ambushed King James, a protestant who was not sympathetic to the Puritans and who was liberally minded toward the Catholics in his realm, with a petition signed by over 1000 clergymen. They respectfully petitioned his majesty to produce a new translation of the Bible. The old versions were archaic and cumbersome. To their surprise, the king agreed.

In 1604, King James commissioned 54 Bible translators to translate the Bible into modern English that was agreeable to the Anglicans and the Puritans and the committee of scholars.

When the King James Bible was first published in 1611 it was literally a tour-de-force in the English-speaking world. Within two years the editors made over 400 changes in grammar and spelling to the 1611 version.

Since then, the KJV has gone through many editions, and most all of them have been unwelcome by some sect. Though the KJV has gone through many revisions, its impact on individuals and the world is nothing short of profound. Millions have read the KJV and come to know Christ as a result of this work. Even today, the KJV is read and memorized and loved by thousands. There is no doubt in my mind a person can read and study the KJV, become a Christian, and live a godly life pleasing to the Lord.

The advantage of the KJV is that it was an honest, collective attempt by the best scholars in England to produce an accurate, modern translation of the Bible in the king's English. Because

the KJV was based on the text of Erasmus, which contained notable translation errors, and because English has changed, and because the KJV has so many archaic expressions, there is a need to be aware of its weaknesses.

The first weakness of the KJV is that it was translated from the TR. As mentioned earlier, Erasmus used 7 MSS, most of them late, to compile his Greek NT of 1516. It is reported that his work was "thrown together rather than edited." For example: Erasmus was unable to obtain a Greek text of Revelation 22:16-21, and therefore, produced a Greek text by translating from Latin back into the Greek.

A second weakness with the KJV is that it was based on the English of the 17th century. Consequently, it contains many archaic expressions: Consider the following sample of the KJV archaic expressions that need updating into modern English (KJV in black italics):

afflict soul should be changed to "fast" in Leviticus 23:27, 32 (Psalms 35:13).

blains should be translated "blisters" in Exodus 9:9.

cover his feet should be translated "go to the toilet", as in I Samuel 24:3.

conversation should be translated "conduct" in Philippians 1:27, I Peter 3:1, "citizenship" as in Philippians 3:20.

Lust of concupiscence should be rendered "sensual lusts" in 1 Thessalonians 4:5.

dissimulation should be changed to "hypocrisy", as in Galatians 2:13.

doting should be translated "sick", as in I Timothy 6:4.

gay clothing should be translated "expensive clothing" in James 2:3.

Holy Ghost should be rendered "Holy Spirit."

the flesh lusteth against the Spirit should be changed to "opposes" or "battles against" in Galatians 5:17

knew should be translated "had sexual relations with" in Genesis 4:1.

perfect should be translated "spiritually mature" 1 Corinthians 13:10, II Timothy 3:17.

quicken should be rendered "make alive" in **Romans 8:11**.

rain should be translated "pour" in Hosea 10:12.

suffer should be rendered "let, allow, permit" in Mark 10:14, Revelation 11:9.

superfluity of naughtiness needs to be replaced with "abundance of evil" in James 1:21.

tongues should be equated with "foreign languages" Mark 16:17, I Corinthians 14.

Does this mean a believer should not read or cherish the KJV? No! It simply means that when you are doing technical studies, you need **to secure the text** and supply a correct translation of the passage before engaging in interpretation. The KJV has served humanity well, is still a good translation, but maybe it should be graciously retired with honors in the minds of some advocates.

12.8 The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

The initial edition of the RSV was too hot and too controversial for the conservative Christian community. It maintained a liberal bias, which challenged the virgin birth of Christ and blood atonement. But, many questionable renderings have been repaired in recent editions. It still has a clumsy syntax in some places and the psalms are not poetically rendered and do not lend themselves well for responsive reading. The translators of the RSV were driven to be politically correct and gender inoffensive. The NRSV is the property of the National Council of Churches and its translators have removed some of the offensive language, but its attempt to be gender-inclusive has led to some problems. For example, it changes "sons" to "children" in Galatians 3 lowering the status of women to that of children, and it changes "man" to "parent" in Deuteronomy 8:5.

Note: The translators NRSV, the NIV, and ICB/NCV and the Contemporary English Version (CEV) are experiencing cultural pressure to feminize the Bible from the liberal branch of Christianity. Gender-inclusive language became an important issue that arose with the birth of modern feminism in the mid-1960s. Feminists began to object to the male dominance that they perceived in English usage. In their view, it reflected a patriarchal system that they wished to overthrow. Feminists saw the continued use of masculine words like 'man,' 'manmade,' and 'he' as exclusive masculine terms that could no longer properly be used as gender-inclusive terms to refer to a person whether male or female.

Every word of the Bible and its gender specific references are inspired! To neuter masculine references is a perversion of translation! While we need to be sensitive to our lovely sisters in the faith, translators should seek to be accurate in their rendering of gender-orientated passages even if it offends the feminists. Changing “sons” to “children” and “father” to “parent” and “he” to “they” or “he” to “she” or “man” to “human race” or “brothers” for “brothers and sisters” or “son” to “child” and the attempt to eliminate “son of man” in the OT violates the integrity of the text, translation ethics, and perverts the gospel of Jesus Christ. Translators need to be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18), not the spirit of feminism.

12.9 The New International Version (NIV)

The NIV is a paraphrase that chose to deliberately compromise accuracy for readability. It is one of the most readable and popular Bibles today. It is an excellent translation into very good contemporary English and lends itself well to public reading. The translators intended this version to be used in the English-speaking world around the globe. Adults and children, and Canadians and Australians can use this version. This is my favorite version for public reading.

Like all translations, the NIV has weaknesses. Because it is a paraphrase, it does not lend itself well to memorization or for serious Bible study. Because it compromises accuracy for readability, the Bible student must make an effort to understand the Greek words behind the translation of the NIV. At times, the NIV translators make interpretive decisions in translation that demonstrate a slight theological bias toward premillennial dispensationalism. For example:

The NIV omits the word “lo” or “behold” 37 times out of its 62 occurrences in Matthew. The word “propitiation” in Romans 3:24 was enfeebled by using the word “atonement” in the NIV.

The phrase “At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky” is replaced with “And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven” in Matthew 24:30.

The NIV omits the term “immediately” in Mark 5 times.

“All the words of this life” are replaced with “the full message of this life” in Acts 5:20.

The long sentence in Ephesians 1:3-14 is broken into 8 sentences in the NIV.

The term “dikaioo” (justify) is translated “declare righteous” in Romans 2:13 and 3:20 mitigating the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to the believer.

The word “flesh” is translated “forefather” in Romans 4:1.

The word “old man” is incorrectly translated “old self” in Romans 6:6 causing the reader to turn inward instead of to his historic connection with Adam.

The word “in” is replaced with “controlled” and the word “flesh” is replaced with the word “sin nature” in Romans 8:8 leading the believer to conclude the conflict in question is between a new nature and an old nature instead of between the regenerate and the unregenerate.

The phrase “the Lord is the avenger” is replaced with “the Lord will punish men” in 1 Thessalonians 4:6.

In Hebrews 11:11, the phrase “power to conceive seed” (GNT) was changed to “and Sarah herself was barren-- was enabled to become a father” in the NIV.

The word “distress” or “suffering” is translated “tribulation” in Revelation 7:14.

The word “they lived” is translated “they came to life” in Revelation 20:4.

If a Bible student understands the weakness of the translation, and will do his due diligence to pursue the text in Bible study, the NIV can be used with discretion.

12.10 The Good News Bible (GNB)

The GNB also called “Today’s English Version” reads at about a 6th grade level in English. It is an easy translation to read, a “masterpiece” of modern linguistic study with an emphasis on colloquial language. The rule of clarity was the driving force behind this translation. For people who do not read English well or have a small English vocabulary, the GNB is probably a good choice for reading.

The Good News Bible, however, eliminates traditional religious vocabulary and softens some of the theological words of Scripture, which can leave the reader illiterate regarding great theological concepts.

12.11 The Living Bible (LB)

The LB is the work of Kenneth N. Taylor, a father who began his work in 1954 in order to make the Bible come alive to his children in family devotions. The LB was completed in 1970. The LB

is undoubtedly dynamic, but the author adds thousands of words to his translation that do not appear in the original text. He was quite tendentious in changing words to conform to his end-times perspective, sexual orientation, political policies, and theological bent. The LB mixes his own interpretation with the text on about every page making an objective study of the LB impossible. The preface says “its purpose is to say as exactly as possible what the writers of the Scriptures meant, and to say it simply, expanding where necessary for clear understanding by the modern reader.” This is exactly what all translations are supposed to do. When the KJV expanded added words to make the text clear they put them in italics. There are no italics in the LB. When reading the LB, the reader need not seek to interpret the text because the LB interprets the text for you.

For example, what is wrong with this rendering of John 3:16?

For the one, infinite, personal, triune Spirit so compassionately cared for mankind, men and women, rich and poor, young and old, that He prepared a gift for the world, His one and only unique, innocent Son, that those among mankind that trust on, rely on, and depend on Him should not be destroyed at the Last Judgment, but live happily ever after (mine).

This is not how Ken Taylor rendered John 3:16, but it is representative of the kind of liberty he exercised in producing the LB. Contrast the following:

^{NAS} Matthew 5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

^{NLT} Matthew 5:3 "God blesses those who realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is given to them.

^{NAS} John 1:13 who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

^{NLT} John 1:13 They are reborn! This is not a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan-- this rebirth comes from God.

^{NAS} Ephesians 1:7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace,

^{NLT} Ephesians 1:7 He is so rich in kindness that he purchased our freedom through the blood of his Son, and our sins are forgiven.

^{NAS} Ephesians 2:9 not as a result of works, that no one should boast.

^{NLT} Ephesians 2:9 Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.

Though Tyndale House was embarrassed over the criticism of the LB, it sold over 40 million copies. They had the money to hire 40 translators to produce the New Living Translation (NLT). Though the LB errors on the side of orthodoxy, I cannot recommend it for any kind of reading or Bible study. In my opinion, the LB is so convoluted it should not be read in public or used as a study Bible. However, much of the slop found in the LB has been cleaned up in the NLT, but a severe warning is still deserved.

12.12 The New World Translation (NWT)

The NWT originates with the Watch Tower Society (Jehovah Witnesses) and is so offensive to the Christian community in its bias against the deity of Christ that the translation is considered corrupt; i.e., a deliberate distortion of the text. The guiding principle of the translation is doctrinal conformity to the tenets of the Watchtower society. A few examples should suffice:

^{GNT} **John 1:1** VEn avrch/| h=n o` lo,goj(kai. o` lo,goj h=n pro.j to.n qeo,n(kai. qeo.j h=n o` lo,gojÅ

^{NIV} **John 1:1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

^{NWT} **John 1:1** In the beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god.

The NWT translators have correctly observed that there is no definite article before God, but chose to render the text “a god” to diminish the deity of Christ. It is true that in translating an anarthrous noun it is appropriate to insert the indefinite article “a”. But, when using an intransitive verb, the language must have a way of identifying the subject of the sentence.

In Greek, the subject is distinguished from the predicate nominative by the insertion of the definite article. For example: What is the subject of the phrase $\text{qeo.j h=n o` lo,goj}$? The subject of the sentence, *o logos*, is identified by the article. Theos lacks the article because that would confuse the subject. If Theos had the definite article and logos lacked the definite article, then Theos would be the subject. If both had the article, then the author would be stating a dynamic equivalence. Second, the absence of the article points to the quality of a thing. Theos lacks the article because the Spirit wants us to understand the quality of Christ. Third, to render Jesus “a god” is inappropriate because it either deifies a man or diminishes the deity of Christ. The NWT chose the latter.

In John 1:14, the NWT translates this phrase, “So the Word became flesh and resided among us, and we had a view of his glory, a glory such as belongs to an only-begotten son from a father; and he was full of undeserved kindness and truth.” The word “resided” is better translated “tabernacled.” The translation “a father” makes it look like a comparison rather than a statement. The phrase “undeserved kindness” should be translated “grace”. The NWT totally misses the tabernacle analogy. Just as YHWH dwelt among ancient Israel in the tabernacle, Theos is now dwelling among men in and through the person of Christ. Just as the shekinah glory dwelled in the tabernacle, the shekinah glory now dwells in Christ. Just as God’s character holds two attributes, grace and truth, in dynamic balance as was so perfectly illustrated in the Ark of the Covenant by the symbols of the mercy seat and the cherubim, so Christ was full of grace and truth. The NWT deliberately derails this truth.

When Jesus debated the Pharisees and declared that before Abraham, “I Am.” He was asserting essence with YHWH; i.e., He was Jehovah manifest in the flesh. So convinced that Jesus was identifying Himself as YHWH the Jews took up stones to stone him. The NWT mitigates the obvious when they translate the text, “Most truly I say to you, Before Abraham came into existence, I have been.” Since the Greek equivalent to YHWH is “I Am” (*evgw. eivmi,*), the NWT translation is unacceptable.

In John 20:28, the NWT renders Thomas statement as follows: “In answer Thomas said to him: “My Lord and my God!” Here the title “Lord” and “God” are render as a spurious, emotional, exclamation rather than a confession of faith. The truth of the matter is that if Jesus defeated death, He is the Lord and He is God.

12.13 The Message Bible (MES)

When it comes to corrupting the text, no one has excelled as well as Eugene Peterson, the author of The Message Bible published by Navigator Press. Just as you think things can't get any worse, they do. The Message Bible claims to be a "contemporary rendering of the Bible from the original languages, crafted to present its tone, rhythm, events, and ideas in everyday language." But is it? Let's look at this "rendering," because I dare not call it a translation:

In the Shema, the most important text to a Jew, Peterson decided to leave out YHWH (LORD), used two times, when he translated Deuteronomy 6:4 this way: "God, our God! God the one and only?" Do you think a rabbi could accept this Shema that left out the most important name in history twice?

Remember Psalm 23, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: Peterson renders it this way: "You serve me a six-course dinner."

Compare the following:

^{KJV} Psalm 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

^{MES} Psalm 1:1 How well God must like you—

You don't hang out at Sin Saloon

You don't don't slink along Dead-End Road

You don't go to Smart-mouth College.

Now, I ask you: Is "Sin Saloon," "Dead-End Road" and "Smart-mouth college a faithful rendering of the Hebrew text? I don't think so.

^{NAS} John 3:5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

^{MES} John 3:5 Jesus said, "You're not listening. Let me say it again. Unless a person submits to this original creation—the 'wind hovering over the water' creation, the

invisible moving the visible, a baptism into new life—its not possible to enter God's kingdom.

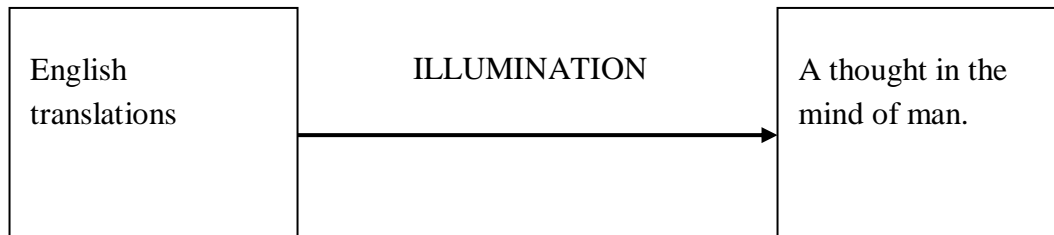
How did the translator get the above rendering from John 3:5, we may never know.

^{KJV} Matthew 5:4 Blessed *are* they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

^{MES} Matthew 5:4 You're blessed when you feel you've lost what is most dear to you. Only then can you be embraced by the One most dear to you.

In conclusion, while the work of translation remains a challenge, the educated Christian should not possess undue alarm over the translation peculiarities, but have the firm confidence that with so many helps and aids available today, he can engage in the work of reading, interpretation, and application with skill and accuracy. But, in so doing the student must understand the strengths and weaknesses of translations and do the work of Bible study with discernment.

13 SEEKING ILLUMINATION



13.1 Introduction

We have been studying, “How our Bible came to us.” Today, our topic is the doctrine of illumination. When we pray, we speak to God; when we read His word, God speaks to us. But, understanding and appreciating the Bible is not that easy, otherwise, more people would read it. Pollster George Gallup Jr. has long referred to America as a "nation of biblical illiterates." Only four in 10 Americans know that Jesus delivered the Sermon on the Mount. A majority of citizens cannot name the four Gospels of the New Testament. Only three in 10 teenagers know why Easter is celebrated. Two-thirds of Americans believe there are few, if any, absolute principles to direct human behavior.

A Barna Research Group survey conducted among a random probability sample of 641 adults. Among Christians in the survey, 22% thought there actually is a Book of Thomas in the Bible, and 13% said they did not know whether Thomas is a book of the Bible or not. 65% correctly stated that Thomas is not a book of the Bible. 61% knew that Jonah is a book of the Bible, while 27% said it is not, and 12% had no idea. Among non-Christians, only 29% knew that the Book of Jonah could be found in the Bible, while 27% said it could not, and 34% were not sure. Three quarters of the Christians surveyed knew that the Book of Isaiah is located in the O.T., while 11% thought it is in the N.T., and 13% did not know where Isaiah could be found. Half of the non-Christians knew that Isaiah is located in the O.T. 61% of all Americans named Bethlehem as the city where Jesus Christ was born. Among non-Christians, 55% knew Christ was born in

Bethlehem. Seven out of 10 Christians answered this question correctly, while 16% named Jerusalem as Jesus' birthplace, 8% said it was Nazareth, and 6% did not hazard a guess.

According to the poll, the question that gave the most people trouble was "Is the expression 'God helps those who help themselves' in the Bible?" Only 38% of all Christians correctly stated that that phrase cannot be found anywhere in the Scriptures. Forty-two percent thought that this was a Biblical quotation, and 20% had no idea. Among non-Christians surveyed, 40% said that axiom was part of the Word, 26% knew it was not, and 34% were not sure.

For this reason the psalmist prayed, "Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law" (Psalm 119:18). The word "wondrous" describes something beyond human power; i.e., something difficult to understand. The Word "wondrous" can also be translated "surpassing" or "extraordinary." David realized the Torah was an extraordinary treasure, but he also realized that he lacked the ability to mine its wealth. When he prays, "Open my eyes" he uses a Piel imperative asking (commanding) God to act with extra intensity and to pry open the eyes of his understanding. The word "behold" is a Hiphal (passive) verb making David the recipient of God's action. David wants God to act with extra intensity on him and make him to see spiritual treasures from God's Word. This action is called the doctrine of illumination.

13.2 Definition

To *illuminate* means to *shed light on something, to explain it, to make it clear*. Theologically, the doctrine of illumination can be defined as "the work of the Holy Spirit in which he enlightens men's minds to understand and appreciate truth about God as revealed in His Word.

We must distinguish between illumination and revelation. Revelation is the act of God whereby he revealed His thoughts to biblical authors in times past. Illumination is the present work of the Holy Spirit shedding light on the Scriptures causing us to understand and appreciate God's Revelation today.

We must distinguish between illumination and inspiration. Inspiration is the work of the Holy Spirit wherein He guided the biblical authors to write the text. Illumination is the work of the Spirit on the human mind wherein He helps the believer to understand and appreciate the text.

13.3 The Need for Illumination

Many people including scholars worry about corruption of the biblical text as scribes copied their MSS. But, this “concern” is really unnecessary. As we have indicated earlier, textual critics are 98% sure of every word in the NT and of the 2% they are not sure of, they have an educated hunch of what word should be used. And, of the 2% of the Greek text which is still doubted, not one variance affects any doctrine or precept of faith that is not fully asserted in an undisputed text.

While there is a 2% possibility of corruption in one’s interpretation because of an unsecured text, there is a 98% possibility of corruption in one’s interpretation because of error within in the interpreter. Careless observation, faulty reasoning, hasty study, false motives, busyness with the job, and “love of the world” is a far greater problem than the lack of scholarship employed to secure a proper translation.

13.3.1 The Need Among the Unregenerate

13.3.1.1 Blinded by nature

Romans 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,

In this passage, Paul is not saying some believers are in the flesh and some are in the Spirit. He is contrasting the unregenerate man with the regenerate man. The unregenerate are said to be in the flesh (sarx). The regenerate are said to be in the Spirit. The term “mind” refers not to the brain, but to one’s thought life. The fleshly mind is the unregenerate thought life of the unbeliever. The spiritual mind refers to regenerated thought life of the believer. The unbeliever has no capacity to understand Revelation. The believer, on the otherhand, has a capacity to know and appreciate truth.

Ephesians 4:17-18 This I say therefore, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart

The mind (noo,j) of the Gentile (unregenerate) is said to be *futile* (mataio,thti: empty, void, and weak). His understanding (dianoia) or purpose and capacity to know and appreciate spiritual

truth is *darkened* (evskotwme,noi) and without light. He is “excluded” (alienated) from the life of God because of ignorance, the lack of truth present in his thought life. His heart is calloused and hard. Could anything be more pathetic?

1 Corinthians 2:14-15 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. But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man.

Paul contrasts the “natural man” with the “spiritual man” The word “natural man” (yuciko.j de. a;nqrwpoj) refers to unregenerate, earth-centered men—a man without God’s Spirit living in him. The word “spiritual” (pneumatiko.j)¹⁸ refers to Christians who have been enlightened by the Spirit regarding the gospel of Christ. To the unregenerate, the things of the Word of God are “foolishness” (mwri,a). We get the word “moron” from this word. The word “appraised” (avnakri,netai) means “to judge.” The translators chose “appraise” because they thought the term “to judge” was too harsh¹⁹. The idea here is that the regenerate has the capacity to know, understand, and discern truth. The unregenerate do not.

13.3.1.2 Blinded by Satan

2 Corinthians 4:4 in whose case the god of this world (aeon) has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

The phrase “in whose case” refers us back to “those who are perishing” in the previous verses because they have not embraced the gospel. Not only does the unbeliever lack the capacity to

¹⁸ By using the word “spiritual,” Paul is not using the term to refer to secular, religious men who are deep subjective and into the contemplation of self or “truth” or who seek to explore the spiritual world. The spiritual man is one who has the Spirit of God.

¹⁹ The word “appraised” is the word “to judge”. It was chosen to avoid the appearance of contradicting Matthew 7:1 where Jesus said, “Do not judge” (kri,nete). Jesus insists that his disciples stop acting as hypocritical judges frivolously condemning people while condoning sin in their own life. He is not, however, saying that God’s people are not to judge the merits of human behavior. Paul insists that that the spiritual man judges all things; i.e., he evaluates the good and the evil, the truth and the lie, the right and the wrong of every word and action.

understand the gospel of Christ, there is a diabolical spirit called the “god of this age” who has mobilized his forces to blind the perception of the unbelieving in “this age.” “This age” refers not to the “world” but to the current aeon, “the age of darkness” as contrasted with the “age to come,” the kingdom of God. As we have learned from watching the Gulf wars on T.V., the first strategy of war is to blind the enemy by destroying his radar so he cannot see incoming jets. Satan follows this same strategy and in some way has the ability to blind the minds of unbelievers, not perfectly or completely, but partially and effectively.

13.3.1.3 Blinded by Judgment

Isaiah 6:9 And He said, "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on listening, but do not perceive; Keep on looking, but do not understand.'

Romans 11:25 For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;

From these verses we see that a judgment from God fell on Israel to keep them from seeing the truth. Because the nation received so much light from the Torah and from prophetic ministry and did not respond to it, God announced a special judgment on the whole of that nation. This blindness continues to this day keeping them as a whole from embracing the truth of the gospel.

If you have ever tried your hand at sharing your faith and wonder why the person to whom you are speaking can't embrace the truth, the problem is not you, but blindness and hardness of heart.

13.3.2 Illumination Among Believers

1 Peter 1:1-2 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen ² according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in fullest measure.

John 1:4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

As we look at the condition of the unbeliever, we wonder how anyone can ever be saved. We must ask, “How in the world can an ignorant, blind, fleshly, hard-hearted sinner ever become a saint?” The answer does not lie within man. It lies in the illuminating work of the Spirit of God.

Peter addresses a group of Christians whom he calls “aliens” and identifies the process whereby each was able to embrace the love of God.

13.3.2.1 Chosen

Peter called the believers God’s “chosen” (evkletoi/j). This is where we get the word *elect*. Peter says that believers were chosen according to the foreknowledge of God. In other words, God’s election of believers happened in the past and is wrapped up in the knowledge of God. It is God Who knows and God Who chooses. It is the Spirit who sanctifies and works to illuminate God’s elect in present time.

13.3.2.2 Sanctification

The word “sanctification” comes from the Greek word *holy* (evn a`giasmw/| pneu,matoj). Sanctification is one of the words connected to the doctrine of illumination. To be sanctified is to be set apart for a special work of Spirit, a work that overcomes natural blindness enabling one to see and understand the gospel. The ability to see the truth and trust the truth does not come from man or originate with man. It comes from the Spirit. God chooses all believers. The Spirit sanctifies all believers.

Because the believer is chosen, God sets the pre-Christian aside for a special work of grace to illuminate him and empower him to embrace the gospel of Christ. Once a person is a believer, he receives sight, the ability to see the truth. But, one who has sight must also have light! Light is of no value to a blind man. A person must first receive life so he can receive light. When a person has life, he is said to be born again or regenerated.

13.3.3 The Need for Illumination Among Believers

It is possible for a believer to have an evil eye and thus be unable to understand truth: “The lamp of the body is the eye; if therefore your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness” (Matthew 6:22-23)! Jesus was discussing spiritual vision, treasures upon earth vs. treasures in heaven. The one who sets his affections on earthly matters instead of heavenly matters, has an evil eye. An evil eye is one that lacks 20-20 vision about the meaning and purpose of life. It is possible to become so wrapped with making a living on this earth and raising a family in this life that he cannot read or enjoy the Scripture with any satisfaction.

It is possible for a believer to have a carnal mind and be unable to understand truth: “And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ For ye are yet carnal: for whereas *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men” (1 Corinthians 3:1-3)? The “you” here is the Corinthian church.

The word “fleshly” is the word from which we get the word “carnal” (sarki,noij). The word “spiritual” (pneumatikoi/j) is an adjective derived from the word “spirit.” The “carnal” are contrasted with the “spiritual” by the strong adversative, “but” (avllV, alla).

Paul is not saying that the Corinthian believers have a carnal nature, but that they have adopted carnal thinking. The issue is state of mind (2:16-3:1) and the ability to receive spiritual instruction, not the believer’s constitution. Because the Corinthians were earthly minded they were thinking like “natural” men instead of spiritual men. It is quite possible to be carnally minded as a believer and not be able to understand spiritual truth.

It is possible for a believer to be sluggish and unable to receive truth: “Concerning him we have much to say, and *it is* hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing” (Hebrews 5:11). The word “dull of hearing” means “sluggish” or “dull.” Some of us own a “sluggish” lawnmower. By *sluggish* we mean its time for a tune up. Likewise, when the believer’s spiritual carburetor gets clogged up, he becomes sluggish and unable to understand truth. Another image before us is that of a dull knife. When a believer’s spiritual senses are dull, he can’t slice even the butter of truth. The author admits he has some difficult spiritual truth to share, but their sluggish dull state hindered their ability to receive the deeper things of God.

It is possible for a believer to walk in darkness and have no need of truth: “If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth” (1 John 1:6). Sometimes you go to church and say, “You know, I didn’t get anything out of the message today,” or “The Sunday school class was boring,” or “Gee, I wish we had a different preacher today.” Now before you lay the blame on the preacher for not understanding the Bible, maybe you ought to do a self-check and examine your own heart. He who has sight must also have light.

Just as light is no value to a blind man, sight is no value to a Christian man living in darkness. According to 1 John 1:6, it is possible to have sight and not have light; to have life and be in the darkness. One needs life and light to understand the Scripture. Walking in the light involves fellowship with God (1:7). The assumption is that if one is not associating with God’s people, he

is not walking in the light. If one is not walking in the light and not fellowshiping with the Christians, his ability to understand and appreciate Scripture is hampered.

13.4 The Possibility of Illumination

13.4.1 Job 32:7-10

One of the friends of Job who came to comfort Job was a young man named Elihu. Because Elihu was a polite, well-trained young man, he let the elders speak and then listened to them try to answer Job's questions. When he realized the elders had not rooted out the rat in Job's cellar, he spoke.

"I thought age should speak, and increased years should teach wisdom. But there *is* a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty gives *him* understanding. The abundant *in years* may not be wise, Nor may elders understand justice. So I say, 'Listen to me, I too will tell what I think.'

Elihu says that man has a spirit (*x:Wr*), ruwach). A man's spirit is what makes him different from animals. You can train animals and teach them to do tricks, but you cannot teach them to reason. It is this rational spirit that separates man from the animal kingdom.

The word "breath" (*hm'v'n*), neshamah) or "inspiration" (KJV) is not talking so much about "inspiration" of Scripture as much as it is referring to "illumination" of the human mind. The word "understanding" is a Hiphal imperfect verb (*-nE)ybiT.*) informing us that God causes man's spirit to understand. It is the breath of the Almighty that gives a man understanding.

13.4.2 Hebrews 10:32-36

But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, ³³ partly, by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. ³⁴ For you showed sympathy to the prisoners, and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one. ³⁵ Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a

great reward. ³⁶ For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.

The author compares salvation to being enlightened. Right after these people were illuminated about the truth of Christ, “all hell” broke loose sort of speak. Suffering, conflicts, reproaches, and tribulation erupted from the ashes of the great abyss. But, despite their conflicts, these believers visited prisoners, endured fraudulent seizures of their homes while maintaining a confidence they would inherit a better, eternal home in the world to come. Do you see the word “enlightened” (NASB)? The word “enlightened” comes from the Greek participle “*fwτισqe,ntej*”. We get the words “photo” and “photograph” from this word. It can easily be translated “illuminated.” Illumination begins with salvation. One a person comes to know Christ; the Spirit begins His work of illumination.

13.4.3 John 1:9

There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.

Here Jesus is called the light of the world. John is not saying that every man born has a spark of divinity in him that enables him to contact God. He is saying that Jesus is the light of the world because only Jesus has demonstrated that He has the power over death. In His death, burial, and resurrection, Jesus defeated death and thus solved man’s fundamental problem. His life is, therefore, the hope of the world. That life is like a lighthouse giving hope to every ship blinded by the storm.

The light came into this world and enlightens every man who “received him” (John 1:12). Here Jesus is the agent of illumination.

13.4.4 John 16:13-16

"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. ¹⁴ "He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose *it* to you. ¹⁵ "All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said, that He takes of Mine, and will disclose *it* to you."

On the final night of Jesus’ life, He informed the disciples that he was going away. Though they did not know it, many of them would be preachers and teachers of the Word of God. Some

would become instruments of inspiration and authors of Scripture. How could they possibly remember all the details in his sermons? The text says they would be given the Holy Spirit, and that the Holy Spirit would disclose to them what to say. Here the Holy Spirit is seen as the instrument of illumination.

The “you” in this verse refers to the Apostles, and secondarily to Christians throughout the centuries. The Apostles received “new light” or revelation from God in the first century. Christians receive light about what the Apostles wrote in the centuries to follow. To use this verse to claim “new revelation” is being given to Christians today is flawed. Practically all of these so-called claims of revelation today are power plays designed to control the weak and unsettled. During the writing of this work, the Episcopalian Church ordained a homosexual priest to their bishopric. They justified their action based on the text in John where Jesus said the Spirit would guide them unto all truth. The truth He was supposedly guiding them to was the acceptance of homosexuality as normal behavior. Nothing could be further from the truth. The only language the Spirit of God uses is the language of the Word of God: “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, *it is* because *there is* no light in them” (Isaiah 8:20). Revelation must be consistent with Revelation.

13.4.5 1 Corinthians 2:9-13

⁹ 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." ¹⁰ For to us God revealed *them* through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. ¹¹ For who among men knows the *thoughts* of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the *thoughts* of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. ¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, ¹³ 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.

In this passage, Paul admits to the Corinthians that the message they received from Paul was not great because Paul was such a great orator, but it was great because it was grounded in truth. Paul did not want the faith of Corinthians to rest on the wisdom of men, but to rest on the

wisdom and power of God. And what is the source of the great gospel message? Paul said it came by revelation through the Spirit. The word “revelation” is the Greek word *apokalupto* (avpeka,luyen). It means to expose or to reveal. The “we” here is not Christians, but the apostles. It is the Spirit who searched the mind of God and revealed the gospel through the apostles. Paul did not get his powerful message from the spirit of the world, but the Spirit of God. His message did not come from men nor did it originate with men. His “spiritual thoughts” were expressed in “spiritual words” which were taught to him by the Spirit. Paul then reminds them that the unregenerate man does not have the capacity to understand spiritual thoughts communicated through spiritual words. Spiritual thoughts and words are foolish to the non-Christian. Spiritual truth can only be understood by one who can “spiritually appraise” things from God. The word “appraised” should be translated “judged” or “examined.” The adverb “spiritually” modifies the verb indicating that only a regenerated person has the capacity to discern spiritual truth, that is, the Word of God.

13.4.6 1 John 2:19-20

¹⁹ They went out from us, but they were not *really* of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but *they went out*, in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us. ²⁰ But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know.

Apparently, in John’s day, the church was experiencing some of those blessed departures. John reminds this community that people left their messianic congregation because they were unregenerate men who did not belong in the company of God’s true people. He then says, “You have an anointing from the Holy One.” The KJV translates the word “anointing” as “unction.” The word “unction” (*cri/sma*) comes from the word *charisma* from which we get the word “charismatic.” All believers are charismatic beings. The word “know” (*oi;date*) is not a future tense, but a perfect tense. He is not saying that believers have an anointing to know all future things. He is saying that because believers are charismatic, they have already come to know the facts of gospel history.

13.4.7 1 John 2:27

And as for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you (plural); but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.

Here we have the noun *charisma* (anointing) again. Every believer has the charisma, and therefore, every believer is a charismatic. I do not mean that some believers have the gift of the Holy Spirit and some do not. All believers have the charisma. By this I do not mean every believer is a cultural charismatic, but that every believer is a biblical charismatic. By this I do not mean every believer has a charismatic personality. Most do not. Some of us are duller than a paint job on a junkyard Studebaker. It simply means all believers have the Spirit of God or they are not Christians.

When the text says that you have no need any one teach you, he is not saying Christians do not need Bible teachers. He is saying that God's revelation, which came from the Spirit is so complete, believers are without excuse in knowing truth. He is saying that because the Christian community received that Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, the church would have no future need of outside instruction on spiritual matters (note the present, active subjective verb of to teach). With the arrival of truth in history in the gospel and with the anointing of the Spirit the church experienced sufficiency.

13.4.8 Psalm 19:7-8

The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. ⁸The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.

The terms "law," "testimony," "precepts" and "commandment" are terms identifying the Word of God. Notice that the Word of God is "perfect," "sure," "right", and "pure." When the Spirit illuminates truth, He does so in conformity to the truth of God's Word. Truth does not contradict itself. And, any supposed "revelation" from the Spirit that contradicts the Word of God is not from the Spirit of God but from the spirit of the world. Anyone that says the "Spirit told me" is lying. The Spirit is not revealing new truth; he is helping believers to understand truth that has already been revealed in the Word of God. The Spirit's light does not shine regarding what is to come but the Spirit's light shines on what has already come; i.e., the Lord Jesus Christ and his glorious gospel.

In conclusion, why is there so much ignorance about the Bible? Most likely, it comes from a lack of Bible reading. Half of all Americans do not read the Bible. The majority of all born-again Christians read the Bible once or twice a week, or not at all. The survey found that only 18% of all Christians said they read the Word every day, while another 18% read the Bible between three and six days a week, 37% read it once or twice a week, and 23% said they do not read the

Bible at all. Among non- Christians, 70% do not read the Bible. Is this because many people do not own a Bible? No. The research has shown that 93% of all American own at least one Bible, and most own more than one. But, there is another reason people do not know the Bible—the lack of illumination. The Word of God is filled with treasures. One needs illumination to mine out its nuggets of truth. Because of the darkness due to sin, Satan, and the World, we need to ask God to “open our eyes” that we might behold wondrous things out His law.

14 WORKING AT INTERPRETATION

14.1 The Science of Interpretation

14.1.1 Definition

The science of interpretation is called *hermeneutics*. The Greek verb *hermeneuo* means *to interpret* or *explain* (1 Corinthians 12:30; diermhneu,w, diermeneuo)

There is a difference between observation and interpretation. Observation is the skill of identifying facts. Interpretation is the skill of drawing a proper conclusion based on the facts.

14.1.2 Importance

Interpreting the Bible is important because truth pleases God (2 Timothy 2:15). Interpretation determines our faith and practice. When we interpret the Bible correctly we believe correctly and we have the potential to live correctly. But, it is possible to become victims of our own false conclusions and to believe incorrectly and to live badly.

14.1.3 The objective

The task of the interpreter of the Bible is to discover the exact meaning of the statement, command, or question as it pertained to the original readers. It is important to understand that while there may be many applications of Scripture and secondary lessons stemming from a passage, *there can only be one correct interpretation.*

14.1.4 The Challenge

The challenge of interpretation is to interpret a passage correctly without skewing the results or feeding our own bias. Each of us has our own set of presuppositions from which we approach Scripture. Fears, beliefs, and wants warp objectivity and threaten to distort our interpretation and

our duty to honest interpreters. Being totally neutral and objective may be impossible. At best, we can admit our bias and seek to control it so we can discover the true meaning of Scripture.

14.1.5 Examples of interpretation

To understand the difference between observation and interpretation, let's look at this model from John 1:1-3:

14.1.5.1 Observation

The phrase “in the beginning” is similar to Genesis 1:1.

The Greek name for God is “Theos.”

The name “Logos” is used three times in verse one and once in verse 14.

The name “Logos” is articular having the definite article in front of it.

The name “Theos” is inarticular.

The verb “was” is a being verb; i.e., an **eivmi**, verb.

The h=n verb is an imperfect indicative of **eivmi**.

“O Logos” is the subject (nominative) of all three phrases.

“Theos” is a predicate nominative.

The Logos is called Theos.

The lack of an article is for the purpose of showing the quality of a noun.

The Logos was with Theos in the beginning.

The “beginning” in verse one is the same word as the “beginning” in verse 2.

The word “with” is the Greek preposition *pro.j*.

The same imperfect **eivmi**, verb is used in verse 2.

The “him” in verse three is a reference to “o Logos” in verse one

The “o Logos” was an agent of creation.

Nothing came into existence apart from the work of “o Logos.”

The word “all” is an adjective used as a nominative indicating that all things were made by “o Logos.”

So far, we have not made any interpretations of John 1:1-3. We have only made true and correct observations to the best of our ability and knowledge. Once we have made observations regarding the text, we are in a position to make an interpretation of the text. Consider the following interpretations of the text.

14.1.5.2 Interpretation

The phrase “In the beginning” is identical to Genesis 1:1 for a purpose.

The name “Logos” is a reference to Jesus Christ (John 1:14).

The name “Theos” is referring to the Creator of Genesis 1:1.

Jesus existed beside the Theos before He came to this earth.

The title “Logos” is the subject of the statement, “and the Logos was God.”

Jesus is fully God, but not all of God was in Jesus.

Jesus existed in eternity past face to face with Theos.

Jesus created this world and everything in it.

Nothing came into existence apart from Jesus Who is the “o Logos.”

Theos is the Creator of the world.

Jesus is Elohim, the Creator of the world.

As you can see, whether you agree with the interpretation or not, there is a difference between **observation** and **interpretation**. The interpreter must not confuse the two. Observation is the first

skill that needs to be employed, and interpretation is the second skill that needs to be employed in the study of Scripture.

14.2 The Laws of Interpretation

NO	LAWS OF INTERPRETATION	QUESTION
1	Secure the text	Can you verify the existence of the text?
2	Secure a proper translation of the text	Are you working with a proper English translation?
3	Discover the meaning of words	Do you know the lexical and contextual meaning?
4	Analyze the grammar and syntax	How are the words used in the sentence?
5	Ascertain the literary genre	What rules apply to the type of literature being studied?
6	Research the background	What is going on in history and in the culture?
7	Study the context	What is the subject and purpose of the book?
8	Push for holistic harmony	Does the interpretation fit the whole of Scripture?

9.	Utilize logic and reason	Has your interpretation made sense?
10.	Compare scholarly works	Are there respectable scholars that agree with you?
11.	Exercise integrity and charity	Is your conclusion honest and charitable?

14.2.1 The Law of Securing the Text

The Bible was written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. We have no originals. The copies we possess are only witnesses to the original autographs. Because various translations are based on certain MSS, it is important to know the interpreter is working with the actual Greek or Hebrew text. A knowledge of Greek or Hebrew and an understanding of a textual apparatus is vital to securing the text.

Example One: How would you interpret 1 John 5:7 in the KJV?

1 John 5:7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

Would it make any difference to you to know that this verse cannot be found in the best, most ancient Greek texts?

Example two: How would you interpret Romans 8:1 in the KJV?

Romans 8:1 *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Would it make any difference to you to know that the phrase “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” cannot be found in any of the best MSS? What ever you do, you must know that the Greek text is secure and that your English translation is based on the critical text.

14.2.2 The Law of for an Accurate Translation

The Bible student cannot begin to interpret the words in a translation unless he is sure the translation accurately represents the critical text. Because there are so many translations and paraphrases in the market place, it would be an error to assume these translations are correct. Remember, paraphrases seek to express ideas rather than to render a word-for-word translation.

Example One: How would you interpret this text?

^{NAS} John 3:6 "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

NLT John **3:6** Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives new life from heaven.

Do you see the words “humans,” “reproduce” “only” “human life”, “Holy” “gives” “new life” and “from heaven” in the New Living Translation? Would it make any difference to you to know that none of those words are in the Greek text? Here, the NLT seeks to interpret the Greek words for you. The NASB is an accurate translation of the Greek text. Once the text is secure, the process of interpretation can begin. **THIS MEANS YOU MUST SECURE THE TEXT AND AN ACCURATE TRANSLATION OF THE TEXT!**

Example two: to see how important it is to secure the text, turn to Romans 12:1. Here the Apostle Paul is pleading for the believers, in light of the mercies in the gospel, to offer their bodies to God which is their reasonable service.

The KJV correctly reads the final phrase like this: “*which is* your spiritual service of worship.”

The NLT reads the last phrase of the verse like this: “When you think of what he has done for you, is this too much to ask?” Does it make a difference to you that not one word in the NLT can be justified in the translation? They place a question mark where God has placed a period. Further, does it make a difference to you that the NLT makes a question out of a statement when no such question is intended in the original language?

14.2.3 The Law of Securing the Lexical Meaning of a Word

God’s thoughts come to us through the medium of words, and for this reason, the interpreter must secure a proper translation of the original text. Words are the building blocks of ideas. In

order to understand a thought, the interpreter must know the meaning and limitations of the English word and at times the meaning and limitations of a Greek or Hebrew word. There are two sources of securing the meaning of a word and both are important: (a) the context: The meaning (breadth and depth) of a word including its extensions and limitations is determined by ITS CONTEXT; i.e., in the context of the sentence and paragraph and at times in the context of its usage throughout the Bible. A good example of this is the word “know” (*[dy, yada`]*) can mean “to possess knowledge” about something, or it can refer to a “sexual relationship” with another person. The context will decide. (b) The definition of a word can be secured by an English dictionary and by Greek or Hebrew lexicons.

Example one: In Hebrews 11:1, the text says that “faith is the substance of things hoped for.” The word *substance* (*hupostasis*) alluded scholars for centuries until the word showed up in Egypt on a piece of papyri. An Egyptian woman in a dispute over property used the word *hupostasis*. Because she had a title deed to the property, she claimed she was the rightful owner of the disputed land. The word “title deed” is our word *hupostasis*. Does this insight help you understand the meaning of the word *hupostasis*? Faith is your title deed to heaven.

Example two: In Romans 12:2, Paul exhorts the Romans to not be conformed to the world. But, what does the word “conform” mean? The word “conform” is a good translation of the Greek word *suschematizo* (*suschemati,zesqe*). The lexical meaning of the word *-suschematizo* “conform” or “pattern” or “shape.” We get the word “schematic” from this word. A schematic is the drawing of the electrical system on the back of your dryer. Would it make any difference to you to know that the word “world” is not the word “kosmos” but the word “age” (*tw| aivw/ni tou,tw|, aeon*)? What insights do you get into this verse by knowing the lexical meaning of the word?

Example three: Take a look at the word “bodies” (*ta. sw,mata, soma*) in Romans 12:1. Both are translated correctly in the English text. In Romans 12:1, Paul exhorts the believers to offer their physical bodies to God as a sacrificial serve to the Lord. The question is, “Why did he use the term “bodies” instead of “spirits” or “yourselves”? Do you think the answer to that question might affect your interpretation?

Example four: In Romans 6:6, some interpret the term “body of sin” (*to. sw/ma th/j a` marti,aj, soma*) to represent the “principle of sin;” i.e., the sin nature. But, is that what it means? Would it make any difference to you to know the word “soma” in Romans always refers to the physical body (*soma*)? If it always refers to the physical body, what justification is there in interpreting

the phrase “body of sin” as “the principle of sin,” or “the sin nature”? In other words, knowing the meaning of the word “body” can make a difference in interpretation.

Example five: In Romans 8:5, both the NIV and the NLT translate the Greek word *sarx* as “sin nature.” Interestingly, the Greek word here is *sarx* and not *soma*. Is there a reason for this? The word *sarx* is properly translated “flesh” in the KJV and the NASB. Both the NIV and the NLT have done the interpreting work for you, but in this case, they are both dead incorrect. While at times in Pauline theology, the term *sarx* may represent the sinful body in some passages, Paul’s use of the “flesh” in this chapter is a reference to unregenerate man, not the sin nature.

Example six: Knowing the use of a word in other parts of Scripture can give you insights into the text that will encourage your heart. Look at 1 Peter 5:6-7. What does the word “casting” mean? The word “casting” (επιρρι,γαντε) is the same word used to describe a blanket being thrown over the back of a donkey in Luke 19:35. The image before us is that of a man who takes a saddle blanket and throws it on his donkey so the donkey carries the burden. In like manner, we are to take the burden off our shoulders and to cast it on the Lord. Further, the verb “cast” is an aorist imperative informing us that this action should be performed immediately.

14.2.4 The Law of Securing Grammar and Syntax

Words not only have individual meaning, they relate to other words in a sentence. The relationship of a word to the others words in a sentence is called grammar in English and syntax in Greek. In English we define word relationships by using terms like nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, and prepositions. We indicate their function in the sentence by labeling them as subject, predicate, direct object, indirect object, participle, infinitive, etc.

Likewise, a Greek (or Hebrew) word can be a noun, pronoun, verb, adverb, adjective, conjunction, or preposition. In Greek, the syntactical relationship can be defined as follows:

14.2.4.1 Noun Cases

Nominative: the subject of the sentence (The man went home.)

Genitive: the case of genus or kind (of man)

Ablative: the case of origin (from the man)

Dative: the case of the indirect object (to the man)

Locative: the case of location (in the man)

Instrumental: the case of personal agency (by the man)

Accusative: the case of the direct object (The elephant threw the man)

Vocative: the case of personal address (Hey, man, whatcha doin'?)

Likewise, the adjectives will reflect the cases of the noun they modify, and adverbs will modify a verb.

Verbs can indicate completed action (aorist, perfect) or durative action (imperfect, or present tense) or incomplete action (future). Verbs can have an active, middle, or passive voice. Terms like indicative, subjunctive, or imperative express the mood of the verb; i.e., its relationship to reality.

Verbals like participles have some characteristics of a noun and some characteristics of a verb, and verbals like infinitives can have tense and voice but not a mood.

Example One: Let's look at 1 John 4:8 where the English text says, "God is love." Would it make any difference to translate the text as "Love is God"? There is a big difference between saying, "God is love," and "Love is God"! Because the Greek word "Theos" carries the article, we know that the subject (nominative) of the sentence is "God" and that "love" is the predicate nominative. If the name "Theos" lacked the article then "Theos" and "love" would be equivalent. Knowing the laws of grammar and syntax will expose this distinction.

Example Two: Let's look at John 3:16 which reads, "God so loved the world." As we look at the sentence we can observe the fact that "God" is the subject. "Love" is the verb. "World" is the direct object and receives the action of God's love. But, could we read the text, "The world so loved God"? By the sound of some of our choruses today you might get the false impression that worship is more about expressing our love for God than singing about God's love for us. There is a big difference between "God so loved the world" and "The world so loved God." The difference is found in the rules of grammar and syntax.

Example Three: Look at John 5:24 where the text says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." Would it make any difference to you to know whether the verbs in this sentence are past, present, or future tenses or whether they are in

the subjunctive or indicative mood? Let's analyze the text. The two adverbs "verily, verily" modify the present tense verb "I say" which is not in the mood of possibility but the mood of reality. The two verbs "hath" and "shall not come" are present tense verbs and should be translated, "has and continues to have everlasting life and does not come and continues not to come into condemnation." It gets even better. The verb "is passed" from death unto life is not a present tense as the KJV indicates but a perfect tense implying a present state resulting from past action. It can be translated, "has passed" from death and "continues to be" in life. These insights can only be gained with knowledge of grammar and syntax.

14.2.5 The Law of Ascertaining the Literary Genre as a Vehicle of Truth

The Word of God comes to us in a variety of aspects and styles of language, including but not limited to narratives, legal and statutory, poetry, allegories, parables prophecy, and apocalyptic language.

Narratives: The historical sections of Scripture like Genesis, Exodus, Joshua, Judges, I and II Samuel, the Gospels and Acts are written in a narrative style; i.e., in historical story form.

Genesis 7:24 And the water prevailed upon the earth one hundred and fifty days.

(Literal and historical). **Legal and Statutory:** Exodus 20-25, Leviticus, parts of the prophets, and the Book of Romans contain legal language and utilize the language of law to communicate truth.

^{NAS} Exodus 20:13 "You shall not kill" (*xc:r' (ratsach; is the word for murder—not harag, the usual term for kill.)*)

Poetry: Exodus 15, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs are poetical in that Hebrew poetry consists of paralleling thoughts without rhyming words.

Psalms 17:8 Keep me as the apple of the eye; Hide me in the shadow of Thy wings. (Use of parallelism, and the metaphor).

Allegory: The Bible utilizes symbols in a story that represent things, objects, events, or people. A biblical author may use an allegory as the preferred vehicle to communicate truth: See Solomon's allegory of old age in Ecclesiastes 12 and Paul's allegory of the two covenants in Galatians 4.

SYMBOL	REPRESENTATION
Sun, light, moon, stars	Energy and Strength
Clouds	Weakness
Keepers of the house	Trembling hands
Strong men	Legs
Grinders	Teeth
Windows	Eye Sight
Doors	Ears
Grinding is low	Deafness
Rise at the voice of a bird	Insomnia
Almond tree flourish	Gray hair

Parables: Parables are stories utilized by a speaker to convey a single lesson to an audience. Unlike allegories, where every word or metaphor or phrase has a unique meaning, the meaning of a parable is controlled by the whole story. Our Lord was a master storyteller and utilized this form of expression to communicate truth about the kingdom of God (Matthew 13). G.E. Ladd gives an excellent interpretation of the Parable of the Sower and the Seed:

THE SOWER AND THE SEED: The kingdom of God was present in the person and ministry of Jesus, but not with irresistible power. His ministry was characterized by sowing. It worked quietly and secretly among men. It did not force itself on man in an irresistible way. In fact, the kingdom of God could be resisted. The varying responses were dependent on the varying conditions of men's hearts.

Prophecy: Prophecy is hard hitting language used by prophets to wake God's people out of their spiritual slumber. Prophecy can either predict a future event or it can level mountains in people's lives that impede spiritual progress by utilizing crisp, potent language. Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Hosea are of this sort.

^{NAS} **Hosea 4:1** Listen to the word of the LORD, O sons of Israel, For the LORD has a case against the inhabitants of the land, Because there is no faithfulness or kindness Or knowledge of God in the land. ² *There is* swearing, deception, murder, stealing, and adultery. They employ violence, so that bloodshed follows bloodshed. ³ Therefore the land mourns, And everyone who lives in it languishes Along with the beasts of the field and the birds of the sky; And also the fish of the sea disappear.

Ezekiel 5:2 "One third you shall burn in the fire at the center of the city, when the days of the siege are completed. Then you shall take **one third** and strike *it* with the sword all around the city, and **one third** you shall scatter to the wind; and I will unsheathe a sword behind them (Literally fulfilled in 586 BC).

Apocalyptic language: Apocalyptic language is distinct style of language and prophecy that uses catastrophism, the absurd, exaggeration, and the phenomenal to convey truth. The language should not be taken literally!!!

But, the style does convey literal truth. In one sense, apocalyptic language is like a giant political cartoon we see in the newspapers everyday with dancing elephants and talking donkeys. Phrases like "the mountains might quake" (Isaiah 64:1), or "tremble, oh earth, before the Lord" (Psalm 114:7) or "the moon shall not cause her light to shine" (Exodus 13:10), or "the stars shall fall from heaven" (Matthew 24:29) or "every mountain and island were moved out of their places" (Revelation 6:14) or "a third of the world was burned up" (Revelation 8:7) or "appeared a great red dragon" (Revelation 12:3) or "a beast with seven heads" (Revelation 13) or "three unclean spirits like frogs *come* out of the mouth of the dragon" (Revelation 16:13) is apocalyptic language, a sort of giant, political cartoon that conveys serious truth.

Revelation 8:7-9 And the first sounded, and there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth; and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up. ⁸ And the second angel sounded, and *something* like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea; and a third of the sea became blood; ⁹ and a third of the creatures, which were in the sea and had life, died; and a third of the ships were destroyed (this is apocalyptic language and not a literal prophecy). **Figures of Speech**

Second, biblical language often contains figures of speech, which the reader needs to discern in order to interpret the Bible correctly. For example, the psalmist prays, “Hide me in the shadow of thy wings” (Psalm 17:8). God is not a bird, and the language employed is Hebraic in that the Hebrews used the art of the metaphor to express a reality. Having observed chickens covering their chicks, the psalmist wants God to protect him. Biblical authors used the art of the metaphor to convey truth because the metaphor adds interest to the story line. For example, consider the following metaphors and consider how they might be used to add interest to a story:

“Handier than a hip pocket on a hog” means something is convenient and useful.

“Grouchier than a junk yard dog” means the person is very irritable.

“Sizzling on the griddle of pornography” implies intense lust.

“Tooth picks of criticism” refers to subtle and deliberate criticisms.

“More sugar than a fairy Godmother” implies being obnoxiously sweet.

“Living high on the flag pole” implies extravagant spending.

“Herding turtles” is the imagery of a slow, difficult task.

The Bible student seeking to interpret Scripture needs to be aware of the following figures of speech.

14.2.7 Simile

The simile (*similes* = like) is a formal comparison of one object to another by using the terms “like” or “as.”

^{NAS} Job 2:10 But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks.

^{KJV} Psalm 1:3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water,

^{NAS} Psalm 10:9 He lurks in a hiding place as a lion in his lair;

^{KJV} Matthew 3:16 he saw the Spirit of God descending *like a dove*

14.2.8 Metaphor

A metaphor (*meta* + *phero* = a carrying over) is a direct or implied comparison without the use of a "like" or "as."

^{NAS} Genesis 49:27 Benjamin is a ravenous wolf

^{KJV} 2 Kings 18:21 thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed (Egypt)

^{KJV} Psalm 18:2 The LORD is my rock, and my fortress

^{NIV} Jeremiah 2:23 You are a swift she-camel running here and there,

^{KJV} Jeremiah 4:7 The lion is come up from his thicket (Babylon)

^{NAS} Amos 4:1 Hear this word, you cows of Bashan (wealthy women)

14.2.9 Irony

Irony (*eiiron* = a dissembling orator) is a form of sarcasm a speaker uses to say the opposite of what he means to say. Look at the following examples:

^{KJV} Job 12:2 wisdom shall die with you.

^{KJV} Amos 4:4 Come to Bethel, and transgress

^{KJV} 1 Corinthians 4:8 Now ye are full, now ye are rich

^{KJV} 1 Corinthians 4:10 you are wise

14.2.10 Hyperbole

Hyperbole (*hyper* + *bole* = a throwing beyond) is a linguistic tool used by speakers wherein they use intentional exaggeration for the purpose of impact and emphasis. See the following:

^{NIV} Hosea 7:6 Their passion smolders all night;

^{NAS} Amos 5:3 For thus says the Lord God, "The city which goes forth a thousand strong
Will have a hundred left,

^{KJV} Joel 2:13 And rend your heart, and not your garments,

^{KJV} Matthew 5:29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out

14.2.11 Metonymy

Metonymy (*meta* + *onoma* = a change in a name) is a word used in the place of another that shares some kind of relationship. See the following examples:

^{KJV} Exodus 12:21 Then Moses said . . . kill the passover (imagery similar to the lamb).

^{KJV} 1 Samuel 1:15 I have poured out my soul before the LORD (imagery of earnest)

^{KJV} Job 30:22 Thou liftest me up to the wind (imagery of cruelty)

^{KJV} Psalm 11:6 snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: *this shall be* the
portion of their cup (imagery of judgment)

^{NAS} Psalm 73:6 Therefore pride is their necklace; The garment of violence covers them
(imagery of total inception)

^{KJV} Romans 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*. The "old man"
refers to the Adamic nature (unregenerate man); i.e., to one's pre-Christian identify with
Adam apart from regeneration.

14.2.12 Personification

Personification (to make like a person) is a type of expression that attributes life or human traits to inanimate objects.

^{NAS} 1 Chronicles 16:32 Let the sea roar, and all it contains;

^{NAS} Job 40:20 Surely the mountains bring him food,

^{NAS} Psalm 114:4 The mountains skipped like rams,

^{NAS} Psalm 96:12 Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy

^{KJV} Matthew 23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee,

14.2.13 Apostrophe

Similar to personification, apostrophe (*apo* + *strephe* = to turn from) is a literary device wherein the speaker addresses inanimate, non-living objects as if they were alive and had ears to hear.

^{KJV} Jeremiah 47:6 O thou sword of the LORD, how long *will it be* ere thou be quiet? put up thyself into thy scabbard, rest, and be still.

^{NAS} 2 Samuel 18:33 to his dead son, David cried, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

^{KJV} Psalm 50:4-5 ⁴ He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. "Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice."

^{NIV} Revelation 18:10 Terrified at her torment, they will stand far off and cry: "'Woe! Woe, O great city, O Babylon, city of power! In one hour your doom has come!'

14.2.14 Synecdoche

Synecdoche (*sun* + *ekdechomai* = to receive from or associate with) is a literary device wherein a part or a sub component is used to speak of the greater whole. Sometimes "I" will stand for "we". See the following examples:

^{KJV} Acts 27:37 And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls.

^{KJV} Judges 12:7 And Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then died Jephthah the Gileadite, and was buried in one of the cities of Gilead.

^{NAS} Luke 2:1 Now it came about in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth.

^{KJV} Romans 7:15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. Here “I” may very well be a reference to “we Jews” or to the general experience of all “unregenerate Jews.” (See the address in 7:1).

Understanding the genre of literature one is interpreting is important especially in apocalyptic literature. It is important not to interpret a narrative symbolically just as it is important not to interpret symbolic passages literally. Spiritualizing the literal, and literalizing the spiritual must be avoided. For example, in John’s first vision on the island of Patmos, John sees Christ with white hair and with eyes of flaming fire. John does not want us to picture and aging Christ with eyes looking like a log fire. Rather, John wants us to interpret the white hair as a symbol of wisdom and flaming eyes as omniscience with intensity. Likewise, as one reads the scenes in the Apocalypse one should not interpret burning trees, poisoned waters, disappearing islands, seven headed monsters, and angels with keys as something literal. Rather, John wants us to interpret the symbol.

14.2.15 The Law of Researching the Religious, Political, Legal, Geographical, and Cultural Background of a Passage

The Bible comes to us through Hebrew eyes and we must put on Hebrew glasses to read the fine print. The biblical authors lived and wrote at various times in history and were deeply influenced by the Hebrew, Chaldean, Egyptian, Syrian, Phoenician, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek, and/or Roman cultures. Understanding the culture is critical to understanding the text. As the reader seeks to understand the text, it will be helpful to engage in some form of historical research to ascertain the religious traditions, political innuendos, geographical dimensions, and general cultural background influencing a text. For example:

It might be helpful to understand the Code of Hammurabi and the Chaldean culture to understand the life and times of Abraham.

It will be helpful to know something of Egyptology to understand Joseph or to properly interpret the Book of Exodus.

It will be helpful to understand the Semiramis Cult and why God ordered the destruction of the Canaanites in Joshua’s time.

It may be helpful to know that an Ashera pole is a cultic, phallic symbol.

It will be helpful to understand the Law of the Medes and Persians when seeking to interpret the Book of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther.

It is helpful to know something of about Herod's temple and temple traditions when seeking to understand the times Jesus cleansed the temple (John 2:14ff).

It may be helpful to know that the Jews washed their hands seven times from the top of the fingers to the bottom of the elbow before eating to understand Jesus condemnation of the Jewish leaders in Matthew 23:25.

It will be helpful to understand something about the Mishna and Rabbinic tradition to fully appreciate Jesus' words, "you have heard it said . . . but I say unto you."

It is helpful to know the Jewish traditions (water festival) connected to the Feast of Tabernacles so one can appreciate John 7:37.

It may be helpful to understand Jewish wedding traditions to fully appreciate the miracle at the Wedding in Cana.

It is important to understand the divorce laws in Israel to fully appreciate the teaching of Jesus on the subject of divorce in Matthew 19.

It may be helpful to learn something about burial customs to fully appreciate the resuscitation of Lazarus and the resurrection of Jesus.

It will be helpful to understand something about the Greek philosophers and Greek philosophy to fully appreciate Paul's lecture on Mars Hill.

14.2.16 The Law of Context

Someone has said there are three rules for interpretation: context, context, and context. It is true. By "context" we mean that the interpreter must find evidence in the passage he is studying to come to a proper conclusion. Most hermeneutic questions can be answered from the context and "running" all over the Bible to solicit "proof texts" is a common, but poor method of interpretation. The law of context employs the following principles:

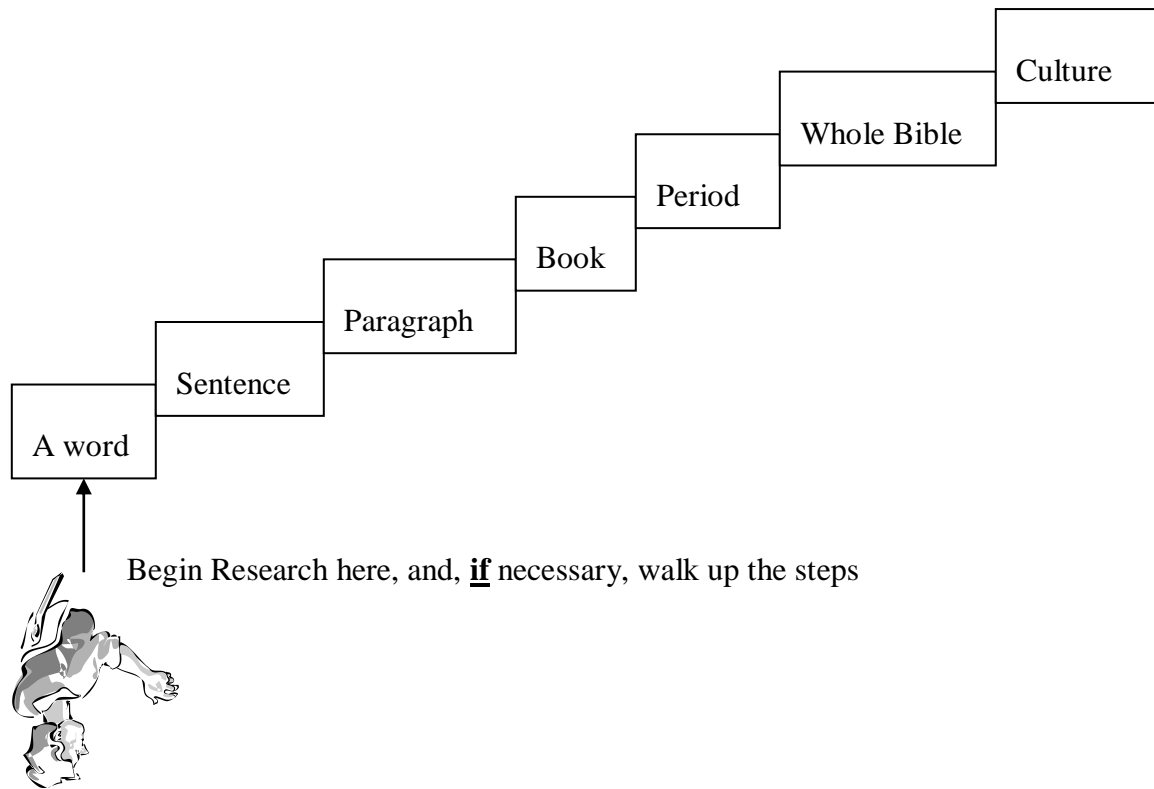
The meaning of a word is best determined by the context of a sentence or the sentences in which the word is found.

The meaning of a sentence is best determined by the context of the paragraph.

The meaning of a paragraph is best determined by the context of the letter or book.

The meaning of a book is best determined by the context of the historical period in which it was written.

The meaning of an historical period is best determined by the whole context of the Bible.



Exa

Example One: Let us look at the word “receive” in John 1:12: “For as many as received him, he gave the right to become the sons of God.”

What does the word “receive” mean? Many evangelicals would respond by saying, “You must receive Jesus into your heart.” But, how could the people of Jesus’ day receive him into their heart? First, the word “receive” (ε;labon) is an aorist tense, completed action in the past. The

word means, “to take.” It is the same word used in John 1:10: “His own received Him not.” “His own” refers to the Jewish people.

Here the word “received” means “to accept him for who He claimed to be;” i.e., the Jews did not accept Him as Messiah, Lord, the Logos, or as their Creator. So, we can see the word “receive” does not refer to prayer or asking Jesus into the heart, but to receiving Him for Who He claimed to be, the Logos made flesh, the Son of God.

Example Two: In John 3:5, Jesus said, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

Some interpreters say that “water” represents baptism and therefore baptize infants. These interpreters usually cite Acts 2:38 as their proof text. But, what does Peter’s sermon have to do with the interpretation of John 3? Other interpreters dash over to Ezekiel 36:25 and interpret “water” using Ezekiel’s statement. However, when interpreters jump out of the context into another passage of Scripture to discover an answer, they violate the law of context, context, context. So, how should we approach the task of interpretation?

One possibility is that “water” is a symbol of human birth. There is certainly evidence for this view seeing that Nicodemus asked the question in verse 4, “How can a man enter his mother’s womb a second time and be born?”

A second possibility is that the word “water” could represent the Spirit; i.e., Jesus could be saying, “A man must be born of water, even the Spirit.” There is evidence for this view in the passage. The Greek word *kai* (and) can be translated “and” or “even.” Further, Jesus addresses the role of the Spirit at least four times in this passage placing an emphasis on spiritual birth. Third, the word “water” could represent the “the Word of God.” While the concept of the “the Word of God” is not found in John 3, it is found in John 15 of the same book. John 15:3 states, “You are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you.” Again, we are still within the rules. We are looking within the Book for an answer to the question. Further, the concept of being born again by the Word of God is consistent with the period in which John wrote (Ephesians 5:26: 1 Peter 1:23).

And finally, Jesus does chastise Nicodemus and questions his qualification for leadership by saying, “You being a leader in Israel do not know these things?” (3:10). Here the context gives us permission to go outside the text and search the OT for teaching on the possible meaning of the “water” where possibly Ezekiel 36:25-27 may be what Jesus has in mind. The point,

however, is not arrive at a conclusion on this verse, but to show you how to approach an interpretive problem.

Example three: In 2 Thessalonians 2, the term “man of sin” is discussed by Paul. Usually what interpreters do is run over to Daniel and grab a little horn from chapter 7 and mix it with the seven horns of the beast in Revelation 13 while stopping in I John 2 to pick up an antichrist to interpret the “man of sin” as the “he” in Daniel 9:27 as the one “who will confirm a covenant for one week.” To me, this is exactly what we do not want to do. While I agree this is a difficult passage to interpret, the “antichrist” interpretation violates all the rules. Is there anything in the context that might provide a clue to interpreting the “man of sin?”

Example four: This same problem can be seen in interpreting the word “giant” in Genesis 6:4. Many interpreters jump out of the context to Job and 2 Peter 2:4 to pick up fallen angels who procreate with the daughters of men. Why can’t the “giants” refer to thugs and mafia figures in Noah’s day that gained a giant influence over men by the use of violence and force? Is it really necessary to jump out of the context to develop a sensible interpretation?

The interpreter would do well to stay in the context until it is necessary to leave the context to find an answer. Jumping and hopping all over the Bible in search of proof texts appears me to be the least desirable way to interpret Scripture.

14.2.17 The Law of Wholistic Harmony

Holistic means that every part must agree with the whole. Since the Scripture cannot contradict itself, an interpretation of an obscure passage should not contradict the clear teaching of a major passage of Scripture. If an interpretation of one passage contradicts another, then we must do more Bible study.

Example One: The Word of God clearly teaches a person is not saved by their own works by the grace of God (Romans 4:1-5; 5:1-10; 10:9; Ephesians 2:8, 9; Titus 3:5). How then do you explain Philippians 4:12 where the text reads, “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”

Since the text “appears” to teach salvation by works and since the interpreter knows that every interpretation must harmonize with the whole, the interpreter must dig deeper to discover the answer to this “apparent doctrinal contradiction.”

First, notice the term “you” (katerga,zesqe) and “beloved” and all the verbs are in the plural. Paul is really saying, “You all” work out your salvation. Second, the word “salvation” can refer to eternal salvation or it can refer to “solving” a current problem. As we look at the book of Philippians we come to understand the church was experiencing disharmony (1:27, 2:1-5). In fact, a fight broke out between two sisters (4:1-5). As we look closer at the book, we can observe that every admonition in the book targeted this disunity. The conclusion, then, is that the phrase “work out your own salvation” is a command for the church to come together to solve the problem of disunity.

Example two: The Bible, particularly John and I John teach that we are saved by faith, but Acts 2:38 appears to teach that baptism is essential for forgiveness. How do we solve the anachronism?

The presupposition is correct. If the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin, there is no room for water baptism to cleanse us from sin (1 John 1:7; 5:10-13).

First, note that Peter is addressing the crowd that crucified Jesus.

Second, notice that Peter is addressing a crowd in which some in the company wanted to know what they should individually do in light of their tragic sin of crucifying their Messiah.

Third, observe that the command “repent” (Metanoh,sate()) and the promise “you shall receive” (lh,myesqe) are both second, [person plurals and are clauses that should be connected syntactically. The nominative “each” and the verb “you be baptized” is a singular. The “you” or “your” in the phrase “and you shall receive forgiveness of your sins” is again plural. In conclusion, the main clauses and the main promises are connected to the main command, “You all repent” indicating that it is the repentance, not baptism, that results in forgiveness of sins.

Using the law of holistic interpretation, interpreting Acts 2:28 as a strong call to repentance is consistent with what Paul taught in the Book of Acts 20:21.

14.2.18 The Law of Logic and Reason

God requested his people to come, “Let us reason together.” Argument is the essence of life! The Bible is full of debates, diatribes, reducto absurdims, exaggerations, fact-finding, jurisprudence, contrasts, propositions and conclusions. Moses, Jeremiah, David, Jesus, and Paul used logic to advance their argument.

Likewise, God wants us to use logic when trying to solve Bible problems. Using inductive reasoning, the interpreter gathers facts, examines the evidence, and draws a logical conclusion. The search will result in something conclusive or it may result in something inconclusive.

Example two: In Acts 14, Paul ripped off his cloak and exposed his bare chest to provide evidence to the idolaters at Lystra that he and Barnabus were men and not gods in order to appeal to their logic. Likewise, in Acts 17, Paul used logic to expound the doctrine of God to those on Mars Hill.

Example two: Jesus used the law of inference to draw a conclusion about the reality of the resurrection from the Hebrew words, “I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” (Luke 20:37; Exodus 3:6).

Example three: In John 8, the Pharisees debated Jesus and claimed they were sons of Abraham. But, notice how Jesus used logic to expose their hypocrisy: “If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham” (8:39).

Example four: In Paul’s conclusion to his great treatise, he says, “If God be for us, who can be against us” (Romans 8:32).

Major premise: No one is stronger than God.

Minor premise: God is on our side.

Conclusion: No one can defeat us.

It is like saying, “If you own the bank, how can you be broke?”

It is important to realize that sometimes we just do not have enough information or skill to draw a satisfactory conclusion. It is O.K. to study and conclude the research was INCONCLUSIVE. For years I tried solving a problem I had with an interpretation of Ezekiel 38 and 39. Every time I studied the passage I could not come up with a satisfactory conclusion.

I determined I did not have enough information to resolve the problem. My study was INCONCLUSIVE. Several years later, I discovered a fact that I had overlooked in previous investigations, and I was able to come to a satisfactory conclusion. In other words, it is O.K. not to arrive at any particular interpretation (INCONCLUSIVE) if the research merits such a conclusion.

14.2.19 The Law of Confirmation

The law of comparing scholarly works means that when the interpreter comes up with an interpretation, he should check out his interpretation with respected authorities. If one cannot find a respectable scholar who agrees with his interpretation, he would do well to hold it lightly and to continue doing research. God has given the church Bible teachers to help the church grow in its understanding of the Scripture. Though they are not always correct in their interpretations, self-doubt ought to drive us to utilize the work and labor of others. When in doubt, check out what other scholars have concluded. Agreement is not fool-proof, but to avoid being a fool, it may be helpful to see if any others agree with your interpretation. Furthermore, it will be helpful to read interpretations by reputable Christians who are not part of your denomination. Often, our interpretation is based on a denomination bias rather than pure exegetical research. Integrity demands we reach for total objectivity, though this is difficult.

14.2.20 The Law of Integrity

Who has a perfect understanding of Scripture? All we can do is do the best job possible to interpret Scripture correctly. We should conduct our research with integrity collecting facts and drawing conclusions based on the evidence. We must adopt the interpretation based on facts and evidence—even if we are not comfortable with the interpretation. Furthermore, after we have ascertained the meaning of the text, we ought to be charitable towards those who may disagree with us.

Someone has said, “Be dogmatic on the essentials; liberal on the non-essentials; but have charity in all things.” It is true. When people disagree with us, we must treat them respectfully and graciously. We should allow them the opportunity to convince us, and we should utilize skills from the art of persuasion to convince others. We use persuasion, not (emotional) power to win other people to our point of view. We do not feel it desirable to withdraw from fellowship with any Christians except at the point where they may require us to do what our conscience will not permit or restrain us from doing what our conscience requires.

In conclusion, you may have noticed that I have not extended **the tenet of literalness** as one of my main laws of interpretation. Let me say, that we should interpret the Bible literally and that the plain sense makes the most sense most of the time. However, the literal method of interpretation is over extended and often misapplied. The overuse of the literal method has led some scholars into a linear mode of interpretation. Interpreting the Bible literally will simply not work in some passages of Scripture. For example, Jesus warned the disciples about the leaven of

the Pharisees (Matthew 16:5ff) and the disciples concluded, “And they reasoned among themselves, saying, *It is* because we have taken no bread.” Because they took Jesus literally instead of figuratively, they misinterpreted Jesus. Jesus had to set them straight by explaining to them that “bread” meant the “teaching” of the Pharisees.

In John 6, Jesus was giving the bread of life discourse. Here he claimed to be the bread of life, which came down from heaven. When Jesus said that people must eat his flesh and drink his blood to have life, the crowd became angry with Jesus and left. Because they interpreted Jesus literally, rather than figuratively, they reached a false conclusion.

One of the huge hermeneutic problems is how to interpret passages in the Book of Revelation. Let me say that a starch, literal hermeneutic will simply not work in Apocalyptic literature. Just as it is an error to symbolize the literal narrative, it is just as wrong to literalize a symbolic passage of Scripture. Literalizing falling rocks, giant scorpions, poison waters, hundred pound hailstones, the 144,000, the virgins that follow Christ, the number 666, and the like leads to all kinds of absurd conclusions about end times.

While the literal method may be helpful in the narrative, it is a hindrance in passages laden with symbolic imagery. Use the literal method, but be cautious when involved with passages of Scripture that contain a high degree of symbolic images.

Remember, the disciples misunderstood Jesus on many occasions because they took him literally. Matthew 16:11 and John 6:53-56 come to mind.

15 APPLYING SCRIPTURE

15.1 Obedience to Scripture

15.1.1 Introduction

Once we have interpreted the text, we need to learn to apply the text to our lives.

15.1.2 Biblical Admonitions

Matthew 5:14-16 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Jesus told his disciples that they were the light of the world and exhorts them to let their light shine. The light he is referring to is their good works. While good works do not save men, saved men do work. Christians do not work for salvation, but because of salvation, Christians work. Works are the inevitable result of true knowledge. Here Jesus warned disciples against hiding their light under a bushel. In Mark 4:21, Jesus warned them about hiding their light under a bed. The bushel represents commerce. The bed represents sloth. Jesus expected His disciples to apply Scripture to their lives and saw busyness and sloth as hindrances to obedience.

Matthew 7:24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

Jesus warned about those who profess Him as “Lord” but did not do what He said. Jesus made a distinction between broad way and the narrow way; between the true and the false; between saying and doing; between profession and application. The admonition to apply Scripture is so strong that one’s eternal destination is raised over the issue. Jesus compared an obedient Christian to a wise man who built his house on a rock and the disobedient to a foolish man who builds his house upon sand. The wind, rain, and flood represent adversity. If a man wants to survive the difficulties of life, he needs to build his life upon the rock of obedience.

John 15:9-11 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and *that* your joy might be full.

Jesus informs His disciples that He has loved them with the same love the Father showed Him. It was a perfect love. Because we can think of no better terms, we call it “unconditional love.” The word “unconditional” is not found in Scripture. Is there such a thing as “unconditional love” in the Bible? I’m not convinced. But, in looking at the love of God, “unconditional” seems to be the best we can do to describe it. Even God’s love must be received to be enjoyed. Here “abiding” is put forth as a condition for enjoying the love of Christ. How does a person abide? By keeping his commandments. Joy comes from obedience, not from the possession of knowledge alone.

Galatians 3:1 O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

Paul chides the Galatians and calls them “foolish” (without understanding). Because they did not obey the truth of the Gospel, Paul views them as being under some kind of magic spell or foreign charm. Obedience to the truth is the normal Christian experience. Disobedience is abnormal. In fact, the reason people do not obey is that they are “bewitched.”

1 Timothy 3:14-15 These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

Here Paul states his purpose for writing Timothy. Paul wrote his work with the intent that Timothy might take the contents of his letter and apply them to church life. Likewise, God wants believers to take the Scripture and apply it to their church life.

James 1:22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

James commands his readers to be doers of the Word. Those who do not apply the Word of God are in danger of being deceived. In fact, it would be safe to say that all non-appliers are deceived. And, the wretched thing about deception is that the deceived does not know he is deceived.

Revelation 1:3 Blessed *is* he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time *is* at hand.

In John's prologue, he extends a promise to his readers. He adds a special blessing to those who understand and "keep" those things written in the book. In one sense, the Book of Revelation is the only book that contains a special promise for those who understand the letter and obey the letter, but in another sense, blessing comes to all who obey all of Scripture. The word, "keep" means "to tend" or "to guard" or "to obey." Now John did not want his readers just to obey the first three chapters, he wanted his readers to obey all the admonitions in the entire book.

15.1.3 The Difficulty of Application

Having established the biblical basis for application, one might think that applying God's a passage would be rather easy. It is just as wrong to misapply a Bible verse as it is to misinterpret a Bible verse. Actually, application takes as much skill as interpretation. Look at the following examples:

Matthew 3:11 As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

One time I was challenged by a brother who thought our church was too conservative. He came from a church where people shouted and hollered and rolled in the isles. He told me that I would be a much better preacher if I was baptized by fire. "By fire," I think he meant yellin' and screamin'. I told the brother that not only had he misapplied the verse, but that he misinterpreted the verse. I attempted to show him that John's message was the kingdom of God and that when the kingdom of God appears, two great events will occur: First, believers will enter the kingdom of God and experience the age of salvation and the regenerative powers of the Holy Spirit; And second, unbelievers will be judged and condemned (Isaiah 2, 11, 25, 62, 64; Malachi 4:1-5); that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was synonymous with salvation and that the term *fire* was synonymous with judgment. Now this brother loved the Lord, but he misapplied the text.

Matthew 5:38 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.'

How many times have you heard this verse misquoted by someone bent on inflicting revenge on an enemy? Because the Jews misapplied the principle, Jesus commented on their misapplication. The verse is a quote from Exodus 21:24 where God was addressing the judges of Israel who were responsible to administer justice to litigants: "and he shall pay as the judges *determine*." (v. 22). But, on what principle was a judge to administrate justice? The "eye for an eye" and "a tooth for a tooth" was not to be taken literally, but to be taken as the literal principle of justice to be applied by judges in compensating victims.

When Gerry Spence, the great trial lawyer, was seeking damages he turned to the jury and said something like this: "I want justice. I want you to bring back the dead child." He hesitated, and then continued, "You cannot return the child. So what kind of justice can you give?" Silence! "The only justice you can give is damages. You have the power of law and you can award damages. Today, I don't ask you for only a part of justice, I ask you for whole justice." Pause. "This was a million-dollar little girl. Give them (her parents) all of her. I want it all, for them!" (Spence, 1995, p. 64).

The Jews of Jesus day took a principle that belonged in THE COURTS and sought to apply it to the push and shove of the market place. This was not the place God ever intended the principle "An eye for an eye" to be applied. It was the wrong place and the wrong application of a good principle.

Matthew 5:39 "But I say to you, do not resist him who is evil; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also.

Jesus went on to help his audience to understand market place Christianity by encouraging people to turn the other cheek. Jesus was not giving a lecture on war. He was not discussing international political policy. He was not talking about crime. He was not giving an anti-self defense lecture in support of peace-at-all-cost lovers. He was helping people to learn how to live godly in the push and shove of the market place. The Jews took a principle belonging to the courts, "a tooth for a tooth" and applied it to daily life while haggling with street vendors. If they were shoved, they shoved back. If someone gauged them accidentally in the ribs, they gauged back. Jesus wanted believers to absorb these minor excusable offenses, so he admonished the crowd to "turn the other cheek;" to overlook minor social infractions.

But, how many times have you heard this verse applied to war. There are some religious groups who refuse to take up arms even to defend themselves. We all heard protestors shouting “turn the other cheek” objecting to President Bush’s anti-terrorism policy (2003). There are men who settled in their minds that they will not protect their wife or daughter if they are assaulted because the Bible says we are to “turn the other cheek.” Now, I hope you don’t have a husband like this. The whole role of a man in the home is to provide and to protect. To apply this verse to national defense or as a policy of self-defense is a misinterpretation of the text.

Matthew 6:19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

One time I heard a powerful, zealous young college student preach on this text. He said it was wrong to save money, to have a pension, or to have a bank account. I can’t tell you how many students went away and terminated their checking accounts. This was definitely a misapplication of the verse. Jesus was not giving a lecture on financial management or retirement or economics. He was discussing life goals, ultimate principles: God or mammon. One cannot live for both. We must serve God. But, I have yet to find anyone who can serve God without money. Money is a tool, not an end in itself.

Romans 13:1 Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

I heard a radio preacher tell his audience that we ought to always obey the government. He went on to say that we ought to obey all the speed laws and fill out all the forms the government sends us properly. He went on to say that we ought to pay all our taxes because citizens have a duty to support their government. Actually, I agreed with the man’s interpretation of the passage, but I disagreed with his application. He seemed to be woefully ignorant of America’s founding documents and the principles. First of all, American Citizens are not servants of the government. The government is the servant of the people. The government is not sovereign. WE THE PEOPLE are sovereign. Our rights come from God, not the government. WE THE PEOPLE gave our servant government certain limited rights and retained the rest for ourselves (Amendment 9). Are Americans suppose to obey a bloated, out-of-control government that overreaches its authority and enslaves its people, kills their babies, and promotes a homosexual agenda? Wasn’t this the type of problem the colonialists faced at the time of the Boston Tea Party? It was the preachers who led the people in the Revolution of 1776.

Didn't the preachers know about Romans 13? Sure they did, but they did not believe economic servitude and enslavement to a greedy King George was a proper application of the text. Yes, we should be good Citizens, but good Citizenship in America means scolding our servant when he needs to be scolded. Yes, we should respect the traffic laws. But, are you really going to go 55 mph on a freeway where the average speed of the cars is 75 mph? If you do, you may end up killing yourself and whole bunch of other people. The way a freedom-loving American applies Romans 13 to his culture, and the way a Russian Christian applies Romans 13 to his culture may be entirely different.

Romans 13:8 Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another

One time I was in a church where a respected businessman began to teach financial principles to people in the church. One of his principles was that borrowing money was a sin. He taught Christians should only use cash and never borrow money for anything. He used this text to prove his point. Well, if this verse is teaching that borrowing money is a sin, then a whole bunch of Christians who have a mortgage on their house or borrowed money to purchase a car are in BIG TROUBLE! Here is another illustration of a bad application of Scripture. First, it must be wonderful to be able to pay cash for a home. Personally, I've never been able to do it. Secondly, it is an advantage to be able to lend and it is a disadvantage to have to borrow. Third, this verse is not condemning borrowing but encouraging timely payments of a debt. If a person has a debt and pays his monthly payment on time, then he has fulfilled this verse. This text is not condemning borrowing, but condemning being in the arrears toward a debt obligation.

1 Thessalonians 1:10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *that is* Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come.

Paul was only in Thessalonica for a three-week period and during that time he taught them about the second coming of Christ. Apparently, some thought he was going to come very soon and decided to quit their jobs and wait for the Lord to return. Their idleness became a problem and was eventually confronted (2 Thessalonians 3). Here is another example of a bad application. The errant made a bad application of a truth when they decided to stop working and to wait for Jesus to return. It is true that Jesus will return, but it is not true that he wants any of us to stop serving and to start slothing. Likewise, we see the same problem today. Many Christians under the influence of contemporary theology have concluded that Christ will come in a time of great depravity and they should not being involved in the political process to try to improve elements

in society. Here again, we have another example of a bad application of a Bible truth. It is not always the interpretation that is the challenge, but the application that is a challenge.

Having looked at some of the difficulties that can happen with application. Let us look at some of the principles of good application.

15.1.4 Principles of Application

Interpret the text correctly. Ask, “What do I need to know about the words in this text?” If a verse is not interpreted correctly, it cannot be applied correctly.

Factor in the cultural element. A Bible command does not occur in a vacuum. It is delivered in a cultural context. We must first ask, “What did this verse mean to the original readers?” before we can ascertain, “What does it mean to me?” The failure to ask, “What did this verse mean to the original readers?” is the Pandora’s box of bad application of Scripture. In fact, it is usually a bad idea to ask the question, “What does it mean to me?”

Discern holiness. Ask, “How does this text promote the character of God or how does this verse condemn sinful behavior that is contrary to God’s character?” We need to discern whether the initiation of an action or whether the cessation of an action is consistent with God’s character. If something is God-like, we are on solid ground. In other words, we must discern the difference between the holy and the unholy. Sin is not everything we do! Nor is everything we do necessarily holy.

Know the point of tension: Ask, “Where is Satan attacking me or the church?” Satan, the world, and the Devil attack each of us at points of vulnerability. And, it is at this point where Scripture must be applied. We must deploy truth and holiness where the enemy has formed his battle lines of assault.

Learn where and when to apply Scripture. Ask, “When and where does this need to be applied.” Apply the Scripture to your mind, emotions, habits, words, actions, and relationships. Some Scripture needs to be applied mentally, some emotionally, and still others need to be applied to human relationships.

Promote balance. Ask, “Is my application balanced; i.e., does it protect freedoms and condemn sin?” All that is contrary to the character of God needs to be radically judged, but in judging sin, we must preserve what is good and not infringe upon God-given rights.

15.1.5 The example of bud

Bud is a college student who is a P.E. major with a minor in dance. He has been a Christian for about a year, and he is serious about growing in his faith. Bud reads 1 John 2:15 one day and wonders how to apply the command, “Do not love the world.” He asks some friends about what they think it means to love the world. John thinks drinking beer is loving the world. Sue thinks watching T.V. is loving the world. Pastor Bob feels that he would be loving the world if he went to movies and supported Hollywood. Ted feels like dancing is worldly, and this, of course, threatens Bud. Clare feels like reading romance novels violates this verse. Nancy, who always wears a dress, feels like wearing blue jeans is under the ban. Jack, who is struggling with girls, feels like nude art and pornography belong in the “do not love the world” category. Kathy, who is an art major, disagrees and believes the human body is a work of art and that paintings of the human figure is not sinful. Aaron feels like rock music should be banned and therefore does not listen to rock music, Christian rock, and most of country western music. What is Bud suppose to do and how is he suppose to apply this verse to his life. Confused, Bud goes to Scripture.

First, Bud asks himself, “What do I need to know about the words in this text?” He notices the word world is “cosmos” and not “earth.” Second, Bud notices the word “love” is a present, active imperative. He asks Pastor Bob what that means and Pastor Bob informs him that John is forbidding an action already in progress. Bud concludes that John is not condemning nature or the appreciation of nature, but something to do with the “world’s system.” Further, Bud’s conscience is bothered by some of the rap music he’s been listening too, and he is bothered about his dance class and wonders if he should drop out of dancing.

Second, Bud asks himself, “What did this verse mean to the original readers?” He does some investigation and discovers that John has ministered in Ephesus one of the Greek/Roman cultural centers of the day. He learns the Romans and Greeks had their own status symbols that revolved around power, sensual lusts, philosophic knowledge, and the acquisition of things. His research strengthens his position that the Apostle is not condemning nature, but condemning a system of values contrary to the kingdom of God. Still, Bud is not sure how to apply this verse.

Third, Bud asks, “How does this text promote the character of God or how does this verse condemn sinful behavior that is contrary to God’s character?” Bud realizes that God is holy and that God wants him to be holy. When Bud compares his rap music to God’s holiness, he realizes that the dirty language contained in the lyrics is ugly and does not promote goodness. At this point, Bud is prepared to give up his rock music. But, what about dancing. Bud digs deeper and

ponders the difference between the holy and unholy. He looks at some of the holiness laws in the OT and learns that some foods were holy, and some foods were unholy; that some clothes were holy and some clothes were unholy; that some behaviors were holy and other behaviors were unholy. Bud asks himself, “Is there a difference between holy dancing and unholy dancing?” As Bud works through the issue over a couple of weeks, he realizes that dance is an art form; that some kinds of dancing require skill, and “dirty” dancing is simply sensual and sexual. Bud concludes that there is holy dancing (an art form) and unholy dancing (merely sensual designed to arouse lust). Bud feels better about his minor in dance.

Fourth, Bud asks, “Where is Satan attacking me?” Bud’s answer is immediate, “in my thought life.” Bud loves music. He knows he’s been entertaining some nasty thoughts and that these nasty thoughts have been pounded into his thought life through rap music. Bud makes a radical commitment to stop listening to rap music. Further, Bud feels comfortable with most of his dance classes, except one. Some of the dances in his Modern Dance Class are really sensual.

Fifth, Bud asks, “When and where does this need to be applied?” Bud believes he needs to get rid of his rap music immediately. So he goes to his disk cabinet and divides his music into two categories: holy and unholy. Bud, then takes the unholy disks and tapes and places them into the trash. About dancing, Bud decides God would not be pleased with his frequent visit to the local disco, but is unsure about continuing his minor in dance.

Sixth, Bud asks, “Is my application balanced; i.e., does it protect freedoms and condemn sin?” Bud feels that destroying his rap music was a good decision, but he’s not sure if giving up all dancing is balanced. Bud does some more thinking and revisits the principle of holiness. He thinks about ice-skating, ballet, the screenplay, “Oklahoma,” and others great musicals and plays. He realizes these are great works of art and that it would not be balanced to give up all foods, all music, and all dancing; that there are holy foods and unholy foods; holy music and unholy music, holy dancing and unholy dancing.

Further, Bud now comes to understand that while he must be zealous in condemning sinful behavior, he must also be zealous in defending human freedom, in this case, works of art. Bud now feels like his decision to give up rap music and keep his other music was balanced. He decides to readjust his views about dance. He decides to keep his dance minor because human movement (nature) is an art form. He decides to give up going to the disco because this is a perversion of human movement. And, finally he has determined that some moves in his Modern Dance Class are questionable and decides to make an appointment with his instructor to discuss

the possibility of being excused from some of the more blatant “sensual/sexual/radical” dance moves being promoted in class.

The wrestling through of application by Bud is what all of us must do.

In conclusion, applying Scripture to our lives is a biblical mandate that is required of all Christians. Correct application begins with a correct interpretation of Scripture. Just as we must apply diligence in interpretation, we must apply diligence in application. Just as there are traps in interpretation, there are pitfalls to avoid in application. There are some helpful rules and by applying the rules, we can make accurate applications of Scripture.

15.2 What Reading the Scripture Can Do For You

We are living in a day and age where thousands of voices blast their messages through the airwaves, where newspapers print gizzillions of words and publishers rush to market the latest book in hopes of boosting sales, and where internet sources provide mega volumes of information to millions of computers. The amount of knowledge that is available to us today is overwhelming.

Further, life is complicated. Paying bills, taking the kids to school, and getting through the work day without blowing a fuse is so challenging that our quality of life seems to be hanging by a thread. Troubled individuals rush down to the self-help section of the bookstore to peruse through the latest magical cure for depression, stress, and insomnia.

People, anxious for spiritual solutions, are seeking out psychologists, the high priests of society, to fix their relationship woes. A whole new set of terms like “abuse,” “hurt,” “inner child,” and “self image,” “bi-polar,” “manic depression,” “A.D.D.” and the like is on the bookshelf of every American mind. Lacking are men and women who are digging their way through Scripture. This move away from Scriptural vocabulary and the adoption of psychological jargon is evidence that many do not understand the sufficiency of Scripture.

What is needed is not psychological analysis or archaeological journeys into one’s past, but face-to-face interaction with the Word of God; i.e., a reliance on the sufficiency of Scripture.

15.2.1 The Scripture Can Make You Successful

Joshua 1:8 This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

Moses was dead and Joshua was next in line to lead the nation. One can't imagine the in trepidation that Joshua must have felt having to fill the shoes of a leader like Moses. How could he possibly succeed?

The first words in the Hebrew text are "You shall not depart from the book." This was the first principle of success God gave to the new leader. The second responsibility God gave Joshua was to "meditate" on God's Word day and night.

The word "meditate" (*hG<©h.y<*) means to "to muse" or "growl." It is the same word used in Isaiah 31:4 which references a lion growling over his prey. God expected Joshua to growl over the Word of God as lion over his food. It is the lack of meditation on the Word of God that threatened the nation. Furthermore, if our congressmen would follow the same principles, we would not have all the headaches we have today in politics.

Two promises are given to Joshua. First, God promises Joshua success in his way (1:8). The word "prosperous" (*X;yliîC. T;*) can be translated "successful." It is translated "and the Spirit of God came upon him mightily" (rushed upon him) in Judges 14:6. That is, adherence to the Word of God would result in speedy success for Joshua.

The second promise is that he would be "successful." The word "successful" is translated "wise" in Genesis 3:8, "understanding" in Genesis 32:29, and "prosper" in Deuteronomy 29:9. The Word of God is sufficient to make one wise and prosperous.

15.2.2 The Scripture Can Keep You From Making Mistakes

Psalm 19:12-13 Who can discern *his* errors? Acquit me of hidden *faults*. Also keep back Thy servant from presumptuous *sins*; Let them not rule over me;

The psalmist realizes that sin is so deceptive the average man cannot even discern his own errors. Consequently, he blurts out a prayer to God that he would be saved from self-destructive powers.

What a wonderful prayer. I can't help but think of how different men would be in the world if they would pray that prayer. His wise prayer, however, comes on the heels of meditation about God's Word wherein he mentions seven benefits of reading God's Word: restoration, wisdom, joy, light, cleansing, warning, and reward.

15.2.3 The Scripture can protect you

Psalm 119:9-10 How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping *it* according to Thy word. With all my heart I have sought Thee; Do not let me wander from Thy commandments.

As the psalmist carefully observed the society in which he lived, he realized how difficult it was for a young man to avoid the lusts, and lies of his age. He blurts out a question, "How can a young man keep his way pure?" The word "clean" is a Piel verb intensifying the difficulty of keeping clean.

The NASB translation provides the answer, "By keeping it according to Thy Word." But, the text could be rendered, "How shall a young man keep his way pure and to keep Your Word?" If the latter translation is correct, the answer comes in the form of a prayer in the next verse: "Do not let me wander from your Word."

The word "wander" means "to meander" "go astray" or "stagger as a drunk man" away from his home. In either translation, the answer is the same. The key to purity is a bone-crushing grip on the Word of God or maybe we should say a bone-crushing grip of the Word of God on the man.

15.2.4 The Scripture Can Sanctify You

John 17:17 Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth.

Realizing the massive trials and lies and deception the disciples would face following his death, the Lord prayed that His disciples might be sanctified in the truth; i.e., set apart, made holy, and beatified in and by the truth. The word "sanctify" is an aorist imperative indicating the Lord wanted the Father to start the process immediately. But, where can a person find truth? In our great universities? In religion? In the psychiatrist's office?

To Jesus, truth could only be found in the God's Word. The means of holiness and the means of overcoming problems is not found in the prophets of Freud, Adler, Maslow, and the like, but in

the prophets of God. The means of sanctification is not found in psychology or philosophy, but in the Scriptures.

15.2.5 The Scripture Can Equip You for Service

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷ that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Note the word “profitable” (wvfe,limoj) is a predicate adjective describing the inspired text. The Scripture provides powerful, positive benefits for men and women of God. Secondly, the inspired text was given in order to help qualify a man for service.

The word “adequate” (a;rtioj) is a predicate adjective applied to the man of God, It means “to fit” or “to prepare.” The Scripture qualifies a man for service; i.e., it helps prepare him for the high calling of Christian service. The participle *evxhrtisme,noj* (equipped) contains the idea of outfitting a soldier for war.

15.2.6 The Scripture Can Make You Godly

2 Peter 1:2-4 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; 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.

This text says that God has called us to glory and virtue and to be partakers of the divine nature. Which of us has not struggled with powerful lusts and emotions that threaten to wreck our families and disrupt our work place? The struggle to be godly has left many of us tired and exhausted. Here Peter tells us that God has given us everything we need for life and godliness. How do we become godly--by reading a book on self-esteem or a book on ten ways to overcome depression? How can we possibly pierce the ignorance and powerful passions that bind us to nature?

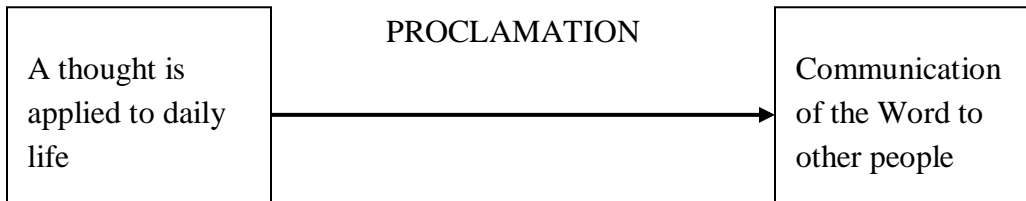
Do you see the preposition “through” (dia.)? The word *dia* contains the idea of “splitting in two.” Remember the demoniac who “rent asunder” the chains that bound him? This is the same

concept. The One Who has called us to glory and excellence can slice through any chain that binds us when we obtain the knowledge of Christ.

Where do we obtain such powerful knowledge that crushes chains and hacks its way through iron passions? The text suggests the answer lies in the promises of God. The “promises” are said to be “heavy” (ti,mia) and “great” (me,gistoj). The adjective “great” means “large” or “loud” or “strong.” We get the word *mega* from this word. In other words, God has called us to be partakers of His divine nature, and the way we escape from the passions that shackle us is by using God’s bolt cutters, the Holy Scriptures. The plastic scissors of psychology and philosophy and religion will not do. Man-size problems call for divine solutions—the Word of God.

In conclusion, in a day an age where men and women are running to self-help books and psychological teachers to find answers to their problems, the educated Christian knows that the Scriptures are sufficient to release him from what binds him and to produce in him Christ-like character.

16 PROCLAIMING THE WORD



2 Timothy 4:2 preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.

16.1 The What of Proclamation

In Paul's final letter to his spiritual son, he commanded him to preach the word. The term "word" is an accusative informing Timothy of the content of proclamation. What did Paul mean by "word?" What word was he to preach? In chapter 3 it appears to be the Scripture or Holy Scriptures (3:15, 16) or "his teaching" (3:10). But, this view is rather broad. Did Paul really want Timothy to proclaim all of OT and NT history and theology?

In chapter 2, Paul called the message "the things" (2:2). But, what are the things he was to preach and commit to faithful men? In 1:14, he calls the word "the good deposit." In 1:13, he calls them the "pattern of sound words." But, what are those sound words? Finally, in 1:11 we learn that the "sound words" and "good deposit" and "the things" refer to the "gospel." Timothy was to preach the gospel.

But, what is the gospel? Linguistically, the word *gospel* means "good news." But, theologically, it is packed with meaning.

First, the gospel is about *a person*. It is good news that Jesus is the Christ (Mark 1:1). He is the promised messiah, the fulfillment of OT promises. Christians proclaim the good news that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the God-man.

Second, the gospel is about the *victorious history of Christ* (1 Corinthians 15:1-4), i.e., about his life, death, burial, and resurrection. It is good news that Jesus conquered death, man's fundamental problem.

Third, the gospel is not only about the marvelous history of Christ, it is about the meaning of that history (Romans 3:21-8:34). In Paul's legal masterpiece on the gospel (1:16), he was not compelled to rehearse the facts of Christ's tenor of Christ's sojourn on earth as Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. Rather, he was concerned about interpreting the Christ event. In Romans, he explains *the meaning* of His life, death, burial, and resurrection: redemption, substitution, grace, propitiation, and victory.

Fourth, the gospel is about how the Christ event *affects* the believer. It is good news that Jesus' life, death, and resurrection powerfully impact the one who believes with such benefits as justification (5:1), regeneration (5:2-5), reconciliation (5:10), identification (6:2-5), eternal life (6:23), adoption (8:15-16), glorification (8:33-34), and sanctification (12:1ff). Finally, the gospel is the good news about how to respond to God's work in Christ (1 Timothy 1:8-10). It is good news we know what pleases God. And, what pleases God and enables the believer to receive the benefits of the gospel is *a response of faith and repentance* (Romans 4:1; 10:9-13; Acts 20:21) followed by a life of love and holiness (Romans 13:8-10; 2 Timothy 1:13; 1 Thessalonians 4:7).

This is good news in light of the current religious climate. Hindus believe not killing rats pleases God. Moslems think that killing infidels by blowing up their children pleases God. Buddhist monks think that avoiding pain and avoiding excess pleasure pleases God. New Agers think holding a crystal and meditating pleases God. With all these views, it is good news we know what pleases Him. Faith in the gospel and a life yielded to good works please Him (Ephesians 2:8-10).

Timothy was not to proclaim his own ideas, or opinions, or even his own testimony. Rather, he was to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ and call men to respond by faith and repentance.

16.2 The Act of Proclamation

The word "preach" (kh,ruxon) means "to make known." It is an aorist imperative commanding Timothy to initiate action of proclamation. The imperative is in the emphatic position emphasizing the need for immediate application. The noun form of this word is "preacher." Previously in Paul's letter he exhorted his young disciple "to commit" the gospel to faithful men

(2:2); to “guard” the gospel (1:14); to retain or hold on to the gospel (1:13); and to not be ashamed of the gospel (1:8); but now he exhorts Timothy to proclaim and broadcast the gospel by doing the work of an evangelist.

16.3 The How of Proclamation

Someone has said the means is as important as the ends. It certainly is. Paul guards the means as well as the ends when he tells Timothy to “reprove, rebuke, and exhort with great patience and instruction.” The gospel is to be used to “reprove” men, that is, to convict and convince men. Some men need persuasion and Timothy was to marshal historical and forensic evidence to persuade the reluctant.

Second, Timothy was to rebuke men with the gospel. Some men are more than reluctant; they are rebellious and unresponsive to the Word of God. These men need to be “slapped in the face” sort of speak with the sword of truth in order to jolt them out of their rebellion.

Third, Paul exhorted his disciple to exhort men with the Word of God. This refers to the category of men and women who are responsive to the gospel and are going in the right direction, but who need encouragement to be fully committed to its truth. All this reproving, rebuking, and exhorting needed to be done with patience and instruction. By patience, Paul called Timothy to Christ-like character and integrity.

The word “patience” here is the Greek word *makroqumi,a* (makrothumia) which means loooooong suffering; i.e., emotional self-control. Emotional maturity is a prerequisite for ministry. Paul knew that some irascible men would test Timothy’s character. When men responded badly, Timothy was to respond godly. The word “instruction” is the word for “teaching.” In proclamation, people need systematic teaching of God’s Word. Guard the means as well as the ends.

The goal of proclamation is not to be intense or to be deep or to appear sharp, but to be clear! If there is a cloud in the pulpit, there will be a fog in the pew. When we are emotional, clarity is clouded. When we are thoughtless, clarity is useless. When we are inaccurate, clarity is compromised. But, when we know our subject and major on how to articulate a gospel component, we can be clear. When we are clear, we communicate and fulfill the obligation of proclamation.

16.4 The When of Proclamation

Paul commands Timothy to preach the gospel “in season and out of season.” Borrowing a farmer’s metaphor for sowing and planting, Timothy’s sowing of the Word was not to be done only when the political weather was fair, but even when the political climate was foul.

In America, Christianity has enjoyed acceptance for a several hundred years, but in recent times we have seen an all out effort to purge society of Christian symbols, nativity scenes, holidays, biblical history, and biblical words from government buildings and public schools.

The political climate has an *ipso facto* suspicion about God’s Word’ which is becoming more and more hostile to gospel proclamation. Nevertheless, Christians are called to advance the gospel “in season and out of season.” More than ever, America needs men of integrity who will boldly “reprove, rebuke, and exhort” men to surrender to Christ and the authority of Scripture.

16.5 The Why of Proclamation

2 Timothy 4:3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires;

The word “endure” is a future tense of a Greek word that means “to hold back” (avne,cw). Paul envisioned a day or many days future to his time when the society of men would not tolerate the gospel of Jesus Christ. Rather, this society would only approve of teachers that support their feelings (desires). These days have arrived in our time.

There was a day when Scripture was quoted on the floors of Congress, but not any more. There was a day when the Ten Commandments hanged proudly in classrooms and courtrooms, but not any more. There was a day when all of America said, ”Merry Christmas” and “God bless you,” but not any more. T.V. has replaced Bible reading. Interest in government has replaced interest in the church.

There was a day when homosexuality was shameful and not tolerated, but not any more. The pursuit of pleasure has replaced the pursuit of duty. Sensuality has replaced spirituality. Pornography is protected speech, and mentioning God in the Pledge of Allegiance has been ruled “unconstitutional” by the ninth circuit court. Right is wrong, and wrong is right.

When the majority accepts the gospel, Christians need tolerance; when only a minority accepts the gospel, Christians need courage. Though preaching the gospel is “out of season,” let us determine to stand on the authority of Scripture and proclaim the truth of His Word. Just as soft soap in the pulpit will not cleanse sinners in the pew, silent Christians will not save souls in society.

17 ANSWERING THE CRITIC

17.1 Introduction

Since God cannot lie and the Scriptures are God-breathed in the original MSS and since the reliability of our present English translations are no longer in dispute, how do we explain supposed contradictions and anachronisms raised by critics?

In 1800 the French Institute in Paris issued a list of 82 errors in the Bible which they believed would destroy Christianity. Marcus Dodd in The Bible: Its Origin and Nature, pp. 136-7, presents the six contradictions in the Gospels which led him to reject inerrancy. Frederick Kenyon in The Bible and Archaeology, p. 27, offers another list of contradictions. At one time, Life Magazine published an article entitled “5,000 Errors in the Bible.”

A careful analysis of these supposed errors will not only demonstrate that the critics are wrong, but can help us discover some basic principles by which criticism can be managed with integrity.

17.2 Bible Difficulties Examined

The Objection: There is no such thing as moral absolutes:

Professor: “Sexuality is a cultural issue and each society must establish its own views of what is right and wrong.”

Student: “No, God has defined what is right and wrong. The Bible says that adultery and fornication are sins that destroy man and his culture.”

Professor: “Well, I don’t believe the Bible.”

The Explanation: By denying the Bible as the authority for faith and conduct, the professor has silenced his critic, placed his opinion at the epicenter of his faith, and ordained it as the official standard of right and wrong. Anytime a person places reason, or feeling, or church canons, or opinions above God’s Word, they are living in rebellion against God. And, this is what happened

at the fall of man (Genesis 3) where the first couple placed their will above the will of God. The problem is one of false reasoning:

Major Premise: God has spoken and the Bible contains the correct standards of right and wrong.

Minor premise: The Bible condemns my sexual practices.

Conclusion: The Bible must be wrong.

Try this reasoning the next time you are stopped for a traffic violation. Say to the officer: “Sir, I know I was going 90 miles an hour in a 55 mph speed zone, but I don’t believe your laws.”

The Principle: Do not confuse a moral problem with an intellectual problem. The professor wanted moral autonomy, and therefore, presented his opposition to absolutes as an intellectual difficulty rather than as his personal, moral anomaly.

Do not attempt to offer an intellectual answer to a moral problem—or you will be defeated! You must help the objector to see his or her own heart as the root of the problem and pray the Holy Spirit will convict the objector of his “sin and righteousness, and judgment” (John 16:8). Knowledge of the objector’s evil condition will make him a critic of the Bible or it will drive him to the cross to find Christ. People will criticize the Bible precisely because it condemns what they do.

Further Examples: Look at the reasoning again: The minor premise is true: “The Bible condemns my sexual practices.” But, the conclusion is false: “The Bible must be wrong.” This is errant reasoning. Take the following example:

Major Premise: There is a mouse in the house! (True)

Minor Premise: I don’t approve of mice being in my house. (True)

Conclusion: Therefore, there cannot be a mouse in my house. (False)

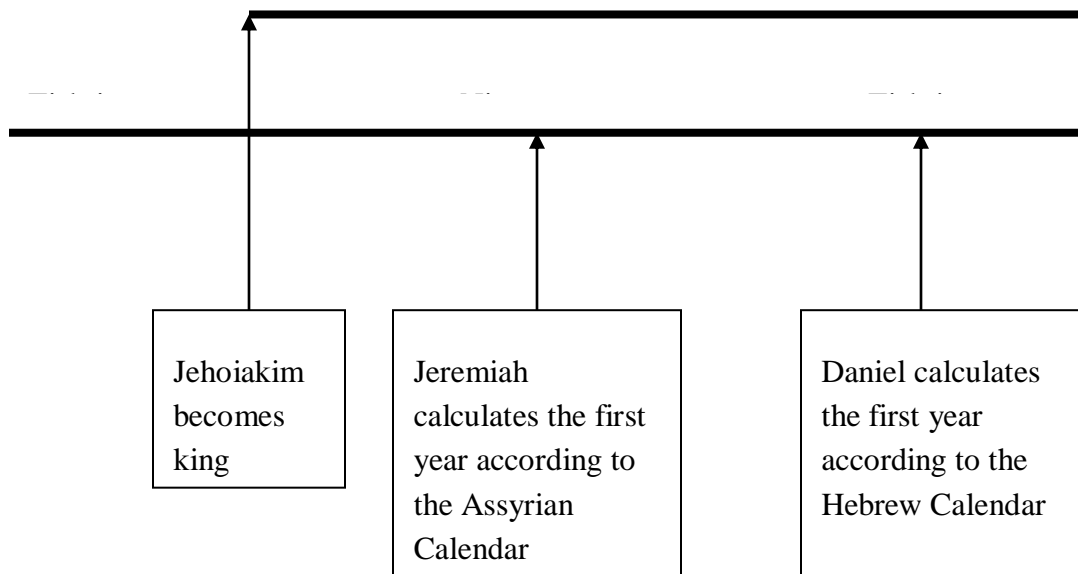
In order to help the objector, you must show him his fallacious reasoning. But reasoning is not always the problem. Often, there are problem feelings: “If it doesn’t feel good, it must be wrong.” Others, will argue, “I know fornication is wrong, but I can’t help myself. I have needs.” Here the problem is with the will, not the mind or emotions. The task of the apologist is to

identify the root of the objection: behavior, mind, emotions, or will. Until one identifies problem behavior, problem thinking, problem feelings, or problem choices, he will not be able to overcome the objector's flawed reasoning or help him accept the Bible as the source of truth.

In answering the critic, the apologist must follow three principles to win an argument: a) Agree on the meaning of terms, (b) examine the premises to see if they are true, (c) use logical arguments.

The Objection: According to Daniel 1:1, Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim. But, in Jeremiah 25:1, the attack is said to have taken place in the fourth year of Jehoiakim. Is this not a contradiction?

The Explanation: Both statements are correct. The difference can be accounted for based on two different calendar systems. Daniel utilized the Hebrew calendar, which began the new year in the month of *Tishri* (around September/October). Jeremiah employed the Assyrian calendar system, which began its new year in the month of *Nisan* (around April). Jehoiakim became king in 609 BC shortly after the 1st of Tishri. Jeremiah counted the year of ascension as Jehoiakim's first year. In Daniel's chronology, Jehoiakim's first official year of reigning began on the first of Tishri, almost a whole year after Jehoiakim ascended the throne. In Jeremiah's chronology, Jehoiakim's first year began on the 1st of Nisan, 6 months after he assumed power, and 6 months before Daniel's official first year could be calculated which was on the 1st of Tishri.



The Principle: Extra biblical sources are still incomplete and therefore always inconclusive. Historical and archaeological evidence that Israel was in Egypt, crossed the Red Sea, and journeyed through the Sinai desert may not yet have been unearthed and identified.

Further Examples: Thomas Holland, co-author and editor of Kenyon's excavation reports on her excavation at Jericho wrote, "Kenyon concluded, with reference to the military conquest theory and the LB [Late Bronze Age] walls, that there was no archaeological data to support the thesis that the town had been surrounded by a wall at the end of LB I [ca. 1400 BC]." Kenyon²⁰ concluded the biblical record was a hoax because she did not find any late bronze pottery at the site (Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East, 1997, p. 223). In 1997, two Italian archaeologists, Lorenzo Nigro and Nicolo Marchetti, dug at Jericho for a month and concluded the biblical account was a hoax.

These reports contradicted the conclusions of the German excavation that took place in 1909 which located the fortification on the North wall and possibly Rahab's house and John Garstang's findings in the 1930's.

Dr. Bryant Wood, eminent archaeologist, reopened the case, and traveled all over Europe examining the pottery excavated at Jericho by Kenyon. He concluded there was plenty of late bronze pottery, and that Kenyon was simply wrong in her analysis. In September 1997, Wood visited Jericho and examined the results of the Italian excavation first hand. Incredibly, he found the Italians had uncovered the stone outer revetment wall at the base of the Tel with part of the mudbrick wall built on top of it still intact. In the balk of the Italian excavation, at the outer base of the revetment wall, Wood noticed the remains of the collapsed mudbrick city walls which had tumbled. **Not only did the Italians find the same evidence uncovered in the earlier excavations, it fits the biblical story perfectly!**

Wood reports:

"The Italian excavation actually uncovered most of the critical evidence relating to the biblical story. But even more exciting is the fact that all the evidence from the earlier digs has disappeared over time. We only have records, drawing and

²⁰ Kathleen M. Kenyon, *Excavations at Jericho*, 3:110, London, British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem, 1981.

photos. But the Italians uncovered a completely new section of the wall which we did not know still existed. I had my photograph taken standing next to the wall where the mudbrick collapse had just been excavated!"

Nevertheless, though Wood has unmasked the fraud, Kenyon's work is firmly embedded in archaeological literature, and the Italian report will continue to circulate among skeptics (Bryant G. Wood, "Did the Israelites Conquer Jericho?", *biblical Archaeology Review* **16**(2):44–58, March–April 1990; "The Walls of Jericho", by Bryant G. Wood, *Bible and Spade*, Spring 1999, pp. 35-42 (available from the Associates for biblical Research).

The Objection: Science traces the history of man back 100 million years while the Bible presents man as a very recent creation. Doesn't the Bible contradict the true facts of science?

Explanation: Science is based on the theory of uniformitarianism, the doctrine that all geologic changes may be explained by existing physical and chemical processes, and does not take into account the principal of catastrophism, like the flood, nor does it take into account that the new earth was created by God with the appearance of age. For example: how old did a mountain or a tree or a tiger look on the first day of creation? All were created with the appearance of age.

Principle: Science is still in the process of discovery and extra- biblical material has been wrongly interpreted in the past.

Further, there is a difference between facts and theories. Science deals with present, current observable data. No scientist was present at creation. Scientists can only form theories about origins. Theories about origins are very difficult, if not impossible, to prove. They remain what they are--theories and not facts. Remember, antiquity is the magic that enables the scientist to pull the rabbit out of the hat and to speculate about possibilities. Somehow, to a mind predisposed to unbelief, Time is the handsome groom that marries the bride of Chance that procreates these malformed origin theories.

Further Examples: At one time scientists thought the world was flat and that the earth was the center of the universe. At one time scientists observed maggots emerging from spoiled meat and asserted the theory of spontaneous generation. At one time Darwin advanced his theory of natural selection, but at the end of his life, he renounced his theories because they were not supported by fact. At one time the Nebraska man was said to be a cool million years old but was later discovered to be built from the tooth of an extinct pig.

At one time the Piltdown man, estimated to be one million years old, fooled the experts until one scientist discovered the jawbone was borrowed from a modern ape. These and other gross errors ought to give us pause in being too quick to assert that science contradicts the Bible.

The Objection: Matthew 1:8 speaks of Uzziah as the son of Joram. However, the OT clearly teaches that he was the great, great grandson of Joram (2 Kings 8:25; 11:2; 14:1, 21). Is this not an error in the Bible?

Matthew	1 Chronicles
Joram	Joram
--	Ahaziah
--	Joash
	Amaziah
Uzziah	Uzziah (also called Azariah)

Explanation: The Hebrews did not have a term for “grandson” or “great grandson.” The term “son of” was a common way to express that a person was a “descendant of” of some ancestor.

The Principle: Biblical records are in place to inform the reader about accurate historic genealogical relationships rather than in place to provide the reader with precise, mathematical chronologies. Because biblical records are incomplete, i.e., because there are elliptical gaps in some records, the records may give the appearance of an error.

Further Examples: We can see an example of this in Luke 3:36 where the genealogy lists “Cainan” between Arphaxad and Shelah, but Cainan does not appear in the Genesis record at this point (Genesis 10:22-24). It is best to view the genealogies in Genesis as adequate genealogies and not a complete set of chronologies.

Deuteronomy claims to have been written by Moses. However, chapter 34 records the account of his death. Isn't this an anachronism?

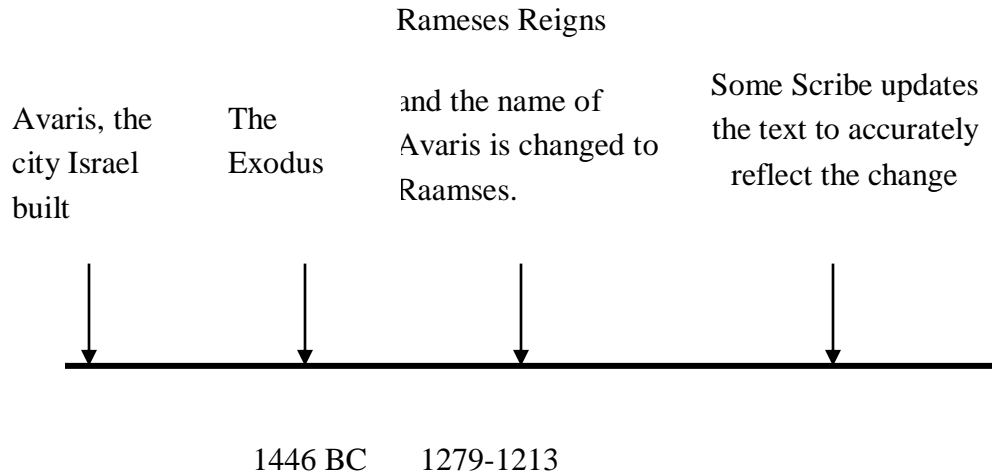
Explanation: This is an “out of time” order with the appearance that Moses wrote the last chapter. The fact of the matter is that Joshua, Moses chief aide and successor, accepted the stewardship of the Torah, and wrote an appendage to Moses' work as the Bible states, “And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God,” (Joshua 24:26).

The Principle: Certain parts of Scripture have been modified by scribes for the sake of clarification and completion and as a result appear to be an anachronism.

Further Examples: According to 1 Kings 6:1, the Solomon began construction of the first temple in the 4th year of his reign which would be about 966 BC, which the text says began 480 years after Israel left Egypt. This places the date of the exodus around 1446 BC in or near the reign of Amenhotep II (1447-1421 BC).

However, Exodus 1 says that Israel was employed as a nation of slaves and that they built the cities of Pithom and Rameses. The problem is that Rameses II (Usermaatresetepenre) of the 19th Dynasty lived in the 13th century (1279-1213 BC) almost 200 years after Israel left Egypt. Isn't this an error? First, the name of the pharaoh of the exodus is nowhere mentioned in Scripture.

Because of this, modern scholars have been in a quandary about who was the pharaoh of the exodus. Many would give their right eye to know the answer. Because Israel built the city of Rameses, many scholars proposed a late date for the exodus (1250 BC) and brushed off the 1 Kings 6:1 reference as corrupt and unreliable.



Manfred Bietak, Egyptian Archaeologist, identified as Tell el-Daba, 60 miles northeast of Cairo in eastern Nile Delta, as the ancient city of Rameses. When the Hyksos invaded the region, the name of the town was changed to Avaris, which became the capital of the Hyksos rulers. This was the name of the city Israel built. When Rameses II became Pharaoh (BC 19th Dynasty), he rebuilt the city and changed the name of Avaris to Rameses. Scribes who were aware of this change edited the text and updated Avaris to Rameses in order to clarify what city their forefathers constructed while in slavery in Egypt.

The Objection: In the early 17th century, James Ussher prepared a chronology of the biblical record and concluded the earth was created around 4004 BC. Doesn't this date contradict the facts of science?

Explanation: Archbishop Ussher (1581-1665) arrived at his date by calculating the life span of people mentioned in biblical genealogical records but he did not take into account the possibility of gaps in the genealogical record. Mr. Ussher's date was published before the ascendancy of modern science, and though it is trendiest to ridicule him, it ought not to be. He was a scholar and knew a great deal more about the records than most of his modern critics do.

It must be kept in mind that the only way to fix a date on anything of antiquity was by tracing the historical records of civilized man. There was not an educated man in Ussher's day that even

conceived of a civilization existing before 6000 BC Scientific dating methodology was unknown at the time. Even the records of ancient Egyptians can't be traced back any further than 3000 BC. A the most reliable and concise record of any ancient chronology is the Bible, bar none. And though Ussher may not have calculated the possibility of gaps in the record, he was not millions or even thousands of years off in his calculations. The whole idea that that man appeared on the scene of history a cool million years ago is infinitely more absurd than Ussher's young earth conclusion. According to these theories man lived in trees and it took primitive man hundreds of thousands of years to learn how to milk a cow.

The Principle: The Bible has been wrongly interpreted to say something it does not say. Interpreter's of the Bible have been wrong in the past and may be wrong in the future. The problem is not with the fallibility of the text, but with the fallibility of the interpreter.

Further Examples: In 1616 AD, Copernicus disclosed his theory that the earth was round and not flat. Churchmen disagreed with Copernicus who used their Bible to support their claim that the earth was flat. And, But, nowhere does the Bible directly say the earth was flat. In fact, the Bible could support Copernicus, "*It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in*" (Isaiah 40:22). But, there are plenty of verses to support a flat earth theory also: Job 9:8; 22:14; 37:18; Proverbs 8:27; Isaiah 44:24. Furthermore, even science is in conflict over such themes. Flat earthers abound and they ain't crazy.

Consider the problem of Christian pacifism. Many Christians have volunteered to go to war and kill people when the Bible says we are to "turn the other cheek." Certain interpreters read this passage and conclude a good Christian can never be involved in soldiering. When Jesus taught us to "turn the other cheek" his message was not in the context of war, but in the context of market place consortium. He was not giving a lecture on national policy but was helping everyday people cope with the minor infringements that confronted them day-to-day. Again, the problem is not the text, but the limitation and perspective of the interpreter.

The Objection: 1 Kings 4:26 claims Solomon had 40,000 stalls of horses for his chariots. 2 Chronicles 9:25 states he had only 4,000 stalls. Is this not another contradiction?

Explanation: This is undoubtedly a copyist error. The ratio of 4,000 horses to 1,400 chariots is much more reasonable than 40,000 horses to 1,400 chariots. The consonants for 40 are RBYM while the consonants for the number 4 are RBH with no vowels in the text. The MSS from which

the scribe worked may have been smudged or damaged causing the copyist to error in his reproduction which gives the appearance of being in error.

Principle: Inerrancy applies only to the original autographs. No scholar asserts the inerrancy of our MSS or translations. The Bible, like Christ, is both divine and human. Its humanness demonstrates the Bible has a genuine, authentic transmission record like everything that man touches and is exposed to the processes of time.

It is the job of the textual critic to identify and catalogue variants existing among the 24,000 MSS. These variants have been classified into *intentional variants* and *unintentional variants*. An intentional variant is a change made in the manuscript for the purpose of improving or updating spelling or grammar to a more modern canon. An unintentional variant is a change made in the manuscript due to a copyist's mistake. These mistakes are cataloged as errors of sight (misreading a letter), errors of hearing (confusing one sound for another), errors of memory (substituting a word in a more familiar passage with an obscure passage), errors of judgment (incorrect division of words in an uncial manuscript).

Further Examples: In Titus 3:5, the KJV reads, "But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain." Do you see the word "strivings"? It is plural in the KJV but singular in the NASB where it is translated "strife." Some MSS (A C K L P 075) favor the plural form and other MSS favor the singular form (Δ D^c F G H Y). The singular Greek word for "strife" is *e[rin]* whereas the plural for "strife" is *e[rīj]*. The difference is one letter. The difference can be accounted for by looking at the context of the list of plural Greek words.

From the point of view of the copyist it seems reasonable that the singular form of "strife" was altered to fit the other plural words in the sentence: "questions" and "genealogies" and "contentions." Though it is not inappropriate or grammatically incorrect to have "strife" in the sentence, the Scribe thought he was doing us a favor by changing the singular into a plural.

The Objection: Joshua 10 records the southern campaign of Joshua's invasion into Canaan. In response to Joshua's prayer in verse 13, we are told the "Sun stood still" prolonging the daylight until the campaign was successfully executed. This statement has been called the most striking incident in Scripture at variance with science. Isn't this an unscientific statement that contradicts true science?

Explanation: It is not necessary to conclude the earth's rotation stopped or was totally halted. Joshua said the Sun "did not hasten to go down for about a whole day." This could indicate the Sun was either retarded from going down or that the earth did stop rotating around the Sun. Whether retarded or stopped, all things are possible with God. All though we may not understand how it happened, the text says it happened.

Principle: First, the skeptic operates from a false presupposition that "miracles do not happen because they do not happen." This is circular reasoning and it is evidence of bias on the part of the interpreter of the Bible. If one accepts the presupposition, "if miracles cannot occur," then miracles cannot occur. Second, the Bible uses everyday, non-technical phenomenal language to describe events biblical people observed.

Further Examples: If you picked up your newspaper this morning, you could see at the top of the first page this statement: Sunrise, 6:49 A.M. Sunset, 7:03 P.M. Now really, did the Sun actually rise? Statements like "sunrise," "sunset," "the moon came up," "clouds huddling together," "storms mounting on the horizon," and the like are used everyday in America and no one questions the integrity of their usage even though they are not scientific statements with mathematical precision.

Furthermore, saying that the Red Sea only appeared to split in half, or Jesus only appeared to walk on water, or that Lazarus only appeared dead, or that the little lad brought out his lunch to share with everyone so that his example overcame the stinginess of the crowd shows a bias against supernaturalism. To say that the only true proof of anything must come in mathematical-deductive form seriously damages the integrity of western civilization on which our legal system is constructed. Everyday in the world people testify in court to what they have seen and heard and very few witnesses are able produce photographs or audio recordings of what they saw and heard. And yet, their testimonies are accepted as the most powerful form of evidence in a court of law.

Another example of the interpreter's bias can be observed in the interpretation of Sodom and Gomorrah. The homosexual community approaches Sodom's problem as one of inhospitality, not homosexual behavior. They argue the word "know" means "to get acquainted" rather than to "have sexual relations with." The four thousand year old tradition of interpreting sodomites as homosexuals is clearly being challenged by the bias of the liberal community that has a political agenda.

The Objection: In the OT, polygamy was practiced and tolerated by God and God's people. The NT only teaches monogamy. Isn't this a contradiction?

Explanation: It is true God tolerated polygamy in the OT times. It is also true the NT upholds a monogamous relationship as God's ideal. One man plus one woman was and is the biblical standard. It is not true, however, that the NT bans the practice of polygamy.

The Principle: God deals with mankind on the level of his intellectual, emotional and cultural maturity and does not demand of him more than is reasonable in that culture.

Further Examples: When Abraham and Sarah could not have a child, they conceived of a plan to naturally inseminate Hagar, Sarah's handmaid, in order to produce a surrogate child. Though the results were hideous, Abraham was not considered an adulterer and is not named as such in Scripture. In his society, producing surrogate children through natural insemination was an acceptable practice. Abraham strayed not because he was a lusty man, but because unbelief was at work in his heart causing Sarah and him to doubt the promise of God.

The Objection: Matthew 28:5 says that there was one angel at the tomb, and John says there were two angels at the tomb. Isn't this a contradiction?

Explanation: Matthew says there was one angel at the tomb. He does not say that there was *only* one angel at the tomb. One has to add the word "only" to make Matthew and John contradict each other. There is a mathematical rule that says *wherever there is two, there is one*. If there are two apples on the table, it is absolutely true there is one apple on the table. If there are two people in a room, it is absolutely true there is one person in the room.

Principle: Just because there are two accounts of a biblical event does not mean they are mutually exclusive or that they contradict each other. In fact, two accounts of the same event enhance the fact that the gospel writers did not collaborate with each other to pen their account of the life of Christ. If two testimonies are too similar, then the critic has a right to allege the occurrence of collaboration.

Further Examples: Matthew has a genealogy that is different from Luke's genealogy but there is no contradiction here because Matthew traces Joseph's genealogy while Luke traces Mary's genealogy. Matthew informs us that Judas hanged himself (27:5). Luke informs us that his guts spilled out (Acts 1:18). These accounts differ but are not mutually exclusive. The difference adds interest and supports the fact that these are true testimonies taken from two points of view.

In conclusion, these principles can be helpful tools to resolve some of the apparent contradictions that appear in Scripture. In facing the critic, three important principles need to be kept in mind:

The burden of proof that there are errors in the Bible is upon the critic. It is impossible to prove that there are no errors just as it is impossible to prove to others that you have never committed adultery. Show me the proof.

Difficulties may exist because all the facts in the debate have not yet been entered into evidence. Sometimes, we do not have enough information to be assertive one way or another. For example, at the present time it is impossible to assert with 100% certainty the identity of the pharaoh of the exodus. We simply do not have enough information to answer the question. But, because we cannot “prove” who the pharaoh of the exodus was does not mean the biblical narrative did not happen.

The history of the Bible’s supposed errors ought to make the skeptic cringe and hesitate before barking about alleged errors in the Bible. Critics have accused the Bible of containing hundreds of contradictions. Yet, the 82 errors reported by the French Institute and Kenyon’s list and Life’s list of 5000 errors have all been resolved due to diligent historical investigation by scholars.

18 REPORT ON ARCHAEOLOGY

Is the Bible true and can it be trusted?

The following is a report taken from archaeological lectures given **by three of the world's leading experts** in the field of archaeology when the *Museum of Archaeology & Biblical History* was dedicated at the Southwest Institute of Trinity College & Seminary, January 20, 2001.

Present were **Dr. Randall Price**, Professor of Archaeology and head of the Qumran Plateau Excavation; **Dr. Leen Ritmeyer**, foremost authority on the Temple Mount and the archaeology of Jerusalem; and **Dr. Bryant Wood**, Dean of Conservative Archaeologists and Director of the Khirbet el-Maqatir Excavation (Ai) and the world's leading authority on Jericho and Ai during the destruction period. This report features Dr. Wood's lecture on the liberal bias in archaeological studies at a lecture to students, staff, and friends of Trinity Seminary. This report helps answer the questions, "Can the Bible be trusted, and if it can be trusted, why is it so attacked?"

18.1 What is the Liberal Premise?

Liberals have advanced the premise that *the Bible cannot be trusted unless archaeological evidence can be introduced* to verify the Bible's internal historical statements. This skepticism is heightened when it comes to Biblical history prior to the Iron Age (1000 BC). But, this view is **prejudicial because it presumes the Bible is guilty until proven innocent**. Interestingly, this same skepticism is lacking toward Syrian and Babylonian sources.

The second premise of liberals is that *because the Bible is a religious book, it cannot be trusted*. Religious people are suspect at best. The problem with this view is that **it is prejudicial against religious scholars**. Do atheists have higher ethical standards than people of ethics? Furthermore, this view makes archaeological studies totally impossible because "Every archaeological find in history has a religious assumption," said Wood.

Wood explained that the Bible is the most reliable book for Near Eastern studies in archaeology. "Every archaeological find always, always supports the Biblical view." He went on to explain that ancient texts from Babylon, Syria, and Egypt have done nothing but verify the Biblical

record. Wood said the Bible is “the main source” for the interpretation of finds by leading archaeologists.

Ritmeyer confirmed Wood’s positiveness: “The Bible is the historical handbook” of archaeologists working in the Holy Land. He went on to say that when he was excavating the Temple Mount with Amihai Mazar, Israel’s foremost archaeologist, that Mazar always had his Bible open when doing research because it was his primary history source.

Price said that in his research at Qumran, the Dead Sea Scrolls have done nothing but to verify the New Testament as the primary authority regarding history in the first century.

18.2 What is the Critical Issue?

The critical issue confronting liberal archaeologists is the question, “**How did Israel come into existence?**” Because the liberals doubt everything from the first seven books of the Bible, they have conjured up bizarre schemes for Israel’s existence. The latest design is called “**The Emergence Theory.**” This view denies the story of Abraham, the exodus, Israel’s sojourn in the wilderness, and Israel’s occupation during the Late Bronze Period. This view advocates that Israelites were Canaanite aborigines from the 12th Century BC who evolved into a political-religious coalition that dominated weaker nations occupying Canaan during this period.

18.3 Why the Skepticism?

Why do liberals deny the Biblical account? Why do they advocate wild, unsubstantiated theories? Wood explained you could understand this scholarly divergence by grasping **three pillars of liberal skepticism:**

LITERARY ANALYSIS is the first pillar of liberal skepticism. Beginning with the assumption that the Bible is a collection of myths, these scholars sit in their offices, having never been on an archaeological dig or performed historical research, and rummage around in the spurious universe of their own minds to postulate on word origins. With no facts, no history, and no archaeological experience, they conclude the Bible was written some time around the 6th century BC by a collection of unknown Jewish authors (JEPD). Wood said this approach is completely subjective, germane to the mind, not based on historical evidence, and completely unscientific.

NON-EVIDENCE is the second pillar: Many of these liberals come to Biblical studies from the humanities without credentials in historical, Biblical studies. Building their system on pillar number one, they use “non-evidence” as “evidence.” **It is an argument from silence.** For example: How could you prove Abraham was a Bedouin living in Palestine during the Middle Bronze Period? Because one cannot find his campfire, does this mean he never existed? If we cannot find a campfire built by Louis & Clark, does this mean they never explored the Northwest Territory? An argument from “non-evidence” is ridiculous! Proofs of existence in the Early Bronze Period have been buried and covered by time. Evidence from archaeology is narrow and meager. Ninety-five percent of known archaeological sites have never been investigated. Archaeological discoveries are merely samples of history, not the actual history themselves. The Bible is still the leading source document for Levantine history. Every find to date “always supports the Biblical view,” said Wood.

BAD SCHOLARSHIP is the third pillar. Liberal archaeologists teach at universities during the year and do field work during the summer. They have a problem that all in the field experience—a time crunch. Field works must be organized, the summer planned, sites excavated, data analyzed, information processed, findings published, and then they must get ready for the next dig season. These duties make it difficult to perform detailed analysis of data in a short time period. Bad information is circulated and skewed toward the liberal bias.

18.4 Can this Bias be Illustrated?

Wood, who did his Ph.D. work on the destruction layer at Jericho, illustrated this 100 year liberal archaeological bias in two areas of excavation, Jericho and Ai.

Bias at Jericho: The Bible teaches that Joshua conquered Jericho around 1400 BC (Joshua 6). K. M. Kenyon reported the destruction of the city happened 150 years before Joshua arrived at Jericho. She based her conclusion upon a lack of Cyprus potteryware in the destruction layer. She hypothesized that Joshua passed through an uninhabited site, claimed a non-military victory, and then circulated the rumor of a military conquest. Kenyon never tried to reconcile her conclusion with the Biblical record, she just assumed her theories were true and the Bible’s record was wrong.

Wood, coming from the position that the Bible is true, reopened the Jericho investigation in order to resolve the problem. Traveling all over Europe, he studied Kenyon’s pottery collections. Wood discovered that Kenyon totally misread the data. He found a plethora of Canaanite pottery

germane to the period in the destruction layer and said, “It is very, very clear that Jericho was destroyed in 1400 BC.”

Wood also found evidence at Jericho supporting the Biblical account: fallen walls, a short springtime siege, a lack of plundering, and an undisturbed housing district. J. Garstang, who dug at Jericho between 1930-1936, reported conclusions similar to Wood’s. In other words, Kenyon’s report is bad scholarship based on her liberal bias.

Bias Regarding Ai: The “lost” city of Ai is located somewhere northwest of Jericho. This military post was the second fortress Joshua conquered (Joshua 7, 8). Liberals identified Et-tell as the possible site of ancient Ai, and determined that Et-tell was destroyed around 2,200 BC and remained unoccupied for a millennium. This being the case, the liberals concluded that the Joshua account was a myth.

Disturbed by this conclusion, Wood studied the pottery finds at Et-tell. In this case, Wood agreed with the excavators.

Assuming the Bible to be correct, Wood asked himself, “Could this be a question of mistaken identity?” Wood assumed the biblical account was correct and that Et-tell was the wrong site. The lost city of Ai was still lost. In seeking to locate the correct mound under which the old city might be buried, Wood and his team searched for archaeological mounds near Et-tell. They located a mound about one mile southwest of Et-tell called Khirbet el-Maqatir. This site had potential to be ancient Ai. But, they had to excavate the site to solve the puzzle. Wood began excavations on this hill in 1995.

Peter Briggs, Professor at Trinity University in Albuquerque doing his Ph.D. research at this excavation, developed 16 biblical parameters for identifying the proper biblical site. At Khirbet el-Maqatir, the team located the city gate, found evidence of military occupation, burn layers, and evidence of mass destruction just like the Biblical account. After five years of excavation, Briggs reported that the finds at Khirbet el-Maqatir met 15 of the 16 Biblical parameters for the correct site. Though this excavation is unfinished, the archaeologists concluded Khirbet el-Maqatir was indeed the lost city of Ai. Once again, this is a case where the liberal scholars were wrong, not because they misinterpreted the data, but because of mistaken identity. Once again, archaeological evidence supports the Biblical record.

In conclusion: You may hear liberal scholars criticize Biblical accounts. The reason they do this is because they perform their studies with a liberal bias that places more reliance on archaeology (external sources) than on the written record (internal sources).

The liberals should be embarrassed by their hasty analysis and errant conclusions. If the world's three leading authorities, after years of analysis, have demonstrated that the liberals are wrong and the biblical accounts are accurate, you can rest assured the Bible is completely trustworthy. When in doubt, follow the evidence! The evidence, "always supports the Biblical account" said Wood. Remember, non-evidence (the lack of finds) in this meager field, should never be used as "evidence" for skepticism.

19 AMAZING BIBLE FACTS

19.1 The Name “Bible”

The English word Bible never appears in Scripture.

The word “Bible” comes from the Greek word *biblion* and the Latin word *biblia* which means “scroll” or “a little book”. *Biblion* is derived from *biblas*, the bark of the papyrus plant, a reed grown in warm countries like Egypt. The word *biblos* refers to any book from this plant.

The first word in the Greek New Testament, Matthew 1:1, is the word *Bi,bloj*.

The Bible is called “The Scripture” (Acts 8:32), “The Scriptures” (Matthew 21:42), “The Holy Scriptures” (Romans 1:2), “The Oracles of God” (Romans. 3:2; Hebrews 5:12), and the “Word of God” (Mark 7:13; Romans 10:17).

The Jewish OT is called the *Tanach*. The Tanach begins with Genesis and ends with 2 Chronicles.

19.2 Structure

The Bible contains 66 books, and is divided into two sections: the Old Testament (OT) and the New Testament (NT).

The OT has 39 books and the NT contains 27 books.

The word “testament” (*diaqh,khj*) means “a pact” or “a covenant.” The central theme of the OT is the old covenant (*tyrIB, berit*), the compact between YHWH and the nation of Israel. The OT word for “covenant” means “to cut.” The central theme of the NT is the new covenant, which was cut by Jesus in His death at the cross (Matthew 26:28).

There is an easy way to remember the number of books of the bible. The word “old” has three letters. The word “testament” has nine letters). Together, 3 & 9 = 39 books. The word “new” has 3 letters, and the word “testament” has nine letters). 3 x 9 = 27 books. 39 + 27 = 66 books.

19.3 Authors

About 40 human authors contributed to this sacred collection over a period of about 1600 years (1500 BC – 90 AD). In reality, however, the Bible has only one author, the Holy Spirit who inspired this Holy Work (2 Timothy 3:16).

Moses was the main contributor to the OT and the author of the Torah.

Paul wrote 14 of the 27 documents in the NT, which is more than half.

In the Old Testament alone, there are over 2,600 claims of inspiration.

19.4 Writing of the Bible

There is one grand subject, salvation history.

The Bible was written in 3 languages: Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic.

Three basic writing styles were used during biblical history: Pictographic, Cuneiform, and Alphabetic.

Scripture was written on 3 continents: The Middle East, Africa, and Europe.

19.5 Translation and Circulation

The Bible is the most translated book in the world. The French academy listed 2,796 languages in the world. Between 300 BC and 700 AD biblical text was written into nine various languages. Since then, the Bible has been partially translated into 2018 languages (2000 AD), and completely translated into more than 250 languages according to the American Bible Society. The complete NT exists in more than 325 languages.

After the Bible, the most translated book in the world is Cervantes' 'Don Quixote'. (<http://www.funtrivia>).

Bernard Ramm said 1,330,213,815 Bibles had been printed by 1932. Today, it is well over 10 times that for sure. Bibles are being published by so many societies, in so many languages, in so many countries, no one organization has been able to keep track of the number of Bibles being

published. Printing 50 Bibles a second or 3,000 Bibles a minute would not keep up with the world demand.

Today, the Bible is the most read book in the world. It is continually the world's best seller.

It is not only the best selling book of all time; it is also the best selling book EVERY year!

At one time (1970), the Bible was the most expensive book in the world. The last selling of the Guttenberg Bible I noted went for a cool \$5,400,000.00.

It is the most persecuted book in the world. It has been confiscated, burned, drowned, buried, and ripped to pieces. One of the earliest English versions was that of John Wycliffe (1328-1384). The Roman Church vowed to burn him at the stake, but was cheated when he died of natural causes. Many years later, the Church dug up his bones and burned them.

The Bible is also the most shoplifted book in the United States.

The Guinness Book of World Records is the best selling copyrighted book of our time. The Bible is the best selling of all time, but it is not copyrighted.

The oldest copy of the Bible is the manuscript of Isaiah, which was part of the Dead Sea Scrolls found in 1947.

The oldest known version of the OT, the Septuagint (LXX), was written in Greek. It was the translation that Jesus and Paul used in first century.

19.6 Canonization

The entire NT as we know it today, was canonized before the year 375 AD. The OT had previously been canonized long before the advent of Christ.

The word "canon" is derived from the Greek word "kanon," signifying a measuring rod. Thus, to have the Bible "canonized" meant that it had been measured by the standard or test of divine inspiration and authority. It became the collection of books or writings accepted by the apostles and leadership of the early Christian church as a basis for Christian belief. It is the standard by which all Christians throughout the ages live and worship.

In 400 AD, Jerome, a church father, called the Bible “the Divine Library.” The Greeks called it “ta biblia” or “The Books” referring to a series of revelations. Thus, it came to be known as “The Book of Books.” The Anglican word for Bible means “Pre-eminent One.”

Irenaeus quoted all of our NT minus the books Hebrews, 2 Peter, & 3 John within his work Against Heresies (130-200 AD).

Within the Muratorian Canon the NT was listed minus Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, & 3 John (170-210 AD).

Eusebius quoted all of our NT within his work Ecclesiastical History (260-340 AD).

Athanasius quoted all of our NT within his thirty-ninth Paschal Letter (367 AD).

The List of the Canon was closed by the Council of Carthage (397 AD).

19.7 The Apocrypha

The apocryphal books, primarily Hebrew literature written between the Testaments, are 1 Esdras, Judith, Tobit, 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees, 3 Maccabees, 4 Maccabees, Odes, Wisdom, Sirach, Psalms of Solomon, Baruch, & Letter of Jeremiah. These works were added into the Catholic Bible during the Counter Reformation. Though they contain helpful information about the Intertestament Period, they have never been recognized as having the same authority as Scripture, and they were never recognized as part of the Canon.

19.8 Printing and Translation

The Bible was first printed between 1450-56 AD in Mainz, Germany from the type devised by Johann Guttenberg. It was first printed in Latin from the contemporary manuscript of the Latin Vulgate. Thirty or forty of these are still in existence.

A copy of the Guttenberg Bible owned by the Congressional Library, Washington, DC is said to be one of the three perfect copies and is one of several vellum copies. It was valued at over 300,000 dollars in 1970. Today, it is worth millions.

The first translation of the Bible into English was in 1382 AD by John Wycliff.

The first Bible to be printed in America was by the missionary John Eliot in 1663, and the first English Bible printed was in 1782 by Robert Aitken in Philadelphia.

There are now more than 5300 known Greek Manuscripts of the NT making the Bible the most authenticated body of literature in antiquity.

19.9 Text Divisions

Text divisions were made by Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury in England in 1228 AD.

Modern divisions were made by Robert Stephanus, a printer who lived in Paris in 1551 AD.

The first Bible to carry both chapter and verse divisions was the Geneva Bible (1560 AD).

The OT has 39 books, 929 chapters, 23,214 verses, 2,728,100 letters (KJV).

The NT has 27 books, 260 chapters, 7,959 verses, 838,380 letters (KJV).

The Bible has 66 books, 1,189 chapters, 31,173 verses, 3,566,480 letters (KJV).

19.10 Bible Trivia

The shortest book in the OT is Obadiah. The shortest book in the Bible is 2 John.

The shortest verse in the Bible is not "Jesus wept." (16 letters) from John 11:35, but "He said:" from Job 3:2 (13 letters).

The longest word in the KJV Bible can be found in Isaiah 8:1 which is "Mahershalalhashbaz"

The most mentioned crop in the Bible was the corn crop.

In London, in 1631, an authorized edition of the Bible was printed accidentally reading 'Thou shalt commit adultery'.

The only domestic animal not mentioned in the Bible is the cat.

The Bible contains 17 (minus 1) references to the number 17. The 17th book is the shortest Book. It has been said that someone spent 17 years looking for the exact middle point of the Bible.

There are 613 laws in the Torah.

It is believed that Shakespeare was 46 when the King James Version of the Bible was written. In Psalms 46, the 46th word from the first word is shake.

There are more than 1,700 references to gems and precious stones in the King James translation of the Bible.

The single greatest contributor to the OT was Moses.

The single greatest contributor to the NT was Paul. He wrote 14 letters.

The oldest book in the Bible is the Book of Job (2100 BC) , or possibly, some parts of Genesis (3,500 BC).

The oldest book in the NT is James (45AD).

The longest book in the Bible is Psalms and the shortest Book is 2 John.

The shortest chapter is Psalm 117 and the longest is Psalm 119.

The longest verse is Esther 8:9.

The Word "God" occurs 3,358 times, and the word "Lord" occurs 7,736 times. However, one book does not mention God (Esther). But, "God" (HaShem: YHWH) is found in acrostic form in the book (5:4).

Of the OT, Proverbs is the middle book; Job 29 the middle chapter; 2 Chronicles 20:18 the middle verse. Esther 8:9 is the longest verse, and 1 Chronicles 1:1 is the shortest verse.

Of the NT, 2 Thessalonians is the middle book; between Romans 13 and 14 the middle chapter; Acts 17:17 the middle verse; and John 11:35 the shortest verse.

19.11 The Grand theme of the bible

The grand theme of the Bible is the Lord Jesus Christ.

The grand purpose is the glory of God.

The grand subject is the gospel: A.B. Simpson is reported to have said that the gospel,

"Tells rebellious men that God is reconciled, that justice is satisfied, that sin has been atoned for, that the judgment of the guilty may be revoked, the condemnation of the sinner cancelled, the curse of the Law blotted out, the gates of hell closed, the portals of heaven opened wide, the power of sin subdued, the guilty conscience healed, the broken heart comforted, the sorrow and misery of the Fall undone (M. Cocoris, Evangelism, A biblical Approach, , Moody, 1984, p. 29.).

The grand command: Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9).

The Bible is not to be worshiped, but it will help one to worship God correctly.

The Bible cannot save your soul, but it proclaims a Savior who can save the spirit, soul, and body.

19.12 Power of the Bible

People have died for the Bible. Others have killed for it. Most purchase it, but many have stolen it. It has prompted the noblest of acts, and been blamed for man's darkest deeds. Kings and slaves, rich and poor, men and women, black and white, capitalists and communists have searched its pages for divine instruction. By it brides have been won, and wars have been fought; churches united, and communities split. It has inspired bloody revolutions and beautiful revivals. By it, the righteous praise God and curse sin, and because of it the wicked curse God and praise sin. Though it opens heaven's doors and shuts hell's gates, it is still the most neglected Book in the world.

19.13 Neglect of the Bible

According to a 1996 survey by the Barna Group, more than 90 percent of American households own a Bible. Only 31 percent of Americans read their Bible regularly.

GALLUP NEWS SERVICE: PRINCETON, NJ – According to one Gallup poll, about six in ten Americans (59%) say they read the Bible at least on occasion, with the most likely readers being women, nonwhites, older people, Republicans, and political conservatives. Readership of the Bible has declined from the 1980s overall, from 73% to 59% today. And the percentage of frequent readers, that is, those who read the Bible at least once a week, has decreased slightly over the last decade, from 40% in 1990 to 37% today. About one American in seven reports an involvement that goes beyond reading the Bible. Fourteen percent currently belong to a Bible study group. In terms of frequency of readership, 16% of Americans say that they read the Bible every day, 21% say they read it weekly, 12% say they read the Bible monthly, 10% say less than monthly and 41% say that they rarely or never read the Bible.

19.14 A Tribute to the Bible

(Author Unknown)

This book contains the mind of God
The way of salvation, the doom of sinners,
And the happiness of believers.
Its doctrine is Holy. Its precepts are binding.
Its histories are true. And its decisions immutable
Read it to be wise. Believe it to be safe. Practice it to be holy.
It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you.
It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff,
The pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's character.
Here Heaven is opened. The gates of Hell disclosed.

Christ is its subject, our good its design, the glory of God its end.

It should fill the memory, rule the Heart, and guide the feet.

Read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully.

It is a mine of wealth, and a river of pleasure.

It is given to you here in this life,

Will be opened at the judgment, and is established forever.

It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labor,

And condemns all who trifle with its sacred contents.

20 REFERENCES

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