

History and Authenticity of the Bible

By
Dr. David Hocking

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Course Description

The History and Authenticity of the Bible, by David Hocking

This course was taught during twenty-five classroom sessions with the purpose of instructing Bible college students in topics such as the inspiration, the inerrancy, and the authority of God's Word. The instructor examines how the Bible was written over centuries of time and how it has been preserved by the Author Himself. He explains the process of translations from the original languages; the importance of canonicity; the issues of textual criticism; and the principles of interpretation. This informative series will elicit bold confidence in the infallible Word of God.

Ages ago someone wisely said, "We cannot dispense with a single word of Holy Writ; the removal of a part would mar the completeness and connection of the whole. Absolutely perfect are the proportions of God's inspired truth." That view of the Bible is strictly adhered to in this course taught by David Hocking. It is available through the text or the audio version, and we encourage you to enroll today.

About the Author

Dr. David Hocking is a graduate of Bob Jones University. He has degrees in Bible, Greek, and Ancient History. He received his M. Div. as well as a Ph.D. in Bible Studies and Languages at Grace Theological Seminary in Winona Lake, Indiana. He has been teaching and pastoring for over 50 years. His radio ministries have been broadcast for nearly forty years, with the most current program being Hope for Today. He is the author of more than 35 books including Bible commentaries.

David has been married to his wife Carole since 1962. They have three married children and six grandchildren. Apart from spending time with his family, he also enjoys speaking at prophecy conferences around the country and guiding tour groups through the Holy Land.

Originally Required Reading List – Hocking, H&A

Don Stewart, *What Everyone Needs to Know about the Bible*.

Recommended Reading List – Hocking, H&A

Evidence that Demands a Verdict, Josh McDowell

More Evidence that Demands a Verdict, Josh McDowell

What Everyone Needs to Know about the Bible, Don Stewart

God's Outlaw: William Tyndale, Brian Edwards

Systematic Theology, Thiessen
A.T. Robertson
Norman Geisler
The Apostolic Fathers, J.B. Lightfoot
The Rise and Fall of Civilization, David Hocking
The Apocrypha
Who Is the Messiah? David Hocking
The Identity of the New Testament Text, Wilbur Pickering
The Harmony of the Gospels, A. T. Robertson
The Life of Christ in Stereo, Johnston M. Cheney
A History of the Debate Over 1 John 5:7-8, Michael Maynard (out of print)
The Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties, Gleason-Archer
Shepherd of Hermas, Charles Taylor
The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, Roswell Hitchcock and Francis Brown
Byzantine Text Type, Dr. Harry A. Sturz
New Greek Testament According to the Majority Text by Hodges and Farstad
With Christ in the School of Prayer, Andrew Murray
The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels, Dean John William Burgon
The Complete Word Study New Testament (Word Study Series), Spiros Zodhiates
Preaching from the Papyri, Herschel Hobbs
A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ, Emil Schurer
Encyclopedia Judaica, Fred Skolnik
Notes on the Parables, Richard Trench
Notes on the Miracles, Richard Trench
The Hidden Pharisees, Elvis Rifkin
Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Alfred Edersheim
The Jewish Book of Why, Alfred J. Kolatch
The New Manners and Customs in Bible Times, Ralph Gower

History and Authenticity of the Bible
Lesson 1
Introduction – Part One

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The course description says that we are going to talk about how the Bible came into existence, the manuscript evidence behind the Bible, and the problems relating to the English translations of the Bible and leading the student to a position of complete confidence and dependency upon the Bible as the inspired, inerrant word of God. Now if you don't think that is an issue, you are not up to date.

In the paper there was an article from Canada in which there was a television talk show where a fundamentalist preacher, who said he knew the Bible, went on with some of the guys from that Jesus Seminar. They [verbally] slaughtered him. He not only did not know the Bible—he didn't know what he was talking about. The result was the program concluded that if you are educated and you know the evidence behind the Bible, you know that it is not the word of God. It can be appreciated, but it is not the Bible, for sure. This had quite an impact; in fact, there were more callers than ever before. And this so-called “fundamentalist” was laughed at and mocked at. He didn't know what he was talking about. He didn't know one thing about what we are going to teach you in this course. Yes, it is important to know what you believe and why.

When I was in Sunday school, we used to sing the little chorus: “The B-I-B-L-E, yes, that's the book for me. I stand alone on the word of God the B-I-B-L-E.” So, if this is not in your heart, then hopefully by the end of the semester there will not be any doubt in your mind.

Course Objectives

- 1) Learn facts about the existence of the Bible and the accuracy of the Bible
- 2) Explain the problem of manuscript evidence and the reliability of the recorded word
- 3) Build confidence in the inspiration and authority of the Bible
- 4) Answer objections to the inspiration and authority of the Bible
- 5) Learn to trust the power of the Bible to change the hearts and lives of people

Now, our course objectives, we have five of them. One is to inform you as to the facts behind the Bible's existence and accuracy. Two is to explain the problem of manuscript evidence and the reliability of the written record of the Bible. Three is to build your confidence in the inspiration, authority, and accuracy of the Bible. And four is to help you answer objections to the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible. And five is to encourage you to trust the power of the Bible itself to change the hearts and lives of people.

What makes this study more distinct is the systematic teaching of the Bible in which our pastors, though maybe not as educated as some, yet were educated in the Bible. And we learn the Bible. And we teach that this is the word of God. We tell you why it is. But we believe it is the word of God and we are going to show you why in this course. So that when you leave, you will always proclaim the word of God in its power and in its authority. So, it is a very important thing.

Now the textbook is Don Stewart's, *What Everyone Needs to Know about the Bible*. You have to read it in its entirety. It's an important book because it was organized on this subject. Now some of the material in there needs to be updated which you will get in this course. For instance, I taught this before under a bibliology theme and we now have—this whole thing is brand new. That's how fast things change in terms of manuscript evidence. So we will update it. I recommend it highly and of course want you to read it.

Now on your general outline, to show you where we're going with the course on the History and Authenticity of the Bible, we are going to hit five subjects. First, we are going to talk about "The Importance of this Study" as it relates to three different issues concerning the Bible. One would be the reliability of the Bible. Two, what we call revelation—which we will describe what that means—and the results that you can expect by trusting the Bible. So that is kind of the initial deal called, "The Importance of the Study."

Secondly, we give you information about the Bible: the Old Testament, the New Testament, as well as the Apocrypha. You will know all of the basic information regarding that, so you are able to give an answer to those who ask a reason for the hope that is in you.

A third issue is the inspiration of the Bible. Now that becomes a little detailed. We give you a definition that we will want you to know. And we will also present the difficulties. We do not run away from them here. We do not put our head in the sand and act like it will all go away. We don't do that. We deal with the problems here. And when there are problems, serious problems, we will admit them. We will talk about them and I

will give you a multitude of problems related to “inspiration.” Not to shake up your confidence—on the contrary—but to build it so that you are able to give an answer to critics.

The cults love to tear evangelical Christians apart on the authority of the Bible. They do it over and over again. And many Christians are not prepared to answer a thing because they have never studied it. Hopefully you will have enough material to be ready.

The fourth issue is a tough one. It is called “inerrancy.” The majority of evangelicals, unfortunately, no longer believe in inerrancy. We are sorry to hear that. We do. We believe that. What does that mean? That means we believe the Bible in its original autographs is totally without error. Well, today that is just being ripped everywhere. Even among good people who say they love the Bible and believe in inspiration. But as you will learn in this course, you’ve got to watch people. Because they say they believe the Bible is inspired does not mean they believe what they should. We will tell you all the differences relative to “inspiration.” Inerrancy is another subject, although sometimes they are put together and that becomes deceiving.

Many seminaries now are no longer having a statement on inerrancy. They are pulling it out. They have had it for years but are pulling it out because they do not want to deal with the problem. So they think that if you take a stand you aren’t going to get many people. Well, I can tell you right now, we are not interested in large numbers here. We really aren’t. We are not trying to have the biggest school ever in America. We are going to stand for what is right no matter what. We know what we believe. We are standing for that and there is no compromise here. The truth of the matter is, what’s important is the word of God. That’s what is important. It’s the heart and soul of this ministry.

We are going to give you what I call the twelve basic principles of the interpretation of the Bible. That's to help you get started so you know how to interpret, know how to deal with the problems of interpretation. Because you and I both know that even in the average church there are people saying, "Well there are many ways to interpret the Bible." We will talk about that before we're done in this course. So that is where we're headed and we'll start with the importance of this study.

Homiletics deals with preaching. Hermeneutics deals with the art of interpretation. Hermeneutics is a biblical word, for instance, the spiritual gift of interpretation is the word hermeneutic. It is a Greek word set into English and it simply means the art of interpretation. We will be giving you twelve principles relating to it that are basic to take what we have studied in the course and be able to apply it.

Also for your library, especially you pastor-types, you will want to pick up a number of books on inspiration and inerrancy. There are a lot of them. The textbook is Don Stewart's. That is the only one and I personally still like Josh McDowell's. They are kind of standards, *New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, Volumes One and Two. That is where it gets into the details of manuscript evidence. And it is still very, very good, that two-volume set by Josh McDowell.

All right class, if you have your outline it's "The Importance of This Study." And considering the importance of the study, we are going to start right away with reliability. Probably the most important thing about this whole subject because people will say right off the bat: "Well, that's just like any other book. Men wrote that like any other book." Actually, they don't even believe that. How do I know? Well, they believe in George Washington but that's just in a book. So you understand, the attack which the enemy has

made against the Bible and infiltrated the secular mind (who does not even know about the Bible) is worse than, “Oh, that’s just a book.”

See, as an apologist, I could very definitely deal with that if you would just treat it like a normal book. If we could just apply those simple principles of a normal book to the Bible, we would still come out fine. But they don’t do that. It is not just another book to them, it’s worse than that. They believe it’s a book of myths and fables that they don’t agree with, or that contradicts their lifestyle. They don’t want anything to do with it. There is an attack mode. Have you ever noticed it? You see, the enemy is out to destroy your confidence in the Bible. He started in the Garden of Eden. He said, “Hath God said, you shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, or you’ll surely die?” Eve added that little phrase “touch it.” God didn’t say “don’t touch it.” He said “don’t eat it.” And he started planting doubts into Eve’s mind about the authority and reliability of what God says.

Reliability is extremely important. In fact, there are two issues that you should know about reliability. How reliable is the Bible? How trustworthy is it? Two things: First we’ve got to know how accurate its statements are. You cannot have reliability without accuracy. And secondly, we have to know how authoritative is its message? Why do I have to listen to it? I don’t care if it is accurate. It could be accurate and be stupid, foolish, ridiculous message. And it may be accurately reported. So those two issues are a part of reliability.

Why should you build your whole life on the Bible? Why should you trust the Bible to guide you in everything that you do and say until Jesus comes again? One issue is accuracy. The other issue is authority.

Now how accurate are its statements? Let's go to Matthew 5. Behind the issue of accuracy is the veracity of Jesus Himself. We try to give you in the notes a lot of space so you can write different things in. But behind accuracy is the veracity of Christ. Meaning He's either saying the truth here or He's not. We are basing what we believe about accuracy on a statement Jesus said in [Matthew 5:18](#).

For verily I say to you, [Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount] 'til heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, til all be fulfilled. (KJV)

That sounds pretty reliable to me. That is a very, very strong statement dealing with the accuracy of the Bible. Everything that it predicts will be fulfilled. And not one jot or one tittle will pass away until it does. So you can count on the Bible doing everything it says.

Now the word jot is the smallest letter in the Hebrew language. Technically it's the *yodh*. You write it in English Y-O-D-H. It is called a *jot*. It is like the English apostrophe, it looks just like that. It's the smallest of the 22 letters in the Hebrew language. So, how interesting that Jesus would say, not one letter, the very smallest letter will ever pass away. Now right away you are getting a view of inspiration and inerrancy that is a little deeper than the average evangelical church believes. It isn't just the thoughts of the Bible. It isn't just the words of the Bible. It's the letters also.

Do you understand that just slight mistakes here, changes the meaning of words? Now He also said, "not one tittle." What is a tittle? A tittle is a marking on a Hebrew

letter that distinguishes it from another letter when the two look alike. For instance the letter that is like our English D, *daled*, looks very much like the R, the *resh*. It looks very much like the same. It's just kind of at a right angle. But on the *daled*, the D, the line at the top goes out just a small tad beyond the line that goes perpendicular to it. The little extension is called a tittle. A tittle is simply a marking on one letter to distinguish it from another letter when the two letters look alike. So talk about a view of inspiration. Jesus said, "not one *yodh*—not one smallest letter in the Hebrew language, and not one marking on those letters will ever pass away until all be fulfilled. That is a pretty detailed view of inspiration.

Go to Revelation 19. Every time I turn to this book, I always think in my heart, "Wouldn't it be great to be looking at this when He comes!" [Revelation 19:9](#). "He saith unto me..." John is being told to write.

Write. "Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And He saith unto me, 'These are the true sayings [of Whom?] of God.'"

Now that is either true or it is not true. Either these are the true sayings of God or they are not the true sayings of God. The Bible says they are absolutely what God said, accurately reported.

People say to me, "Well, there are lies in the Bible." Well, of course there are because every time Satan speaks, it is usually a lie. And by the way, men are recorded and they speak lies. But inspiration does not refer to whether there is a lie in the Bible.

Inspiration refers to whether it is accurately reported as it was told. Whenever God speaks, it is the truth of course. But it is all accurately reported—that's what it means—true, genuine, totally dependable and reliable sayings of God.

Look at [Revelation 21:5](#). I like to use these in Revelation because Revelation is a much debated book as to whether to take it literally or not. [Revelation 21:5](#).

He that sat upon the throne said, "Behold I make all things new." And He said unto me, [He's reporting what was said to him by God the Father on the throne.] 'Write, for these words are true [they're genuine] and faithful [totally reliable].'"

You say, "Well, how do I know that the guy accurately reported that?" That is part of the problem that is discussed in this course. [Revelation 22:6](#). I just want you to understand the importance of this study at this point and what the Bible actually says. You may not agree with what the Bible says but at least be honest enough to admit that this is what it says. In [chapter 22, verse 6](#), "He said unto me these sayings are faithful and true." There it is again. We have a totally reliable record given to us.

Now we are going to deal with that issue in a moment before we are done. We are simply just starting out. What is reliability? What does that mean? How trustworthy is the Bible? It deals with the accuracy of its statements. Are they reliable? Are they genuine? The Bible says they are. You say, "That is the Bible talking about itself." And that is a funny thing to me about people. In their attacks on the Bible, they are scared of internal testimony. They are scared of it. They say, "Oh, the Bible is saying that about itself. How

do you know that's true?" Oh well then, we can't apply internal evidence to any book can we, under those terms? If that is so, then we have to apply external evidences to the accuracy of the Bible. Would you like to know what the external evidences are to the accuracy of the Bible? The answer is "no," they don't want to know it. Why? Because there is no book in the entire world that can stand the test that the Bible can on external evidences. And we will show that to you before we are done with this course.

So you see, the very testimony of the Bible itself is clear. It is telling you "this is totally reliable." It reports God saying it. The veracity of Jesus is here. He said that none of it will pass away. It will all be fulfilled. In Matthew 24, He said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away" ([Matthew 24:35](#)).

Now, how authoritative is its message? I was witnessing to a guy on the Bible and he was so hostile I said to him, "You know I'm learning in old age to be a little more relaxed, but I do get uptight. I love this Book."

So anyway, he is just telling me all that is wrong with it and I said, "Can I ask you a personal question?"

He said, "Sure. What?"

I said, "What have you got against this Book?" I mean he was waxing so eloquently about what he thought was wrong with the Book. You know, I had not done that tactic before, but I was just kind of frustrated. I didn't want to get any angrier than I already was. So I just said to him, "What is it that you have against this Book?"

He thought for a minute and he said, "I have read it."

I said, "I'm glad you have, but you are certainly against it."

He says, "It is the way the Book writes."

I said, “What do you mean the way?”

He says, “It acts like it is the authority, like you’ve got to do what it says.”

And I smiled at him and I said, “You know I cannot find a finer testimony for the authority of the Bible than what you just gave. I want to thank you for that.”

“I don’t want to give any testimony,” he said.

I said, “Well, you just did.”

Yeah, I can understand that very, very much. The Bible tells you what to do and acts like it is the authority and you are not. And you see the carnal nature that we have, the depravity that we have, we fight that, man. “I don’t want anybody telling me what to do.” But just to emphasize that for you, when it [the Bible] says: “Thus saith the Lord.” Now some book I read had [listed] five thousand times that this was said. Please be accurate. Don’t say that to people. Anybody can get the trusty computer out and find what it is. It actually says it [415 times](#).

You see how we lose credibility when we do not say what is true. We are quoting somebody and all this business of what the Bible is or it isn’t. Please quote accurately and don’t quote something from somebody that you haven’t also seen the evidence for. This is very important.

All I am trying to say is that these are phrases that are used in the Bible to indicate its authority. In other words, God said this, you do this. “The word of the Lord said...it is spoken...it is written.” That is how authority is developed.

What I want you to understand is *be accurate*. Don’t quote those figures that you read in some books on this. And it is done constantly. Look it up yourself. You do not

need to trust the notes in the syllabus, look it up yourself. And who cares whether it is one or two off, but just do not say “five thousand.” Bad mistake!

Now when you talk about authority, authority in this Book, why is it authoritative and therefore totally reliable? And the answer is: “because it is the word of God.” Flat out. Do you know that if it is the word of God and God is who He is, according to this word, then He would not make a mistake? He could not. It would be impossible for Him to do so. The next argument is: “Well, but the guys who wrote it down could make mistakes.” And do you know something? That is true. So in our course, we have to look at all of that.

There is not a book that is extant, which means it was not printed or published before we had the printing press. Those extant copies of other manuscripts are far more error-filled than the Bible ever was by hand copying it. Some people quote things like, “Oh there’s over 500,000 variations of the original text of the New Testament.” No, there is not. But people say that. I had a guy throw that up to me and he listed them all. So I went back and looked them all up myself. First of all, half of what he put down was not true at all and the other half were simply repeating the same error in multiple copies of the same passage. So you understand that if a guy made a mistake—wrote down one letter different than another letter—and all the copies that were made off of his copy, that would repeat the same error, wouldn’t it? If there were 50 copies, so are there 50 errors? No, there is just one. Are you following me? So the total number of those things is so ridiculously low, there is no document in all of ancient history that can even compare with the accuracy of the Bible. And it is amusing to me how we allow this argument to go on and on. It is like, “Oh boy, yeah, he’s into that human author thing. I don’t know what

to say now.” “Well, they were unusual men, you know.” No they weren’t. They were just as crummy as you are. You know, they are fallible. They can make mistakes. And so we have to deal with that. We have to deal with the transcribing of the documents. You know, that is very important.

I hear people say, “Well, the Jews did not make any mistakes.” Yes they did. They made fewer mistakes than Gentiles because they had a reverence for the Bible that maybe the Gentile did not have and the Jew had a fear of making a mistake. But they still made some mistakes. In the manuscripts there are some differences. Not many. But there are some.

Now I don’t know whether you are getting shaky or not right now. But I have found something in my life: “the truth will set you free.” Don’t hide from the truth. We are going to expose probably a lot of myths that you have heard from preachers. All well-meaning, but we are going to have to deal with them because they are not always the truth. So, if I ask you, “what’s the key to the reliability of the Bible?” There are really two issues: The accuracy of its statements and the authority of its message. There is no book that has ever been written—and I have read a lot of religious statements, I’ve read cult books too—but there is no book that talks like the Bible. You talk about authority. There aren’t any options here. There aren’t creative alternatives and suggestions. He just says, “Do it. This is My word, now do it.” The Bible expects us to obey it. Why?—because it is God’s word!

Now, listen carefully. I don’t make it the word of God. It already is the word of God. It doesn’t become the word of God by the way I teach it. It already is the word of God. You can shout and scream and yell and say “I really believe this with all my heart.”

Well, we are glad you do, but that has nothing to do with whether it is the word of God.

“But I believe it and that settles it.” No, it doesn’t. The guy who believes in Buddha could say the same thing. “I believe that Buddha lives. He lives within my heart.” Well, I am glad you feel that way, but I don’t believe he does. I may believe you believe it, but I don’t believe what you believe.

Is everybody following that? Okay, you understand this? This is a very important issue. We will not run away from the problems and the details of this. It is no threat at all, none whatsoever. But it is to a lot of Christians because they do not know how to handle it. One thing is for sure: the Bible claims to be accurate in its statements. One thing is for sure: the Bible claims to be authoritative in everything it says. This is God’s word and you better shape up!

The carnal man does not want to hear that. We want to do what we want to do. We don’t want anybody telling us what to do. Well, the Bible sure tells us what to do. And that is the reliability issue. I trust it because it is the word of God. If I did not believe this was the word of God I would not be sitting here teaching this course. I’ll tell you that right now, I would not waste the time with it. I would not want to preach anymore either. I would not want to go into the pulpit doubting that this is the infallible word of God. That is the key to biblical preaching and teaching—what a man believes that Book is really all about. I believe it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes. I do not make it powerful. It already is the power of God. That is a wonderful Book, isn’t it? I love that Book. And it is so important that we get this straight.

Let’s Pray,

Father I thank You for Your word. I thank You that we can have confidence in this Book. It is the word of God that liveth and abideth forever. And I pray that You will help us as we go through this course. Lord, it breaks our hearts to see how the enemy in his strategy has blinded the minds of them that believe not. It breaks our hearts to see friends and relatives and loved ones who simply will not open their minds to the truth. God You must do that. You opened the heart of Lydia long ago ([Acts 16:14](#)). You can open anybody's heart. You have the power Lord. We need You. Salvation is of God and not of man. We are born of the Spirit of the living God and Lord I pray that You would teach us throughout this course to trust You to break the bondage of blindness that is on the unbelieving heart. Thank You, Lord, in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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Lesson 2
Introduction – Part Two

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Now, we need to talk about the importance of the Bible as it relates not only to reliability, but also to what we call revelation. Now class, don't get mixed up between revelation and inspiration or inerrancy. They are all different terms. What does revelation mean? Revelation, in the standard religious sense, is talking about God communicating to man. That is how simple it is—God communicating to man. And so the question is: how did He do that? If He is God and we are men, how did He do that? And that is the subject of revelation.

Inspiration refers to what was written only. Does God communicate to man in ways that are not written? Yes. But it is the written record that tells us how He did that. So, revelation is how God communicates with the creation that He made.

We have five things we want you to see regarding how God does communicate. And then we are going to ask the question, “Well how do we know the person is speaking from God's revelations or not?”

The other day some guys came up to me and said, “Boy I really had some interesting vision last Thursday night.”

I said, “Really? Did it match with anything the Bible teaches?”

“Hey look, I know you, David, just leave that out for a moment. Let me just tell you what God said.” He told me.

I said, “You know what? I would check into what I ate before I went to bed. God didn't tell you that.”

“He did too!”

“No, He didn't and here's the proof.” I opened my Bible...

And he said, "I don't want to hear that Bible stuff again. You know that's...you're limiting God by just..."

"Excuse me? I'm limiting God by getting the information on what you are telling me out of the Bible? No I'm not. I'm giving God all of His proper place and His authority and His glory. I don't want to trust you at all. Do you understand?"

A lady told me the other day that Jesus sat on her bed.

I said, "What did He look like?"

She said, "Well, He had long hair. It was blonde."

I said, "That offends my Jewish blood, but okay, it's blonde. What else?"

She said, "Oh, He kind of glows."

"He glows."

She said, "There's no doubt about it."

I said, "Well, I don't think He paid you a private visit."

She said, "Why?"

Because He says in the Book, He is not going to do that until He comes again.

She made a mistake of asking where? So we looked at it, the whole evidence.

"He told His disciples that He is leaving and He is not coming back until He comes again. He does not leave the right hand of the throne of God where He constantly makes intercession for us and pay a special little trip down to see you. He does not do that. He is not coming back until the Second Coming. That is what the Book says."

"Well then what was in my room?"

I said, “Well, now that is another interesting subject. The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 11 “the devil can transform himself into a minister of righteousness and an angel of light” ([2 Corinthians 11:14](#)).

Do you see this kind of deception? Did you know on the Internet... how many of you use the Internet? It’s like a disease. You get on there and you get into it with people and you can’t stop. They keep writing back and writing back and you think you are witnessing, but I’ve come to believe it is a very poor way of witnessing. You may disagree on that. But anyway, on the Internet they’ve got a whole thing on Mary now—the apparitions—where you can go and see them and the evidences that Jesus is also appearing and all this stuff. I think we have just begun to see what is going to happen to the minds of this culture. You are going to see a continual turning away from this Book even among evangelicals.

Those who have been in my classes know that there are some little pet peeves of mine, little things I’ll say along the way. One of them is that I am watching Christians in evangelical churches coming to church without their Bibles more and more now. I almost feel like going back to Sunday school. Okay all of you now, raise your Bible, now. Let’s make sure you have your Bible. I don’t want to get into that silly stuff, but I’m telling you, there is something wrong going on in our culture with [Christian] people who ought to know better.

I was sitting at Calvary Chapel the other night, listening to my pastor and I looked over and a guy and his wife who were sitting there without their Bibles. And I looked at my wife’s Bible. We both had one. I said, “Honey we can look on. Let’s give this Bible

over there.” I handed my Bible. He said, “No, we’re just listening.” I couldn’t wait until that study was over.

Boy, as soon as that study was over, I came to him and I said, “Could I say something to you?”

He said, “What?”

“Are you folks Christian?”

He said, “You bet. We’ve been here a long time.”

I said, “Being here doesn’t make you a Christian anymore than going to a garage makes you a mechanic. The important thing is that you know the Lord.”

“We know the Lord.”

I said, “Let me just tell you something, it really grieved me when you didn’t want to look at the Bible. Our pastor’s doing an in-depth study on the book of Ephesians and you need to look at it for yourself.”

“Well, we trust him. Whatever he says...”

I said, “Don’t. He is a wonderful man and I thank God for him, but he is not the authority. God and His word is.” You better watch this.

I said, “What’s with this?” on the way out.

My wife said, “People just aren’t bringing their Bibles are they?”

You know, I’m ready to get those old time family editions. Carry it up here and man, Amen. The B-I-B-L-E. People will carry any other book, so what’s the matter with carrying this? I love carrying this. The Bible calls it a sword. That’s the most powerful Book in all the world, right there—the Bible. So don’t walk around like you are sneaky. Some of you put your New Testament in your pocket so nobody can see it. God help you.

If all you have is the New Testament, you don't have the Bible. You have only the New Testament. The Bible has the Old Testament and the New Testament. Do you understand that? There are sixty-six books, thirty-nine in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New Testament in the Protestant Bible. Twenty-two in the Hebrew, but they are the same books, thirty-nine.

In Psalm 19, how does God speak to us? How does He communicate to us? Now according to the Bible, again, this is the Bible's record of how He does this, we admit that. First, He speaks through what He has made. Now you don't learn a whole lot by skipping church, going out under a tree and meditating. Some people think they're learning more about God. No, you are not learning much about God. You are learning two things that we will show you here in a moment. How does God speak?

He speaks through what He has made. "The heavens declare the glory of God, the firmament, [the expanse] shows His handiwork" ([Psalm 19:1](#)).

The Bible says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" ([Genesis 1:1](#)). So what He created reveals something about Him. It doesn't tell you everything. But what does it tell you?

Go over to Romans 1 and you learn that there are two things about God that the Bible says are clearly seen by anyone, even if they are not a believer. They may not want to admit it, but there are two things—when God speaks through what He has made—that we will understand about God. They are so simple. We make them more difficult than they are.

The Bible says in [Romans 1:19](#), "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them." Now the reason he said this is because of [Romans 1:18](#), where he said

that the unbeliever is “holding down, suppressing the truth in unrighteousness.” It is because of his sin, he does not want to face the truth. And the text says: “because that which is known of God is manifest.” Well, how is it manifest to unbelievers? It says, “God has shown it unto them.” How? [Romans 1:20](#) answers:

The invisible things of Him [God is the invisible God] from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made [And here are the two things.] even His eternal power and godhead, so that they are without excuse. ([Romans 1:20](#))

All men are without excuse if they don't live up to the light they have in creation. Now what do they learn? Number one, whoever made this had to exist before it was made. That's not tough is it? God is eternal.

Now without going into details with an unbeliever about the eternal nature of God, you simply tell them all that verse means is: whatever thing, whatever force, whoever it was, who made it, (obviously by *a priori* argument) had to have existed before it was made—if He made it. You learn that whoever made this obviously had to exist before it was made in order to have done that.

Don't you understand now secular humanism and evolution, the whole argument in our culture is very fundamental. You see, unbelievers do conclude that whoever made this [universe] had to exist previous to it being made if He made it. So, since they don't want to live under God's authority, they've got to get rid of God. So they've got to come up with an argument as to how we explain the origin of the solar system.

I have a little book in my library called “The Origin of the Solar System.” It lists nine different views that are prevalent today on the origin of the solar system. They are all crazy. The one that still holds sway, over our major universities and intellectual centers, is still the big bang theory. What is the big bang theory? Well, let me simplify it for you without going into ramifications on it; but, it basically means that there were some sort of eternal chemicals floating in space. You can’t have those from the beginning because you have to have something in order to produce something. Because it is against the doctrine of secularism to believe that something comes out of nothing. If you say that, you’ve got to go back to God again. So something has to come out of something. So what did something happen out of something in relation to creation? Answer: these chemicals by an unknown way collided with each other, caused an explosion, and as a result solid mass was created by winging through space at really rapid speeds—the Big Bang Theory.

Now the number one proponent of that in our world was Dr. Steven Hawking. He has been called the most brilliant man since Einstein in mathematics and astronomy. He has been in a wheelchair late in his life. But he was the number one proponent of the Big Bang Theory. I don’t understand what he was talking about, but here’s basically what he said: “In order for big bang to occur—he has demonstrated this from a laboratory point of view—there has to be perfect atmospheric conditions for that to occur.” He says, “So there must have been some gigantic bubble in which the bang took place that provided a perfect environment.” He said, “Now some religionists will say, ‘Where did the bubble come from?’” His answer: “We simply do not know.” The smartest man in the world does not know where the bubble came from, but he can’t have bang without bubble. I’m sorry, it is a lot easier to read, “In the beginning God....” Case closed.

How does God speak to us, class? He speaks through what is made. And I have found this to be an overwhelming argument with unbelievers. If Satan has blinded their minds and if the Lord, the Holy Spirit has not moved them to be interested in the gospel, you will find them running away. They have no answer. They cannot deal with it. We do not laugh with glee, we run with broken hearts and say, "Please listen." But unless the Holy Spirit works on somebody, they are not going to be saved through our apologetics.

But my point is, you, in what you believe, stop running away from this. It is true. God has spoken. The heavens declare the glory of God. It is a wonderful thing. We learn that whoever made this was in existence before it was made.

What's the other thing we learn? Very simply, whoever made this had to have the power to do so. When was the last time you made a galaxy? You understand the whole universe is a testimony to the enormous power of whatever it was that produced it. That's why they call it Big Bang, because they've got to have a tremendous surge of energy to cause it. They've got to come to some conclusion as to how this would have been done. The truth of the matter is that we do learn. God does speak. When you look at the stars, we know in the Bible it is even more detailed, isn't it. These are the two simple things every unbeliever can conclude, which the Bible says they (unbelievers) don't, they suppress it. So God holds them accountable.

People say, "Oh, does God hold people accountable way out in some jungle somewhere who have never heard the gospel?"

And the answer is: "He doesn't hold him accountable for he doesn't know."

"Oh boy, that's great."

“Well, it is not so good. God does hold them accountable for what they do know.”

What do they know? They know from creation that somebody bigger than you or I had to make it and He had to be in existence before it was made.

You may say, “Well, that is not the gospel.” Listen, God gives more light, according to the Bible, to those who respond to the light He gives them. You see, the problem is in the human heart. The problem is not in the apologetics of the universe. The universe is a constant witness to God. Even the stars and we can go on and on in the details of the very processes of nature and the laws of gravity and all of it is a testimony to who God is. God does speak through what He has made. And therefore, they [unbelievers] are without excuse.

Now God also speaks through supernatural acts. So what is the tactic of the enemy?—to deny the supernatural. Now when I talk supernatural acts, I am not talking about many of the psychosomatic, inward disorders that are healed on public television. I am talking about real miracles that are attested by the unbelieving mind.

Now, when we come to God speaking through supernatural acts, what does the unbelieving mind prompted by Satan come to the conclusion [of]? That it did not happen. There is not an unbeliever in the world who as ever read the Bible who isn't aware that it is a book of miracles. Why, even in pagan literature they say that. But they do not believe they [biblical miracles] happened. I just want to establish the fact that God does speak, according to the Bible, through supernatural acts. In [Exodus 7:5](#), concerning those plagues in Egypt, it says,

And the Egyptians [these are the unbelievers not the believers] shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch forth my hand upon Egypt and bring out the children of Israel from among them.”

The Egyptians will know...

In 1970 I'm in the Egyptian museum in Cairo, one of the most fabulous museums in the world. We were in the mummy room. These are the mummies of all the pharaohs that had been uncovered from the Valley of the Kings and Queens down at Luxor. And here are these mummies. The man leading the tour was a graduate of Harvard and a specialist in hieroglyphics and archaeology. We were on the row of kings that lead us to believing that Ramses, the great builder of Egypt whose statuary is all over Egypt, was the pharaoh of the exodus. I do not believe that at all. I believe what the Bible says. The chronology is different; it is about two hundred years off. But anyway, he was waxing eloquently about it all and I was listening to it. After he was done, he asked if there were any questions. I said, "Yes, I have one."

He said, "What's that?"

I said, I looked down this row at these glass coffins and I was counting them, and all the pharaohs are here.

He said, "Well, of course. We had them all down at the tombs and they are all up here now."

I said, "No, you don't understand. According to the Bible you should have one missing."

He said, "Why is that?"

“Well, because he drowned in the Red Sea.” He looked at me, and then he looked at his audience. Now some of them were not believers and everybody was asking, “Yeah, what about that?”

He said, “Do you have another solution?”

I said, “Yeah, as a matter of fact, I do. But we need to go over two more rows of mummies down there.”

“Two more rows?” he said, “that’s going backward. You mean that you think the children of Israel came out of Egypt a couple hundred years back?”

I said, “Yes. Uh-huh.”

“Well let’s go over and hear the man.”

So we walked out. I walked through and started with Tuthmosis I, a great military conqueror. I said, “Interesting name, Tuthmosis? But anyway, Tuthmosis II died very quickly. His wife was Queen Hatshepsut, who was the daughter of Pharaoh, so she began to be very powerful. Now there was a step-son of Tuthmosis. He had had sex with some harlot off the street and they had a boy and they tried to make him out like he was the next pharaoh. Queen Hatshepsut had nothing to do with that. First of all, it wasn’t her boy. Plus she didn’t want to tolerate the immorality of her husband who had died. So she became the ruler herself and ruled for about twenty years—a daughter of pharaoh ruling, how interesting! She’s the one who found Moses.

By the way, she named him what? Moses, which means to draw out. The idea of the Moses thing is that the Nile River is the top god in the Egyptian pantheon. So we draw him out of “god.” He is a son of God. By the way, when Moses did the first little deal with turning the water to blood you understand that their god died. Is everybody

listening? Every one of the plagues was an attack against Egyptian mythology. But any way, she draws Moses out of the river, teaches everybody that he's the son of god and he deserves to be Pharaoh. Well, this step-son hates him. Interesting story!

Tuthmosis III is not going to be very favorable and he had his opportunity when Moses was 40 years old. So Moses fled. He went out to the back side of the desert. Well now, we know there is a different Pharaoh and we've got to have another line. And I said, to the audience, "Now isn't this interesting, here we start the Amentet line. That is very interesting. Let's just follow these mummies. Come on, folks, walk down here. One, two, uh-oh, we have one missing! What happened to him? He's gone. He's not here. This guy's just shaking his head. So he stepped up and here is what he said. I knew what he was going to say, because I already knew that background.

He stepped up, "Folks, folks, folks, this is all very interesting but we already know what happened to that Pharaoh. We uncovered what is called a Dream Stela on a rock and in hieroglyphics, which I of course studied, we know what the message was and what happened to the pharaoh. And everybody agreed, "Oh, yeah."

And I said, "Hold it! Hold it! Since you are a scholar, I am sure we would all be interested to know, exactly what did the Dream Stela—this rock, or slab of stone—say happened to the Pharaoh?"

He said, "That's not important."

I said, "Oh, I think it would be very important. What happened to the Pharaoh? Since it was written by a son, it would be very important what he thought. What did he sell to the Egyptian people as to what happened to his dad?"

"Well," he says, "the Stela says he was mysteriously exited to heaven."

“Mysteriously exited to heaven? And you expect us, twentieth-century people to believe that? No way. That is mythology. That is occultism. The Bible says that he drowned in the Dead Sea.”

He said, “That’s occultism.”

We were in this little game, you see. I said, “Well, believe what you want, brother. But there is something very obvious to all of us. There is no pharaoh here where he is supposed to be. He is not here at all, he is gone. You said that he sort of went to heaven. The Bible says that he drowned in the Red Sea.”

He said, “Well, that means that the Exodus would have to happen here.

I said, “That is right. That’s exactly where the Bible places it.”

He said, “No. That means the bondage they went through was under the Hyksos rulers.

I said, “Exactly right. They were shepherd kings.”

He said, “No, shepherds were an abomination to the Egyptians.”

“Yes, but the Hyksos rulers came in and took it by force.”

“No. It was a natural transition.”

“No it wasn’t. [Exodus 1:8](#) says, “There arose a king.” The Hebrew word is to take violently by force. There was a coup and the shepherd kings took over.

Are you understanding me? I just told you this simple little story for one reason, stop being pressured by all that you read about so-called scholars. The truth is they are not dealing with facts; they are creating the facts to make us all run away. No, we are going to find out the truth, people. We aren’t going to run away from any problems.

The most accurate account of ancient history is still the Bible and every scholar knows it. So why do they attack it? God tells you why. It is the depravity of their own hearts. Do you understand every scientist that has ever studied paleontology knows that a global deluge on this earth's surface caused the stratification of society? We know that and then why don't they believe it? [2 Peter 3:5-6](#) tells us that they are "willfully ignorant" that the world perished under water. They do it deliberately. They come up with a view, evolution, the study of strata.

I sat in a major class on evolution at Long Beach State University not too long ago just to listen and see how they had improved their scientific knowledge. I was shocked that they were still teaching the same thing as thirty years ago. What they said was, "You can tell the age of the fossil by the strata that it appears in."

If you ask, "Well, how old is the strata?"

"Well, it depends upon the fossil that is in it."

"Well, how old is the fossil?"

"Well, it depends on the strata that it's in."

"What are you talking about! That's reasoning in a circle."

Don't you understand that they are doing a snow job on people. And people are sitting there and saying, "Oh I guess we can't trust the Bible." Are you kidding? We have more evidence that God has spoken than they have ever begun to dream about. God has spoken to us through supernatural acts and more than once, which we will learn about next time.

Let's pray.

Father I thank You for Your word. I thank You that we can have confidence in this Book. It is the word of God that liveth and abideth forever. And I pray that You will help us as we go through this course. You have the power Lord. We need You. Salvation is of God and not of man. And Lord I pray that You would teach us throughout this course to trust You. Thank You Lord, in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

History and Authenticity of the Bible
Lesson 3
Miracles

By
Dr. David Hocking

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Let's have a word of prayer.

Father, we thank You that Your word is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. It is a hammer. It is a fire that burns in our soul. We thank You Lord that You have given us a word that is totally reliable and authoritative and I pray, Lord, that You will help us to understand again the power that is in the Bible that we, Lord, will be students of the word always, all of our days. Thank You in Jesus name. Amen.

We were talking about revelation which means how God has communicated Himself to us. And we mentioned He has done so through what He has made, the universe. As we left our last class session, we were talking about how God speaks through supernatural acts, one of which was clearly laid out for us in [Exodus 7:5](#).

Now I would like you to go to [Numbers 14:11](#). God does reveal Himself, especially His power and the kind of power He has, because often it is rooted in His mercy and compassion. But we learn about Him through His miraculous acts, supernatural acts. One of the number one attacks about the Bible is they think these supernatural acts are mythological, that they aren't really true miracles.

[Numbers 14:11](#) says,

And the Lord said unto Moses, how long will this people provoke Me and how long will it be ere they believe Me for all the signs [miracles] which I have showed among them.

One of the purposes of those supernatural acts is that we will believe in Him. So if a person is not believing there is a God, he is really going to react against supernatural miracles. He is not going to believe it. So it is very important to be able to understand the purpose of God

behind that. When Moses is reiterating God's law to the people on Mount Nebo, or what is now Jordan, in [Deuteronomy 4:35](#) we read this: "Unto thee it was showed that thou might know that the Lord He is God that there is none else beside Him." Now, he is speaking about the signs and wonders and miracles He did, according to verse 34.

You see one of the purposes of God is not only that we will believe in Him, but we will really know that He is God. When God does a miracle, you know it. It proves that He is God. When man does so-called miracles we got to flip the coin sometimes, figure out whether it is really of God or not because we are not sure. But when God does one, everybody knows it and the Lord intends that His miracles, His supernatural acts, will point to who He is.

I have not developed this thought, but I have thought it many, many times, that there are degrees of let's say "impact" among the miracles of God—degrees of impact. For instance, there are degrees of impact as it relates to unbelievers, as it relates to believers, as it relates to nations versus individuals. There are lots of different things. We know for instance, when the Lord healed the ten lepers only one came back to thank Him. So what was the impact on the other nine? At least they became very ungrateful or maybe they just ignored it. The point I am making is that sometimes we speak of miracles and they truly are miraculous, but they are not what we mean by the revelation of God in supernatural acts.

For an example, the way God is taking care of us at times, to me is quite miraculous. But if I analyze it as an unbeliever looking at it and say well, John Doe gave you that money when you needed it and that is how your bill was paid. I see it as an answer to prayer and a miracle from the hand of God, but in reality that's not what I am speaking about now. Do you understand me? There are degrees of impact as it relates to the miracles of God. I see miracles all the time and I hope you do too. I hope that is your mind, your heart, to see the hand of God in things. But when we are talking about how God has revealed Himself through supernatural acts in the Bible, they are never like that. They aren't through human agency. They are the interruption of natural

processes. They are the intervention of the supernatural into human history causing something that no one can question. It had to come from God. That's very important to understand.

In John 20 we have this remark concerning the miracles that are listed in the Gospel of John. It says, "Many other signs did Jesus which are not written in this book." Now how many more? Well, at the end of [John 21:25](#) it says that it would be impossible to even have enough books to contain all the things that He was doing all the time, all the people that were healed by Him. But we do know that the miracles that were listed. In John he says, "These signs are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Messiah and in believing you would have life through His name" ([John 20:31](#)).

Now, there is an emphasis there that some of us have missed because the miraculous is done also through the apostles. And it does not prove they are the Messiah. The miracles that Jesus did that are recorded in the book of John are all miracles that only God could do and which in fact the Messiah, according to the Old Testament, had to do. Why is an incident of a lame man being healed in John? Why is the incident of a man born blind there? Why is the emphasis on the feeding of the 5,000? Do you understand what I'm saying? All of these things, including the resurrection of the dead are things that were credentials of who Jesus is. That He is the Messiah.

Now saying that means that the Messiah is in fact also the Lord God. Because only the Lord God could do these miracles which we see recorded. And not everybody believes that. But if you go to Isaiah chapters 40 to 66, you will have a big discussion about the Messiah as the servant of the Lord. And over and over again it says that by what He does, He demonstrates He is the Lord God and there is none else like Him. So the supernatural acts of God do reveal the very nature and ability of God in contrast to man. Not similar to what man may do by trusting the Lord and working through him, but something only God could do.

The third thing we notice about revelation, how God communicates, is that He has spoken directly to certain individuals in the past, amen? Now there is a very troublesome matter here. People say that God does the same thing today. Now if He does the exact same thing today

then we really have no argument about a complete and final revelation from God in written form. There is no argument against the Mormons, for instance, who claim that God spoke directly with Joseph Smith. You see this is an issue a lot of people don't think about. In their effort to believe that God has spoken to them, they are undermining what is truly called direct revelation in the Bible. I do not question that God speaks to us. I feel many, many times God has spoken to me. But I do not believe that He is giving direct revelation that He wants me to put into the Bible. Do you understand? But there are a lot of people who do today. And that's why we have cults and aberrant religions.

So, one of the purposes of our course is to help us with these things, to understand from an apologetics point of view, why it is so important to believe the Bible is a complete and final revelation from God. Now we are going to really hammer that issue. And hopefully you will all know what you believe.

But let's start first of all, by saying that in the book of Genesis alone we have a long list. God spoke directly to people and it says so. He talked to them and they heard Him. All the way through the Bible we have that record.

Now let's start with Matthew 5 and let me show you this whole problem of God speaking directly to individuals. In [Matthew 5:17-18](#), we know in this verse, something I mentioned earlier to you about the accuracy of the statements of the Bible that not one jot, which is a *iota*—the smallest letter in the Hebrew language. Not one *tittle*—a marking on a letter to distinguish it from another letter when they both look alike. None of that will pass away until all is fulfilled. Right? That is what He said, verses 17 and 18. It will never pass until everything is fulfilled.

Now the reason why that is critical is that if you ever had any writing that was never fulfilled, it would come under question and scrutiny, wouldn't it? In the Bible we have fulfilled prophecy and we have unfulfilled prophecy. But what if in the Bible we had a prophecy that was supposed to be fulfilled 2000 years ago, but wasn't? You see if that were true, in just one instance, we would undermine the whole doctrine that the Bible is the word of God. Is everybody

following me? Let me repeat this again so you're clear because the cults really do a number on this.

First, in the Bible you have fulfilled and unfulfilled prophecy. Amen? You understand that? There are prophecies that have already been fulfilled about nations of the world that were written before they existed, also about the first coming of Christ. And we know they were in existence before Christ because of the Dead Sea scrolls. Now when we look at this matter, it isn't that there are unfulfilled prophecies that undermine the authority of the Bible, because they will be fulfilled. What Jesus said, "Not one of these letters or markings on the letters will ever pass away until all of it is fulfilled," it is going to be fulfilled. But what we mean is, if there was any prophecy about something that was already to have taken place before our time today and it did not take place, then we do not have a reliable accurate revelation from God. Do you understand? You see in our view, there is no possibility of such an error. Does everybody follow me? If you are not, let's talk about it now because I don't want you to be mistaken on this.

Well, with the prophecies that are not to be fulfilled until the future, there is no problem because eventually the future will prove them. But let's suppose that there was a prophecy that was supposed to be fulfilled in past history and it has not been fulfilled. Now, we have a problem. In our view that is an impossibility based on the promise of Jesus. Do you understand? Suppose the Bible predicted as it does, that Alexander the Great's empire would be broken into four parts with four generals, four leaders. The Bible predicts that but suppose that were not true. Suppose his empire was divided among five generals? Is that a small matter to us in this course? And the answer is "no" that is a major issue. We could not teach with confidence that we have an accurate, totally reliable Bible if there is just one point like that.

You see that helps us to understand why people who don't want to believe the Bible attack it so much and try to undermine it because they are struggling to find something like that to disprove it to us. This is very important. Suppose the Bible predicted that from the 20th year of Artaxerxes until the time Messiah would be cut off that there would be 40 years instead of 69

times 7. Suppose it was just 40? Well, it didn't happen. If that was so then we cannot say to people that we have an authoritative accurate Word. It would be impossible. So in our discussion about how whether God has spoken to these people or not, remember [Hebrews 6:18](#) says it is impossible for God to lie. So whatever God has told these people it has to be the truth if He is God—or He's not God! I know this sounds almost elementary, but it is amazing to me, when we get into a tough spot reasoning with this subject how we don't keep the facts straight. The facts are that everything that is in that book will be fulfilled. And that which is not fulfilled in our day has to be in terms of predictive prophecy in the future of our day. If it is in the past and it wasn't fulfilled then it undermines our confidence in the accuracy and reliability of the Bible. Are we following that so far?

Okay now, let's take that just a step further. Go to Luke 24. The other thing we learn from the Lord Jesus in [Luke 24:44-45](#) is that all of this direct revelation was divided into three parts and all speaks about the Messiah. So when God spoke directly to individuals of the past by direct revelation, all of these words were intended to lead us to the Messiah. They were all to be organized around that. Here is what Jesus said, verse 44. "These are the words I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled." There is our argument again, but look at this. It is clearly stated where the "all things" that are to be fulfilled are found. In the law of Moses, the five books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, and in the prophets and in the Psalms.

Psalms is the beginning book of five books called the writings. And whenever the Jewish people refer to that division of the Old Testament, they call it the Psalms, but they're really referring to five books: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon. You take those five and the five of the law of Moses, ten. How many do we have left that are called prophets? In a Jewish Bible we have only twelve left. In a Protestant Bible we have 29 left. So people look at that and say, "Wait a minute! The only Scriptures they had, it wasn't English then, it was Hebrew." So they have twenty-two books and we have thirty-nine. What is wrong here? And it is

very common that people use this argument to undermine the Bible and it really shows their ignorance. The twenty-two books in Hebrew are exactly the same as the thirty-nine in English. They're simply organized differently. For example Jeremiah and Lamentations are all put in one book. We have the Kings, not separated as First and Second Kings or First and Second Samuel or First and Second Chronicles and these are put together. You have to go to a Hebrew Bible to see that. So in a Hebrew Bible, there are twelve prophets.

Now you have to listen carefully here. I don't want anybody to be mixed up. You may want to jot this down in your notes so it is clear to you. When you say that everything the Lord wanted to be fulfilled that came from God about the Messiah is in the prophets, it is in twelve books in Hebrew and it does correspond to twenty-nine in English. Twelve prophets and all twelve of these prophets as to their main message, is a message of the Messiah and that is very interesting.

The whole reason for the history of the kings and all of that is tracing the line of the Messiah and showing God's prophetic plan to bring a savior, a redeemer into this world who can solve the world's problems. God tells us in [Revelation 13:8](#) that He was a lamb slain before the foundation of the world. So, all of God's intention for this One who would deliver us is all laid out ahead of time. If we had a book let's say that did not do that, could we not rightfully question its inspiration and authenticity—at least on the testimony of Jesus? Now what some people say, like the Jesus Seminar, they do not believe that Jesus actually did this. You say, "Well, how do they know?" Well, they threw a little marble into the center of the table indicating their opinion as to whether He said it or not. Do you understand how serious this matter is? We have the law of Moses, we have the writings, we have the prophets, and Jesus said all that is in them will be fulfilled.

I love to show Mormons out of their own Book of Mormon what is obviously impossible to fulfill and what is grossly inaccurate, so that it cannot be from God. And when you start at that point and start laying it out, you can see the trouble that comes into their hearts because they have

been programmed to believe that God spoke directly to Joseph Smith. Their whole belief system, everything about what they are, is all built on that. Well, don't be surprised, everything you and I believe is all based on these books we call the Bible. It is all built on it.

We had a big smoke screen sent up a few years ago over the gospel of Thomas, called *The Forgotten Gospel* or whatever. There are all kinds of books like this. We call them "pseudographic writings." They are false writings, in terms of that which we can prove comes from the hand of God. So this issue is a very, very critical one. Jesus has already identified the three-fold division of the Old Testament and He didn't include the Book of Mormon. It doesn't matter if it is the Mormons or who it is, the issue of whether or not God speaks directly (by direct revelation that was intended to be Scripture) is a very important one.

Jesus has clearly shown us that all that He said was going to be fulfilled, because "heaven and earth will not pass away 'til all this is fulfilled," is clearly the law of Moses, Psalms or *The Writings* and the prophets. That is what He said. We preach the truth about the Bible. In other words, the truth always exposes the error. Light always exposes darkness. So one of the traps the devil likes to get us into in apologetics is we start arguing in the area of the darkness. We start arguing the area of their beliefs or trying to show why they are not of God or whatever. Hey, just preach the truth and they will be done. They are finished. That is why this issue is critical.

What exactly was direct revelation from God? And my answer to that is: in the Hebrew Bible there are twenty-two books. And in the Protestant there are Bible sixty-six books, thirty-nine in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New Testament. And that we believe is the completed revelation from God. Well, how do you know that?

Let's go to [John 10:32-35](#) and keep following this argument. This is a very difficult passage. First of all it comes after the Jews were wanting to stone Jesus because He said "I and the Father are one." And in verse 32, Jesus answering them said, "Many good works have I showed you from my Father, for which or those works do you stone Me?" And the Jews answered and said, "For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy and because that thou

being a man maketh thyself God." Now Jesus answered them and said, "Is it not written in your law?"

Now here we learn that the word "law" can apply to the law of Moses or the entire Bible. Here, it is going to apply to the Psalms. And the Lord made the application. Some people say when they read Psalm 119, where there is an emphasis on the law, "I love thy law. I delight in thy law." I had somebody actually tell me, "Well that is the law of Moses." We are not under law, we're under grace. No it is not the law of Moses. It is a broad term referring to the entire Bible. Here is a direct passage to show that Jesus referred to a passage in the Psalms as being the law of God. Interesting!

This is Psalm 82 which I want you to turn to in a moment. He said, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said ye are gods'" ([John 10:34](#); [Psalm 82:6](#)). If He called them gods—now watch this carefully— "unto whom the word of God came"—this is direct revelation again and the Scripture cannot be broken. Do you understand? Before I even answer this problem, I know that the Lord taught me what is Scripture and what is not. Scripture is direct revelation from God. Scripture is not a journalist observing an event and making up the facts as he saw them.

Class, listen to me carefully. Before we are done with this course, we are going to talk about the views of inspiration. And you will learn about the differences between mechanical dictation and that which is sometimes called the personality of the writer or his viewpoint. This is especially applied to the gospels in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Before we ever get to those problems, I want you to know something about what your teacher believes and what I believe is the view of Scripture. And that is that everything in this Bible that we are calling the complete and final revelation from God is a direct revelation of God. Everything.

Some guys say to me, "You mean only when it quotes when God speaks." No! No even when it quotes who's going to say God speaks. Everything is a direct revelation from God. And I meet many Christians today, in fact this has once again become a battleground among evangelicals and it is warring right now. Once again it just keeps coming up all the time because

it is a strategy of the enemy to weaken us on what the Bible is. And what they are saying now among evangelicals is that we should not take the hard line on inerrancy. That what we should say is almost like the Mormons say: "Well, it is the word of God as it is accurately reported or accurately translated." Now, I just want you to know that that is not our view at all. We believe that it is not only accurately reported, but it's inerrant. It is without error in the original languages as it came from God and that it wasn't up to these men to say whatever they wanted to say. According to the Bible, the Holy Spirit of God superintended the whole project and made sure that what they wrote was exactly what God wanted written. They never had the option of making up their own mind about it.

Now, that is not taught in many of the Bible colleges and universities here in our country any more. It used to be, but it's not now. And it is getting rarer all the time. If this keeps going another twenty to twenty-five years—perish the thought—we may not have a college or seminary to go to that believes that this entire Bible is the result of direct revelation from God. That is how bad it is right now. This is a serious matter. And if I die tomorrow I'm hoping and praying that one of the accomplishments that I may have contributed to the general cause of Christ on this globe is to get people back to believing that the Bible is the word of God. And we don't make up the rules. This is so important. You take this Book away from people in terms of undermining their confidence in it, and you will destroy, ultimately their relationship with Jesus Christ. You will undermine everything and a lot of evangelicals don't think that. All you have to do is look at some of the major denominations that fifty or sixty years ago already departed from this and they are already long gone. It is really serious. May it never happen to us.

History and Authenticity of the Bible
Lesson 4
Scripture Cannot Be Broken

By
Dr. David Hocking

Brought to you by
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Okay, now back to our subject in [Hebrews 1:1-2](#), dealing with whether or not the Bible is a complete revelation from God and whether or not it is direct revelation from God. Here is a statement that you will read in books: "The Bible *contains* direct revelation from God." Well, they have not told us anything because that is rather obvious. They quote: "and God said" or "thus saith the Lord." Of course it does, but whether it's accurately reported or not is an issue also. But is the Bible itself (all of it) direct revelation from God? That is a very important question.

[Hebrews 1:1-2](#) provides a very important passage. It says, "God who in sundry times and in diverse manners"—that means at various times. So the Bible was not written in one moment of time; actually, it was probably over a good 1400 years. "And in diverse manners" means various ways. These could have been dreams, visions, and a lot of different ways. But God spoke. Notice the verse says "God spoke." Is the Bible, in all these various ways and through various means and times, a direct revelation from God? According to this verse it is. "God spoke."

Now, how did He do it? He did it by the prophets. Did God directly speak to men, who then in turn wrote it down under the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit? And the answer is yes, that is what it says. Now how that happens is a matter that we are going to be discussing. And you can understand why cults and religions immediately say, "Well, there you have it. We have the same." So now I have to say, "Wait a minute, how do I know the Bible is that and these writings are not?" So we will get to that in a minute but let's read in verse two.

“This God who spoke, hath in these last days.” Now it is interesting when we hear the words “last days,” we immediately are prophecy buffs and so we are thinking prophecy. But actually the Greek text says in its proper order, very literally, “in the last of these days,” that is what it says. “The last of what days?” [Hebrews 1:2](#), “The days in which God spoke.” Now in the last of these days in which God spoke, in other words, what you need to see at this point is that God is setting a time limit. He is going to stop doing this. There is going to be a time when we say “this is the end, the last of these days in which He spoke.” In the last of these days—when was that? Well, He spoke unto us by His Son.

“Wait a minute! I thought you said it was by the prophets.” Well it is, but it is also by His Son. Okay. What book did He write? I mean, I know the four gospels are about Him, but He didn’t write those books. So what book did He write? The book of Revelation! You see in the book of Revelation, its title is in the first verse. It is the revelation of Jesus Christ, which He is going to give to His servants. Now watch this carefully. Hebrews, written before that time—probably twenty to twenty-five years before that time—says that God in the last in the days in which He speaks directly is going to speak by His Son, through His Son.

Well, that is really interesting. Even in terms of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, it is greater in the book of Revelation than anything you have in the Bible. There are more titles and names of Jesus Christ in Revelation than in any other book of the Bible. There are more names and titles of Jesus Christ in Revelation than all the New Testament books combined. I’d say that’s a pretty strong revelation. As a matter of fact, the picture of Him is totally different than anything you read in the gospels. Just read chapter one of

Revelation, you will find out how different it is. All of a sudden, He is in His glorified, resurrected state. And the information that He gives us goes clear into the future, to the eternal state.

Listen to me carefully. I would find it very hard to believe that if this is the last of the days in which God speaks and He does it through His Son, I find it very hard to believe that anyone else could be additional to that. Especially since the information His Son gave us in that book of Revelation extends clear into that eternal state. Now how are you and I going to add to that?

If you think that's bad, go to Revelation 22, the very book we are talking about, and look at what it says at the end of that book. [Revelation 22:18-19](#). This is the very book that is the last of the days in which God spoke that was through His Son, not through anybody else. If you want to know whether it was Him or not, [Revelation 22:16; 18-21](#) says,

I, Jesus, have sent mine angels to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David and the Bright and Morning Star. [verse 18] For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book. If any man shall add unto these things God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life and from the holy city and from the things which are written in this book. He which testifieth these

things saith, 'Surely I come quickly.' Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Folks, here is what many people who are in other religions say. "Well, that only deals with the book of Revelation. You can't add to it or take away. It doesn't deal with the whole Bible." But you see when you go from [Hebrews 1:1-2](#) to [Revelation 22:18-19](#) you realize it does refer to the whole Bible. But it refers to the whole Bible because God has been speaking and in the last of the days in which He speaks, He'll speak through His Son. He'll give us a final revelation. And the last book is called the Revelation of Jesus Christ and no man can add to that or take away from it. Plus the fact that the very content of the book of Revelation militates against the view that just because it is revelation, it somehow allows us to add additional revelation to other books of the Bible. Excuse me, that is impossible, because from the standpoint of the content of the book it takes us all the way into the future. It already maps out what is going to take place. You can't add to it. You can't change it. You can't take anything from it.

You see, everything that is written in the book of Revelation is going to take place exactly the way He said. And all that unfulfilled prophecy there will one day be fulfilled. "Heaven and earth will pass away but My words will never pass away" ([Matthew 24:35](#)), and all these things will be fulfilled. Is everybody following me, now? Do you understand that we have a complete and final, written revelation of God? Wow!

You say, "Well, wait a minute! How did they know which books were in it?" Oh, we are going to discuss that too. We are going to get into all of it. We are just talking

revelation, about how God communicates. The Bible teaches that God speaks to us through His Son, Jesus Christ. We just saw that in [Hebrews 1:2](#).

But let's go to [John 1:14](#),

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory [What? His glory!], the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

So has God the Father been revealed in His Son Jesus Christ? Yes. He has. In John 1:18 it says, "No man has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him," or put Him on display. Is Jesus Christ a revelation of the eternal God? Yes, He is.

In [John 14:8-9](#), Philip asked kind of an amusing question. He said, "Lord show us the Father and it sufficeth us"—you know, it will be enough—just show us who God is. Well, I guess it would be!

Jesus said to him,

Have I been so long a time with you and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father and how sayest thou then, show us the Father?

Is Jesus Christ a revelation of God in human form? Yes.

In [1 Timothy 3:16](#) it says, "Great is the mystery of godliness. God manifest in the flesh." In fact, in [1 John 4:2-3](#) it says if you don't believe that Jesus Christ is God come in

the flesh, you are a part of the spirit of antichrist and you do not have God or the Father, Christ or the Father, either one of them. So do you have to believe that God's revelation is seen in Jesus Christ? Yes, or you are not saved.

In [Colossians 2:9-10](#) it says that, "All the fullness of God dwells in Him in bodily form." Is He a complete revelation? Yes. All the fullness of God dwells in Him. So if I asked you, class, could you name the two complete revelations of God? The answers are the Bible and Jesus Christ. Everything else is partial.

Now the fifth thing about revelation is what we have been implying all along. So let's just say it. God speaks to us today through the Bible. Do you believe that? Sure He does. Can I tell you that God spoke to me this morning? Yes I can. How did He do that? Was it an audible voice? No. Well how did He do that? Through His word, He spoke to my heart this morning. In fact, He does every day, I have noticed. Sometimes I am more belligerent one day than another one and I do not see clearly all that God wants me to see, but God speaks everyday through His word to me. Does He speak to me by His word if I do not open it? No.

You see, the essential nature of the Christian life in terms of growth and our salvation is that you have to depend upon the Bible—God's final, complete, written revelation—to know what He wants you to do. If you want to hear God speak, the way He is going to speak is through His Bible. That is the way He's going to speak. And He holds you accountable for it now. All the way through that Bible He holds you accountable for it. You are supposed to listen to what He says in this book. Well, isn't that interesting!

The whole Psalm 119, all 176 verses, is a testimony as to how God speaks to us through the word. There are 22 sections of 8 verses each, total of 176 verses. There are 22

letters in the Hebrew alphabet. Every section of eight verses begins with a word whose first letter is that letter of the alphabet in sequential order. For instance, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet is *aleph*. There are 8 verses that begin [Psalm 119, verses 1 to 8](#). Every verse in the Hebrew begins with a word whose first letter is *aleph*. When you come to the second section, [verses 9 to 16](#), it's *beth*. And every verse begins with a word whose first letter is *beth*. And it goes that way straight through the Hebrew alphabet. Many people who have studied that passage in Hebrew say that if there ever was a reason to believe that the Bible is the word of God, it is because of Psalm 119. Human ingenuity just could not have done that. It is incredible. God's ability is fantastic!

It is generally thought that David is the author. I don't have any problem arguing for King David but a lot of people do. I am kind of simple on that issue. To me the human authors are not important, but a lot of people make a big deal over it. People say to me, "Well, how could Moses write Deuteronomy 34 on his death? I mean, if he's dead, how could he have done it? What are you going to do with that?" My answer is that I think Joshua could have handled that okay. What is the problem? He was the servant of Moses and I don't see any problem with that, do you understand? There is too much emphasis on the human authorship of the Bible and not enough on the divine authorship of the Bible. That is where our problem lies today.

There have been prophecies reported on Christian television. Now you know I don't want to be unjustly critical, but I am telling you, we already have direction in the Bible as to know whether that stuff is from God or not. I got a whole big prophecy from a guy back on the East Coast who just stirred up Christians back there something terrible. He said Jesus Christ was coming on Rosh Hashanah; there was no doubt about it. See that

is not from God. And everybody's trying to do that. Makes them feel good. Makes them feel important. Have people submit to their great authority. That is why I tell people over and over again, not to think any speaker, including me, is the authority. God and His word is the authority.

You watch out. We are being prepared by the enemy, even in evangelicalism to believe that people are the authority. You may think, "Well, he studied the Bible, he ought to know." That means nothing. I study the Bible and the more I study, the more I don't know. So, it makes me wonder whether the guys that know everything whether they studied or not. Please people, understand this is a serious subject!

Now let's come to number two. If the gospel that is preached is not the gospel of Jesus Christ found in the Bible, then God did not speak it to them. [Galatians 1:8](#) says so. It even says if an angel did it. You can't help but think of Moroni in that deal.

Third, if what they say does not agree with the Bible, then God did not speak to them. Isaiah's great on that. It is almost like there are Christian channelers out there. I mean, they do not call themselves that, but you know when you contact them, they really are "in touch with the Lord." Really?

And the fourth thing, if they add any additional truth to what the Bible says, then God didn't speak to them; and that just kills all known prophecies that people are trying to argue are from God. Now, people they hear this and they say, "Oh, you don't believe God speaks to people, huh?" I did not say that. Yeah, I believe He speaks to people. He speaks through His word. Can He speak through circumstances? Yeah. He can. He did it in Acts 16. He can close doors, open doors and all that, but I wouldn't trust that until I saw the results.

Does the Holy Spirit of God lead us through circumstances? Yes. But this is a most dangerous argument. Is it possible that He has led you through circumstances? Yes. I know that very strongly in my life, but I tell you it is after the fact that I usually have the evidence. The truth of the matter is the major way God speaks to me is through His word.

Now some people say, "What about the word of knowledge, or word of wisdom?" If it is wisdom and knowledge it will match with what God's word teaches. In other words, it is a speaking gift. You don't argue that about the gift of teaching. Everybody who believes in the gift of teaching says, "Well but it is God's word you have to teach." Well amen! Wouldn't a prophecy or word of knowledge or of wisdom be the same thing? It is the ability to communicate effectively what God's word teaches.

Did you think the prophets were coming up with original stuff? Let me give you an idea of a prophet. Aaron is called a prophet. You know, all he did was repeat what Moses said. The reason God did that was as a judgment against Moses for all of his excuses about going in to Pharaoh. And he said, "I'm not eloquent, I can't do it." He had all these excuses. God said, "Okay then, your brother is going to talk to Pharaoh, but you are going to tell him everything I tell you." Can you imagine the embarrassment of Moses, who is eloquent, trained in all the education of Egypt, and has to walk in front of pharaoh with his brother, Aaron.

Is everybody following? A prophet is a proclaimer of God's truth. It doesn't mean you have to come up with original stuff. All the original stuff is already come up with. It is in the Bible. The beauty of the whole thing is that if you pay attention to this complete, final written revelation of God, you can experience fantastic results in your life. You can get saved! That's pretty good, isn't it?

We have passages like [1 Peter 1:23-25](#).

We are born again of the incorruptible seed of the word of God which liveth and abideth forever, and this is the gospel which was preached unto you.

How is a man born again? Well, he attends a crusade? No. How is a man born again? Well, he has these vibes about wanting to give his life to Jesus. No. No. He's born again by the incorruptible seed of the word of God which liveth and abideth forever. If there is no Bible, you better check into whether there's a true, born again relationship.

In 2 Timothy we have this interesting passage. I like this passage very much. For a reason I will tell you in a moment. In [2 Timothy 3:14-17](#) it says,

But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Wow. That's pretty strong. The interesting thing is in verse 15, the word child—the Greek word *brepheos*—is referring to a baby in the womb or one that was just born

that can't speak yet. What did he say? "From a baby in the womb even, you have known the Holy Scripture."

You say, "Do you believe in child evangelism?"

"Yep. I believe in the evangelism of anybody who hears the word of God."

"Can a child understand the word of God?"

"Sure can!"

"You mean to tell me that a child could develop a favorable response to the Bible before it ever comes out of the womb?"

"Yep. Sure could."

Do you know scientifically we already know that's true. Do you know babies in the womb can tell the sound of a voice as to whether it's favorable or not favorable? Did you know that music played while that child is in the womb, the child will immediately respond to, whereas music that has not been played while in the womb will be discordant and will upset the baby? All of these experiments have gone on now. They know the voice of the mother. They know the voice of the father. They know it all. They can even now watch the movements of the baby in the womb through the sonographs we have. They can watch them respond to sound. Very interesting and all he said here is, "From a child you have known the Holy Scriptures."

It is interesting that one of the major problems in life is finding out what's right and what's wrong in a given situation. What is right to do? What is wrong to do? And here in [Hebrews 5:12-14](#) it says,

For when for the time you ought to be teachers, you have need for one to teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God and have become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For everyone that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age [mature in the Lord], even those, [how did they get mature?] who by reason of use have their senses [which is a very vulnerable area of proof] have their senses [I don't know sometimes what I'm feeling or touching or seeing or whatever, but I have my senses] exercised to discern both good and evil.

Why?—because I was using the Bible.

You know when Christians tell me they are trying to make it through this world without God's word, I fear for them. I don't know how you do it. Even with the word of God the satanic strategy is to destroy you. He brings all the guns of hell against you. It is a miracle that any of us can survive. I feel sorry for you. I pity you. I warn you. You cannot live without God's word and discern right and wrong. And what do I see across evangelicalism? Compromise everywhere, toleration of sin and evil.

Do you understand, people, that over and over again I see this in the issues of our day? It is like when it really gets down to tough going, where somebody is going to have to take a stand here, and you don't want to. You just want to tolerate everything. You don't want to hear the facts. Your mind is already made up. You see, you don't want to listen. It simply illustrates what is going on in society now.

A guy calls me, "Well, you can't just trust the Bible, you know, to say everything."

"I trust the Bible to say everything that I need to know about life. There's not a thing that I can think of that the Bible doesn't comment on." Well, he did not agree.

"You are just causing a lot of trouble."

I said, "I am not trying to. I'm just trying to preach the word of God. But if it does cause trouble, praise the Lord!" And I said, "There is one solution."

He said, "What's that?"

"You could follow what the Bible says and bring instant unity."

"Well, then everyone's going to be offended."

Do you see what I'm saying? Folks you better learn a lesson right up front. When you say you believe the Bible is the key to knowing right from wrong, you are going to be tested over and over again.

I know what this Bible teaches. And do you understand? You are going to have to decide this, class. You are going to have to make the decision about what you think about this Book. Is it the word of God, really? Are you willing to obey it and to bow the knee to it? Are you willing to acknowledge that this is God's truth no matter what, and will you follow your life and ministry after it—without compromise? This is a serious issue, isn't it?

But you know what else is involved? Prayer. You say, "I want to be a prayer warrior." Great! [John 15:7](#) says, "You abide in Me and My words abide in you; you can ask what you want and it will be done unto you."

We read in [1 John 5:14-15](#), "This is the confidence we have, that if we ask anything according to His will" ...well, where is His will? You and I don't make up His will. His will is in the word. "If you ask anything according to His will, you know that He hears you. You know you have the petitions that you asked of Him."

The prayer is to ask God for wisdom and now I know He will answer, because He says, "If any of you do lack it, you can ask of God and He gives to all men liberally" ([James 1:5](#)). And He won't reproach you for asking. He will give it to you.

The effectiveness of prayer life is related to the word of God, also your ability to live victoriously. [Psalm 119:11](#). "Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee." By the way, it's more than memorizing the Bible. The idea is treasuring it. You see, your regard for the word of God is fundamental to it. And sometimes in an area where we are being tested, we don't treasure it like we should. We treat it lightly and think "Well, maybe there is another view." Before you know, the devil set a trap for you. Watch out!

Jesus said, "Now ye are clean through the word that I have spoken unto you" ([John 15:3](#)). And one of the other great results of really depending on the Bible is the one we read in [2 Timothy 3:17](#), "The man of God will be equipped for every good work." Wow. There isn't anything that God wants to do in our life that the Bible won't train and equip us in. "When you delight yourself in the law of the Lord, He will give you the desire of your heart ([Psalm 37:4](#)).

I don't know how anyone who plans to go into the ministry of the word of God can do it without the word of God. I don't understand it. Yet all over this country we have people trying to preach and teach God's people and they don't know the Bible. I don't

know that you're going to be a preacher. You may not have come to college for that. But whatever your reason, just understand something: our goal is to give you as much of the word of God as we possibly can. Because we believe the word of God will achieve all the results that you need in your life.

Amen?

History and Authenticity of the Bible
Lesson 5
Dead Sea Scrolls & Aramaic Targums

By
Dr. David Hocking

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“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.” Lord, I thank You for each of these students and I pray that you would put within them constantly a hunger for Your word, a desire to know You, to delight in the word day and night. And God we pray Your blessing, as we once again examine the wonderful factors relating to the reliability and inspiration of Your word. May our hearts grow deeper in appreciation for this wonderful, complete and final revelation from God in this form. We thank You. Your word is forever settled in the heavens and You have exalted it above Your own name, so we come to honor it. But most of all, Lord, we come to worship You. We thank You for all You have done for us. Minister to every student’s need; for those that are sick or ill, that You would strengthen them Father. Touch their bodies. Some of us are emotionally stressed and we need peace from You, and priority and wisdom. We thank You that You give that. We submit this time unto Your hands. In the wonderful name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

We are talking about revelation, how God speaks to us. And we, of course, have told you how to know if a person is speaking from God’s revelation or not. If it doesn’t happen, then God did not tell them it would. If the gospel that is preached is not the gospel of Jesus Christ found in the Bible, then God did not speak to them.

On a tour of the Mormon temple we were told some things that were definitely *not* the gospel of Jesus Christ as found in the Bible. We were told that it is found in the

“complete” Bible. So the very issue about how many books are in our Bible—an issue of canonicity—we are going to study in this course. This is a very, very important matter.

We were handed a leather-bound-gift edition of the Bible. On the front it said: *Old Testament, New Testament, Book of Mormon, Doctrines and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price.*

When I opened it to look into it, there was no Old or New Testament. So I handed mine back to the bishop, who gave us these nice gift editions. I said, “Excuse me, there is something wrong with mine.”

He said, “Really? We haven’t had a misprint in years.”

I said, “Oh no, no. Mine’s definitely got a problem in it.”

He opened it up and hunted through it and he said, “I don’t see what the problem is.”

I said, “Well the problem is that you left the Bible out of it.”

“No, it is here.”

I said, “No. The Old and New Testament that is advertised in the front, you don’t have it.”

“Well, we assume everybody has those.”

“Oh really, then why would that be? Why would everybody have that, and not yours?”

He said, “The gospel that we are giving to you was revealed by an angelic messenger to his servant, Joseph Smith.”

I said, “Doesn’t it bother you that Galatians 1, in the New Testament says that ‘if an angel comes and preaches any other gospel, let him be accursed’?”

He said, “Well, that is dealing with whether or not it is additional to God’s revelation.”

I said, “Oh, then we’ve got to figure out whether or not the Old and New Testament is a complete and final revelation from God?” And his answer to me was scary. He said, “The majority of Christians believe in progressive revelation.” And he walked away.

You know, the sad thing is that he was correct. That is the sad thing that Christians haven’t come yet to understand that there is a complete and final, written revelation of God. And we are going to deal with that as well.

And we also have to question “If what they say does not agree with the Bible, then God did not speak to them.” It is fairly obvious. And if they add any additional truth, then God did not speak to them. And that is an issue that we’ve got to get into and you will know probably more than you even want to know about it.

Now, we talked a little bit about the result. I concluded the last time we were together, with the illustration about preaching to my grandbaby. Remember that? Because Paul said, “From a child, [the word is *brephos* in Greek, a baby in the womb, or one just born] thou hast known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation.” Can you think of a more wonderful result?

I asked this Mormon bishop, “You know, one of the tests of God’s word is that people come to know the Lord through it. Do people come to know the Lord through reading Nephi, in the Book of Mormon? The point is that God’s word will produce salvation. Has anybody been saved reading Doctrines and Covenants?”

“Well, it depends upon their obedience to what is said in that.”

Hey, let me tell you something. There is something really terrific about the Old and New Testament. It can cause the new birth. It is a remarkable Book! You see, one of the results of God's written revelation is that it brings salvation to people. That is so important to understand.

Also, from [Hebrews 5:11-14](#), we learn that there is the wonderful result of discerning right from wrong. And that is so important. The effectiveness of prayer is found in [John 15:7](#), "If My words abide in you [Jesus said], you can ask whatever you want and it will be done." Why? Because your whole prayer life is going to be controlled by the word of God, not by your whimsical feelings about things. [1 John 5:14-15](#) says, "This is the confidence we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us. And we know that if He hears us, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him." Very important.

In terms of enablement for victorious living, do you know anything else in all of literature that can produce this? "Thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against Thee" ([Psalm 119:11](#)). I don't know, I've read a lot of books in my life and they don't do it. The Bible does. It is very interesting. I've read Tolstoy. Wonderful! Interesting! Will Durant—some classics—it is very interesting, but they don't help me to get victory over sin. But this Book will change your life. The Bible says, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that you may grow thereby, if so be that you have tasted that the Lord He is gracious" ([1 Peter 2:2-3](#)).

There are some wonderful promises in God's word. Even in [John 15:3](#), Jesus said: "Now ye are clean." It means to wash with water. "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." There is no book like this. No wonder the devil wants to

find your interest elsewhere. He does not want you to read this Book or learn this Book. This Book is the key to walking with the Lord.

And I love [2 Timothy 3:16-17](#), which I would like you to turn there, please. Two verses that you will probably see again. That is what you call a “major hint.” [2 Timothy 3:16-17](#).

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

These two verses you ought to know when it comes to describing the Bible and its impact upon life. We call it the equipment of the believer for every good work, but there is a lot in these two verses. It says, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” What does the New International say? “All Scripture is God-breathed.” That is good.

Now in the Greek there are only three words. You want to understand what we are doing in this course, we are trying to give you an apologetic understanding of the Bible, so that you have a defense, you have an answer for the reason and the hope that is in you. First thing you have to know is that there are only three Greek words in that opening sentence. We have the Greek word “all” or “every.” It can be either one: every, or all. We have the Greek word for Scripture, which is *graphe*. We get “graphic arts” in English from that term. It means writings or that which is written. So you see words that are in English. We have “lithography,” and lots of words that are connected with *graphe*. But *graphe* is referring to writings, so “every” or “all writings.”

Now the next one is a compound word. It includes the word *God* and it includes the word *to breathe*. So it translates (as some of the English translations do correctly) “God-breathed, “every writing God-breathed.”

There are some obvious things about that sentence that are very, very important. First of all, there is no description in that sentence as to what is included in “the writings.” “All writings.” Now, whatever it is, it is a done product. But yet when Paul wrote 2 Timothy (which was the last of his epistles) there were still some writings of John to come. But he says, “all Scripture.” Whatever it is, the total of it is “God-breathed.” So we’ve got to find out what that total is. We are going to have to find out what it is. That is a very critical statement: “every writing, God-breathed.” And it is very, very important to know what you are talking about when you say “every writing.”

A second thing that we need to understand about that term is that only the writing is inspired, not the writers. That is probably one of the greatest misunderstandings people have. They say to you, “Well, they were just men.” And I always say, “Yes, you are correct.”

Well? So what? What’s that got to do with it? Do you understand, you make them say apologetically what it is they are after. And of course, they will come out with “Men make mistakes.” Oh, that is very interesting. See, God did not want to leave it up to guys to give their own views and make those kind of mistakes. So He has an interesting process by which He guarantees the accuracy and reliability of what they wrote. Would you like to know how He did that? So sometimes in an apologetic way, you just kind of break it down step by step.

“Every writing is God-breathed” means the writers are not inspired, the writing is inspired. You see if you are not careful, then Shakespeare could produce Scripture. They say, “Well he was inspired.” But they mean inspiration in a human sense, not what God means. God is referring to the accuracy of what is written, not whether it was – “Whoa! It gave me the vibes when I read that.” No, although, the Scripture will move your heart. It is a very interesting subject.

In [2 Timothy 3:16](#) it says it is not only God-breathed, but it says it is two things. In the Greek text, it is organized every writing is two things: God-breathed and profitable. Now we are talking about the results here of God’s revelation, so what is the profitableness of the word of God? What does it accomplish? What is it good for? And according to this text, it is good for four things that every one of us needs. Now the ultimate purpose is stated in verse 17, “that the man of God”—the believer. God’s word does not do this for the unbeliever; rather it leads him to salvation. But for the believer, the man of God, “that he be perfect.” Now that does not mean sinless—“that he be complete.”

The next statement is “thoroughly furnished.” What we have here is a play on words. It is a double impact: equipped, thoroughly equipped, or completely equipped, “unto all good works.” In other words, there is nothing that you and I are involved with that is described as “good works before God” that would be outside the realm of Bible-equipping. Whatever God wants you to get involved with in your life regarding good works, the Bible is the key to equip you to do that.

Now in order for that to occur, the result of this wonderful Book is in four areas that will, in fact, equip you. What are those four areas? One, found in verse 16 is

“doctrine” or “teaching.” What we are to believe about God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, salvation, is found where?—in the Bible. Some schools believe that they should teach us the opinions of men and the Bible is a reference source. No, we believe that all doctrine is Bible doctrine. If it’s not a Bible doctrine, then it is not a doctrine that we teach. It is just as simple as that. So, when you look at it, this Bible will teach you all there is to believe in the Christian life.

Do you realize how important this verse is? What is it saying? A lot of people don’t carry it out or think it through as to what the impact is. The impact is pretty fantastic! Whatever it is that God wants you and me to believe, is found within the context of whatever is “all Scripture.” It is God-breathed and it is profitable for doctrine. It is right here in the Book.

Number two, it is profitable for “reproof.” Now, a lot of people believe that God has given them the gift of reproof. They take great pleasure in coming up to you and reminding you of how you are not acting the way you should. But it is the Scripture that does the best reproof.

Now “correction” has two sides of one issue really. The one is *confronting* the person and the other is *building* that person. You know, “there is a time to tear down,” says [Ecclesiastes 3:3](#), “and there is a time to build up.” There is a time to say, “You are wrong brother and here is the reason; the Bible says so.” And there is a conviction issue there, a reproof and a rebuking. But there is also a correction. You know, sometimes we don’t want to help the people to learn how to walk. We don’t want to really build them back up. We just leave them dead and wounded by our remark. But the Bible does both.

The Bible never rebukes you without showing you how you can correct the situation.

That is very important to understand about God's word.

It also is instruction in righteousness. Everything you need to know to do right and to reflect God's character in this world, is all found in God's word. It will "lead you in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake" ([Psalm 23:3](#)).

So you see, everything I need to be completely equipped in this world to do whatever is good in the sight of the Lord, all these good works, I will find it all in the Bible. And you ask me, "Is it important that we know what the Bible is?" Oh yeah. The Bible is the whole ballgame. It is everything. You see, when everything else fails in your ministry or whatever you are doing for the Lord, you can come back to some very simple things. Just trust the Bible and the Holy Spirit and you will be fine.

"Well, don't I need to know the computer?"

No, you don't. Will it be helpful? Yes. It can help you to learn God's word, but knowing how to use a computer will not make you a more effective servant of the Lord. Is the computer or the knowledge of it necessary for the good works that God has for me to do in this world? The answer is "absolutely not."

Over the years, I have found there are so many Christian parachurch organizations designed to show you and me why the Bible is not sufficient—why we need their program. Now, they would be very upset to hear me say that, but somebody needs to speak the truth. Every week there are mailers telling me how I could be more effective if I would buy this thing and that thing and get their stuff. We have been doing a colossal job of undermining the confidence which the Bible itself says we should have in that Book and that we don't need anything else. If you go out of this school believing that you

do not need anything else but the Holy Spirit and the word of God, you will be just fine. God will use you super abundantly. One of the interesting paradoxes is the more things you substitute for that, the greater will be your problem in being effective for the Lord.

You need the Lord and His word and you don't *need* anything else to be effective for the Lord. And may God drill that into your heart so that you never forget it. No matter where you go or what place of service you have, I trust you'll never forget that all you need is the word of God.

There is a pastor friend of mine who loves the overhead and transparencies. I know what that's about. I used to teach using an overhead all the time. He was just panicked and said, "We don't have an overhead. You know the meeting is about ready to start and I do not know what happened to it. I said, "Boy, this is a crisis! Now all we have to do is trust the Lord and the Bible. What are we going to do?" He looked up at me with kind of a little smile. He was a good brother. He says, "I guess I was a little stressed out over the overhead." I said "We don't need the overhead. It's a nice tool, but we don't need it."

Do you understand? I'm trying to tell you this verse, [2 Timothy 3:16](#), is a key verse in understanding the importance of the Bible in our life. You cannot make it without the Bible, in my opinion.

Okay now, we come to a whole brand new area. We have just been talking about the importance of this study and we are now coming to a section called "The Information about the Bible." Now the Old Testament was completed a minimum of 150 years before Christ. It was already compiled and in use in Greek, so we know that it was done. We also know, obviously, that the New Testament was not written until the first century AD.

We also know conclusively from the early church leaders that the New Testament, as we know it, was completed before the first century ended. Even though there were other books claiming to be gospels that should be added, and we will get into the problem of that.

So let's start with our Old Testament. Now I am thankful because we teach through the entire Bible in a systematic way. We don't leave the Old Testament out. But a survey done several years ago of American Christians in major Bible-believing denominations showed that there was total ignorance of the Old Testament and very little preaching of it; that Bible-teaching pastors basically dealt with a few passages in the writings like the Psalms and Proverbs and so forth. Usually they did the first eleven chapters of Genesis, but rarely went to anything else. The Old Testament is not a handy reference book for New Testament thought; the Old Testament is God's word.

People say to me, "Without the New Testament you couldn't understand it." I've got books that say, "Without the New Testament you can't understand the Old." Poor Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Job, Daniel. They all could never understand anything. But boy, we got it now, don't we? Look, there is another way of looking at this if you want to know the truth. You cannot understand the New Testament without understanding the Old. It's not the other way around. The New Testament quotes voluminously from the Old Testament. In the book of Revelation alone I counted more than 400. I saw a book recently that said there were 700 quotations. But anyway, I found over 400 quotations in the book of Revelation alone. It quotes continuously. Even the Bibles that indicate the quotations don't get them all. And the more you know about the Old Testament the more you read in the New Testament and you see it is just quoting verbatim.

I was reading in James chapter 3 concerning the tongue and bridling the tongue and how great a matter a little fire kindleth ([James 3:5](#)). I went back and read Psalm 39 again. Sure enough, those two things are the same. The New Testament writer, James who was Jewish, was reflecting what King David said in [Psalm 39:1](#), where he tells me to bridle or muzzle my tongue so that I do not sin with my tongue. You know and all of a sudden we see that bridle issue, a horse with a bit in the mouth in [James 3:5](#). This is coming out of the Old Testament and over and over again, you will see that the New Testament begins to take on a clear picture for you when you know the Old Testament.

What about the Old Testament? Well, as I said, first of all, it is God's word. In terms of writing, a lot of critics of the Bible get all upset because they say there is no evidence of alphabetical writing until 1800 BC. Well, there is a lot of truth to that. But you see, I do not believe the Bible started to be written until 1400 B.C. So, we have 400 years to play with. It is all right. No problem. Also the earliest kind of writing, people, did not divide words. That is why when we see some Old Testament text or in old Hebrew, it is just all run together. So it takes a very astute mind, especially someone who knows Hebrew to know where you break up the letters, because they are just run straight together.

Now in the Old Testament we have another language besides Hebrew. It is very much like Hebrew. It's called Aramaic. So let's make sure all of us in this class know what we are talking about. There are Aramaic words in the Old Testament. There are some pretty lengthy sections in both the book of Ezra, as well as in Daniel there is a very long one from chapter 2:4 to 7:28. It's all in Aramaic. Now it's a derivative of Hebrew. It is a Semitic language, it's like Hebrew.

In Daniel's account there are Persian and Greek words also in the Old Testament. Our knowledge of this becomes more prevalent when we see what archaeology brings to pass. But we believe that some of the instruments mentioned in the book of Daniel are actually Greek origin and some of the words are definitely Persian. And that should be expected also since part of the history of the Old Testament is under the Persian domination, especially the return from the Babylonian captivity.

For that matter, we may also have Egyptian and Assyrian, and Babylonian words. Is Rameses, *Ra Ahmasees*, is that a Hebrew word or is that Egyptian? Well, it's Egyptian. And Rameses, these cities the children of Israel were building in slavery, are they Hebrew cities or are they Egyptian names? They are Egyptian names. As a matter of fact, Moses' name—is it Hebrew or is it Egyptian? Well, he was existing at the time we had pharaohs named Thutmoses, I, II, and III. So you see Moses means “to draw.” It was a very common name in the Egyptian language at the time. And when Pharaoh's daughter took him out of the river, the Nile River was the top god of the Egyptian pantheon. So she was trying to sell the fact that this little baby is from the god, the Nile River. Is it a Hebrew word? Well, it becomes a Hebrew word. The truth of the matter is that many words have derivation in other languages. It does not do anything to the accuracy of the Old Testament; in fact, it confirms the beauty and accuracy of it.

Now before we talk about the Dead Sea Scrolls and people will bring this up to you, especially if they know a little bit. They have been to a liberal college somewhere and they picked up a little bit. Now they will say things like, “Well we didn't even have an Old Testament text until 900 A.D.” Wrong. Though let's talk about what we had from 900 A.D. It is true that the earliest copy of the Old Testament before the Dead Sea scrolls

is about 900 A.D. It's a group called "Masorites." On page three, you see the word Masoretic and we have given you the definition. What does Masoretic mean?—tradition. But literally the root behind the word tradition or Massorete is one who puts a hedge around the Scripture to protect it. The Masoretes what they did is they produced vowel markings that they knew in the Hebrew language in terms of pronunciation. They produced vowel marking for Hebrew letters because Hebrew is the language of only twenty-two consonants. There are no vowels in Hebrew. So they put vowels in for correct pronunciation to protect the Bible from being incorrectly pronounced.

Well, the Jews really cared. They had a dedication to the preservation of the text that has been unheard of in any history following it. And by the way, if God is calling you to the mission field maybe something we are saying today is far more important than you realize. We need to have a compassion, a care, a willingness to learn and to listen and to try our best. They always, I've found in every culture, respect you for trying. And maybe you didn't say it right, but the fact that you keep trying is very, very attractive to somebody. You want them to hear your gospel, then spend a little time with it.

This is very important that the Masoretes, these godly men, were trying to put a hedge around the Scriptures so that they would not lose the pronunciation in Hebrew. Now they know how to pronounce the words with their consonants. And they have sounds that come out in those consonants that sound like our vowels. So all they did was put vowels on the Hebrew text. And that's the earliest known text we had until the Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered in 1947, but not really available to the public until the late 1950s and early 1960s.

We were told many, many times that there was no proof that the prophecies concerning the first coming of Christ were truly prophecies. But when the Dead Sea scrolls were finally translated, we saw every book of the Old Testament—except one, Esther—had some fragment in it or whatever. Including some of them with the whole scroll, like Isaiah, the entire book, all sixty-six chapters. The whole scroll is now in the Shrine of the Book Museum in Jerusalem. The whole intellectual world was stunned by it.

Do you know that they are continuing to put out books about the Dead Sea Scrolls? And it is interesting to me that the Qumran community, which was like an ascetic, monastic community, that they wrote in many, many other areas. They have fanciful writings like medieval literature. They have a manual of discipline, which was a teacher of righteousness, and some people think that maybe it is Christ. But that was an effort to prove that it was after Jesus, but it was not after Jesus. They know it wasn't because of the writing material alone and the discovery of it has proven that beyond a shadow of a doubt. It was before the first century, we know. And here that same Dead Sea Scrolls has revealed passage after passage after passage that predicts things about the first coming of Jesus.

So now we have a powerful argument about fulfilled prophecy concerning the first coming of Christ. It can't happen by any other way but by divine direction. It couldn't have happened. But it is very important to understand these Masoretic texts because they were putting vowel markings on the Hebrew.

We mentioned the vowel markings, but will you notice that in this Masoretic text you have what is called "marginal notes." You know, you do that in your Bible. You

write something out in the margin. And these marginal notes also deal with the tradition of transcribing the text. Now I wish we had that for all the Greek manuscripts. Look at that very carefully the next time you run into somebody attacking the accuracy of the text. The scribes changed the text in only eleven places, according to one tradition and only eighteen, according to another. And get this, in all eighteen places, the only changes at all were all dealing with extreme anthropomorphism—that God has feathers or wings or whatever and they thought needed explanation; so they wrote in a marginal note to the text as to what they thought it meant. When I read that, and I see all the variation among the Greek text, I just sit there and say, “This is absolutely unbelievable!” In a day before printing presses, or printers and all of that, when it is only transcribed by hand, unbelievable!

Anthropomorphism. *Anthropos* is man. *Morphism* is the exact nature of something. Morphology is the study of the exact essence of it which, by the way, goes into DNA. But anthropomorphism is dealing with the exact nature of man-like expressions. Like “the arm of the Lord”...does He really have an arm? “The eyes of the Lord”...does He really have eyes? “Under His wings”...you know, the point is they are using expressions. We would say “picturesque speech” to point out a tremendous truth about the character of God.

Now another interesting thing about the Masoretic text, this is the only Hebrew Bible we had before the Dead Sea Scrolls. There are summary notes at the end of every book. This was to guarantee the accuracy of transcribing it. They reveal the number of verses, the number of words and the number of consonants in that book. Why did they do that? So they could check it for its accuracy. And if one man said there were 10,212

consonants and another man said there were 10,213, they would count again. Now you understand why we don't have to take a back seat to anybody. Don't hang your head in any discussion about the authority and accuracy of the Bible when you are speaking about the Old Testament. There is no book in all of history, including after printing and publishing of today that has any way of being in the same category of discussion with the accuracy of the Old Testament. Phenomenal! It is just remarkable! Every time I think about it I think how God not only preserved these, but protected them in every way. I think it is a wonderful thing.

We also have, "Ancient Versions." You will want to know, what is a version of the Bible? Because sometimes they say on their Bible, this is a version—New International Version. No it is not a version of the Bible. The word version means another language, another language. King James, New American, New International, Living Bible, they are all English. The version is English. The variations of course, are there. Ancient versions of the Old Testament mean translating the Hebrew into other languages.

We have, first of all, Aramaic. The one I told you about. Aramaic was the court language of Babylon. It was also spoken during the Persian reign. It's a derivation of Hebrew. It's a Semitic language. And we have what's called Aramaic targums. You have heard that name before. You say, what in the world is a targum? It's simply the word for translation. That's all it is. But in a Hebrew mind, a translation, a targum, can also be an interpretation. A book that's on the Bible, we call a commentary. So if you can keep that in your mind, the Aramaic targums are like commentaries. But they're trying to translate the Bible by giving you the meaning of it.

Well, we are doing that today. When people ask me: “Do you think the New International is the most accurate translation of the original language? What do you think is a good translation?” Well, what is the difference between those two? The principle behind New International is what we call “dynamic thought equivalent.” That is a phrase that’s equivalent to the Hebrew or the Greek that would be more readily recognizable in English would be used rather than a word-for-word translation. Now being a teacher type, I prefer that which gives me a word-for-word translation and let me decide. But they were trusting these scholars. They certainly know what they’re doing. However sometimes they have bias on a passage. But anyway they try to give the thought. It’s called “dynamic equivalent translation.”

Now Jews believe that there is nothing wrong with this. And that surprises a lot of people because they are such sticklers for the original Hebrew. You know, they don’t vary there at all. You better see what that word is. But the moment you go to another language, or you are talking to the people, they see no problem whatever in being free. And their idea is that they are teaching people about what is meant. You can understand that. We do the same thing with commentaries. But sometimes with a little knowledge we become bombastic like we know everything. This whole area is filled with scholarship far beyond what this course will ever expose to you. Just understand there are some basic things we ought to know.

And it is a targum from which we get a lot of our biblical ideas. In fact, many people believe that Paul and Peter referred to the targums that were well known among the Jews, rather than to the Old Testament text to reflect some opinions of interpretations. Now that’s another subject.

The synagogues, which by the way grew up after the destruction of the temple in 586 B.C., and really they grew up *primarily* after the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. because there was a reconstructed attempt, as you know. But a synagogue is simply a word meaning “to gather together.” The Jewish people gathered. Now a synagogue translated orally what do we call that? Preaching—a sermon. They translated orally into Aramaic and so that is like our paraphrasing. Like the Living Bible. What is the Living Bible? It is Ken Taylor, a father, teaching his children the Bible and putting it on their level. And he did it of himself. He doesn’t claim to be a scholar. He had scholars check it. So there is nothing heretical in it, but it is a paraphrase. And by the way, sometimes he really hits it better than the others do. Sometimes in his effort to explain it to his children, he comes out with the correct Hebrew. And it is, you know, beautiful. If you have ever read the Living Bible, it has a lot of beauty to it.

The Jews conducted business in Aramaic. It was a trade language. Now, class, I’m going to tell you something here that you probably will not read in any book at all. It has been standard teaching up until this time that Jesus and the disciples spoke Aramaic in the land of Israel. First of all, there are Aramaic words in the New Testament. When Jesus said, “*Talitha cumi*” ([Mark 5:41](#)). When He said, “*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani*,” that is Aramaic. “My God, My God, Why hast Thou forsaken Me?” ([Mark 15:34](#)). *Maranatha*—there are lots of things like that. So there are Aramaic expressions: “*Talitha Cumi* - little daughter arise.” They are close to Hebrew words, but they are Aramaic, so they say so that is the reason they are in there is because Aramaic was spoken in the land of Israel.

There have been some archaeological views of first-century Israel before the destruction of the temple that have proven that the Jews who were loyal Jews, not Hellenistic, but loyal to the Hebrew tradition, spoke Hebrew and did it deliberately. So in the marketplace they would speak Aramaic, the trade language. In some cases Greek, but that was usually foreigners. But there were what was called “Hellenistic Jews” in the early church. They had adapted the Greek language, culture and all, to get along with their conquerors, basically. But there were other Jews, zealots or others, who wanted nothing to do with this. They were going to speak true Hebrew. Remember in [Philippians 3:5](#), Paul said he was a “Hebrew of the Hebrews.” Every Jew reading that knows exactly what he meant. Paul didn’t go along with the Hellenistic trends of his day. He excelled in Judaism above anyone else. And he spoke pure Hebrew.

So more and more we begin to take another look at the whole issue as to whether or not Aramaic was the language of Palestine, or I prefer Israel. Israel is bi-lingual, okay, definitely bi-lingual, and probably more than that. Most of the people had a few Greek words to communicate with all the Hellenism going on. And they also spoke Aramaic, which was the trade language, which had come from Babylonian and Persian sources. And then the Orthodox of course spoke Hebrew and trained their children to speak Hebrew.

Some people believe and it is still going around today that the New Testament was originally written in Aramaic and so Greek is a version rather than the original. That original Aramaic is called the *Peshetta*. But that was the problem. See it is a little problem for us to go back 2000 years to figure out what was really going on. But the scholarship that we have tells us that because they spoke Aramaic, they naturally had to

communicate. We know Jesus spoke it. We know Paul used it. Aramaic was used clear until the time of Mohammed when Arabic and Islamic teaching came in. And you say, “Well what is the difference in Aramaic?” The problem is that there is a strong tendency against anthropomorphism—as we were saying a moment ago—man-like descriptions of God.

Let me show you an example in Aramaic. First, you know how Jews are very careful about the name of God? For instance in an English book today, if a Jew is writing it, he will put G-D. You say, “Why doesn’t he put the “O” there?” They do not believe that it is right for us finite creatures to write the name of God. So that is what they do. Well, in Aramaic they used the “word of God” 179 times in the Old Testament in place of the word “God.” Literally, because they are trying to protect God’s character, they did it sincerely but if you are going to translate off an Aramaic targum the word, “word” is not in the text. But it is in the Aramaic translation of the Old Testament Hebrew for God or *Elohim*.

Now they also substituted the word *Shekinah*. *Sheka* is the word “to dwell.” It refers to the dwelling. We speak of the *Shekinah* presence of God in the holy of holies. When a cloud came down, the glory of the Lord filled the house. That is *Shekinah*. So instead of writing God and putting *Elohim* into Aramaic they put *Shekinah*. They also did it with the word “glory.” They substituted “glory” for God. So that is a part of the problem with Aramaic. Also it is highly interpretive and strong on paraphrasing. And we just have a little word of caution. We would use extreme caution. But you are probably not going to read Aramaic. There are a lot of translations now into English. And I have seen in bookstores a whole set of books called, *Aramaic Targums Translated into*

English. Now people are buying them to use as commentaries and in a sense they are commentaries by Jewish writers on the Old Testament.

Now you know what the targums are. It literally means translation, but could be interpretive or a passage like we would paraphrase. And those are very popular among Jewish people. So for our communications sake, let's at least learn these basics. Okay?

Take a break and we'll go to the Greek next.

History and Authenticity of the Bible
Lesson 6
The Greek Translations

By
Dr. David Hocking

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There is another version of the Old Testament that we want you to be familiar with and that is Greek. From Alexander the Great, in approximately the fourth century B.C. on, Greek dominated the world. You know how you have heard stories of how Alexander the Great conquered the world. He had no more worlds to conquer and he sat down beside the Euphrates River in Babylon, a drunken man and died at age thirty-three. There is even some question as to whether that tale is true. But he did definitely conquer the then-known world. He certainly did not handle the Far East, but as they knew it from a western culture point of view.

So, one of the things that he imposed was Greek culture and Greek language. Boy, was that a mess! Can you imagine, conquering a people and demanding they speak your language. And before long Greek was everywhere. But in the providence of God, that was all a fulfillment of what God wanted to accomplish because in [Galatians 4:4](#) it says, “When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son.” And you realize that at the time the gospel came, it was the first time in the history of the world since the tower of Babel that all the world was one language. They spoke other dialects of course. But there was one language dominating trade across the world and that was Greek. We had also for the first time in the history of the world, in addition to all speaking Greek, we had a culture that was imposed on the entire world. That culture just, class so you know, comes to be called “Hellenistic,” off the Greek word for Greece. It means Greek culture, Hellenistic. So you could have Hellenistic Jews. You could have Hellenistic Arabs. You could have Hellenistic Russians. They are people who are now dominated by Greek culture and Greek language.

Now that Greek influence, from fourth century B.C. on, was very powerful. The Romans, actually their republic was started in 705 B.C. And the Romans stood over there in Italy kind of ignored while Greek culture dominates the world. But what you often will hear or read in a book, when you're talking about the time of the New Testament, you will read this statement: "Roman-Greco culture." Have you seen when you're reading, "Roman-Greco culture?" What that means is that when Rome took over and conquered and started the empire, unlike what Alexander the Great did, they tolerated the Greek language and culture but infiltrated it with Rome's culture. So it was a mixed bag at the time of the first century. But the number one language of the scholars, the journalists, the writers, was Greek. Greek was the biggest language in the world. It was also more mathematical and exact and so it became a teacher, classic, journalistic-type language for the world. The documents were all written in Greek.

So it is of no surprise to us that the Old Testament would be written in Greek, if you are going to communicate. Now, we have a number of Greek translations. I've listed for you five of them. The one everybody knows is the Septuagint, which is a word meaning "seventy," which is spelled in Roman letters LXX. The L stands for fifty. X is ten. That is how you get seventy, LXX. It is talking about the Septuagint and the Septuagint has dominated the Christian world.

One of the greatest church fathers in the eyes of many was Origen, because of his brilliance. I do recognize his intellectual capacities. Origen had what he called the Hexapla. It was six columns and it included four Greek translations. The first four are mentioned, with his own transliteration in Greek along with the Hebrew text. Now can you imagine, I want to know the meaning of the Hebrew, the Old Testament text, and

here is a man in church history, third or fourth century, and he's got all the Greek texts listed parallel in six columns next to the Hebrew. So do you understand that I would really weigh heavy his views, wouldn't I? I would really say, “Wow, he is really telling us what the Old Testament means.” Well, this is so serious, I don't know where to begin but I'm going to just try.

At the end of the nineteenth century, two British scholars, B.F. Westcott and A.J. Hort, on the basis of the discovery of two Codex manuscripts—one Codex Sinaiticus, the other Codex Vaticanus, which the Vatican produced upon hearing about Sinaiticus—on the basis of this, they said we needed a new Bible. It was news in England and it was news in America. I thank God for D. L. Moody. He was reluctant about anybody telling him there was going to be a new Bible. Now he was not a scholar, at all. And he slaughtered the King's English and never knew Hebrew or Greek. But he was America's greatest evangelist and he heard about a new Bible.

Now, one of the greatest Greek scholars of all times, studied manuscripts, was also alive when Westcott and Hort wrote. His name was Dean Bergen. And he had nothing to do with this new Bible. In fact, he was viciously attacking it as being from the pit of hell itself. Well, all of this manuscript evidence that they used to produce this new English translation off of a brand new Greek text (which by the way, is the foundation behind the New American Standard, the New International, etc.—it all uses the same text) was largely controlled by Origen, who is part of what we call the Alexandrian school. Alexandria is in Egypt. And it was an Alexandrian school that was dominated by allegorical teaching, fanciful interpretations, and led and fostered by their godfather who was Origen. In some books that you will read, they will call Origen the greatest church

father to have ever lived. But can you imagine what the impact would be for those of us who would like to know the meaning of the Hebrew text, as we relate it to Greek to see his Hexapla, six columns of it, four Greek translations, plus his own and the Hebrew text.

Now the problem is, are they truly (these Greek translations) what they claim? I have some facts for you about the Septuagint. If you heard this in some schools, they would just laugh. Because they just already feel that the Septuagint is the only thing to trust. They even say that Paul wrote most of his fourteen books of the New Testament off the Septuagint rather than Hebrew. Does he refer to the Septuagint? Of course! If it was a popular translation of his day, he could refer to a quotation from it. But never does the Bible depend upon the Septuagint to give us any correct interpretation. But that is taught in seminary and college all through America, that they depended on the Septuagint. I do not believe it.

But let's just get a little background on it. This all comes from a letter of a man named Aristeas. It was dated about one hundred B.C. and supposedly scholars, (listen to this carefully, I have simplified it, you can check it out for yourself) scholars supposedly came from Israel, six from each tribe, went to Alexandria, (that's in Egypt). They were housed separately, translated separately, and when they came together, their translations were miraculously alike.

Now, remember when I told you about Jews and their carefulness? What do you think Jewish scholars think about that? Let's consider some facts. One, there were Jewish groups in Egypt as early as Nebuchadnezzar and there was a growing colony around Alexandria. Two, Alexandria became the predominant place of Greek language and

culture after the conquest of Alexander the Great and that is where they got the name, Alexandria.

Let's keep going. There are quotations from the Greek Pentateuch found in other Greek literature before 200 B.C. So we know that the Old Testament had to be completed before the time of Christ, right? Otherwise how could you translate the whole thing into another language? The Septuagint probably was the completion of other attempts. Now those who are dedicated to the Septuagint hate this talk. They don't like it at all. But I think there is plenty of proof for it. And I think the Septuagint is associated with Origen and the Alexandrian school of text criticism and it is associated with Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus and all of this came together, miraculously in people's minds, seeing how it was all coordinated all about the time of the end of the nineteenth century, when we wanted to put out a new Greek text and a new English Bible. I don't know. I have trouble with that.

There is early evidence of Greek translations of the Pentateuch (that's the first five books of the Bible) that are more literal in their translation of the Hebrew, unlike the Septuagint. And isn't this interesting, the Jews rejected the Septuagint. You know the exact opposite is told to people? Jews rejected it. Why? Because the Christians accepted it! Why? Because they were all speaking Greek! Wouldn't you? If you only spoke Greek, you did not speak Hebrew and you have the New Testament? What about the Old Testament? Well, we've had Greek translations. Hey listen, the early church before they had the books of the New Testament, that's all they had. So if you are Greek, you were using the Greek Old Testament versions.

Now, we had a man named Aquilla who had a translation, a word-for-word translation in the second century A.D., to make the Old Testament acceptable to anti-Christian Jews. We had Theodotian's translation, he tried to bring the Greek text into harmony with the Hebrew and it was a revision of an older pre-Christian Greek text—and we do not even know what that was—completed in the second century A.D. And Symmachus' translation, he tried to make a smooth reading, but he did not revise old works with Hebrew idioms, he just left them. And Origen, he brought out his own.

Today's Greek Old Testaments date, the ones we have copies of, from the fourth century A.D. If anybody tells you we've got them 300 years before Christ, they are wrong. We do not. Do we know that it was translated into Greek before that? Yes, we do. Why? Well, if you back up again, quotations from the Greek, at least Pentateuch, are found in Greek literature before 200 B.C. So we know it was in existence. But do we have copies of the Greek Old Testament previous to fourth century A.D.? And the answer is, no. This is very surprising to a lot of people who are trying to make a big case.

We rely primarily, listen to this, on two manuscripts—this is very interesting because they are the two that have caused all the trouble—Codex Vaticanus, and Codex Sinaiticus, and the work of Origen. It all centers in there and guess what? When the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered and they began to be translated, all of a sudden, the respect for Hebrew became greater. Now we realized, up until the Dead Sea Scrolls we only had a 900 A.D. Hebrew text with vowel markings by Masoretes. So people said, "Oh, there were a lot of changes made." Now we know by the Dead Sea Scrolls, matching it with the Hebrew Masoretic text that outside of the vowel markings there is hardly any difference at all.

In fact, to demonstrate this, when I take tour groups to the Shrine of the Book in Jerusalem, I take a Hebrew text of Isaiah. The Isaiah scroll is unraveled and it is all the way around this big glass case. We look up a given passage and I look it up in my Hebrew Bible today and I take and I rip a page out. Forgive me, but I do. And I put the page up there on the window and let people notice the consonants and I point them out one by one. And it is amazing the effect on people! They say, "Well, those are exactly the same!" That is true, though there is over a thousand years' difference between the two. You tell me, were the Jews careful?

So you see, what has happened by the Dead Sea Scrolls is all that big argument about the Greek text and how it was so important and may have even resulted in our Hebrew text that we were using in the ninth century A.D., is all a bunch of bologna. As a matter of fact, it was used by Westcott and Hort to sell their new Greek text, which has over 13,000 changes from the majority of texts that were used throughout history.

Let's go to another subject. We are going to come back to that in detail. But let's go to another subject. What versions of the Old Testament have we learned about so far? Aramaic. Not Hebrew. Hebrew is not a version. That is the original text. A version is translating into another language. Aramaic, Greek. Now let's go to Latin. How many of you have taken Latin in school? You should have taken Greek. When we were in school, as you well know, man, you had to take Latin. We have two things to say about Latin. One is that there is old Latin and the Latin Vulgate. I don't want you to know anything else. That is all you need to know in this course. What is old Latin? Well, it dates around 200 A.D.—primarily in North Africa. And the old Latin Old Testament appears to be a translation, listen carefully, from the Greek rather than the Hebrew. Now that is very

common to do. There is a difference between primary versions and secondary versions. Primary means translated from the original language straight into the language. Secondary means it was translated into still another (an additional) language from that language. So, it is really a secondary version, the Old Latin.

Now the Latin Vulgate becomes the number one Old Testament used throughout church history. So you better learn that—the Latin Vulgate. What does Vulgate mean? Vulgar. Well, today it means dirty, something awful. But vulgar, its original meaning is “common.” It means “the common people.” So the Latin Vulgate was putting Latin not into the language of court or scholars but into the language of the people on the street. It was common. It is kind of funny, isn’t it? Because the Roman church sort of made it like it was really a great, unusual, courtly language, but really it was the language of the people.

By the way, the Greek New Testament that we use is in *Koine* Greek. *Koine* means “common.” It is like “vulgar” in Latin. The Latin Vulgate (390 – 404 A.D.), you notice the dates of Jerome, he translated from Hebrew. Now it included the Apocryphal books, but he questioned their canonicity, and rightly so. The Council of Trent, 1540 to about 1547 A.D., did an update on the Vulgate, called The Sixtine Edition. Some of your Catholic Bibles today will have that in it, The Sixtine Edition. It appeared in 1590 A.D. and it was just revised by Clementine two years later. But that is what Catholics have had for years. And the Latin Vulgate was from the fourth century all the way through, until the Reformation at least, as a dominant Bible that people used.

Now, class, put your thinking caps on. What is the problem with a dominant Bible being Latin? Nobody understood it. Guess who controlled the continuation of Latin?—

the Catholic Church, the hierarchy. They perpetuated Latin and in fact, kept the Bible from the common people so they depended upon church leaders to tell them what the Bible says. Is everybody following now? That’s why in history books—it’s amazing, history’s being told differently today, it really is—but that is why we call the Middle Ages the Dark Ages. If somebody asks you, why were they dark? A guy told me, “Well, they had the Bubonic plague.” Well, no, that did happen, but that is not why they were the Dark Ages. “They were the Dark Ages because it was a feudal state.” No. The feudal state was a result of the Dark Ages. The Dark Ages are keeping the Bible away from the people in their own language. So they could be interpreted only by church leadership. Well, you see what happened to the world because of it. It was plunged into the most awful, terrible, filthy—from the standpoint of hygiene—it was a filthiest period of time. A thousand years of misery, dominated by wealthy churchmen whose only Bible—they said the true Bible—was Latin. The common people did not know what in the world they were talking about.

That carried over to even today. Have you noticed in some Catholic churches today, they believe that really the true church keeps using the Latin. No, no. It would be better if you would teach Hebrew and Greek, then you’ve got it. But you see they used it (Latin) and it created the Dark Ages and then they depended on church leadership and they threatened the people. If you have not read *God’s Outlaw*, for instance; it is a simple little book about the life of William Tyndale and you absolutely ought to read it. It is an exciting adventure and you will learn why it was so important to put the Bible into the language of the common people.

We have also what we call Syriac (Syriac, the eastern-type church) Antioch of Syrian, Constantinople, Turkey, all of those areas, Caspian Sea areas—Syriac. We have two Bibles to bring to your attention. Peshitta, I mentioned that earlier. That is what we call old Syriac, third century A.D. It is quoted often in the fourth century A.D. It did not include the Apocrypha books. It was translated from Hebrew, not Greek; however, one of the interesting things about it, it left out the book of Chronicles, originally.

Now the Syriac Hexapla is a translation of Origen's fifth column. Which was LXX, which means what? Septuagint. Out of the six columns, the fifth one was the Septuagint and that was the Syriac Hexapla that was published in 616 A.D. Syriac was a very popular language in what we call the Eastern Church.

Now the fifth thing we have, regarding the Old Testament, this is just gaining information about it, is what we called "patristic." What does that mean? Father. Latin word. Also, isn't Spanish, *padre*? Latin, *pater*, or Greek, pretty well the same in those languages. It means quotations of church fathers. What is church father? They are leaders. You will find me referring to the early church leaders. God is my Father.

Now these church leaders, you need to understand this; it is a very important issue in relation to your Bible. They quote voluminously from the Bible. Just like in a message today when you listen to a tape, I hope you hear a lot of Bible. Oh they quoted a lot of Bible too, and wrote many comments. Cyprian, who died in 258 A.D., was a bishop of Carthage (that's in North Africa) has over 740 Old Testament quotations in his writings. So you understand these patristic quotations give us evidence of what the Old Testament was, the text of the Old Testament. It is not what we call primary. Primary would be looking at the Hebrew. But it does tell you what was understood by those church fathers.

Also when they write in Greek, which many of them do, or in Latin, and they quote, now you know how the Hebrew was translated into Latin and Greek. And you can match it with—like Origen's attempt to prove, or Westcott and Hort in the end of the 19th century—that this was the original text. Wait a minute! If the patristic quotations do not agree with that, then we've got a real problem. And by the way, they agree more with the text behind the King James than they do the text behind the newer translations, which is interesting.

Now are there other versions, other languages? Yes. Manuscripts from the fourth century onward include Coptic, Ethiopic, Arabic, and Armenian versions. They were the most popular. We also have Hebrew translations. But look at the dates of them.

Codex is different than a scroll. A scroll you roll. A codex is the ancient background behind our books. They actually have leaves. Codex is usually on vellum or animal skin. We are going to talk about it, by the way, in the course. Right now, we will tell you that it is like a book. So there are leaves stacked together and usually there are holes in the side, punched in the side and leather thongs would tie it together. So it is like a book. It flips open. Codex Sinaiticus is on display at the British Museum in London and I have seen it; rather large and very ornate. They have a number of leaves but there is a lot missing.

This is one of those courses where your mind says, "Wait a minute, what about...what about?" And you just keep thinking of things. Be patient. We are going to get to them.

Hebrew Translations

- 1) The Cairo Codes of the Prophets (A.D. 895)
- 2) The Leningrad Manuscript (A.D. 916)
- 3) The Aleppo Manuscript (Tenth Century A.D.)
- 4) The British Museum 4445 (Genesis 39:20 – Deut. 1:33)
- 5) The Leningrad MS B-19 A (A.D. 1008)
- 6) The Dead Sea Scrolls (100 - 250 B.C.)

Other Hebrew translations—look at this carefully. The first five of these, before the Dead Sea Scrolls, are what we used to reconstruct the original text before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. A lot of people do not know that. What is the earliest date on them? 895 A.D. You see the problem? For 800 years, how do we know this is the right text? They use a Hebrew text that is a combination of that. Like we go down to the store and buy a Hebrew Bible, they would use that. What this is saying is that all five of these were used to construct what we thought was the Hebrew text. Okay? Follow that? And I do not want you to know these. I just want you to know the fact that they exist. You do not have to know these or memorize them.

So you could imagine what a marvelous discovery the Dead Sea Scrolls were in 1947. Now that's the Old Testament. You say, "Is that it?" Well, there's a lot more pages in books on it, but yeah, that's it. You say, "That's not a whole lot of evidence." That's true. That's true.

When we come to Greek, it is a whole different story. When we come to the New Testament, we are talking about big-time trouble in manuscript evidence. And my purpose will be to strengthen your faith in God's word, not to undermine it. But you need to hear me carefully right now. I understand why people, when they go into these fields, have their confidence in the Bible undermined. Because it can shake you up. And it is very important; you can understand that if you had a teacher who was not committed to inerrancy or inspiration of Scripture what can happen here. A lot of people believe that when their teachers speak they must be right, they are teachers. But just because we teach does not make us right.

And I think this is a very serious subject, the whole subject of manuscript evidence of the New Testament. You are going to be exposed to it here at Bible college. Some people will take the same evidence and come to another conclusion. I have been through the scholastic world. I have been through their side. I know what their side is. And I do not support their side, but I understand their side. Some of those guys are my friends. But I do not agree with them.

You say, "Well, what makes you right and them wrong?" Nothing makes me right. The Lord is right. All I am telling you is that when you look at this, you can look at it with two sets of eyes. Now if you look with the eyes of the Lord, you are going to be just fine. If you look with the eyes of faith and confidence in Him that He will not lead you astray, you will come out just fine. But if you enter this with a little skepticism and are looking for doubt, you can find it.

Now I hear preachers say, "There are only one thousand places where you actually find any variation in the original text." I feel like going up to them after and

saying, "Have you ever read them yourself?" I mean we are talking a lot, but yet we got a lot of words too. And it is not as big a problem as you think. It is less than any other extant manuscript, so the Bible is not worse in that regard. And I believe there is a reason behind this, which I am going to get to later. What is the name of this course? *The History and Authenticity of the Bible*. What I am trying to tell you is that there is balance. It would be easy for me to try to protect us all, to not give you any of this information. There are people actually in this land who say that the King James in English is the original language. There are books written on it. And it comes under the doctrine of preservation.

Well, I want you in your mind and your heart to not be afraid any more of facts. Do not be afraid of it. There are lots of facts that you are going to see and you are going to wonder, "Wow, I did not know all that. Wow, did we have a trustworthy...?" Yes. When we come out in the end, you will be stronger than ever. But a lot of people filter out along the way. I am not talking about you. I'm talking people that hear about this. They filter out. They give up. They quit. They do not want to hear any more. They are all confused. And what has happened is the devil has done a number on us. He has gotten us, in this culture, to believe it is not important. What do you mean, it's not important?

Don't you know that Christianity crumbles if you can undermine this Book? It crumbles. Everything that you and I believe about Jesus Christ is in this Book. There is no issue that is so fundamental to Christianity as the Bible itself. And so, we are not going to be afraid of the facts. We are not trying to scare you. We are not trying to give you more information than you can handle. We are trying to teach as we laid out in the objectives of the course, to teach this in a way that apologetically you will have an answer. You will

have the defense. You will know what you believe and why, and you will understand it more than you will ever understand without it. But you will be able to tell people what are the facts and to do it with a love, and a kindness, and a humility, but to show them why it really does build confidence in the Lord. And it does not undermine our confidence in the Bible.

Do you realize that you have fellow Christians in churches who have been to other Christian colleges who literally (I have heard this over and over again) lost their faith and confidence in the Bible in a Christian college. Does it mean that they were not taught the facts? No, they were taught the facts. But you see it makes a difference, doesn't it, how we come out at the end? It makes a difference about our commitment. Whether we believe this is as God originally gave it—we have no original autographs—but whatever they were, they were inspired and inerrant from the hand of God Himself.

Now we've got to prove that point. You say, “If we do not have the original autographs then how do we know?” That is what this course is all about and that is what we are going to answer.

Let's pray.

Father, thank You for the Bible. Thank You that we have here, in our hands in English, a sure foundation. We thank You that You guided those men by the Holy Spirit to ensure that what they wrote was indeed the word of God, without error, totally reliable and trustworthy in every respect. We believe, Lord, that everything that is in this Book is true. When the devil lies, it is accurately reported, and we thank You for that. When men speak lies and falsehoods, You accurately report what they

said. Thank You, Lord, that we can trust this Book. And I pray, Lord, that You will continue to give us a heart to know the Bible in every way. We thank You, in Jesus' name. Amen.

History and Authenticity of the Bible
Lesson 7
New Testament Manuscripts

By
Dr. David Hocking

Brought to you by
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A ministry of
The Blue Letter Bible
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Father, we thank You so much for this wonderful Book, the Book of all books, the Bible, the word of the Living God. Help us as we examine its history, its authenticity, Lord that we might be guided by Your Spirit. Help us to be kind to those who maybe disagree. But help us also to be thorough in what we understand. That we might place our confidence in a God who not only has inspired these words, but has preserved them throughout history. Thank You, Lord. We praise You. We love You. Thank You for what You are going to do in changing people's lives, as we present the Bible in all of its authority and beauty and majesty. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

We are starting the New Testament. The Old Testament was a cinch by comparison. It was a cinch to evaluate its authenticity. But there are some related issues, as we will be flipping back into some stuff about the Old Testament; there are some related issues, especially as it deals with the Apocrypha. And depending on how our class time goes, we will hopefully deal with that today.

Now in the Open Bible, this is a New King James Version of it, I want to read you what it says:

For the past several centuries, English speaking people have cherished the King James Version of the Bible. This love does not come from a desire to preserve a tradition for tradition's sake, rather the opposite is true. The King James Version has become a tradition because it is loved for its

scholarship, literary form, and devotional quality. During its long history, the translation has been revised in accordance with changes in English speech and our growing knowledge of the original text of the Scriptures.

Now let me stop right there and say that the actual King James Bible that we use says, "Translated out of the original tongues and with previous translation, diligently compared and revised." The actual text of the King James Version Bible that you use is not 1611. There have been five revisions of the King James Version Bible. This is not mentioned in your notes, so find some space and make a note of it somewhere. There have been five revisions. In 1629 was the first revision, eighteen years after the King James Bible first came out in 1611 A.D. The second revision came nine years later, in 1638. Then it was over 120 years later, in 1762, that we had the next revision. That is 1629, 1638, 1762! And then believe it or not, seven years later we had another one 1769, and for two hundred years it was not changed.

I have the actual translation, Old English King James Version, which I bought in a bookstore, the 1769 edition. I also have a 1611, and there are a few changes. One that I am very thankful for is the letter "f" in the 1611, which is really our English letter "s." So it helps greatly not to have an "f" every time an "s" appears. But that is the way old English was written. So, that is one noticeable change. But there had been four revisions up until 1769.

Now the fifth one is the New King James. That is the fifth revision of the King James text. So be careful when you read another English translation as though it is a

revision of the King James. It is not. And you will learn more about why it is not before we are done in this course.

Let me continue reading. This is a little footnote:

In the summer of 1603 A.D., King James was on his way to London to receive the English crown. He was presented with a petition of grievances by clergy holding Puritan convictions.

That is very important to understand because it was the Puritans also, who saw to it that the Apocrypha, which was a separate section in the King James Bible, was taken out of the Bible. It was the Puritans who did that. The greatest theologians and Bible scholars of church history were all Puritans, whether you know that or not. Charles Spurgeon was in that tradition. And there were many, many wonderful teachers. They actually had a commitment to knowledge that was unlike anything that had ever been heard of. They were anti-reason and yet some of the most reasonable men ever. But anti-reason would mean in contrast to Roman Catholics who depended greatly on human reason and tradition. Puritans did not. They were scholars who spent hours on the theology of the Bible, not anything else. And so they are the ones who basically got the changes, where the Apocrypha would no longer be listed as a separate section. They said that it had no business belonging there. And we are going to tell you why we don't have the Apocrypha. Now notice the very translation—King James—came because of Puritans pressing King James. He held a conference and here is the quote from King James: "A

conference for hearing and for the determining of things pretended to be amiss in the church.”

It was a conference for hearing and for the determining of things pretended to be amiss in the church. Now this conference was held for three days, January 14 to 16, in 1604. It was known as the Hampton Court Conference. And during this conference, a man who was the head of the Puritan movement, Dr. John Rainolds (and he was the president of Corpus Christi College in Oxford, England) made the motion that a new translation of the Bible would be undertaken. The majority was against the motion (interestingly) but it appealed to King James, so he ordered that it be undertaken.

So they gathered together fifty-four of the best biblical scholars who knew the original languages in Great Britain, and they were brought together. They were divided into six groups, these fifty-four men. Nine in each group, so there would not be a split vote. And they would be assigned various passages. The interesting thing is that each group, whatever section they were assigned, had to submit their final resolution on it to the other five groups, who then had to vote unanimously on it or they would throw it out. There were a lot of checks and balances. They also decided that no text would be considered without fervent prayer. They spent hours in prayer asking God to guide them before they ever started to analyze a text and all the manuscripts that were available to them.

Anyway, let me tell you what the title was on the original. You ready for this? *The Holy Bible Containing the Old Testament and the New; Newly Translated Out of the Original Tongues with the Former Translations Diligently Compared and Revised by His*

Majesty's Special Commandment, Appointed to Be Read in All the Churches; Imprinted in London by Robert Barker, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, Anno Dom.

1611. That is the official title. Aren't you glad we just say King James Version?

So, it gives you a little bit of background on it. But there is one other thing I wanted to mention. It says here that in the preface to the original 1611 edition, the translator said that their purpose was: "Not to make a new translation, but to make a good one better." They spoke of being indebted to the work of William Tyndale. Again if you have not read that story, it is a paperback book called *God's Outlaw* that is worth reading. They saw this contribution as merely a revision and an enhancement of the excellence of the English versions that had sprung from the Reformation. Now, you have a little clue, which means only in the last 100 or 150 years or so, all those works that contributed to the Reformation, putting the Bible in the language of the common people. And so they took that tradition and that is what they followed.

Some people have said, "Isn't the King James just based on Latin?" It is true that the major edition of the Scriptures used by the Roman Catholic Church for over a thousand years was Jerome's Latin Vulgate. And they certainly did refer to that because a man who wrote in the fourth century would certainly know more about how Greek should be translated than you would 1500 years or 1100 years later. However, the argument that they did not consult the original tongues is a direct attack against what is clearly stated in all the documents related to King James and the story about how it was done. They consulted the manuscripts that were available to them in Greek, which did deal primarily with what we call a Byzantine text. These are just some basic facts about your King

James Bible. And there are some other Bibles in addition, new Open Bible that has some of those facts listed for you.

A lot of people say, "Wait a minute. How did we get our Bibles? How did they put them together?" And we will deal with that later under canonicity, but at this point I simply want you to see something. The list of books that should be in the New Testament, since the originals were scrolls, you know lots of scrolls or a letter that had been written. The original list, the earliest list we have is from Athanasius of Alexandria, which is in 367 A.D., and he lists twenty-seven books, the exact same books we have in the Protestant Bible today.

Catholics do not like us bringing that fact out because they are trying to argue that that was not done until later. That Protestants have removed the Apocrypha. No we didn't. We have evidence that before Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus, two manuscripts that modern English translations refer to, do contain the Apocrypha. Before we ever had the Latin Vulgate, which does have the Apocrypha as a separate section after the twenty-seven books, before we ever had the edition of the 1611 King James Bible, which also includes the Apocrypha, whether you know it or not in a separate section, before any of that we have a list of what books belong in the New Testament and there are twenty seven.

Interesting Jerome and Augustine both, although they had Apocrypha sections of their works, yet they said they were not Scripture. And they listed only twenty-seven books as being from God, inspired of God. At the Synod of Hippo, 393 A.D., a big church council, lots of leaders from all over the empire, they confirmed that there were only twenty-seven books in the New Testament. And the fourth synod of Carthage in

North Africa in 397 A.D. is probably one of the most important conferences dealing with the canon of Scripture. It confirms that there were only twenty-seven books in the New Testament and that the church had deemed it so. And we will go over those arguments. How did they know which books to make New Testament?

Lists of New Testament Books

Athanasius of Alexandria (A.D. 367) – confirms 27 Books

Jerome (A.D. 340-420) – confirms 27 Books

Augustine (A.D. 350-430) – confirms 27 Books

Synod of Hippo (A.D. 393) – confirms 27 Books

4th Synod of Carthage (A.D. 397) – confirms 27 Books

Now another item that is of some interest to us, especially in dating the New Testament, is the matter of writing materials. What writing materials were used? The most important manuscripts in some sense (if you mean oldest) are those which were found on papyrus. Very similar to the word paper, the word paper comes from it. But papyrus is reeds, like bamboo shoots that grow along the Nile River. They make parchment paper out of them. They do the ancient process in Egypt today. If you go to Cairo you can find little factories that are still doing it and you can buy a replica of a parchment of how they did it in ancient times. So it is not used today, and frankly was not used after the fourth century A.D. The problem with parchment—have you ever had a piece of paper in your clothes that went through the washing machine?—you know what

it comes out like. It is all crumpled up and destroyed. That's what happens to parchment when it is in a non-arid climate, that is, rainy or wet climates. So, most of papyri comes from when it's found by archaeologists in dry, desert areas where there is very little moisture, where the humidity factors are down around five to ten percent. That is the only way they would have been kept preserved even under dirt and sand all these years. So that is important to understand. Papyrus was the writing material of the early centuries. All the apostles would have written on papyrus. So that is the reason why the original documents are kind of hard to preserve.

Now we have fragments of them but not many. This might surprise you. These figures, I just happened to check on at the bookstore in several volumes of apologetics and criticism books, and it's interesting, not one of them agreed with each other. There is a reason for that, because most of the papyrus has been found in the last few years. I gave you a running list so that you get an idea.

Kenyon, a great Greek textual criticism scholar, in 1912, listed only 19 of those twenty-seven books. In all the years of having manuscript evidence for the New Testament, for the first four centuries basically, we had only 19 fragments. The Chester Beatty Papyri, which is named after the man who discovered it, is just a fragment of John, like chapter 18, a few verses. That's all it is. It was a great find, significant find, because it was a parchment that was dated around the first century. It could very well have been close to coming off the pen of John. So it was very interesting and very powerful when it was discovered. But again, you only had nineteen [books].

Now in 1925 the great Greek scholar A. T. Robertson lists thirty-four, so you see, they are uncovering more. Most of the heavy-duty archaeological work, in the Middle East of course, has happened since this century. Now why is that?

Well in 1897 under the great leader Theodore Herzl, we had a return to Israel. Zionism began and a return back to the land. In 1914 A.D., well 1917 actually—1914 was World War I starting—and in 1917 A.D. we had what was called the Balfour Declaration. What happened is that they divided up the Middle East into the present boundaries really, outside of the wars that have happened. But they divided it up, the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan and all the barriers between Syria and Iraq. It was all divided up at the Balfour Declaration. But see the Jews never really had a homeland, although they were continuing to come back to the land. There had always been a Jewish presence in Israel ever since the captivity back in 70 A.D. But they started coming back in droves.

And we had, of course, the war of liberation and that was in 1946-48, following World War II. And in 1948 the Jews captured, not really a whole lot of that land, but enough to have a separate state and they declared the name of this state "Israel." That was the first time in history that a nation that had been completely wiped out came back into existence. And that was a fulfillment of prophecy, by the way, from the book of Ezekiel 37.

So since that time, 1948 until now, can you imagine the excitement all over the biblical world as archaeological projects, of course, are launched by the Jews and with governments of the world like Italy, and Germany, and America, and all of the various schools and universities. Boy, they wanted them to come in! Israel is filled with mounds

all over it, that you look at and say, "There is a city under there. There is evidence under there of Bible times." And they'll be doing this if the Lord delays His coming for another hundred years. Because there are so many of them and it takes so long. And it is tedious work, very tedious work.

But everything that archaeology has ever uncovered has only confirmed the history and authenticity of the Bible, so we are excited about archeology. Hey, bring it on, man—the study of old things, you know. Henry Thiessen has a great book called *Systematic Theology* and we still use that in the School of Ministry. And in 1945, he lists fifty-three fragments. So it is really growing now, finding these fragments all over. And in 1955, Bruce Metzger, whose books are still classics on Greek, he has one little book that is a real handy little volume. It lists all the Greek words and terms and the number of times they are used. Now that took some time. And when you open the book, you will discover that the average Greek word is used less than fifty times. Words like "love," and "God," and all those are exceptions. But the average Greek word is used less than fifty times. So it helps you to get a handle on studying and following things up.

In 1958, Driver (of Driver, Briggs, and so forth, big dictionaries and lexicons) he lists sixty-eight of them. I just checked Norman Geisler's book, it is supposed to be pretty well updated, he said, there are seventy-six. So today, I've been told there are some ninety-two of these fragments that have been catalogued, and there are probably a lot more sitting in the basements of universities and museums. Did you know that some of the greatest discoveries on manuscripts of the Bible are found in the basements of museums? They have taken out by the truckload, stuff out of Israel, and dumped them in there and scholars spend the rest of their lives, poring through this stuff. I've seen this

with my own eyes. I saw a room that is a lot bigger than this with glass cases as far your eyes can see, rows of them, and scholars (with thick glasses I might add), with fine little brushes and pins, trying to separate documents, manuscripts of the Bible.

This is an amazing science and what we have already had catalogued is indeed, amazing. Hey, it would take you a lifetime to do one of them, so it is really remarkable that we have ninety-two. And you are talking about some of the oldest writing the world has ever seen. And these are very special manuscripts, papyri fragments of actual passages of the Bible. And who knows which ones of those might have come off the hands of the apostles themselves. We don't know, but we basically say that we don't really have the original text, at least we don't know that we do. We probably just have copies. And it is understandable because most of that would be destroyed if it was taken to any climate except maybe Egypt or the Sinai Peninsula, desert. If it was taken to the high altitudes of Israel, those documents would have folded in a period of time.

These papyri are written in what we call "uncial script." I'm going to expect you to know what an uncial manuscript is. It is a manuscript with capital letters. Now they used large, capital letters in these original manuscripts, which tells me something. I do not want to overstate this. But it is very possible that the original copy of the New Testament, as given by God controlled through these men, was in large capital letters and it tells me something: God didn't want anybody to miss His message! Isn't that interesting? It's just a simple little deal. But I kind of like little deals. Little deals thrill me sometimes. It is just a little deal. God didn't write so small that somebody couldn't figure out what He said. And it's interesting that we have these large uncial letters in these papyri manuscripts. Again, as I told you last time, there is no separation between the

words. But of course if you know the language, it's no problem. It was true in Hebrew. It was also true in Greek. So through the years, people have helped us out. Non-Hebrew speakers, non-Greek speakers have helped us out by separating words and indenting and so forth.

Right after papyrus, they started using leather. Now leather is hard to work on. If any of you have done any leather work, you know what tools are used and all that. You did it as a kid maybe in Vacation Bible School or camp or something. That isn't easy to do. Can you imagine doing a whole book of the Bible on leather? But they didn't wear out of course, as fast as papyrus. It is interesting that only leather and papyrus are used in a scroll format. You know where you roll it up. The next two that we're going to talk about don't. So the scroll really, if I can show this with just a small piece of paper, it really goes both ways. So when you unravel it, the opening or the first paragraph is like right here in the middle. You are unraveling it. Now, sometimes we have some on leather that are rolled up like we think. They're rolled just like this. But isn't it interesting that in Jewish synagogues, when you go to see copies of the Torah, they still use the ancient practice of two rolls!

Now, one of the most important kinds of manuscripts is what we call parchment. But I do not like this word. I'll tell you why. It is amazing how many people hearing that, hear "paper" in it. Parchment is paper. Because you go down to an antique store and they have some little poem or something on parchment. It's literally paper. But when we say "parchment" in biblical manuscripts, we're talking about the skin of sheep and goats. And that was used then for probably 600 years, clear up until the 10th century A.D. And it is the main material, class, for books from the fourth century on. And they are sheets and

they are tied together with leather thongs. And the name of that is codex. Codex—C-O-D-E-X. Now, that's an English word. When we codify something, we are cataloging it or putting it in an organized structure. That's what it means. Ancient writing, instead of being on these long scrolls and hard to read, it all of a sudden began to be organized as a book would be. So, codex, codifying, is our first word for "book." And that is your main book from fourth century all the way up even until the time of printing.

But along the way, they discovered that calfskin, baby cow, was better for writing material than either sheep or goats, which was a little tougher and harder to work with. So calfskin becomes the dominate kind of material on which we have the majority of our manuscripts of the New Testament. It went clear until the invention of printing.

Now, when was printing invented? Anybody know?—in A.D. 1450, by a man named Gutenberg. Now the first thing ever put on a printing press was the Bible in German. Anyway, that was the first thing ever printed on a printing press. Until that time everything was copied by hand and the major writing material was vellum. So if I ask you, "What is the major writing material upon which most of the manuscripts of the New Testament are written?" The answer is "vellum," which is cow. It was calfskin instead of sheep and goats.

There is something else that we want to take a look at and that deals with types of writing. There are two types of writing on which manuscripts of the New Testament are found. One is uncial—capital letters. Now how many of these uncial manuscripts do we have? That is manuscripts with capital letters? In 1912 when we had one of the first listings of all the available manuscripts, there were only 168 of these. And interestingly today, in spite of all research, all archaeological digs, we only have a total of 270 that are

catalogued. I mean, there might be some others sitting in museums somewhere. But we have 270 uncial, capital-letter manuscripts. And we know the capital letters were used up until the ninth century. So class, in terms of evaluating the importance of a manuscript, if your argument is age, then uncial manuscripts will be very important to you. The most important would be papyri, the first three centuries, closer to the time. Next, would be uncial manuscripts. Now, papyri are not real helpful, in that they are only fragments. But the uncials, we've got some with huge sections of the New Testament in them and so they become very important manuscripts.

Two of those—Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Vaticanus—were not revealed to the world until the end of the 1900s. And that became the turning point in changes from the manuscript evidence behind the King James, to the manuscript evidence behind modern English versions.

The second type of writing is what we call "minuscule," and you know it as that which you usually do yourself. It is what we call "cursive" writing. You are not using capital letters; you are just kind of handwriting. What we call "handwriting" today is cursive writing or script writing. Now on computers or typewriters they have script fonts also. That would be called cursive writing that appears like it was, done by hand. It uses smaller letters. Not capitals.

However, one of the interesting things is that it has capitals when there is a new paragraph, at least in thought. Or it has a capital when it is a proper name. But basically it is cursive writing. Now, notice please class that the majority of Greek manuscripts are in this area alone, 2,800 of them. And they are primarily later, that is, from 800 A.D. on,

because they would be copies of the major uncials. There were some earlier, but not many.

Now if you want to know, class, about this because there are some of you who are going to be Bible teachers and you want to know the facts, a fourth issue deals with the age of a manuscript. Now, I went through the bookstore looking for some of these books that tell you about the Bible and how we got our Bible. What we are trying to do in this course is give you a confidence in your Bible and a basic knowledge of the facts behind it to help you deal with apologetical issues in the future—when somebody is attacking your Bible. But be careful in reading these books on how we got our Bible. Not that they aren't good, but they don't really tell you all that you need to know and they kind of skip over some stuff.

Now you will often read, even in the Bible, I took out five of them in my office and I was reading their introductions. It is amazing how many of them say that the best manuscripts are the oldest manuscripts. But that is not true. The oldest papyri we have are all messed up. It's the craziest thing you ever saw in your life. And that is the oldest copy of papyri we have of the New Testament. The point is, be careful about that statement: "If it is old, it is best." Now in general if it is older, then maybe copies were made of it. So that's an important factor, but be careful what you say. Again, a little knowledge is a dangerous thing.

Here is how they determine the value of these manuscripts and their age. I'm not going to expect you to know all these things. But you should be familiar with this just so you can refer to it later. First of all, one thing we have already dealt with would be writing material. So the kind of writing material does have a tendency to date it. Another

thing is letter size and form. If you would go to say King James' period of time, they come in giant lettering with beautiful calligraphy and art and all that. So sometimes the size of the sheets determines the age. That's not a hard fast rule, you have to be careful. That is not a dogmatic issue, but it is one that is considered, the size of the actual letter that you are looking at.

Also, punctuation is definitely a factor. Punctuation has changed. What we have today was not in the older manuscripts at all. And so, even as we look at a manuscript—how it was punctuated, whether a period or a comma or a hyphen of whatever—that tells us a lot about what age it's from.

Text divisions. Class, you have probably been told this before, but let's make sure you know it. The chapter divisions in the books of the Bible are not in the original text. Okay, so some of that was the result of scholarship trying to put it in a form that was easier to read, more book oriented. So not always is the chapter placed correctly, is it? You have probably heard people mention that before. A chapter ends and you know really it continues for two or three more verses. Like in [Hebrews chapter 7](#), dealing with our High Priest, if you don't see what it says in [8:1](#), you miss the whole point of the passage. What it is leading up to. And there are lots of passages like that.

In [2 Corinthians 6](#) where it says, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. What fellowship has light with darkness? Come out from among them. Be separate. I shall be a father to you. You shall be My children." If you do not read chapter [7:1](#), you miss it. It says, "Having therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let's cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit; perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

So you've got to understand that not always is your chapter division a break in the thought. Now, many times it is. But sometimes it is not. So, the way a text is divided often reveals the period of time in which it was written.

Also, there is the issue of ornamentation. We have a book that you can buy in a scholarly or academic type store or university bookstore, ancient near Eastern texts, huge like this. And you open it up and you can see photographic facsimiles of these original manuscripts. And some of them will amaze you—the ornamentation, the design work—even the original King James!

I have a copy of the original cover of the King James 1611 and an original page from the book of Acts. I have that framed on my wall. But when you look at it, you say "I don't believe this! I mean was that actually the Bible? That was King James?" Oh yeah, it is very ornamented. I mean it is just all over the place in artwork. You just look at it, "man, how did they read these things?" Well, you see, some of ornamentation varies, even in use of colors and the kind of artwork. You know that if you've ever had a class in art and traced art through the years, you know that you can basically tell when art was in the Renaissance period as opposed to the Middle Ages period. So that's another way that the scholars date text.

Another thing is color of ink. A lot of people have the idea that it was all black. No, it wasn't. They used a lot of colors. We have that principle in our Bibles, don't we? I don't have one but maybe you do. You have the words of Christ in red. Sometimes these manuscripts would put every time God spoke in a different color. So there are different ways of looking at it. So the color of ink affected it and certainly the texture and the color of the parchment. Sometimes a scholar could say "That is between the fourth and fifth

century. You can tell by the material that it's on.” And they will look at another vellum and they will say, “Well, that animal skin, that design on it and the impression into it, the writing tools into it: that probably comes from the eighth or ninth century.”

So this is a scholarly deal. It gives you an idea that this is a science, called “textual criticism.” I want you to know the difference between higher and lower criticism. When we hear the word criticism, it is a negative term—when somebody is critical of something. It is not a negative term in academic scholarship, and we need to understand that. Now higher criticism deals with matters like, when you have a study Bible or a Bible handbook, you have a long section that's introduction. It talks about the date of the book, the author of the book, where it was written, etc. That is higher criticism. It doesn't deal with the text at all. Higher criticism deals with things like authorship, the date of the book, to whom it was written, where it came from, etc. That is what is called “higher criticism.”

Now most of those books we call today, like *Old Testament Introduction* or *New Testament Introduction*, or *Introduction to the Bible*, those are the kinds of books. And sometimes they are in survey books of the Bible, where you will get that kind of information. In most of the study Bible, whether Ryrie Study Bible, or Open Bible, or some other Bible, you will find these discussions at the beginning of each book—a little background. Sometimes in the back of the book you will find some discussions about it. That is higher criticism.

“Lower criticism” is referring not to something that is less than what higher is, but it is a term they use for the actual text. The actual text, where is it? Is it in the Bible? Is it not in the Bible? Is this word really in the text or is it not in the text? What does this

marginal note mean? And did they insert something here? Did the copyist copy it correct here? That is all lower criticism.

When you hear in a message, you'll hear guys speak about the liberal critics of the Bible. By and large, a liberal critic is committed to higher criticism. That is why sometimes guys get confused and say, "a higher critic said..." Well, they don't know the meaning of "higher" because it isn't higher criticism that is the problem. It's the fact that he's liberal doing higher criticism. Is everybody following me? I don't want to confuse you here. I want to make sure you know the difference.

For example, the book of Daniel is greatly criticized by people who don't believe in the inspiration of the Bible, because chapter 11 alone is the most detailed account of the breakup of Alexander the Great's empire into the Ptolemies and the Seleucids that you will ever read in history. It is totally accurate to everything we know in archaeology. And if you took a Nile River cruise from Aswan Dam down to Luxor, the Valley of the Kings, you would have lectures all along the way and stop at many, many fortresses that are from that period of time, which would just amaze you. You would hear lectures and actually you could open Daniel 11 and follow it straight through, even though the names are not listed. So people who look at that say, "Wait a minute, Daniel couldn't have written that in the 500s B.C. It is 200 years before it happened." You see what I'm saying? But that is one of the strongest issues with those of us who believe the Bible is the word of God. Issues of prophecy and fulfilled prophecy are extremely important to us. If you refer to a liberal criticism of Daniel that it wasn't written by Daniel, but some later writer, he is what we call a higher critic. That is, he's concerned about the date and

the author of the Bible. He isn't dealing with the text at all. So sometimes we get confused with that.

Most lower criticism scholars, who do translation work, don't care. I'm just being honest. They don't care whether you are a liberal or a conservative. You just pay them to do the job. These are guys who look at manuscripts and are going to compare them with manuscripts, they are going to do all that detailed eye work; they are not really thinking, "Gee, I wonder if this came from the only King James school?" They don't even ask those questions. The same guys who worked on the New King James—that is in the King James tradition of text—also worked on the New International and the New American Standard.

In my New American Standard Bible, it has a list of the scholars. Four of them were my teachers and they were fundamentalists and they believe the Bible is the word of God. The Bible publishing company authorized them to do an English text off of that Greek text that it came from. So if you are a lower critic and you are doing those kinds of studies, it makes no difference to you. All they are doing is working with the text, all day long. Okay, that's a lower critic. So don't jump all over him. Don't criticize him. He is just doing what he is asked to do, or paid to do, I might say.

Okay, now we need to take a break and think on these things.

History and Authenticity of the Bible
Lesson 8
New Testament Languages and the Apocrypha

By
Dr. David Hocking

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All right, a fifth issue related to the New Testament is the matter of languages and class what I want you to know is that there are three issues here. We are going to deal with them, but just understand it. That is why I list them here right now. There's Greek and that is a heavy duty problem. The first issue and the major issue behind the history and authenticity of the New Testament is Greek. Today we have: about 5,500 manuscripts, fragments, sometimes a whole book, sometimes a whole New Testament, but over 5,500! It's a big issue and we are going to take our time with it.

Number two, we have what we call "primary version." A primary version means it was translated directly from Greek. Now all that we are talking about is before printing. That's why English is not listed or German, even though some of them come from the original Greek or Spanish even. We are talking about before printing. That is where our problem lies in manuscript evidence. We had no way to prove the copies except handwriting and that, you know, could be filled with human error. So that's where we've got to deal with it.

Primary N.T. Versions from Greek

- **Syriac** - The Antioch church in Syria is where the disciples were first called Christians
- **Coptic** - The Ethiopian eunuch from Acts 8 can be traced back to the Egyptian or Coptic church
- **Latin** - The Roman Catholic Church dominated for over 1900 years
- **Gothic** - The German, Russian, type languages used in early missionary enterprises

We have four major or primary versions of the New Testament before printing. We have Syriac, you recognize that name, Syria. Antioch in Syria is where the disciples were first called Christians. Syriac.

Coptic, which is primarily in Egypt. The Coptic Church is still in existence today. There are still Coptic Bibles. I have a man who attends my Bible class on Wednesday night, who is Egyptian and he comes with his Coptic Bible and they believe it is very close to the original. Why? Because of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8, they trace the whole Coptic Church to the Ethiopian eunuch. And they believe their translation is one of the closest to the original language that there is. So he brings it and follows along with me from his Coptic Bible.

Latin of course dominated—now, there is no other word—*dominated* the church for a thousand years. And of course, the Roman Catholics dominated clearly for 1900 years. And you will see why in a moment when we talk about the Latin versions, how

many there are. Latin was primarily used by the Western Church, whereas Syriac was used by the Eastern Church. The Western Church focuses on Rome. The Eastern Church focuses on Constantinople, which is now called Istanbul.

Now Gothic is a lot like our Teutonic tribe, like Russian, those kinds of languages, Gothic. And it was used, by the way, very, very much in early missionary enterprises. In fact, some of the reasons why the Bible is translated into other languages was for a missionary motive, to put it into the language of the people.

Now, a secondary version—what is secondary? That means it was translated off of another version rather than Greek; for instance, the Vulgate—“vulgate” means common. The common Latin of the people was actually a translation from the old Latin, a primary version from Greek. Persian was translated from the Peshitta, which was Aramaic. And I mentioned that last time. Armenian, Georgian, these are like Gothic languages. Ethiopic was off of the Coptic. And Arabic, of course, became a very important language and often came of Aramaic rather than Hebrew. But all of these translations are secondary. They did not come off of Greek. They came off of other languages.

Now a sixth matter relating to the New Testament is what we call patristic—the patristic quotations of Church Fathers. I prefer as I have mentioned to you before the word leader. I don't like the Catholic idea of Church Fathers, but usually we know what we're talking about and a lot of books are organized that way. You have what you call the pre-Nicene Fathers. Council of Nicaea, in the early A.D. 300s the church leaders were before that time. Post-Nicene would be leaders after that time, of course. Now here is the

problem: these men wrote voluminously. I mean, it isn't just one or two passages. They wrote constantly.

Polycarp, who studied under the apostle John, was a martyr at Smyrna. Smyrna was mentioned in the book of [Revelation 2:8](#). John was the bishop of Smyrna. He was murdered. He was tortured at the stake. But anyway, Polycarp wrote a letter to the Christians across the water at Philippi, a Roman colony, where you remember Paul wrote to the Philippians. When you read Polycarp's letter to the Philippians, it's like reading the book of Philippians. You can hardly tell when he is quoting Paul and when he is giving his remarks. You can hardly tell. And naturally many of these leaders wanted to talk exactly like the apostles would talk. And they quote voluminously from the Bible. So these quotations sometimes, class, especially if they are early Church Fathers (leaders) they verify the text of the passage that is quoted. Is everybody following me? So if somebody says, I've got a tenth-century manuscript here that I think is pretty accurate, but if the same passage is quoted by a man who lived in 200 A.D., and it's different, then I'll have a tendency to question that tenth-century manuscript.

Now what sort of qualifications do we put upon this? I've listed a problem for you, and that is determining the accuracy of the text, because these men quote out of a passage to make a point. We do that today. And so how do I know which part of your remark is the Scripture and which isn't? So that has to be determined. The value of this, of course, is what I have just mentioned. It will fix the time of a certain text type, because if they are quoting the Bible, then you know what text they are quoting from—even though you have to decide which is a quote is and which is their remark. Yet, you will know the period of time that they are quoting from. Also, you will know geographical

locations, because there are different texts being used at different locations. Like whether it is used in Italy, whether it is used in Egypt, whether it is used in Syria and Turkey.

They are different text types. So there are a lot of problems there.

To give you an idea of who these leaders are, I have given you a little category list. This is very general, but it will help you if you ever need to refer to something within that period.

Categories of Patristic Quotations

Apostolic Fathers (up to A.D. 125)

Ante-Nicene Fathers (A.D. 125-325)

Post-Nicene Fathers (A.D. 325-600)

Eastern Fathers (Syriac)

Western Fathers (Greek or Latin)

Apostolic Fathers. Now there is a whole set in the bookstore. I'm not recommending you buy them. But if you're going to become a pastor/teacher, probably at some time it would be good to get it. It is by Lightfoot, who was a great commentator years ago. But Lightfoot has a whole series called *The Apostolic Fathers*. It's five or six volumes and it is absolutely fascinating reading. You're reading letters and books that are back at the New Testament time or shortly thereafter. And it is fascinating and very

helpful. So that goes to about 125 A.D. We think Revelation was written around A.D. 95, so it was approximately the first century. Apostolic Fathers.

The leaders who in addition to guys like Paul who died earlier, probably around A.D. 67-68, we have John who was living clear until the A.D. 90s and could verify anything that was said about who was quoting Jesus and what was being quoted. He was still here. So John's role was extremely important. That is why a man like Polycarp, who studied under John, his writings are very important to us. And by the way, they are very accurate too.

We have the ante-Nicene, meaning *ante*, "pre." Some call this "pre-Nicene"—A.D. 125 to 325. That is when the Council of Nicaea is, A.D. 325. Post-Nicene carries you to about A.D. 600. Then from then on, all church leaders are divided into two categories: Eastern—that is the Syriac traditions, Constantinople and Western—that is Rome. And those manuscripts are primarily Latin, but there are some Greek.

Let's look at one more thing before we study the Apocrypha. We have what is called, in all this manuscript evidence, we have what's called "lectionaries." Now what are lectionaries? They are the same things that you see in hymnbooks today, where they have Scripture readings in the back of the hymnbooks. These are selected portions of Scriptures that were to be read in the churches, like responsive readings. You know Jews, they take the first five books, the Torah, and they outline it for Shabbat readings on the Sabbath, Saturday. They outline it through the year. And by the way, you end it at the Feast of Tabernacles and on the last day the seventh day of that feast is called *Hoshana Rabbah*, "the great hosanna." And that is the day we believe Jesus poured out water and said, "Come unto me and drink," from John 7.

But they finish the Torah reading on the next day, the eighth day of the feast—which was a special day mentioned in Leviticus 23—they call it *Hoshamini Azulid*. And what it is talking about is a day where they come down off of seven days of rejoicing to a seriousness and that day they read the book of Ecclesiastes, which gives them a balance that their life is very vulnerable and you should never stop reading the Bible. The evening is called *Simkhat Torah*, which is a rejoicing over the Law. And what they do there is they have the final reading of the Law, the last chapter of Deuteronomy, and they go back and start in Genesis and just read a few verses in Genesis. Why?—to remind you that you never are finished. So they go back and read the Law again, the next year. By the way, that just happened. We are right at that time. Last night, the *Simkhat Torah*. And they will begin the readings in Genesis this Saturday in all the synagogues of the world. So, it is kind of interesting. That Jewish practice was brought over in the New Testament church.

One of the great speakers and commentary writers and teachers was a man named Chrysostom, in the fourth century. And he wrote what he called *The Lesson for Today*. And you know today in liberal churches they still do this. In fact they send out a little format for pastors telling them what readings they should have in the church. They sometimes have a reading in the Old Testament, a reading in the New for today. And sometimes the people look at it and say, “Oh that’s just liturgy.” Well, actually it is a very old practice. Churches did it for years. And the goal was to make sure you read through the whole Bible in a year. That’s not a bad practice. The bad practice was when the tradition came in and they told you what to preach as well. That got to be bad.

These lectionaries sometimes are just a few verses. But there are lectionaries, manuscripts of these lectionaries, which are three and four chapters. The average length

is about ten verses. And they appear from the sixth century onward even though Chrysostom who lived in the fourth century, he used it. I want you to notice something interesting about a lectionary. Most of them begin with a phrase (practically all of them) and we have about 2,200 of these manuscripts. And they practically all begin with the phrase, “on a certain occasion.” Why do they do that? And the answer is they wanted to protect the congregation from thinking that this was the original text. Now in the Bible when a text is being quoted from the Old Testament, what is the phrase that goes with it?—“as it is written” or “this is written,” or “these things are written.”

Interesting class, that in the Dead Sea scrolls, where you have copies of the Old Testament as well as many other books including apocryphal books, it never uses the phrase “as it is written” unless it is Scripture and it belongs in the Bible. That is very interesting because there is not an apocryphal book among them that ever has “as it is written.”

Now in 1958 we had 1,838 of these, both capital and small letter writings. And today there are 2,200 that we know are in existence and that have been cataloged. Now let’s get a summary note. Know what these facts are.

Summary of Cataloged Manuscripts

New Testament Greek Manuscripts: over 5,500

- Only 200 of these are complete manuscripts
- 50 contain everything except the gospels
- 1,500 contain all or part of the gospels only

New Testament Latin Manuscripts: over 10,000

- Total number of N.T. manuscripts: over 20,000
- N.T. quotations of church fathers: over 86,000

Out of 5,500 Greek manuscripts on the New Testament, only two hundred of them are complete New Testaments. Kind of shocking, only two hundred! Another fifty contain all but the gospels. And about 1,500 contain all or part of the gospels only. Are you following that?

Manuscript evidence in Latin now numbers around 10,000. And the total number of manuscripts of the New Testament reaches about 20,000. This is before printing. I mean, that is unbelievable. Let me tell you why. The most manuscripts that we know are in existence today is actually Homer's Iliad. And Homer's Iliad has over six hundred copies. Imagine comparing that document of six hundred copies to the New Testament, which has 20,000 known copies! And that's only the ones we have discovered and cataloged. I mean, we are talking about unbelievable evidence that will lead us to whatever is the original text in a way that no other ancient writing before printing can ever claim. So there is a lot more evidence for what is the text of the Bible, a lot more

things to compare and study and many languages of the world, than any other book in ancient history.

So if someone asks you: "Oh you don't know what really was the original Bible." Just say to them, "What books do you know those facts about beside the Bible? Is there any book in history that you believe has an accuracy and an authenticity like the Bible? Can you name one?" No, they cannot name it. Why? Because the whole ancient writing system before printing is all messed up and they don't even have the number of copies to compare, much less the accuracy of them that the Scriptures contain.

So you see we are not panicking here because there are 20,000 manuscripts. How do you know what the original text is? We are going to get to that. We are going to show you. It is a science. It's called "textual criticism." And now today, when you open up a Greek New Testament, you have at the bottom of the page what is called a "critical apparatus." It lists all the variations in all those 20,000 manuscripts. Imagine that. So you can look at it. Go to the front of your Greek New Testament and see what all those symbols mean and you can know exactly what the difference is on every single variation in the Bible. This is a big subject and a difficult one. You better know what you believe.

Well, one of the interesting things is the quotations from the Church writers. Look at that. How many references? Over 86,000 separate references. Do you suppose that would be pretty good evidence for finding out what was the original text? These men are quoting from it; 86,000 of them we have in print. References. This is not a small subject.

Okay, we'll get started in this. Let's talk about the Apocrypha. What does the word "apocrypha" mean, class? Hidden—that's all it means—to hide. The Apocrypha is not all there is to apocryphal writings. Here's where people get confused. For instance,

the Book of Enoch is an apocryphal writing, but it is not in the list of the Apocrypha. But it is an apocryphal writing and so is the Shepherd of Hermes, and the Epistle of Barnabas, which are in Codex Sinaiticus but they are not in the Apocrypha.

So it is important that we know what we are talking about. You say, “Yeah I do, I’m witnessing to my Catholic friends.” Watch out! Your Catholic friends don’t understand this either. There are a lot of things thrown around. The average Catholic grows up in his home with his mother and dad just speaking off the top of their head telling him that the Protestants took parts of the Bible out. And Revelation says you are not supposed to take any of it away. And guys grow up in a Protestant home, if they ever hear about it they say, “Yeah the Catholics they added some books to the Bible.” And so on and on goes the battle.

The word apocrypha means “hidden.” What does that mean? Well, between the historical end of the Hebrew Old Testament until the writing of the New Testament—I’m trying to say it carefully—between the historical end of the Hebrew Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament in Greek, we have what has been referred to for years as four hundred silent years, or we would say “hidden.” That is, we don’t know much about it. It is hidden from our knowledge. There was no revelation from God during that period of time. We do have some history about that time, and guess what? It is in the apocryphal books. How do we know about the breakup of Alexander the Great’s empire into his four generals?—which by the way, it predicted in the book of Daniel. Even though Alexander the Great is not mentioned, it’s obviously him. But the breakup of his empire into four divisions is clearly taught in the book of Daniel. How do we know

what four divisions they are? Cassander, Lysimachus, Ptolemy, and Seleucus—how do we know that? Where did we get that information? Out of apocryphal books!

So, in one sweep, we got Protestants acting like, “Oh boy, Apocrypha! You must be a heretic.” Wait a minute! A lot of the history that we have of those four hundred silent years comes out of apocryphal literature. Because it is in the Apocrypha doesn’t mean that it’s not true. You might see that sometime on a test. Because it’s in the Apocrypha does not mean it’s not true. There is a lot in the Apocrypha that we know is not true. Especially in terms of geography, topography, things like that, dates. But there’s plenty that is true. A lot of it is fanciful, mythological-type writing. But a lot of it is talking about historic events.

Do you know in the Old Testament it tells us that Manasseh, who reigned for 55 years, was one of the wickedest kings ever in Israel? Did you know that because of the sins of Manasseh, God would bring judgment to the Babylonian captivity and would not repent of it no matter if the people turned to the Lord or not because the sins of Manasseh were so terrible? Did you know that Manasseh repented at the end of his life, according to the Bible ([2 Chronicles 33:12-13, 18](#))? Just a little, small note, we don’t know much about it, but in the Apocrypha there is a prayer of Manasseh about his repentance. We don’t know whether it is true or not, but in that prayer we get information that is also quoted in the Bible.

Now we’ve got another problem. You see a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. When we come to the Apocrypha, do you understand when you are witnessing to a Catholic, they have no reason to doubt that those books aren’t the Bible? No reason at all. They believe the Protestants are the ones—Luther caused all that—and they took them

out of the Bible. The Protestant answer is: “They didn’t even make them part of the Bible until the Council of Trent.” Not exactly. The Apocrypha was in the King James Bible. That might be a surprise to you. The Apocrypha was on Jerome’s Latin Vulgate also. But they were always separate sections. They were not treated as Holy Scriptures. Why were they in there? Because there are facts in them that do relate to biblical history, so they were like our introductions.

For instance, I do not believe that in Charles Ryrie’s Study Bible his notes are inspired of God. But they are helpful aren’t they? You read them. They are in your Bible. Did you buy an Open Bible? If you’ve got an Open Bible, are all those notes that are in there—all those introductions and all the books—is that all Scripture? No, it is not, but it is helpful information. That’s the same way the Apocrypha was treated. So in talking to Catholics, in witnessing to them, be very careful what you say. We’ve got to get the information.

I read you a little note out of the Open Bible’s introduction which says that the main opposition to the Apocrypha came from the Puritans, and that is true. It was a Puritan-called conference that led to King James’ decision to have a new translation of the Bible. And it was brought up by the Puritans to get rid of the Apocrypha; but interestingly, in that Bible all they did was put the Apocrypha in a separate section. It finally wasn’t knocked out until a few years later, in a later edition. As the Puritans won the day and said, “Don’t put anything in there that we cannot prove is inspired Scripture. It will confuse people.” You know, I agree with them. But at the same time, I want to be careful how I attack the Apocrypha. Okay?

First, let's talk about what the Apocrypha is. It is not all the apocryphal books. It's what we know as the books called the Apocrypha. It refers to fifteen of them, although most people say there are fourteen. But the reason you get fifteen is that there's a document called "The Letter of Jeremiah" that if it's put with Baruch (that's a Bible name by the way), you have to read the book of Jeremiah to find out all about that. But if you put it with that, then there are only fourteen. Eleven of these fourteen are considered to be Holy Scripture by the Roman Catholic Church. Just eleven and I've given you a list of them.

The Apocrypha (300 B.C. to A.D. 100)

A collection of ancient Jewish writings

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| 1 <i>The First Book of Esdras*</i> | 9 <i>The Song of the Three Children*</i> |
| 2 <i>The Second Book of Esdras*</i> | 10 <i>The Story of Bell and the Dragon*</i> |
| 3 <i>The Book of Tobit*</i> | 11 <i>The Prayer of Manasseh*</i> |
| 4 <i>The Book of Judith*</i> | 12 <i>The First Book of Maccabees</i> |
| 5 <i>Additions to Book of Esther*</i> | 13 <i>The Second Book of Maccabees</i> |
| 6 <i>The Wisdom of Solomon*</i> | 14 <i>The Book of Baruch /</i> |
| 7 <i>Ecclesiasticus / Wisdom of Sirach*</i> | <i>The Letter of Jeremiah (15)</i> |
| 8 <i>The Story of Susanna*</i> | |

*** Considered Holy Scripture by the Roman Catholic Church**

The first and second Book of Esdras; the Book of Tobit; the Book of Judith; the additions to the Book of Esther (these are all Jewish); The Wisdom of Solomon; Ecclesiasticus or the Wisdom of Sirach.

We have also Baruch; the Time of Jeremiah; Suzanna. We have The Song of the Three Hebrew Children. We have the story of Bell and the Dragon. That one probably isn't going to bless you. We have the Prayer of Manasseh. And we have two books, class, that tell us almost all of the knowledge we have historically after the Babylonian captivity—First and Second Maccabees.

It's those two books that confirm the accuracy of Daniel chapter 11 and show us that that book is truly inspired of God. It is those books that tell us about Hanukkah, which is in the Bible in the Gospel of John ([10:22](#)). Jesus attended it. It was called “The Feast of Dedication.” How interesting! But we don't know anything in the New Testament about Hanukkah. We get that out of the Book of Maccabees, as we learn the whole story of it. Isn't that interesting! And Jesus in His time attended a Hanukkah. Well Hanukkah deals with lighting in the battle that the Maccabean families had against Antiochus Epiphanes. Ever hear of that name in somebody's sermon? Where did you get that name? Do you understand the Book of Maccabees has provided us with tremendous historical matters that we teach when we're going through the book of Daniel and other books? And yet we sit here with a bad attitude towards the Apocrypha. Wait a minute! This is good history. Yeah, it's got some problems in it, but it is good history. No, it's not inspired of God like the other books are, but it is good history. And there are facts in it that are true facts.

You know we have a big related argument even after printing, as to whether what people say is valid or not. Watch out for what people say! There are true facts in other books besides the Bible that are true also. They are not lies. It does not mean that these

books are Scripture, but they are true facts. I'm leading up to something to show you why the Bible quotes from the Apocrypha, so hang on. You didn't know that? It does!

Now there is a tradition in it and we don't know whether it's true or not. It could be just a fable in the battle for Jerusalem to cleanse the temple, because Antiochus Epiphanes had sacrificed a pig on the Jewish altar of the rebuilt temple in Ezra and Nehemiah's time. We are down now to about 167 to 154 B.C. They were having a terrible battle in the temple area. And they were almost finishing it, but they needed more light because soon it was going to be dark. And the tradition is that the lights of the candelabra miraculously were sustained after they had run out of oil and they were able to finish the job. It is a great story and Jews love it.

And so they have today an eight-pronged candlestick that looks like a menorah, a candlestick, only it has eight prongs. That is what you use at Hanukkah. And you have eight days of Hanukkah, because that is how long it lasted. That is the tradition. And so you light these candles. You light one on the first day. Then the next day, you light number one and two. Then the third day you light one, two, and three. By the way, on the first day you give a gift to one another that is very inexpensive. A pencil maybe or a rubber band, and everybody gives you a gift. It is representing the gifts that God has given to us, and we are going to exchange them among each other to remember that all good gifts come from God. Does that sound Jewish? [James 1:17](#), "Every good and perfect gift comes from the Father of lights with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning."

There are more Jewish things in your Bible than probably you have ever recognized. But here we are, giving gifts. Well each day the gift gets more expensive, so

by the eighth day it is really costly in a Jewish home. But guess what? They lit all those beautiful candelabras in the court of the women, the court of the treasury. The Bible is very clear that is the place ([John 8:12](#)) where Jesus shouted, "I am the Light of the world and he who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" ([John 8:12](#)). Are you a little more interested in Hanukkah now? And I tell you if you have never understood that as it relates to Bible information, you need to. Where does all that come from? It comes out of the Apocrypha.

You see, a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. We've got to deal with this carefully because the Apocrypha is quoted in the Bible.

Now let's talk about the acceptance by the Church next time, shall we?

Let's pray.

Lord, thank You for Your word, a lamp unto our feet, a light unto our path; a word that is forever settled in heaven—a word that is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, instruction in righteousness that the man of God would be equipped, thoroughly so for every good work.

Teach us, Lord, to know our Bibles well; to know what we believe and why. We thank You, in Jesus' name. Amen.

History and Authenticity of the Bible
Lesson 9
The Apocrypha and the Catholic Church

By
Dr. David Hocking

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So let's have a word of prayer, shall we?

Father how grateful we are for Your wonderful love for us and for the marvel of the Bible itself. Thank You that You have superintended it's preservation. You protected it through the years. You have given us a written revelation of Yourself and all of Your wonderful deeds. And may our hearts continue to desire to know You through Your word. Teach us, Lord. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

We are studying the Apocrypha, and no doubt from last week you were so stimulated you went and read through the Apocrypha since last Wednesday. You are now well prepared and very excited. Let's quickly review, class. The Apocrypha is primarily ancient Jewish writings, written between 300 B.C. and A.D. 100, so about four hundred years. They come right up of course to New Testament times. The word Apocrypha means what, class? "Hidden." They were regarded as canonical by the Roman Catholic Church at the Council of Trent, which is a counter-Reformation movement to Martin Luther and the Reformers. The Apocrypha was in the King James Bible. It was a separate section. The Apocrypha was attached to Jerome's Latin Vulgate, a separate section. But it was the Puritans primarily who emphasized that they should not be even included in any edition of the Bible. We talked a little bit about how they are good history.

Let's just walk through this slowly. And we will also comment on the Bible's quotations of the events in the Apocrypha and tell you why and so forth in just a moment. Now the first thing in terms of acceptance by the church, deals with the Greek translation of the Old Testament called the Septuagint. The Apocrypha is contained in the Septuagint. That surprises a lot of people. But if you were a Roman Catholic, can't you see how you could use a number of these arguments to prove that they (the apocryphal writings) belong? The Septuagint was accepted by Christians in the first century. We know by Paul's quotations from it that it was well used, as well

as Church Fathers who tell us that they did use the Septuagint. Why? They spoke Greek not Hebrew and they had a Greek translation of the Old Testament. There were several Greek translations of the Old Testament. In addition to the Septuagint, you have Aquila's, Theodotion's, Symmachus', and Origen's. All of them were Greek translations of the Old Testament. The primary one used by Christians was the Septuagint. But anyway, it was in use because they spoke Greek.

The Jewish people however, because it was used by the Christians, did not use it. Even if they were Hellenistic Jews, meaning that they spoke Greek, knew Greek culture. We have reference to the Hellenistic Jews in the New Testament, don't we? Like [Acts 6](#), when they appointed seven men to help them on waiting on tables, it was because the Hellenistic Jews, Jewish widows, were neglected in the distribution of food and care because they weren't true Jews, so to speak that is, true Hebrews. So, it is a very interesting discussion as it relates to the Apocrypha because it does appear in the Septuagint and that was used by the New Testament church. However, that very fact troubled early Christian leaders. Because since it was available to them, they read it and it was Jewish writings. But there were some things that don't fit with Scripture. It doesn't match and we will show you why in a moment.

Now, a second fact dealing with the acceptance by the Church was Jerome's Latin Vulgate. Now that comes around fourth century A.D., but at least for a thousand years, if not longer, it was the standard Bible in the then-known Church. Jerome's Latin Vulgate. Rome officially falls politically in A.D. 476. It probably fell internally and morally long before that, but that is when the Visigoths, a barbaric tribe, came in and sacked Rome and burned it to the ground. At that point, the bishop of Rome took the title of the Roman emperors, *Pontifex Maximus*, "supreme pontiff," if you want to know where the pope came from. That title was given to all the titles of the Roman emperors from Octavian, who was Augustus Caesar in your Bible, from him all the way to A.D. 476. All the emperors took the title *Pontifex Maximus*, supreme pontiff. The final change over was under a man named Damasus. Damasus was a monk from the Carmelite

monastery in Haifa, Israel. He became the bishop of the church in Rome and when Rome fell, he literally took everything over. The College of Cardinals among the Roman Catholics is literally the ancient Roman Senate. All of their insignias, their robes, everything—when political Rome fell, religious Rome took over.

By A.D. 800 under Charlemagne, we have the Holy Roman Empire. And do you understand that all during this time Latin is now becoming the dominate language of the Christian world, the western world? And the Latin Vulgate, Vulgate meaning “common” in the language of the people that Jerome translated, was the Bible for way over a thousand years. There are many Catholics who don’t even use the Douay version of the Bible but prefer Jerome’s Latin Vulgate. And in that Latin Vulgate which everybody is using there is the Apocrypha. But the interesting thing is that Jerome himself did not believe that it should be included in the canon of Scripture. So, he made it in a separate section and it does have good history, history that is not found anywhere in the Old Testament. It tells us about those four hundred silent years that we mentioned earlier.

Now in the third case dealing with how the church accepted this Apocrypha, these hidden truths of the Apocrypha, in Luther’s German Bible. Now remember you are talking about the guy who’s breaking away from the Roman Church of 1534. When did Luther put his Ninety-five Theses, attacking the Roman Church tradition, when did he nail them up to the door of the chapel at the University of Wittenberg? He did that in 1517. If you don’t know that, it is a very important date to know. He did it in October, 1517.

Remember last time I told you what book was first printed on the first printing press. And it was the Bible in what language?—German. That was 1450 A.D. So now we are only 84 years from that point and Luther does an edition of German. And of course, that becomes the standard Bible that was used in the Lutheran Church. And in that Bible the Apocrypha was in a separate section at the end of the Old Testament, not at the end of the Bible. So, he correctly analyzed

them as Jewish writings. He puts it at the end of the Old Testament, but he has them all together and not like the Catholic Bible that has it woven in between all the books.

Luther's Major Issues

1. The authority of Scripture over the traditions of the Roman Catholic Church
2. The universal priesthood of all believers over the clergy's exclusive right to interpret Scripture
3. Justification by faith alone, apart from the works of the Law

Now a fourth thing that became pretty dominant at that time—now this is the Reformation, mind you. What were Luther's concerns in the Reformation? There are three major issues of the Reformation and this affects the issue of the Apocrypha. Three things that Luther said were necessitating a split from Rome. One is the authority of the Scriptures over the tradition of the Church—the authority of the Scriptures over the traditions of the church.

At the time of Luther, there was a Roman Catholic gentleman by the name of Johann Tetzel. And Tetzel was selling what we call indulgences. He has the famous saying: "As the coin drops into the chest, a soul flees to its heavenly rest." Bad! Bad! Bad! But he was literally raking in money everywhere, all over the empire by selling these indulgences, which supposedly would get a person out of purgatory. They would be good works done by people who loved their dead relatives and try to get them out of purgatory. And they would get out of purgatory by indulgences. They still do the same thing today. Lighting candles, offering gifts, and of all that.

Okay. Now, Luther condemns this and says there is no Scripture, this is the tradition of the Church and it is a violation of what God teaches. So that was the first issue.

The second issue was called "the universal priesthood of all believers" versus the laity and clergy controversy in the Roman Church where only the priests could rightly interpret the

Bible. Luther said the Bible should be put into the hands of the common people, a universal priesthood of every believer, instead of a select group of priests. He said that there were pastors who had gifts and functions, but that the idea of priests, from the Old Testament economy, was not biblical theology. He said that Peter, in [1 Peter 2](#), calls all believers "priests" who could offer up sacrifices to God. We are all priests and he was correct. But the Roman Church, of course, you cannot have a Roman Church without the priesthood, anymore than you could have the Mormon Church without the Melchizedek priesthood. These are vital issues to them because only they can interpret the Scriptures.

So now you see we have another issue affecting the Bible itself. Under the universal priesthood of believers, everybody has gifts and everybody has a right to read the Bible and not to listen to somebody else. Luther taught that by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, illumination in our lives, any average believer can read the Bible. They cannot read the Bible if they don't speak Latin. Latin was the language of the Church and the common people all over Germany spoke German. So Luther makes an edition of the German Bible that is really in the language of the people. And immediately it just goes like wild fire!

By the way, Luther never founded the Lutheran Church, for all of you who may have a Lutheran background. A lot of people believe that and I can understand why. But that is not true. Luther was an Augustinian monk in the Roman Catholic Church until the day he died. His goal was to reform the Church. People who were followers of Martin Luther are the ones who split. But Luther was always trying to reform the Roman Church from within, even though he was excommunicated by it.

Myles Coverdale in his English Bible, also the Bishop's Bible, as well as the King James Bible of 1611, all placed the Apocrypha in their Bible in a separate section. In other words, they recognized the validity of the historical sections of these books and their mentioning of events that are also in the Bible itself. So, they were all there. So naturally, people, you could imagine their surprise to see it as a separate section, rather than spaced throughout. They wanted to make

sure it wasn't exactly on par with the rest of the Bible, but it is valid history to help us understand. So they put it in as a section of the Bible, a separate section at the end.

The third issue of the Reformation was justification by faith alone apart from the works of the Law. Justification by faith—and that became the major issue that separated Roman Catholics from Protestants and still today separates us. When I teach the book of Romans, I have often distributed a test on justification, multiple choice, without people knowing. I just ask simple questions about the righteousness of God. I have done it to evangelicals in many, many places. I am not trying to shock you or surprise you, but every time I have given that test, every evangelical church I've ever given it to, proves to be Catholic rather than Protestant—overwhelmingly so!

See, even today we do not understand the Reformation. There were some very serious issues that I wish it was taught more. I wish people understood more what happened at the Reformation. We would not be in such a doctrinal mess as we are today with our narcissistic, attitudes where all we want to know is how to feel better. We have lost why we are justified by faith alone and not by the works of the Law. So it is a very serious issue.

And that began to undermine the Apocrypha. Why?—because the Apocrypha has many, many things that imply a salvation by works. So, you see all of a sudden it becomes contradictory to the majority of what we have in the Bible.

Now the other thing that was against it, why the Christians were divided over this, even among Roman Catholics, was because it was not found in any of the Hebrew translations. The Jews (these are Jewish writings) you would think they would honor it more than those who are not Jews. But they never placed it on the level with Scripture and I think that is quite significant. As a matter of fact, in the writings of the Dead Sea Scrolls, you have many books besides the books of the Bible. You have all the books of the Bible represented by the fragments of the Dead Sea Scrolls, except one, Esther.

So you see, even at the time of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which are dated before Jesus Christ, they knew about these apocryphal writings but did not accept them on the same par as the Hebrew Scriptures. And in none of the Hebrew translations will you ever find the Apocrypha. So that began to cause Christian leaders to question it. "Why in the world are we including it? We have other history books. If it is good history, fine, we'll say so. But it doesn't belong as Scripture."

Now where the battle actually took place, class, and I want you to know this because you'd be amazed at how many Christians don't. And they get all confused about the Apocrypha. And what they normally do is become anti-Catholic, while they're talking to Catholics. Can you not see, class, by what we have said so far, why a Roman Catholic may be quite comfortable with the fact that the Apocrypha belongs in the Bible? They've got a lot of evidence. If you just look at it from their side, they've got a lot of evidence and they do blame the Puritans.

Now, who are the Puritans? "Oh, they are the ones that landed on the Mayflower." Well, that is a group of them, but that isn't the Puritans. I mean, that's not the whole issue. And I am going to try to explain this briefly. If it was a course in church history, we would take more time with it, but that's not our course. So please be patient and kind. I am not going to tell you a whole lot. I'm just going to connect this together for you.

When Martin Luther and the Reformers like John Calvin, Phillip Melanchthon, Ulrich Zwingli, and all these men, when they were really coming out more and more toward the Scripture, preaching the Scripture, putting it in the hands of the common people because of the printing press, everybody was reading the Bible now. They were learning more and more and more. Well, that is the same period of time in which we have the growth of denominationalism. Can't you understand that? There is only one church, the Roman Catholic Church. And now, everybody is seeing the Bible. So, we forget some of that [because] we are so removed. We think Luther was dedicated therefore to the 39 books...no, he questioned some of the other books, whether they belonged. Why? They were coming out of the Roman Catholic Church.

Class, the Roman Catholic Church believes that the church is the fulfillment of all that God said to the nation of Israel in the Old Testament. Now once you understand that, you see where they are coming from theologically. For instance, their priests are the same as the priests in the Old Testament. Mass to them is the sacrifice of the temple and tabernacle. You understand that? Once you get this into your head, you can begin to understand why the Roman Church is organized like it is and why they feel like they do.

Now, that particular theology [is] that the church and Israel are exactly the same, or to put it more correctly, the Church is the fulfillment of all God said to Israel. Israel, because of their disobedience and idolatry, God rejects them and the new Israel is the church. Okay. Now listen carefully class, I don't know you each individually. I am not trying to attack your religious background or your mom or dad or anything else, because we are just non-denominational. Okay? We see the dangers of them and as they have caused, division. I am not trying to do that to you. I'm trying to explain something as it relates to our Bible. Okay?

Groups like Lutherans, Reformers, reform traditions, covenant, like Presbyterians, Episcopalians, et cetera, have never changed that doctrinal belief. They are still what we call, "amillennial," which is a nice name as it deals with the Millennium for the fact that they don't have the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth. Why? Well, they do believe in the thousand years of Revelation, but as a metaphorical term. Because of the verse, "The Day of the Lord is like a thousand years, and a thousand years is like a day" ([2 Peter 3:8](#)). And they relate it to the triumph of the gospel during the church age, at the end of which Christ will return. So the Rapture and the Second Coming at the end of the Tribulation are all at the same moment. Okay, in contrast to say that there is a pre-trib Rapture and a post-trib coming to the earth.

The main issue is Israel, and it always has been. That is the issue. Has God set aside the people of Israel or does He have a continuing plan with them? So that causes your prophetic views to change the moment you decide that.

So will you listen to me carefully, class? And I know that this is kind of long, but I don't know how else to do it. All of these denominations from the Roman Church, which was the only church, they were always amillennial. Christ's kingdom is going to be set up on earth; we are going to do it. You see, all those people that you have heard believe in dominion theology who are existing today, word of faith, they believe that we can have a kingdom of God on earth that we Christians can bring in. This was very common in America before World War I. You see, World War I shook up everybody's confidence that we could bring peace on earth. So post-millennialism (which means we are already in the Millennium) that is the growth of the church in the present age. This is the blessing of the kingdom on earth in the Church and there will be no fulfillment on earth with Israel. That causes people to think differently about the Bible, very differently.

Luther was an amillennialist. Now today we have a lot of sharp scholars who are honing and making this thing really sharp and it all sounds good. It isn't a negative term. There are a lot of good Bible teachers that are amillennial. Westminster Seminary is a fine seminary, fundamental, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, with lots of good teachers. It is amillennial. And there is a stronger growth in Reformed tradition I find today than we have had for some years. You read books like Rushdoony, who has excellent analysis of events in history and philosophy and religion together, really an academic-type approach. Rushdoony is an amillennialist. You have in the counseling field, Jay Adams, a wonderful, straight-forward biblical counselor, amillennial. You have multitudes of books out there in the Christian book stores that you are not even aware of what their theological position is. You say, "what are you getting at?" I'm glad you asked!

You see, at the time of the Reformation, there weren't a lot of changes, but there were people who were discovering things in the Bible that they had never discovered before. One of them was baptism. Now in the Reformed tradition, baptism is likened unto circumcision. That is the way it is in the Roman Catholic Church also. So why do you baptize babies?—because you

circumcise babies. Circumcision represents the faith of the parents in the Mosaic Covenant. So they circumcise their child. And because [Colossians 2:11-12](#) says, it connects circumcision with baptism in a metaphor, therefore, they believe this is a correct biblical understanding of baptism. So we should baptize babies representing the faith of the parents in the Lord. Now it is a child of the covenant.

Did you know that most of the men that wrote the United States Constitution, our early leaders, were all amillennialists? Interestingly, many of them believed the United States was the new Israel. Think of the cities, especially back East, named Bethlehem, Mount Zion. You know, it is unbelievable, the Bible names that are all over the East Coast. It was a theological position of theirs and they felt the Jews had been rejected. They are no longer a part of God's program and we are the new Israel.

Now among these people in the Reformers, some read their Bibles and could not prove the baptism of babies. They were called Anabaptists. There were all kinds of them. Even Moravians, Brethren, all kinds of them. They were not just Baptists. The Anabaptist movement, basically is against the teaching that we should baptize babies. They believed in believer's baptism. Did you know that most of them were killed because of this? That is how serious it was. They believed they were heretics in denying what God taught. When in reality, you and I would say today, “No, they were right-on.” We believe today, in what is called “believer's baptism.”—“If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest...” That baptism is a public testimony, an act, an apologetical response to God, says [1 Peter 3:21](#),

The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. (KJV)

And it's evidence that we have come to know the Lord and a public testimony of that fact. Well, how does that relate to the Apocrypha?

Well, the interesting thing is these Anabaptists began to grow. They began to look at the Bible more and more and more. And some of the teachings of the Roman Church that had carried over into Reformed thinking are perpetuated by Apocryphal books. So some of the Puritans—which are not necessarily all Presbyterians and Reformed people, there were some Baptists that were Puritans. Charles Haddon Spurgeon believed he was a Puritan and he was a Baptist, but you have all of these people coming out of the Reformation. They are coming out of that with a tremendous desire to get back to the Bible. And there are all kinds of people, especially around 1700, some two hundred years after the Reformation. We've got unbelievable proliferation. People are hearing about America and the New World. There is freedom of religion there! They are coming in droves. It wasn't just in 1620, the Mayflower Compact. They were coming in droves. And by the time of the American Revolution, everybody's main concern in this country was freedom of religion.

What is the first amendment of the Constitution? It's freedom of religion. Isn't that interesting? It is the very first one on their list, which shows you what was really going on in America. And through the work of John Wesley, George Whitefield, and many others, we had a spiritual awakening also at the same time. People were turning to the Lord right and left. And America was really born out of a spiritual and moral awakening. I think we need another one, by the way.

So, I'm trying to lay out some history. All during this Puritan era, these strong Bible-teaching men, maybe they didn't know much about prophecy, but they are seeing there is a lot wrong with what's being taught. And the King James Bible, now in English from 1611, a hundred years later has caused a tremendous foment. People have the Bible in their own language. They're reading this thing and they're saying, "Wait a minute!" In the providence of God, isn't it interesting that this is the heart of the great worldwide missionary enterprise of the 1700s and

1800s. Can you see why? They were all going out to proselytize and get people to their way of thinking. So all over the world, and in the process they are bringing them to Christ too, and that's between 1700 and 1900, all the way up to 1929-30, in that bracket, is what we call the "Great Missionary Movement."

That's just millions coming to Christ. You can go to African, South American, Asian, isolated places today and find a Baptist Church, a Presbyterian Church, you know. It's amazing! They just continue to foster their denominational beliefs. And there are people that still today are a part of that. You've got people in America that will not go to another church except their denominational church. Why? Because it's been rooted in them for generations that they are correct and everybody else is wrong. If you don't dot your i's and cross your t's like we say, then maybe you are not in the true body of Christ. See, that has happened throughout history.

Well, all of these Puritan leaders, these guys wrote all the great books that you and I love to get. Still some of the best books on the Bible were written between 1700 and 1900. Not in this century! If you think this is deep, you ought to go back where they didn't have faxes and telephones and television sets. That is when they had time to really study. So you understand that all these guys are really growing in their knowledge of the word. Well, what are they seeing? They are seeing that all these traditions of the Roman Church that they are fighting to break away from, guess where they are perpetuated? In the Apocrypha!

So you see it was the Puritans all the way from the beginning who insisted, "Get that out of there!" They forced one edition within eighteen years from the original one, 1611. By 1629 the Puritans got the King James publishing houses to drop the Apocrypha out of the Bible. Some editions were still putting it in for a while, but you can understand, this became like a snowball. And they are saying, "The true Bible, the inspired word of God, is not the Apocrypha." So no matter who tells you what, if you are in that view, our thanks is to the Puritans who were learning God's word, growing in their understanding of things, and pulling out of the Roman tradition, which basically blinded the people. They never had the opportunity to look at their own Bible for

over a thousand years. Now they see it and now they are saying, "Wait, this is not right. What is in the Apocrypha contradicts what is in the Scripture."

Was it good history? Yes. But what is wrong with it? Why did they reject the Apocrypha? They said it is not canonical for seven reasons.

Confession has been a problem for years. In the priestly Chaldean system they had confession of sins to a priest. There are passages that they can use to apply that. Roman Catholics use [1 John 1:9](#), "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The question is: if you confess it, you have to say it to somebody, so who do you say it to? We say, "to God." But Catholics say, "No, the priest is representing the authority of God; you should say it to him. He's the only one who can absolve you." How do they get that he can absolve your sins?—from what Jesus said to Peter, who they believe is the first pope! See how all of this is tied together. He says, "to whomever you remit their sins, it shall be remitted" ([John 20:23](#)).

I can stand on this other side for a while and debate their cause and I see why we need to have kind of a gentleness, a kindness to Roman Catholics. We always think that they have no scriptural reasons for their beliefs. That's not true. They have a lot of reasons for their beliefs.

Yes?

Another voice: You said there was a literal fulfillment of the Millennium that the Catholics believed?

The Catholics do not believe in a literal Millennium, no sir. They believe that the Millennium, like many in the Reformed traditions do, is the triumph of the gospel seen in people coming into the membership of the Church in this present age, which will end with the coming of Christ. That is why we call them post-millennial. But even in the thousand years, it is not a specific thousand years. It is a general term in their view. It could go on for years after that, which it obviously has in their view.

The Catholic Church views the book of Hebrews as totally different. The book is written to whom?—Hebrews or Jews. The Catholic's primary view—they've said for years that the Jews crucified Jesus. They have held them personally and corporately responsible. That has been the Catholic view throughout history. So, their view of the book of Hebrews, you understand, is tainted.

When you ask a Roman Catholic priest, "Have you ever taught the book of Hebrews?" I mean, he never has. I taught the book of Hebrews at the request of a Roman Catholic group from Bologna, Italy. But that priest was fighting me all the way, every day. He'd stand up and try to correct it—of course he spoke Italian. And I would have to have somebody translate and they'd tell me, "He does not like you!" But out of fifty-five people we had there for that retreat, on the final night, forty-one of the fifty-five prayed to receive Christ. And Carol (my wife) and I individually dealt with them all. A university student from Bologna stood up on the final night and in broken English he said, "I don't care what we teach, I want Jesus now!" That started it. Others said, "I do too. I do too." And the priest was up there trying to stop them and put them back down. You can't stop the work of the Holy Spirit.

Today you and I both know if you say somebody is puritanical it's a negative, isn't it? He is a Pharisee, self-righteous, holier than thou. And they completely missed the point. The Puritans, who did believe of course in a godly lifestyle (like all good men have through the history of the Church) are pure in doctrine. Pure in their commitment to the Scripture, you see. We have missed that. These men were followers of God's word and that is why they had questions about the Apocrypha, which leads me beautifully into this transition for our next session.

History and Authenticity of the Bible
Lesson 10
The Apocrypha and the Bible

By
Dr. David Hocking

Brought to you by
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The Apocrypha, it was not a part of the Bible of Jesus or the early church. Never once is the Apocrypha so recognized, ever. Almost the sure thing that condemned it is that the Puritans said, "Why isn't it ever quoted in the Bible?" Now that opens Pandora's Box. Is it quoted in the Bible? That's a good question. Don't answer yes or no until you really know. Go to the book of Jude for one example. [Jude 14-15](#).

Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." [Then the commentary of Jude continues.]
These are murmurers, complainers...

Now [Jude 14-15](#) has a fascinating connection to 1 Enoch 1:9, in which something very similar is said. Now contrary to what some people say that this is a quote from the Apocrypha, we don't know that at all. It is possible that the apocryphal book is quoting a well known fact among Jews. First of all, the Apocrypha didn't come up with Enoch being the seventh from Adam, but the Bible does. And where is that fact found?—in the book of [Genesis 5:1-19](#). You see, you have to be careful of what you're saying.

Jude, how did he get the information that Enoch prophesied the Lord's coming with ten thousands of his saints? Well, he got it directly from the Lord. The Lord told him that's what Enoch said. Now every time you see a quotation like that in somebody else's writing, the question always comes up, "Who authored it?" So is this a quotation from the Book of Enoch? If it's literal, the answer is no because it's not exact, but it's very similar. So now what do we do?

Well, let me give you another one. Do you believe that the story of Noah and the Flood is a compilation of what happened and a group of quotations from forty different flood stories in

forty different cultures and languages in the ancient world that we believe existed before the Bible? Why not? For the same reason! In my book, *Rise and Fall of Civilization*, I list what are the common facts between all the flood stories in mythology and the Bible's account. And I list the similarities. There's a key man whom God chooses. There's a boat. There's the salvation of eight people. There's a worldwide flood. There's the death of everything. You know, there are a lot of similarities. But a lot of them are wildly mythological. So does the Bible simply pull them all together, streamline the story and make it sound more plausible? And the Bible is simply quoting all of these apocryphal, hidden documents about the Flood. Or listen carefully, or is the truth that there was a Flood? And that forty different cultures remind us that there was a flood? And that the only accurate account of that is in the Bible?

Do you see now how easily you can become a skeptic and a critic of the Bible? You can see the reason from an apologetic point of view, why someone would attack the story of the Flood from the Bible. "Oh, that's just an ancient myth," and so forth. Wait a minute! Why would it be in forty different cultures and languages if it did not occur? See the fact that it occurred is proven by that, not that the Bible "cleaned up the account" and made it more plausible for modern man to read—and "modern man" meaning four or five hundred years before Christ.

Is it not also plausible that this is not a quotation from the Apocrypha at all, but that Enoch actually did say that? Is it also possible that Enoch was well known to have been a preacher of prophecy? Was it also possible that the heart and soul of his message was that unless you repent, the Lord's going to come, not with the Second Coming of Christ but with ten thousand of his saints, his angels, to destroy the world? It was a message of judgment as is clear from verse 15.

Now, isn't it also interesting that Enoch named his son, Methuselah? The oldest man who ever lived. *Muth* means: when he dies. *Selah*, which you have a lot in the Psalms, kind of means like: "It's done, Praise God!" There are reasons for saying *selah*. I'm not going to give all those to you right now, but simply to say a primary idea is like: amen! and right on! So be it and let's

praise God because of it! "Methuselah: when he dies, it shall come." Now what's going to come when he dies? The Flood. You see the answer to the prophecy is the Flood. All of that you find in the Bible. You don't find anywhere else, including the Book of Enoch.

So now when people tell you that the Bible quotes the Apocrypha, now you have a little bit more knowledge. Whether it does or not, we don't know. By the way, I'm not troubled if it does. Why?—because if it's an accurate fact, God could take an accurate fact in history and record it also in the Bible. This is a very important issue.

Well let me give you a more troublesome one. Go to Hebrews 11. Now in Hebrews 11, it is claimed the Apocrypha is quoted twice. Now we will see whether that's true or not here in a moment. Now in [Hebrews 11:35](#), you notice right after the first phrase that: "women received their dead raised to life again." The next words say "and others." Do you see that? Now in Greek you have "others of the same kind" and you have "others of a different kind" indicated by the different Greek word. It is interesting right here, in fact, a lot of Bible teachers who notice it are fascinated the way the passage is organized. Because up until this verse, notice that all of the great leaders who suffered that are listed, all were victorious, every last one of them. "Through faith they subdued kingdoms, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, waxed valiant, turned to flight the armies, women received dead raised alive"—all victorious!

The next word said "and others" [of a different kind] and now none of them are victorious. "Tortured, trials of cruel mocking..." The only victory there is awaiting the future resurrection, but in this life, nothing. "Stoned, sawn asunder...and since we are encompassed with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us run a race with endurance" ([Hebrews 12:1](#)). "For you have forgotten the exhortation to you, the Lord chastens His children" ([Hebrews 12:5](#)). See, His issue is going to be suffering in this present life and sometimes you never get an answer to it, until you die. Will you still be faithful to the Lord? You see, a lot of people miss that context in Hebrews.

Now the Apocrypha fans say that there are two facts here that can only be explained by the Apocrypha. First, in [Hebrews 11:35](#), the very first thing says, "others [of a different kind] were tortured not accepting deliverance." The word torture in Greek, *tympanum*, it's a large drum, but it was also a wheel. What they did was people were stretched on that, beaten, often dismembered, their bodies torn apart. Now why do people believe that is a quote from the Apocrypha? Because in the second Book of Maccabees it mentions that victims of the Maccabean wars, which takes you down to the second century, A.D. 167 - 164 primarily, when Antiochus Epiphanes came in and Judas Maccabeus and his family got a great victory, but eventually lost and the Maccabeans then were publicly tortured on these wheel-like drums. Their bodies stretched out and their arms and legs pulled apart. So they say that's specifically referring to that story in the Maccabees.

My answer to that—is it not possible that there were many people tortured in the same way because that particular method was used for several hundred years? Is it not possible that there were many believers who were tortured that way? Now, did it really refer to Judas Maccabeus? I don't know. Many people thought he was the Messiah. Was he a true believer like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? I don't know any of that. I'm trusting he was, I don't know. We get our Feast of Hanukkah from that event, by the way. And Jesus attended one in the Gospel of John, called the Feast of Dedication. Now it does not say that it was Judas Maccabeus who was tortured, does it? So to say that this is a quotation from the Apocrypha is a little misleading. We have no evidence of that. Were they also tortured in this way, on the tympanum? Yes they were. Were others tortured that way? Yes they were. I'll leave it up to you to judge.

Let me give you the other one, down in [Hebrews 11:37](#) it says, "They were stoned and they were sawn asunder." Now there is no Old Testament passage that talks about sawing somebody in two—none. But in the apocryphal writing called the Ascension of Isaiah in 5:1-14, it talks about Isaiah being sawn in two by the false prophets of Manasseh. It's a thrilling story by the way and it may in fact be true. But I'm asking you, if Isaiah's name mentioned there? No.

Were there other people who were sawn asunder? Yes. In other words, all these things, do they represent individual Old Testament or apocryphal stories? No, I don't think that's the point at all. Why say "others" without mentioning them? Why even have it like that? "Others had trial, mocking, scourging, bonds, stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, slain, wandered about in sheep's skins and goat skins." Now we have to say, which person was it in history that wore goat skin rather than sheep skins? Do you understand? It's nonsense doing this. All it's telling us is that lots of people suffered for their faith without naming any particular story.

So, is it in fact true that people were sawn in two in the past? Yes. Is it a fact that they were put on this drum-like wheel, like the tympanum? Is it a fact that they were tortured in that manner? Yes. Are these quotations from the Apocrypha? That is a huge leap and a leap into the dark.

So, does your teacher believe that there are quotations from the Apocrypha in the Bible? The answer is flat out no. I support the Puritans and I believe that there is no quotation from the Apocrypha found in God's word.

And by the way, don't think the Apocrypha hasn't been touched up. The Council of Trent did a number on that to make sure we'd have all the doctrines that Luther said were not in the Bible would be there. If you have not read the Maccabees on purgatory, you might question where the Catholics get their doctrine of purgatory. Well, it comes right out of Maccabees. And Luther said "isn't it interesting, he who made an edition to the German Bible and put the Apocrypha in a separate section from it, argued publicly in court that the Roman doctrine of purgatory was not found in the Bible yet it's clearly found in the Book of Maccabees," which was the answer of the Roman Church. He said, "But the Roman Church has never made those books canonical." Well, guess what they did?—from 1540 to 1547 they made them canonical! They became a part of the Bible. So did the Roman Catholic Church add them? Or have we taken them away? See how the argument goes? And they said, "Well even though we didn't have a church

decision to make them canonical, they were in many Bibles throughout history.” And that is true.

Is everybody still with me?

All the Church Fathers, early Church leaders before the time of Constantine, what we call pre-Nicene Fathers, all separated them from what they thought was canonical Scriptures, what was actually the word of God. They never made them a part of the word of God. And as I said, it's not included as Scripture until the Council of Trent.

Student: In [Acts 20:35](#) there is a direct quote from First Clement.

You mean, “It's more blessed to give than to receive”? If you don't know, that simple remark could have been said by multitudes of people, you're indeed naïve. I could see our Lord saying that numerous times. Does that truly reflect God? All it says is, “the words of our Lord.” Paul said that he received all of his writings by direct revelation. Do you understand the attempt to find that quote? I can find that quote in books today. Is there anything more simple or sublime than to say, “It's more blessed to give than to receive”? You see, this is a number that people are doing on you. Back up and think. It isn't a quotation from that. Paul says it's a quotation from the lips of the Lord Jesus. And he says in Galatians 1 that Jesus directly told him all these things. You have the same problem in 1 Corinthians 7. They claim that out of the Apocrypha is where you get the divorce laws, from the Wisdom of Sirach. Remember when it says, “I say this by permission and not by commandment.” All he means is that the Lord did not have anything to say about this; but he, through the direct revelation of God, has given us the information about such things as the unbeliever married to the believer issue, which the Lord never spoke about.

Yes?

Student: So what you're saying is that instead of the Bible quoting another work, both of these works are equally recording a common saying or a common event.

David: Or a truth. Let's just look at it another way. Yes or no. Is there a Bible truth in secular books before the time of Christ? Of course there's Bible truth! Truth is truth! Are they Scripture? No. Do they contain statements that are also in the Bible? Yes. Let me put it to you

another way. Are there passages in the Talmud which are reflected in the Bible? Oh yeah, many of them. Does that mean that the Bible got it off of the Talmud? No. In fact, from my point of view, it deals with the dating of the Scripture itself. It proves the dating of the Scripture, that the Scriptures were not composed at the time of Christ and so they fit in all the prophecies so that He would fulfill them all. It proves it, not only the Dead Sea Scrolls but also the Talmud's usage of things. The Babylonian Talmud especially is from the time of Babylon, which means these events had to occur before that they're writing about. I mean, I could go on and on. It just gets mind boggling.

The point is that you are hearing something in this class that probably is going across the grain of what a lot of guys like to say when they teach. They think these things are from the Apocrypha, try to prove a point from it and they go to all kinds of gymnastics about it. I think the total job on us in this area is totally unnecessary. I don't think there's any proof of it whatsoever.

I have mentioned that there is a story in the Ascension of Isaiah about Isaiah being sawn in half by the false prophets of Manasseh. Whether it happened I do not know. Since it is not Scripture, I cannot guarantee the accuracy of it.

The Apocrypha has similar language in it. But once again, where did Jude get his information? Was he reading the Apocrypha and said, "That's a nice note, I'll put that in here"? That is exactly the opposite. You see, when we get in the issue of canon, we are going to discuss whether or not something is Scripture or canon. And that's very crucial to this whole argument of our Bible and how we know what is Scripture or not.

Class, let's say that nothing is clear in this discussion. Would it be true that the discussion proves my point about the need of understanding how we got our Bible? Could you not see that the same facts presented by a different teacher, let's say, could literally undermine your confidence in the Scripture? Can't you see that? That's why this issue is so vital and so important. That's why we have to deal with it. But these views—you know, it's been true in evangelicalism,

I hate to admit it—we have accommodated ourselves to the world. We try to compromise with it, which is what they do on this issue, they try to compromise.

The Puritans would say, “no compromise.” It all came by direct revelation, the instruction of the Holy Spirit guiding these men. They were never left up to deciding for themselves, ever. And yet we have a host of evangelicals who say, “Well we see different personalities, different vocabulary and so forth. So you know, I mean. Maybe the Lord just kind of protected it, but you know, they gave their own opinion.” Now if you haven’t read that, it’s everywhere. And one of our purposes is that you understand what the Bible says about itself also. Of course we haven’t gotten to any of this subject yet.

If you’re going to be a Bible teacher there are four areas that you ought to know. First would be the area of biblical studies, learning as much Bible as you can. There’s also the area of theological studies, the doctrine of God, doctrine of Christ...learning systematic theology. Third area is biblical languages, Hebrew and Greek. And the fourth area is ancient history. History parallels the Bible.

There are many historical and geographical inaccuracies in the Apocrypha. I don’t treat history and geography lightly. When people say there are contradictions in the Bible, I say, name one! One thing you need to understand, the most accurate account of ancient history, the most clear-cut teaching of geography is found in the Bible. There isn’t a history book in the past that equals it.

Now mind you, before the ability to have satellite photos or maps or whatever, this is a proof to me of divine revelation. You see, God had to tell these people. There’s no way they could have known. He had to give them the exact information about geography and locations they had never been to. And there was no history book to open and look at the map. So, that’s another issue that I think is very, very fundamental to the issue of the Bible’s accuracy. We know that geographically the Bible is right on target. We know when they said “they went up to Jerusalem,”

we know now why, because it's at 3,000 feet elevation. We know why you go "down" to Jericho, because it's below sea level.

Let me give you another one, how important it is seen in even the technicalities of rolling a stone in front of the grave of the Lord Jesus. The Greek indicates that it was on an incline. I think that's very fascinating, because in the garden tomb—if in fact that is the tomb of Jesus—there's a trough in front of it where these giant stones rolled and it is on an incline. That's how they get ten to twenty guys behind that thing and push it with their backs and everything just to get it to roll. Then it would roll down and there's a brace at the end and it locks it in front of the door. And no one is going to be able to push it up the incline. The angel rolled away the stone. He rolled it up. Those are things that people say, "Oh that's just a little detail." But you see, my view of inspiration is so tight and so detailed that I believe every detail related to geography, history, whatever, is exactly on target. I don't think there's any question.

Herodotus is filled with inaccuracies. If I told you to read Xenophanes, it's filled with inaccuracies. The truth of the matter is the Bible is the only accurate account. Why is ancient history filled with inaccuracies? Because they didn't have maps, satellite photos, anything else. There is a lot of guess work there. But there's no guess work in the Bible. So scientists are always amazed at how the Bible seems to have accurate remarks. How did this happen, these good guesses? Terrific guesses! But that doesn't turn you off from reading history.

I was being asked about that obelisk stone I mentioned and about the Assyrian list of kings. It is in the Oriental Museum in Chicago and on that list there is no mention of the name Sargon. And at the time I went to seminary and they'd found that, they made a big issue over that being the first known contradiction of the Bible that they could prove because the Bible mentions Sargon as one of the great Assyrian kings. So, everybody's panicking because here is the Assyrian list of kings on this obelisk stone and Sargon's name is not there. Now that problem, you'll be happy to know, has all been resolved because we not only found the ruins of Sargon's palace, but we found his name engraved in every brick. And added to that, we also found why his

name is not on the Assyrian list of kings. Because the king who followed him knew about his popularity and so he blotted his name off the list of the kings, so nobody would pay attention to him (Sargon). You've got a lot of that kind of stuff in Egypt. They knocked the idols down. "Get rid of that guy. I don't want to hear about him again. I'm king!" I mean, you have all kinds of stuff like that.

Does the Nile River really flow from heaven to the earth? "Oh, if you go upstream you discover its original source is way in the sky." No! If you go up-river you would find out, it is just a river. But since they had never been up there...you understand what I'm saying? So, are there inaccuracies in mythological literature? Oh yeah, lots of them. Does that mean we shouldn't study them? No! You study because there are lots of interesting things. We need to be "wise as serpents and harmless as doves," you know (cf. [Matthew 10:16](#)).

One of the interesting things about the Apocrypha is that it has what we call a lack of prophetic spirit. You know, you read the Bible and there is a punch there. "Thus saith the Lord!" And it's lacking in the Apocrypha, it's not there. In fact, the more you read the Apocrypha the more aware you are. If you have read the Bible quite a bit, then you read the Apocrypha, these two are not the same. And there is a lower level of writing, especially in the Old Testament. You have some of the most beautifully-worded sentences in all the world. I don't care if it was in Hebrew and translated into English or what language. God has a way of expressing, especially about His own character and attributes, just gorgeous ways! "Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised and His greatness is unsearchable" ([Psalm 145:3](#)).

And then to read a verse that says, "Hey, God's cool." It lacks. You understand?

You say, "But we use that word today."

"No. It just doesn't match it, see. His glory and majesty fills the universe."

"Hey, God's everywhere."

Well, true, but... Do you understand what I'm saying? You are missing in the Apocrypha the level of writing that you read in the Scriptures.

By the way, I also believe that is true about the Book of Mormon. If you were a Mormon, I'm sorry, I don't want to offend you, but it is not the word of God. If you're talking about an individual saint trusting God to open his heart to it, I mean it lacks! Even when these guys are translating the Bible, they often confess that they didn't quite capture it. I think there is an infinite majesty to God's wonderful word. Well, more about that later. But the New Testament refers to what is in the Apocrypha, [Jude 14](#), [Hebrews 11:35](#), but does not site it as Holy Scripture. It sites it in the same way that Paul referred to heathen poets, if in fact, it is reciting it.

That's what I would call the heart of this course—I don't want you just to know all these interesting facts about the manuscripts and all of that—I want you to know why we believe this is the word of God. That is what I want you to know. I want you to stand on it so much that you feel guilty if you haven't consulted it for wisdom in your life because you know this is from God.

Let's start with the definition of inspiration. No doctrine has suffered more in the last half of the twentieth century than the doctrine of inspiration. And there are a lot of doctrines that are suffering, that's for sure, from sloppy teaching. But there's nothing more serious in our time than the doctrine of inspiration. Isn't it interesting that it parallels the attempt to have a modern English translation? Since 1950, especially with the introduction of the Revised Version in 1952, there have been a plethora of translations. They were just coming out right and left. It is interesting to me that the struggle over the meaning of inspiration is occurring at the same time that we have all these many attempts to translate the Bible more in the language of the people.

Now, I'm for any translation that will help us understand the original text. Don't misunderstand! I just think the strategy of Satan is somehow involved here; if you wanted to undermine people's confidence in the Bible, boy that would be one way to do it! Just keep telling them that "No, the new Bible we have is better than the old one, because the old one doesn't really say it right. This new one is the one that is really going to help you now." Do you understand? If you keep doing that, where does it lead? So everybody who buys the one this year,

then hears about another one. "Oh no, they did a pretty good job, but wait until you read the next one!"

The King James Version, though beautiful, it uses many monosyllabic words. Which is easier, if you're not acquainted with English, to say *know*? Or to say *comprehend*? Well, of course, "to know." The Bible is very simple in the King James. But you know what we do? We run to the archaic word. So, I experimented with my new friend. I thought "I'm going to turn him to Daniel and see what he thinks about the sackbut and the psaltery, to see what he says about that. So, I turned to it and he read that and I said, "What do you think?"

He says, "Well, they're obviously musical instruments."

"Well, you're right. How do you know that?"

He said, "I don't know."

I said, "Well, maybe they are just guitars."

"No, that doesn't sound 'Bible' to me."

This guy's never seen a Bible! "How do you know if it sounds 'Bible' or not if you've never read it?"

"I don't know. I just expect it to be like God-talk or something."

Let me tell you something, we need a little reality in this class. You know what all this stuff is doing? It is confusing Mister Average Christian out there. It is confusing him. Then to have the preacher get up and correct the King James all the time. "Well, you know what it really says is...." What it really says? What gives you the right to say what it really says? That's different than saying "the original meaning of this word is...but what it really means is...." How do you know what it really means?

Are you following what I'm trying to tell you? We are undermining people's confidence in the Bible and we don't even know that it's happening. So consequently, the average Christian today doesn't really know what the meaning of inspiration is at all. They don't understand it.

They think you're talking about, you know, Shakespeare was inspired and he wrote his stuff. And it must be the same thing. "To be or not to be, that is the question" you know. No, it's not that!

I've given you a definition that I hope you will think about. It's simple, but I want you to know it.

Course Definition of Inspiration

"Inspiration is the act of God
by which *His* revelation is
communicated, in written form,
to the very creatures from whom
He wanted a response."

"The act of God,"—boy, is that important! This isn't an act of man. We are going to walk through this, but this is the definition. "The act of God, by which *His* revelation" not somebody else's, *His* revelation, what He intended for the creatures that He created to know and understand about Himself and what He has done. It is the act of God by which *His* revelation is what?—"communicated." The whole thing is that God who made us certainly has the intelligence since He made us, to communicate with the very creatures that He Himself wanted a response from. How did He do that?

Well, the Bible records that the heavens declare something about Him, "the glory of God." But according to the Bible itself, it is His communication in written form. Interesting isn't

it that the Bible was never given to us until man was writing? Why? Because it's been God's intention from eternity past to give us His revelation in written form. That is what we mean by inspiration.

Now class if I ask you on a test, there are two passages that I want you to know. And in the future, twenty years from now, if you are trying to help somebody understand how the Bible was given or whatever, these two passages tell it to us.

[2 Timothy 3:16-17](#) and [2 Peter 1:19-21](#). So turn in your Bibles because all we are going to be able to do is just read them or just get started here. The last book that Paul wrote of fourteen epistles, [2 Timothy 3:16-17](#).

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

The key phrase, "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God," is three words in Greek, three words in Greek. The word "all" or "every"; the word "scripture," *graphe*, writing, every writing, and a compound word, "God-breathed." That's what we call an action noun. It's a predicate nominative really. All Scripture is God-breathed.

Now go to 2 Peter 1. We will break down these passages later. [2 Peter 1:19-21](#). "We have also a more sure word of prophecy." More sure than what? This is interesting. If you look at the verses preceding it, there was a direct revelation from God on the Mount of Transfiguration that Peter's referring to.

When he heard a voice that said, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." "We were with Him," he says, "in the holy mount." And now for him to say, "we have a more sure word of prophecy." The only way that could be interpreted is if it was written, so that we then could still have it, not based on hearsay, of somebody who heard it 1900 years ago.

It says, "Whereunto you do well, that you take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place." You want the light to come on? You go to the sure word of prophecy we've got. "Until the day dawn and the day star rises in your hearts." Until that sweet day God calls you home or you meet the Lord, God gave you something He expects you to pay attention to. And it will turn the lights on in your life. "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture," what does Scripture mean, class? Writing. That's all it means. Writing. *Graphe*. "Knowing this first that no prophecy of the writing." Apparently there is something that is *the writing*.

It says, "Is of any private interpretation." Yet, there are evangelical teachers telling folks all the time, that what happened was they were privately interpreting events they saw and God was kind of guiding them. But the Bible says none of it is of any private interpretation: "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man."

"Well they were kind of, you know, evaluating what they saw, heard from Christ and wrote down their opinion of it." No. No, the Bible says, "it did not come by the will of man, but holy men of God ([2 Peter 1:21](#))." Were they pure? Sinless? No! Holy means separate, they were separated for the task. That's why they become holy men of God. The same thing is said in [Ephesians 2:20](#). "The holy apostles and prophets laid the foundation of the church, which is the Scripture."

"No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but [these men who were separated for this process] these holy men of God, spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" ([2 Peter 1:21](#)). Did the Holy Ghost come in and clean up their act so that whatever was wrong then? No. It said that they never even spoke except by His superintending work. Until He guided them, they never even spoke. That's what it says, which is reversed from what some people teach in the Christian colleges and seminaries of our country.

So folks, we are on a hot subject here and it's going to be fun. Let's pray.

Father in heaven, thank You so much for Your wonderful love to us and thank You that we do have a sure word of prophecy and we do have a word that is profitable for everything in life and will make us equipped for every good work. May we trust You more, Lord. May we adhere to Your word more and more each day. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

History and Authenticity of the Bible
Lesson 11
Inspiration – Part One

By
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Let's have a word of prayer.

Father, thank You that You are a God who has revealed Himself in written form so we can learn about You, about Your wonderful ways and about Your gospel. And help us, Lord, to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves and not to become so dogmatic that we lose perspective of kindness and patience and openness. And help us, Lord, to not to be critical minded in the sense of tearing down. But our criticism, we pray, would be constructive, to build up the body and to encourage people to trust Your word. Thank You, Lord, for what we are learning in this course. We pray that You will help all the students to just quickly grasp these serious matters even though we don't go into great depth in these critical areas. Help us, Lord, to get enough so that we understand what's happening. We thank You, in Jesus' name. Amen.

I mentioned in the opening of this class about how it is going to become more of a controversy. I believe it is. The more people are exposed to the actual evidence of these manuscripts, the more it is going to become a controversy. And that is exactly what is happening—very interesting. It is a war out there because it involves a lot of money. And you know Bibles still outsell all Christian books ten to one. So, you understand that there is mega, mega bucks in this business of selling Bibles.

According to these articles, there are more versions on the docket they are talking about putting out. And they are arguing over which Greek text they shall use. It is very

interesting and exactly what we are talking about in the course. So this is one of those “stay tuned—more controversy coming.” And that’s why, again, we need to be careful when we walk through the course that we have facts and that we don’t become argumentative. “The servant of the Lord must not strive!” (cf. [2 Timothy 2:24](#)). But we do have to stand against those who oppose with love, with gentleness, but with strength too. And just say, “Wait a minute, here’s some of the evidence and let’s take a look at it.”

We are in a very critical point in our discussions because we are talking about the inspiration of the Bible. And I think that one of the first things that you need to understand is that most people believe the writers were inspired, as we have said. They don’t believe that it refers to the writings. When you ask if the Bible is inspired? They think the people that wrote it are inspired. And that is not what the Bible teaches. It’s “every *graphe* (writing) is God-breathed” ([2 Timothy 3:16](#)).

The definition I’d like you to be responsible for again, to mention it again, it is the act of God. It is not an act of man. When you talk about inspiration, it is an act of God, by which His revelation is communicated in written form. Now I could add this word on the end of that, we are referring to the original autographs. That would be as it came off the pen of the writers. Because from then on, the issue of inspiration changes into preservation and so we need to be careful. Like, there are many people who believe that the King James Version of 1611 is the inspired version of God. I happen to believe the Bible is inspired of God. And I believe that the King James Version that we currently use is an adequate and sufficient translation of the Greek text, the summary of the evidence of the Greek text, that show us what the original autographs in fact were. But technically the inspiration of the Bible refers to the original autographs, not to its translation.

In addition to the fact that inspiration refers to the writings, there are two passages that we ended with last time I want you to know, [2 Timothy 3:16-17](#) and [2 Peter 1:19-21](#). You need to know those passages. In addition to the fact that the Bible in its written form is inspired of God, breathed out by God, we also realize that the Holy Spirit of God was controlling the writers—and it is important how you say this—so that what was written was exactly what God intended.

Can you imagine the paradox or the trouble we are going to be in if we think that what was written was not what God intended? This is where a lot of people bring in human error into the problem of transmission of the text. And they think these guys basically wrote their own stories and although they are pretty accurate, they disagree. But you know that we would expect that with four different reporters, and so you kind of leave out the message of [2 Peter 1:21](#), which teaches that the Holy Spirit of God controlled the writers. So whatever was written is exactly what God intended and was accurately reported. That is very important.

In [2 Samuel 23:2](#) where David said: “The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me and [notice] his word was in my tongue.” So God apparently is making sure of this by the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said of David in [Mark 12:36](#) that he spoke “by the Holy Spirit.” The Holy Spirit was actually giving him the words to say. In [Acts 1:16](#), Peter in his message on the Day of Pentecost said: “which the Holy Spirit by the mouth of David spoke before concerning Judas.” This was in the selection of somebody to replace Judas when they were in the upper room. And Peter referred to that passage in Psalm 41, which dealt with the betrayal of David by Ahithophel, Bathsheba’s grandfather. And he likens it to the betrayal of the Messiah by another Ahithophel, only this one would be called

“Judas.” And he says, “The Holy Spirit, by the mouth of David, spoke.” In this case, notice the order is reversed. It is not David spoke by the Holy Spirit, but it is the Holy Spirit speaking through the mouth of David. So once again, you are pressured in your view of inspiration by that verse alone. And if we believe the Bible is the word of God, we now have to say that it’s the Holy Spirit speaking through the human authors.

Now some people have the idea that the writer speaks and the Holy Spirit kind of guides it. But the Bible says “the Holy Spirit spoke it.” That is different from the Holy Spirit guiding us today and giving the words to say when we need them. This is direct revelation. And that’s a difference between Scripture and you and I preaching the Scripture under the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit. There is a strong difference between those two. In [Acts 28:25](#), Paul said, “Well spoke the Holy Spirit by Isaiah.” There it is again. The Holy Spirit speaks and He speaks unto our fathers.

Take your Bibles and turn to John 14. And I want you to see what Jesus predicted concerning the inspiration of the Bible by the Holy Spirit. [John 14:26](#). This is the night before He went to the cross. It says, “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you [what?] all things.” Better underline that. Mark it. Make sure you understand it. “He will teach you all things.” Now will He trust you to remember it? No. The next statement says: “And bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you.” Notice, not only does He teach them everything, but He doesn’t trust them to recall it, which is one of the arguments of the neo-orthodox side of those who believe the Scriptures were inspired but maybe just the thoughts not the words. Their argument is that: “They would have had to recall and remember things. And you know you don’t always do that accurately. The Holy Spirit

kind of guided them to make sure the essential points were there." But that isn't what it says!

I happen to believe in [1 John 5:7-8](#) that what we call "the Johannine Comma" is indeed correct in King James. Yet everybody says it is not a part of the original text. The Johannine Comma is dealing with the statement in 1 John 5 that refers to the Trinity. And the Jehovah Witness of course loves to point out, quoting fundamental, evangelical scholars that it doesn't belong in the text. So there is no mention of the Trinity. I happen to believe it belongs in the text and the King James is correct. And later on we will be telling you why. Amen?

So we've got to have the evidence, don't we? See, I am one of those sticklers for this. I just don't bow down and take it just because it is in a margin of a Bible, or because somebody says it. It's all nice, but I want to look it up. It doesn't make me right. I'll look it up and I'll show you the evidence and you can make a decision. By the way, I do that every time I study the Bible. I'm making decisions just like anybody else. But I want to look at the evidence.

You know in the New American Standard in [John 1:18](#) it says: "No man has seen God at any time. But the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." The guys who wrote the New American Standard I knew very well. Several of them were my teachers. And they love the Lord with all their hearts and believed in the Deity. And they thought the New American Standard, which took some heavy manuscript evidence that the word "God" belongs there, was correct. Okay. Now some of the "King James Only" crowd has said, "No, they are attacking the deity of Christ because how could God be begotten? Without realizing that if that's so, then we

are attacking the deity of Jesus, because in the other translations of the King James it says, "The only begotten Son." So the issue isn't whether it's "God" or "Son" in the text, the issue is the meaning of what is "only begotten." Do you follow what I'm saying? It's hard to back up and say, "I made a big mistake." But that is what we have to learn to do, don't we?

From [John 14:26](#), we learn two things: "all" was taught by the Holy Spirit and secondly, "all" was brought to their remembrance by the Holy Spirit. Now, go over to [John 16:13](#). And this is very interesting. Least I hope it will be. Jesus said, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth..." Just for your information, the word truth is mentioned twice. And in the Greek text the definite article "the" is front of the word truth, both times. It is not just truth in general, it's "the truth"—meaning a particular body of truth. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of the truth when he is come, he will guide you [lead you] into all the truth." Do you believe He did that? Do you?

Do you believe that the people listening to Jesus were guided into "all" the truth? Did you know that most evangelicals do not believe that verse is speaking about those who were listening to Jesus? They believe it is referring to the total body of Christ—all believers. In other words, the Spirit will guide all of you into the truth. So this is where we get the doctrine about the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer guiding us into the truth. "Dear Lord, guide me into all the truth."

All the truth there is that you need to know—that is God's revelation to you—is already in written form. Now either He told them the truth, or He's kind of deceiving them, isn't He? Did He mean, He's going to start it with you guys, but He's going to continue it until He comes again? On that basis, [it is] what we call "progressive

revelation.” Therefore we’ve got to fight the Mormons as to whether or not their deal, which Joseph says he got from the Lord, could be also included or anybody else.

If He didn’t guide them into all the truth, then we have no objective basis for questioning anybody who stands up and says, “God directly spoke to me and gave me some additional Scripture.” Even under the name of a spiritual gift, like the word of knowledge, word of wisdom, word of prophecy. Does that mean that they have the ability to come up with new revelation from God?

Now folks, does God impress our hearts? Does He lead us? Does He give us visions, and just constantly show us the way to go, and impress hearts? Yes! It is not Scripture. It’s not direct revelation, but He does. He guides us by the Holy Spirit. Paul said that he wanted to go into Bithynia but the Spirit didn’t let him go (cf. [Acts 16:7](#)). How did He do that? Was there a detour sign? Was it a rainy day? What was it? We don’t know. He did not say. But since he also believes what this teaches, he didn’t add it to the Bible as direct revelation. The event of what occurred is accurately reported.

We are really in a tough area here because I want you to know what inspiration means. And I’m very aware that you could walk out of this class and hear another fine believer who loves the Lord and teaches the Bible and loves God and is going to say something entirely different. So you’re going to have to judge that aren’t you? You’re going to have to really think this through. I’m just asking all of you the question: “Do you believe that all the truth that God ever wanted you to know was given to the guys that were listening to Him that day? It’s an interesting question, isn’t it?”

Thankfully, John was there because we are including his writings and he didn’t bring those off until about A.D. 90-95. So John was there that day. When John died, the

last disciple who died, was *all* the truth given? I'm just telling you, this is a critical issue, isn't it? Was it *all* the truth? Or was it some of the *all* the truth? Was it a part of the *all* the truth? Or was it *all*? Did He mean all believers or was He just talking to the disciples? That's an interesting question, isn't it?

At the end of [John 14:31](#), when He said, "Arise let us go." Should we now get up and go, because it's written to us? No! It's a fact reporting how the disciples left the upper room and moved over to the garden of Gethsemane. So you understand what I'm saying to you? Now, let's back up again. Did those men, who were listening to Jesus, did they get *all* the truth? That's what He told them. Now, He's either telling the truth or He's lying. Which is it?

In other words, inspiration not only refers to the writings, but it refers to the control of the Holy Spirit over the writers so that what was written was exactly what God intended and in fact was a completed product.

I would want to really find out whether or not Paul really received direct revelation from Jesus Christ Himself, wouldn't you? I'd want to know that. And wouldn't you think that if God wanted you to believe that, then He would somehow mention it since Paul wasn't there? Wouldn't that be important? Does Paul say that he received it by direct revelation from Jesus Christ? Yes, he does.

Now, not only was John there, but John doesn't wait for us to assume this. In Revelation he tells you flat out that this came directly from Jesus Christ, directly. That's the name of the book, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." And it is very interesting when you think about it. Is it a revelation about Him? Or is it a revelation from Him? Well, it's actually both! If you were Joseph Smith and you wanted to add to the Scripture, then you

would have to prove that He directly spoke to you. Right? But Joseph Smith says that it came from where? An angel named Moroni. Now, do we have any evidence in the Bible that we are not to respond to an angel that claims to be giving us direct revelation? Yes, we do. But the Mormons answer, "Wait a minute. John got the book of Revelation through the agency of an angel." Remember that? That's where Joseph Smith got his idea. So, let's turn over to [Revelation 1:1](#) and let's take a look at it again. It says,

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, [that's the title of the book] which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it [did it by signs] by his angel unto his servant John.

Does it say that the angel gave the revelation? No, it doesn't. He carried it. He illustrated it. But the revelation God gave to Jesus Christ and then He showed it to His servants. Okay?

Let's go back to [John 16:13-15](#), which says:

When he, the Spirit of the truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you— [what]—things to come [which of course we just read in [Revelation 1:1](#)]. He shall glorify me for he shall receive of mine, [it's the Lord's revelation] and shall show it unto you. All

things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine and shall show it unto you.

What we have here is a claim that this is direct revelation from God and His Son, Jesus Christ, from the Father and His Son. Interesting!

Inspiration is the work of God using prophets and apostles as human channels of His revelation to us. Now, do you believe that any ordinary Christian can receive direct revelation from God? Well, let me ask you another question. Did anyone ever, who was not an apostle, nor a prophet, receive direct revelation from God? Yes, there are quite a number of them, especially in the book of Genesis. Well now, we've got a problem, unless the direct revelation we are talking about is that which is to be written. Now let's ask the question: did anyone but an apostle or a prophet receive direct revelation that was to be written in what God calls "His forever-settled word?" No.

You say, "Wait a minute! What about Moses who wrote the first five books?"

No problem. Moses is called a prophet.

We have how many apostles? Twelve. Now, is that true? No, it's not true, but we continue to hold on to it. Actually some of the twelve didn't write any books, so it isn't just the twelve. We have additional men who are apostles. We have: Silvanus, Timothy, Titus, Andronicus, Junia, Epaphroditus, and Epaphras. They are all called apostles. Sometimes you have in English the word "messenger." You look it up in the Greek, it's the word "apostle." There are some apostles who were used to write Scripture and there are some who did not write Scripture, who are a part of the twelve.

Now the question, was Paul one of the twelve? Judas betrays Him. And the early Church did something wrong. They threw dice, gambled, and selected Matthias when they should have chosen Paul, or waited for Paul. Now that's a theory a lot of people have. Is that true? No, that's not true. Why?

Turn to Acts please, chapter 1. I'm just here to get you to think. Look at the Scripture for yourself, [Acts 1:15](#). Now, they've got to get someone to replace Judas, Peter says from verse 15 on. This gives a little background there from the Old Testament, both Psalm 41 and 69 are mentioned down in verse [20](#). And then he says "Out of all these guys (cf. [Acts 1: 21-22](#)) who have been with us...from the beginning, from the baptism of John until the day He was taken up, one must be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection" (cf. [Acts 1: 21-22](#)). So there were more guys than just those twelve...they appointed Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus and Matthias and they prayed and said, "Thou Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whither of these two thou hast chosen." Why did they think there was only twelve? Why in the world did they think they had to have twelve?

Jesus chose twelve and He even called them His twelve apostles in [Matthew 10:2-4](#). And these twelve Jesus sent forth. He chose twelve. He also said that in the future they are going to sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. If you are Jewish you would think, "Oh He wants one for each tribe." Okay. So, they are just thinking: "we need twelve."

Are there more apostles than twelve (mentioned in the Scriptures)? Yes. Are there just twelve? Yes. What part do they have? They are a very significant part because their

names are going to be on the foundations of the heavenly city. Why? Because that's the way God wants it.

Now, let's go back to the question again in Acts 1. It says in verse [26](#), "They gave forth their lots." You say, "Well that's gambling." No it's not, even though we get the word "lottery" from lot. But no, it's not. [Proverbs 16:33](#) tells us the casting of the lot, and the whole disclosing of it, is of the Lord. There really is no chance, is there? Now, it says that the lot fell upon Matthias and he was numbered with the eleven what?—apostles. You say, "That is just recording that it's what they did. You don't know that's what the Holy Spirit wanted."

Well, keep reading. [Acts 2:14](#), the Holy Spirit is reporting this on the Day of Pentecost, "but Peter, standing up with the [what?] eleven." It didn't say "with the ten." It said "with the eleven." So the Holy Spirit has already included Matthias by chapter 2:14. Paul's name is not in the twelve, but neither is Barnabus' name, neither is Timothy, nor Titus and they are all apostles.

Now apostle is *apostelō*. We just said it in English "apostle," we didn't translate it. *Apostelō* is a verb. *Apostelōs* is a Greek noun. Now if you put that into Latin, the verb becomes *missel*, which said into English becomes "missionary." Our word missionary is actually an English transliteration of a Latin word that translates apostle. That's how we got the word missionary.

What is an apostle supposed to do? Well, you have to read [Acts 14:21-28](#) and it tells you at least seven things that every apostle should do. He's supposed to preach the gospel. He's supposed to disciple the new converts. He is supposed to train leaders. There are a lot of interesting things he's supposed to do. Then he moves on to another city.

Missionaries are not local pastors. Apostles are not pastors. There is a different kind of a person there, a different kind of gifted man.

Now coming back to the apostle issue, it says in [Ephesians 2:20](#)—talking about Jew and Gentile who have come into one body in Christ and are no more strangers, fellow citizens, household of God—“are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Cornerstone.” Now, what’s he talking about here? Is he talking about all apostles and all prophets? No. I don’t believe so. I’ll tell you why.

Would you look at verse 20 very carefully? The definite article “*the*” is in front of the word apostles. Is it in front of the word prophets? Look at your Bible. No, it’s not. It’s not in the Greek text either. Now we have an elementary Greek rule of grammar that says when you have two nouns connected by the conjunction “and,” and the definite article “the” is in front of the first noun, but not the second, it is connecting equals. Now that is very important in some passages.

[Titus 2:13](#) says, “Looking for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.” Jehovah Witnesses say at the Second Coming both the Father and Jesus will return, on the basis of that. Because they are certainly not going to claim that He’s the great God. But they’re wrong. Why?—because of an elementary rule of Greek grammar. In that text it says “the great God *and*,” and it doesn’t say “*the* Savior,” to separate it. It makes the two nouns one and the same. God is the same as the Savior. Savior is the same as God. In other words, Jesus is called the great God in [Titus 2:13](#). Now that is worth a great halleluiah!

So here we have another example. In other words, whoever the apostle is, he's also the same as the prophet. And the prophet is the same as the apostle. So the question is, "in what sense?" And the answer is again, "Scripture." How do you know it's talking about the revelation of God? That's a good question. Is the written revelation of the Bible the foundation of the Church? That's the question.

Look at [Ephesians 3:3-5](#). Paul says,

How that by revelation, he made known unto me the mystery [This mystery of the Church, Jew and Gentile would be one body in Christ.] as I wrote before in a few words. Whereby, when you read you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, [watch this carefully] as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

Now I know what he means by [2:20](#), when he said "the foundation of the church."

Why are they holy? The word "holy" means to be separate. What he's talking about is that there are apostles and prophets who are separate from other apostles and prophets in some sense. What sense?—the sense of receiving direct revelation which is in these verses.

Can you name a prophet out of the New Testament—not the Old because there are many named in the Old Testament—name a prophet in the New Testament who did not write a single book as far as you know: John the Baptist, Agabus, Judas, Silas. These are all prophets mentioned in the Bible by name in the New Testament who never wrote

Scripture. They are not one of the holy, the separate prophets that receive direct revelation.

Can you name apostles who never wrote any Scripture? Yes, of course. We named some off a moment ago. So when you say holy, separate apostles and prophets—separate in what sense?—that they received direct revelation as it clearly says. So that means, class, that this Book is the foundation of the Church that God is building. I don't know about you, but we aren't building the foundation any more. We're about ready to put the roof on. The Lord Jesus is coming soon. Do you understand that this issue is fundamental to a complete and final and sufficient revelation from God in written form?

I believe that unless you settle this issue in your mind, you will have no apologetical answers for any cults whatsoever. A smart cultist who knows what he's doing can tie you in knots if you cannot demonstrate that the written word of God was completed, final and totally sufficient within the first century A.D., and if you cannot prove that, you're sunk, there is no way you can deal with them. There is no way you can question their desire to add to the Bible. You can't do it. This is very important, class, extremely important. Really, that's the whole reason [argument] behind the Apocrypha. Why we reject it. Why we do not believe it was a part of it? Because the Bible was a finished product in the first century A.D. and it did not include the Apocrypha. The fact that men later included it doesn't answer anything. They were good history. They wanted people to know about it. But that is not evidence for it being the word of God.

Go to Hebrews 1. We take it a little step further of this same point. It's amazing how when you just really follow the Bible very carefully, what insight it brings to you on all that other stuff you've heard. I caution you, read your Bible carefully. The first

principle of preparing a Bible lesson, whether you are teaching a Sunday school class or preaching in a service, the first lesson after prayer and consulting the Lord is to read and re-read the passage over and over again. I like to read it so many times that if I lost my Bible I could still give it back to you. I'm not trying to memorize it in one sense. But in another sense I want to know that passage so well that it's a part of my life, it's a part of my brain. This is very important, class. This is the word of God. I need to renew my mind daily in God's word. I need the word of God.

[Hebrews 1:1-2](#). This is a very critical text. That usually means, expect to see it sometime in the future on a test. [Hebrews 1:1-2](#) says,

God who at sundry times [or various times] and in divers [or various] manners, spake in time past unto the Fathers by the prophets.

Why didn't he say "apostles and prophets?" It's because he is speaking of Old Testament revelation. Now watch this: "Hath in these last days." You are going to want to know what that actually says there, because when we read "the last days," we think of prophecy, don't we? But technically we are in the last days anyway. The last days began on the Day of Pentecost; that is what Peter said. He quoted the prophecy in Joel. That "in the last days God would pour out His Spirit upon all flesh." He said "this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel." It started on the Day of Pentecost; it's continued now for over 1900 years. The last days actually go to the end of the Tribulation period. But that is not what he's talking about, as I'll show you in a moment.

He hath in these days spoken unto us by his Son, [oh, a direct revelation from Jesus Christ!] whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he hath made the worlds. Who being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person, upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged [or cleansed] our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high. ([Hebrews 1:2-3](#))

I can't believe how many Christians have messed up their minds on these verses! In the Greek text of verse 2 it says: "in the last of these days." And a lot of people say to me, "Oh Dave, you are such a stickler for word order!" I didn't do it, God did it! He wrote it! I'm just trying to make it accurate. So sometimes we take freedom and we say, "these last days," but because last days often are thought of prophetically in our day as still in the future, we are missing the context. Actually, you would understand the context if you remembered [Hebrews 1:1](#). What's he talking about? How God spoke, "in the last of these days," the days in which God spoke by the prophets to the fathers, like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. "In the last days in which God spoke directly..." Whoops! In other words, class, this text argues for the fact that God stopped giving direct revelation that He expected to be in written form.

When did He stop? And the answer of the text is that the final revelation would be "His Son." His Son! Now do you know any book of the Bible that tells you about Jesus more completely than all of the Bible put together?—the book of Revelation. There are more names of Jesus Christ in that book than in any other book. Actually, He's totally different than what you read in the gospels. When you get to chapter one you realize we

are talking about the glorified Son of God, resurrected, "whose eyes are like a flame of fire, His face, like the most brilliant sunlight, the resurrected Christ" (Revelation 1:14-16). And from then on, everything we learn about Him is greater than anything we've ever seen.

Isn't it helpful that God called the book, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ?" Have you ever thought about that? So nobody would misunderstand what Paul said to the Jews in [Hebrews 1:1-2](#). Why put it in the book of Hebrews? Because the Jews are concerned about direct revelation from God; as a matter of fact, they still today question whether the New Testament belongs in the Tanakh, the Bible. Isn't it interesting the very book written to the Jewish people, says, "God, in time past." They're all saying "amen" on verse 1. When it comes to verse 2 they are very quiet. "Has in these last days in which God spoke, spoken by His Son." Jews don't like that. And isn't it interesting that the last book in our Bible is entitled, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ?"

"Spoken unto us by His Son," but you don't have any recording of that up until His ascension. You don't have any description of Him other than Luke 24. He ate the fish and all of that. But you have after that a lot of stuff. For instance, the fact that the disciples handled His physical body and touched Him is in [1 John 1:1](#), written about A.D. 90 – 95. Hebrews was written before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, so you've got thirty years later, more evidence of how He spoke to us by His Son.

What kind of revelation did He give us? Well then you'd have to read the book of Hebrews to find out what kind of revelation. Isn't it interesting in Hebrews, it's all in His exaltation, not His earthly life. He is so much better than the angels, so much greater than the priests, greater than Moses, greater than Abraham, greater than the Levitical,

sacrificial system. In other words, the greatness of Jesus Christ, this revelation concerning Him, it's even intimated in the book of Hebrews! "He has spoken to us in His Son." But it actually doesn't say "in" His Son. It says "by" His Son. Does the book of Hebrews claim to be direct revelation by Jesus Christ? No. Is all Scripture a direct revelation of Jesus Christ? Yes, in a sense. But it's the book of Revelation that is called "The Revelation of Jesus Christ."

In other words, you could ask another question. What is it at the writing of Hebrews that I don't know about Jesus Christ, since I have all the Gospels already? What is it that you don't know? Why would he even make that remark at that point? Because at this point, you're some 30 years after the Gospels, so why make that point now? Is there something I'm missing? Yes there is! You mean there's more revelation about Him? Yes there is. You see, what He is now. What is He now? First of all, He is better than angels. He's better than. You see, in His earthly life He was made a little lower than the angels. Now Hebrews tells us, the revelation we have of Him now—how God is speaking to us now—He's better than the angels. In other words, He's no longer talking about earthly existence. He's now talking about glorification, exaltation. Where do I see the particulars on this? Oh there's a whole book about it, twenty-two chapters. It's called "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." There's where you will see the unfolding of who He really is.

Do you follow? In other words, the fact that it isn't written is still presenting the question: "Well, where is this information?" You see [Hebrews 1:1-2](#) anticipates a revelation about Jesus Christ as to His present state. What He's really like after His

resurrection. It not only anticipates that but it also indicates that when it comes there won't be anything more said.

"In the last of these days, in which God spoke," you will see a revelation through His Son. What revelation are we talking about, Paul?

"Oh, that He's greater than the angels, greater than Abraham, greater than Moses, greater than the Levitical priests, greater than all the sacrifices."

"Well, where is it? Where's the revelation? But what is it?"

"Oh, that's going to come in the book of Revelation."

Do you understand what I'm saying? Without that you're lost. There is no explanation of these verses in Hebrews, none whatsoever. See I happen to believe that God did do this. If "God spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets and in the last of the days in which He speaks He has spoken through His Son," I expect to see it. I expect to find it somewhere. And it will have to be after the death and resurrection of Christ. Why? Because that's what's presented throughout the book of Hebrews, telling us about how He is "greater than." You've got to follow it through. Just keep asking if you don't understand. It's very important to get a hold of this. Most people don't follow this clearly.

Have you ever asked why, in the book of Revelation, it says at the end, "No man can add to this or take away from it"? Now if you look at that apart from Hebrews here's what is usually said—Mormons are very, very strong on this—they say what it means is only the book of Revelation because all these books were written separately. And that makes some sense. So it's just referring to the book of Revelation that you can't add to that or take away from it.

Now how do you answer that? My answer to them is, "How does that help? What is the book of Revelation about? It goes clear into the eternal state. Now how are you going to add to that? I don't understand. What else would be said if God has said about everything that's going to take place in the future and it hasn't even happened now in our time, then how could you add to that?" So, the fact of what the book of Revelation is, answers the argument as to why at the end it says you can't add, can't take away from this book. This book is about the future clear into eternity. How you going to add anything? You got some additional information? This is ridiculous.

No. Instead of that, it is highly significant that that remark is at the end of the book that gives that revelation. Why? Because in [Hebrews 1:1-2](#) it speaks about the last of the days in which God reveals. Is there an ending point? Class, listen to me: the whole issue of dealing with cults and false religions and everything is actually based on this one issue we're talking about. When all the smoke is cleared, it's this one issue. Is the Bible a complete and final revelation from God? That's the issue. You don't just say that, you've got to prove that and that's what we're doing right at the present time. You have to prove that. It's not as easy to prove as some people say, "We've always believed that."

Really?

David Koresh got a bunch of fundamental Christians to believe that his revelations were additions to the Bible. So much so that he proclaimed himself to be the Messiah! How did they get to that point? It never would have happened if the Christians would have said, "Excuse me! You are giving additional revelation to what the Bible says."

A guy sent a big long book on prophecies that he said were going to come true in America and several people got them. They were all shook up about "the big one" [earthquake]. God directly told him that the big one was going to knock California into the sea. He was preaching these as prophecies, direct visions from the Lord. All eight of his visions that he received "directly" from Jesus Christ have all proven to be false.

What does the Bible tell me to do about him? You don't come to me and say, "I think about ten years ago he got one." No, if he doesn't get them all 100 percent, I'm not supposed to listen to him.

Do you understand how critical this is? You see this would never happen to us if we understand we already have a complete and final revelation from God.

"Is there going to be a worldwide revival?"

Now, first of all you've got to ask the question, "Do you mean evangelism?"

"No, we mean the stirring of the Christians."

"Well because revivals usually produce lots of evangelism. If you mean that, then yeah, there is going to come a real big revival with lots of folks saved, probably more than any other equal period of time."

"When's that?"

"In the tribulation, and I don't think you're going to be here if you're a believer."

That's one problem, but do you understand that there are going to be so many people saved that the Bible says you can't number them. They're going to come "out of every nation, tribe, tongue and people" (cf. [Revelation 14:6](#)). So, there is going to be a worldwide harvest. We are talking 144,000 Jewish evangelists taking the everlasting gospel to every nation, tribe, tongue and people.

You say, "Well then, they'd have to know a lot of languages."

No. We would simply have what Peter told us would happen. The same thing that happened on the Day of Pentecost when every man heard it in his own language, and every dialect in which he was born, will happen also for the 144,000 in the tribulation period because Joel's prophecy primarily deals with the tribulation period, when the sun is turned into darkness and the moon into blood (cf. [Joel 2:31](#)).

Do you understand me? Accuracy where the Bible is so important, accuracy!

So, when people tell me that God directly spoke to them and it doesn't come true, I shouldn't be surprised. Everything God wants you and me to know about Himself and His plan is in this blessed Book. I definitely believe that. I do not mean that God cannot speak to you and impress your heart on matters that are not dealt with in the Scripture, but I do not believe it is direct revelation from God. Nor do I consider it that. Nor do I believe it will therefore be accurate in every way. This is very important, class. Is this a complete, final revelation from God in written form?

Why don't we just take a break now...

History and Authenticity of the Bible
Lesson 12
Inspiration – Part Two

By
Dr. David Hocking

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Jesus said,

All that is in the law, the prophets, and the psalms are concerning Me.

(cf. [Luke 24:44](#))

In Matthew 5 He said,

Not one jot [the smallest letter in the Hebrew language] or one title [the marking on a letter to distinguish it from another letter that looks like it, not one marking on any of those letters] will ever pass away until all these things be fulfilled" (cf. [Matthew 5:18](#)).

In the Bible there are two kinds of prophecy. There is fulfilled prophecy and of course, unfulfilled prophecy. What amazes many people who have not done an in-depth study of the Scripture is that there is much more fulfilled prophecy than they ever dreamed—volumes of it—which you could easily make a case for in proving that the Bible is the word of God. We have predictions of nations, empires, rulers in the Bible before they ever came into existence even those nations named. And we have evidence that before they ever came into power, the information was already there in the Scriptures. So we know about that. We have predictions about the destruction of nations in the Bible long before it happened. Even before the nations described as being destroyed came into existence. So, don't ever forget that fulfilled prophecy is a biggy! What's the most famous one that we know was fulfilled? What subject? Jesus Christ, yes. We have all this prophecy about His first coming. So we have a lot of ways to prove the inspiration of the Bible.

I have a little booklet that is used a lot with evangelism of Jewish people called "Who Is the Messiah?" And there are no New Testament verses in it at all. And what it does is it proves that whoever the Messiah is, He had to come before the Temple was destroyed and after it was destroyed. You say, "What do you mean?" Well, He had to come after the temple built by Solomon is destroyed—can't come before that. And He has to come before the second temple designed by Herod is destroyed. Did you know the

Bible predicts that? And so, when you nail down who the Messiah is, there aren't many choices. So I do what I call a process of elimination in this little booklet called, "Who Is the Messiah?" And we just walk down, just taking the facts about who it can be. And it comes down that if it's not *Yeshua* of Nazareth, it's got to be somebody exactly like Him, who did exactly what He did at the same time period in which He lived.

So again, in terms of fulfillment, certainly inspiration guarantees the accuracy. If there ever was anything that was not fulfilled, the Bible is not truthful then. "Heaven and earth will pass away, but His words will never pass away" (cf. [Matthew 24:35](#)). That's why we count on the unfulfilled prophecy being fulfilled because up to this point, everything has all been fulfilled.

Now, when God told Ezekiel after the Babylonian captivity that He would once again bring Israel back into the land and they'd become a nation again; the dry bones would come to life ([Ezekiel 37:4](#)). They would die and come back to life. Do you think that was fulfilled? I do. Otherwise, I don't know what in the world is going on over there in the land of Israel unless that isn't a fulfillment. Otherwise we've got something happening that looks just like it, but isn't it. When the Jews took the old city of Jerusalem, did the remark of Jesus get fulfilled? Some people say that they may not have it for long. They may lose it again.

Now, is it a fulfillment of prophecy that they have the city of Jerusalem? That's an interesting question. If it's not then what is it? Because Jesus said it was going to happen. So, how do you explain that? And a lot of my friends who don't want to believe that it is prophecy being fulfilled will say, "Well, it's in unbelief." That doesn't help you because the Bible teaches it will be in unbelief. Now what are you going to do?

At the end of the Tribulation when Christ comes again and they look on Him whom they pierced and Israel turns to Him, and believes, and repents, and is cleansed, it calls them "the inhabitants of Jerusalem" (cf. [Zechariah 12:10](#)). We didn't have that until 1967. Isn't that interesting? Now, do you believe that the inhabitants of Jerusalem are actually going to look on Jesus and then believe? Well, if they believe then, they're not saved now, right? So did they come back to Israel and get the city in unbelief or belief? It's in unbelief. Everybody agrees it's in unbelief. They just don't believe that it's going to happen when they're unbelievers.

See, I love taking the Bible literally because it answers it all for me. It's a very simple little plan I'm under. I believe all of this is going to be happening exactly like God said.

Let me ask you another one. Do you believe that the trees, the actual, named trees (which are kind of unique trees) that Isaiah says will grow in the land in the end times, do you believe that the trees that are growing there now are a fulfillment? Because all of the breeds of those trees that he mentions are all growing there now. And they didn't grow there before 1948. What do we do about that? Do we just say, "Well, it's sort of the same." No it isn't. It's exactly the same. All the trees God mentioned are all growing there now!

When [Ezekiel 34:25-31](#) said that in the last day, previous to the great return of the Lord, you're going to see the land filled with trees. It's going to be a land of forests. There weren't any trees there in 1948. So how many trees are there now? I don't know, hundred thousand, thousands. And some get real excited, millions maybe! I don't know if you know this or not. There are billions. In that little piece of real estate there are billions of trees. See, I actually believe Jesus is going to come real soon. But I will tell you this, when He comes you will know it is a written, final revelation from God and everything that He said will be fulfilled. You see, it is inspiration, a guarantee of the accuracy and the reliability of everything it says in terms of fulfillment.

The second issue is in terms of interpretation. [2 Peter 1:20-21](#) says that "No prophecy of the Scripture [of the writing] is of any private interpretation. Holy men of God [those who were separated for this task] were moved [or carried along] by the Holy Spirit." They didn't make it up!

Who interpreted the Bible? People talk about how you interpret the Bible? That is a good question actually! I'm trying to study the interpretation that's already there. I mean, God has already interpreted the Bible. He's already interpreted it by many quotations He interprets the Bible. Right? We have something in the New Testament that's quoting an Old Testament passage and interpreting what it means. So by quotation doesn't He interpret the Bible? Sure He does. So God's already interpreted that Bible.

Number two, not only by quotations but by direct statement. Jesus said, the entire Bible is "concerning himself." Now, did He interpret the entire Old Testament in that one slot? Yeah, He sure did. He said, "It is all about Me."

One day I'm sitting with a bunch of Jewish guys in a little kibbutz in northern Galilee while there's some shooting going on with the war in Lebanon. And we're sitting there and it's late at night. Of course because the war is going on, they're kind of prophetic. Every time a war happens they get real prophetic. Is this the battle of Armageddon? What's happening here? So all these Jewish guys they were all Orthodox also. And we were talking about the Bible and I have a lot of fun with them. One of them said to me, "You know David, we really like you but you've got to stop snowing the people here."

I said, "I beg your pardon?"

"Look we heard you today. Today you said that from Genesis to 2 Chronicles [which is the last book of the Hebrew Old Testament] that all of the books are speaking of *Yeshua*." Now, this guy is talking to me, he says, "I memorized *Bereishit* [which is Genesis in Hebrew], I memorize *Bereishit*. There's not one verse in that whole book about *Yeshua*."

Now, what would you do if these five guys were looking at you? I'm sitting there thinking, "What am I going to do?"

So I said, "Well, there is a verse and it comes real early. I'm not going to get into the "In the beginning God..." thing, cause you guys are going to get all upset. Or the plural pronouns about God and who God is talking to, because you guys say it's a majestic plural." So anyway I say, "I'm going to take you to [Genesis 3:15](#)."

And God said, "I will put enmity between thee [talking to the snake] and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; and he shall bruise thy head [crush the head of the snake] and he [in the process] will bruise your heel."

I said, "There."

They said, "There, what?"

I said, "Well, get out your Bibles." They carried them with them. I don't know if you know that or not; all Jewish guides do. They pulled them out of their little sacks, laid them down, gave me a Hebrew Bible.

They said, "All right let's go. We're going Hebrew not English."

I said, "You bet. No problem." [Genesis 3:15](#). We got it all laid out.

They said, "Jesus is not in there. That's a wrong interpretation."

See, the Bible has already interpreted itself. I know it is the word of God. I know it's inspired because it interprets itself accurately. Now watch!

I said, "Well now, the seed of the snake. Who's that? Who are the children of the snake?" They wouldn't answer. Of course, I already knew what they believed so I knew why they wouldn't and that's why I asked them.

"Why will you not tell me?"

"We just can't."

"Who is the seed of the woman?"

"Oh, that's the Jewish people."

I said, "Really? That's kind of hard to believe."

They said, "Why it's always been the Jewish people."

"No, it is singular and not plural."

"Well, the word *seed* can be singular or plural, refers to descendants or one. How do you know it's one?"

"Oh, because it says he shall bruise thy head. It's just one descendant of the woman who will crush the head of the snake." I said, "Who's the snake?"

"Satan."

"Satan, okay we agree! It's that wonderful. We agree. The snake is Satan. Now, the text said that some person that's coming from the woman is going to kill the snake because when you crush the head of a snake, I mean, it's all over for it. What about his biting the heel? Because whoever this seed of the woman is who comes, who's going to crush the head, at the same exact moment in the Hebrew grammar, as you guys well know, he bites the heel of that woman's son."

One of the guys popped up and said, "Well that isn't fatal. I got bit by a snake. The best place you can get bit is in your heel because it's very hard for it to penetrate and for the poison to go in there. And you can get it out quickly."

I said, "Exactly correct. Therefore, whatever blow it was, it was not fatal. And whatever blow it was it was a reversed effect. Because by biting the heel, he was crushed with the heel and destroyed." I said, "Now when is that going to occur?"

"Well, in the future."

"Who's the seed of the snake? Well, they didn't want to say. You know why? Because they believe it's the Gentiles. Gentiles are from Satan; they are Satan. And Jews are the seed of the woman and they're going to ultimately triumph over them. But it troubled them that it was singular. It's singular. It's not plural. He shall bruise the head.

I said, "Now I've got to go to bed. I am so tired. It's late. It's 2:00 in the morning. Look, we'll talk about it in the morning."

The next morning as we are lining up for the bus, all five of these guys came to me and said, "We've been up all night trying to figure out who this person is."

I said, "Well, you know that's why it's so beautiful to just believe that *Yeshua* was correct when He said 'it was all about Me.' You see, you guys want to attack me for saying that from Genesis to 2 Chronicles the entire Old Testament is about Him. It obviously is. If He's in chapter three, I'll bet He's in chapter one and you guys just haven't figured it out yet." Now, that is only one fun illustration.

When you say inspiration, I just want you to know that this thing is not open to any private interpretation. Our job in studying this Book is to find out what the interpretation of the Bible is. I think we need a little bit more illustration. I don't want to drill something in the ground, but I want to make sure you understand what I'm talking about.

[1 Corinthians 1:18.](#)

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us who are saved it is the power of God.

Amen? What a great verse! But you know the next one everybody skips over. Even in the commentaries.

For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of the world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom [meaning its] knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. ([1 Corinthians 1:19-21](#))

What? No wonder guys just kind of skip over that! It is basically saying that wisdom is preaching the cross and foolishness is not doing it. And they move right along. Wait a minute! You see if you want to understand the Bible, you have to understand that the Bible already interprets itself.

This is a quotation from the book of Isaiah dealing with the story of Hezekiah. Assyria had already taken the northern tribes into captivity. And under the leadership of the great king Sennachrib that invaded Judah, they went to the five cities of the plains, the Philistine cities, Gath and Ekron and Ashdod and Ashkelon and Elah. They conquered all five of those. Then they come and surround Jerusalem and they are basically mocking them (my translation) saying, "We're going to have you for lunch tomorrow."

Now at that point, the Jews are panicking. They are trying to communicate with them. They go to good king Hezekiah, who's a wonderful king. And they are trying to give him wisdom about this. What should we do? And they say, "We've got to negotiate with them." Now, people tried to do that in Nehemiah's day. They said, "Why don't we come out to the plain of Ono and negotiate, talk this over. And Nehemiah said, "Oh no!" He's not going."

Now, let me tell you the background behind this story. The reason Assyria invaded Judah was because of the wisdom of these counselors of Hezekiah. Because Hezekiah had seen the destruction of the northern tribes and said, "What are we going to do to protect ourselves?" And the answer is: "We make a treaty with Egypt and therefore because Egypt will support us, then Assyria won't invade." On the contrary, that is the

reason Assyria did invade, because they made a treaty with Egypt. Should Israel have made that treaty? No. It says, "Woe to those who go to Egypt to help. Instead you should seek the Lord alone." What a tremendous lesson!

So now, he's back in the same boat again. They caused this by their foolish wisdom and reasoning. And now they are coming into the land again. Now what do we do? Let's try to talk to them. That didn't work the first time. It's not going to work the second time either. And Hezekiah, confused by it all, good king that he is he went into his private chambers. The Bible says that he got on his knees and he called on the name of the Lord. And he said, "God if you will not deliver us this is not going to happen. We are finished."

That night the Lord sent the angel of the Lord to the Assyrian camp and he killed 185,000 Assyrians. And God gave them a wonderful victory because of one man deciding he needed to trust the Lord, which tells us that in evangelism, we need to depend on the power of the gospel not our own reasoning.

You see if you follow through it, you come down to [1 Corinthians 2:2-5](#).

I determine not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified. I was with you in weakness and fear and much trembling. My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, [like Hezekiah's counselors] but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

I think I'm preaching. I feel it. But anyway, I don't mean to do that, but sometimes I get excited. Do you understand what I'm saying to you? How would you know that's the point of that passage?—because we have first the quotation, and secondly we have a direct application in 1 Corinthians 2 by Paul to the issue. So you see the Bible interprets itself in terms of fulfillment and in terms of interpretation. And one more that we have already been dealing with, in terms of completeness.

Now this might surprise you, but it is a little different way of looking at this than what we've been through already. Go to [Matthew 23:35](#). This was spoken that last week before our Lord went to the cross, right before the Olivet discourse prophecy. It's talking about woe, telling the scribes and Pharisees what is going to happen to them because of their hypocrisy. And in the middle of this, Jesus called them "serpents and generation of vipers. And how can you escape the damnation of hell!" He was a rather straight forward preacher, wouldn't you say? That is verse [33](#).

Now [Matthew 23:35](#),

That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Able [What book is that in? Genesis.] unto the blood of Zecharias, son of Barachias, whom you slew between the temple and the altar.

What book is that in? It's in 2 Chronicles, which is the last book in the Hebrew Old Testament. In other words, the entire books of the Old Testament were spoken by Christ as though it were a final completed revelation from God, especially as it related to martyrs. Everybody see that? From the blood of righteous Able until the blood - all the righteous blood shed. And He gave you the entire Old Testament.

Now come to [Hebrews 2:1-4](#). We need to say something about that before we conclude here today.

Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, [through the agency of them] and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?*

Did angels, messengers actually give direct revelation? Did they? Sure. They were messengers from God. The angel of the Lord appeared unto them over and over again—Hagar, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc. Okay. If the word spoken by angels, (messengers) was steadfast...in other words, it worked! It came true. And every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward. They got what they deserved, what God said was coming. Remember the revelation by the angels who spoke to them about Sodom and Gomorrah and the two angels went and delivered God's message and pulled Lot out and brought the judgment. That's what he's talking about. If all this happened and it did...now here's the punch line: "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation," if we don't listen to God's revelation?

Which revelation are you talking about? "Which at the first..." Now, who's he writing to?—the Jews who do not except the New Testament. He said, "Now how can we escape if we neglect?" He took an Old Testament story, applied it now to New Testament truth about Jesus Christ. How can we escape? "It was first spoken by the Lord, [Here we've got the gospels.] and was confirmed."

Now, the word confirmed, *bebaioō* in Greek, is a legal term out of the courtroom. Now we might say it was authenticated, or made reliable, clearly shown that it was true. "It was confirmed unto us [the writer and the readers of Hebrews] by them that heard Him." They heard His revelation. Was Paul one who heard the revelation of God? Yes. He says so in Galatians 1. These men who wrote the Scriptures heard this direct revelation. It was confirmed unto us by them.

How did God confirm unto us that what they were speaking is direct revelation and should be added to the Old Testament? Would not the Jewish people who hear my whole class say, "I loved your class all the way up until you started talking about the New Testament. It seems to me like you are adding to God's revelation."

Now how do we know that? How did the "us" know that those who claimed to have direct revelation really did have direct revelation? How did they know? How was it confirmed? Here he answers ([Hebrews 2:4](#)), "God bearing them witness." God's going to confirm it to them. How?— "...with signs, and wonders, and with diverse miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will." Is He talking about all the spiritual

gifts? No. He is only talking about the miraculous sign gifts. *Signs* is used seventy times in the New Testament— miracles and wonders.

Now that's very interesting. Ready? Acts 2, this is the Day of Pentecost. How would the Jewish people react?

Ye men of Israel harken unto the words that I say. This Jesus of Nazareth whom you crucified and slain, God's made both Lord and Christ. And they were pricked to the hearts and said, men and brethren what shall we do? Repent and be baptized every one of you. (cf. [Acts 2:22-23, 38](#))

How do I know what these guys are saying? It says very clearly in verse [43](#), "Fear came upon every soul and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles."

How did God confirm that this revelation was truly from God? By signs and wonders and miracles—wow!

Acts 5 says,

By the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people. And of the rest durst no man to join himself to them: but the people magnified them. And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women. ([Acts 5:12-14](#))

Now these Jewish people are really believing this was coming from God. How did they know? By the signs and wonders and miracles!

Go to [2 Corinthians 12:12](#),

Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience and signs and wonders and mighty deeds, or miracles.

You see if you compare Scripture with Scripture, you will have all the answers you need.

How do I know that the New Testament revelation that was given by these men, how do I know that they really got it from God? The answer is by the signs and wonders and miracles that they did as apostles.

John wrote,

These signs that Jesus even did are written that you may believe that He's the Messiah, the Son of God and believing you'll have life through His name" ([John 20:31](#)).

I want you to know that God sometimes heals people, even externally obvious. And He does it even in a meeting, and He'll do it even in a local church or maybe with just a handful of Christians praying for one another. God can do that. But isn't it interesting, that the signs, wonders, and miracles of the apostles are kind of altered a bit today. We wouldn't want anybody to think that I could just touch you and you came back to life. We wouldn't want anybody to believe that just the shadow could heal any disease you had. But you know a lot of people believe that it will.

Look people—God does miracles and God heals, but this showmanship, this entertainment stuff, this is not what we read in the Bible. And anything they say that ought to be added to the Scriptures, I'm sorry; this [the Bible] is a complete and final revelation from God. It's done. It's all over.

You see, the Jews required the sign. That's what it says in [1 Corinthians 1:22](#). That's why they knew that the New Testament revelation was truly of God. There was no doubt that miracles had been done. Amen?

Okay, let's pray.

Thank You, dear Lord, for all Your many blessings. Help us Lord to seek Your face and to carefully look at Your word that we might not come up with presumptuous remarks. Lord, I know that You have great power. You can do the miraculous and You're still doing that today. But that You have no longer chosen to do that through Your apostles and prophets in the way that You did it. You have now asked for elders, more than one of them, to pray for people, to seek Your face and anoint them with oil in the name of

the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick. The Lord will raise them up. Help us Lord, to see Your hand directly doing it. But the evidence that You gave of Your New Testament revelation, is done. It's finished. It's over. The foundation has been laid. We have a complete sufficient written revelation from God. We thank You and we praise You, in Jesus' name. Amen.

* All Scriptures not personally read by the instructor have been graciously narrated by Stephen Johnston.

History and Authenticity of the Bible
Lesson 13
Difficulties of Inspiration – Part One

By
Dr. David Hocking

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Let's have a word of prayer.

Father, thank You for Your wonderful word that You've exalted above Your name. Thank You for the privilege we have to study and to learn and to grow in our knowledge of its beauty and majesty, its sufficiency, its completeness, its inerrancy, its inspiration. Lord, I pray that You would build our confidence in this Book. For You have told us that "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God." And it's through faith that we understand that even the worlds were framed by the word of God. So the things which do appear were not made of things which we see. We thank You that You created out of nothing and brought all of it into existence, and we have that revelation in Your word. Teach us to trust what You say. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

We are talking about the difficulties of inspiration. Two very well-known scholars of New Testament criticism got involved with fighting over the difference between the Greek text behind the King James and the one behind the modern English like New International and so forth. They represent some pretty strong seminaries and schools. And it just shows you among evangelicals how critical they can be.

Well, there are two passages in the Bible that we're going to be getting into here just in a moment. But there are two passages in the Bible that have become the subject of enormous fighting and seriousness.

One is [1 Timothy 3:16](#), which says: "Great is the mystery of godliness: God manifest in the flesh," that's King James. Many of the modern English like, New American Standard, New International, drop the word "God" out, and have the word "who." They say it's a relative pronoun.

It's interesting. I give you a summary of the scholars on it just to show you somewhat of the problem. It says:

This verse has been neither beyond all question nor without controversy, as it opens up, without controversy, great is the mystery. In the realm of Bible translations, some say the first line of the verse should read, "He appeared, or better, who appeared." While others say, following the King James, "God appeared." The answer lies in understanding the biblical discipline known as textual criticism. Very few Christians seem to understand the problem that is behind the English translations of the Bible. Textual criticism is a science that compares all [listen to this carefully, compares *all*] known manuscripts.

Now, I just want you to know that there is no textual critic who has ever compared all known manuscripts. First of all, it would be very expensive to fly between all the museums that have these all over the world...plus the fact getting access to it, plus the fact taking the time to read them all would take more than one person's lifetime. There are 5,500 Greek manuscripts and pretty close to 20,000 Latin. Not counting other translations and versions. So, it's just interesting as you read. Do you understand?

Now this is coming from a very top-notch seminary scholar in New Testament. But you see, already there's a statement that, you know, leads your mind to think a certain way. Because there's no way anybody has compared all of those texts. Anyway... "Textual criticism is an effort to locate the reading that best reflects the words of the author." By the way, I'll tell you the guy that did this was one of translators on New International because he believes in dynamic equivalent. "But the important thing is not to literally translate the words, but to give the sense or meaning of that word"—which a guy translating is really trying to come up with, isn't he? So

then, the question is: how's he coming up with it? What gave him this idea? But, boy is that subtle! He said, "It's an effort to locate the reading that best reflects the words of the author." Locate the reading? Locate it where? Best reflects the author? Why, do you know him? See a lot of people don't ask.

Listen to this:

The original biblical autographs have been lost [which is true] and for subsequent centuries, until the time of printing, every copy of the Bible was reproduced by hand. Today there exists thousands of ancient New Testament manuscripts, [that's true] the earliest fragments, papyrus uncials.

Class, what is an uncial? Capital Greek letters. Papyrus was the first writing materials from the first three centuries.

He says:

The earliest fragments, papyrus uncials, and early style of Greek writing using all capital letters, date from the second century A.D. [Actually, there are several in the first century A.D.] Today ninety-eight of these fragments are cataloged. [Now it says] There also exist 301 uncial manuscripts on vellum.

Listen to this class. This is a set-up for what we are going to get into.

There are 301 early uncials manuscripts written on vellum [or sheepskin, animal skin] some of which date from as early as the second century. Of these, [now see, he laid in your mind second century, of these] the only uncial manuscript that contains the entire New Testament is the fourth century Codex Sinaiticus. Half of the leaves are missing in the New Testament.

Half of the leaves are missing in the New Testament, now isn't that interesting! As a matter of fact, when Tischendorf went into that monastery at Mount Sinai, they were burning the leaves of the Bible. He asked them what they were burning, because they were manuscripts and didn't know what it was. And that's how he found it. No, it doesn't contain the entire New Testament. But that's what he said. This is one of the leading scholars. Now isn't that interesting! See in this whole ball game, class, you are going to have to really be alert. People are going to undermine you so fast you can't see straight.

I just got a whole paper I was going to bring today from the Islamic center, in which they attack the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, based on [1 John 5:7](#). And they say that this is a heresy in the Christian church. It goes on to explain that the Christian argument of how we have a completed Bible, and they quote our verses that we have in here and show why they are not correct. And why the Bible is not completed until you have the Koran. It is the most "scholarly," tricky thing you have ever read.

You know, the devil's coming out with some heavy guns lately. You better know what you believe about the Bible. The real issue is going to be the Bible. It has started already several years ago with multiple translations and people's confidence in the Bible is getting worse with every passing day. If you can get rid of the authority of the Bible, you can completely eliminate Christianity's authority. There isn't anything else to stand on.

Listen to this. It says:

Later manuscripts known as miniscules [that's small letters, cursive writing] came to the fore in the eighth and ninth century and outnumber the uncials eight to one. The versions [or early translations: Old Latin, Syriac, Coptic] inform us in the discussion of textual criticism as do biblical references of the church fathers, known as the patristic evidence. [It's like a little summary of what we've been

studying.] Anyone who has copied a recipe or written down a phone number knows how easy it is to make a mistake in the transmission. [That's what we're getting ready to study today, the difficulties of inspiration.] You know how easy you can make a mistake. When it came to the dissemination of the New Testament text, errors were made, some inadvertent, some intentional. The scribes at the time recognized that these writings were sacred, of course, but they had not yet started to think [listen carefully—in quotes] "canonically."

What is he talking about? He's talking about when they transmitted the text, they really didn't think about it until they were told that they should all belong in one completed edition.

Hmmm!

As a result, during the first and second century they felt a great deal of liberty.

Now, he doesn't know them. He's telling you that this is what he thinks they did. He doesn't know one single one of them and neither do I and neither do you. But this is typical journalism of our day, making it up as you go along. Then it gets in print and people believe it.

During the first and second century they felt a great deal of liberty to enhance the biblical authors' intent. And if a particular reading was difficult, they helped the readers by glossing over the discrepancy. It was not until A.D. 400 that a canonical mentality became entrenched and free-flowing emendations stopped.

Let me tell you something, my friends, under the argument that the oldest manuscripts are best, that's how they undermine the King James. And why we have New International and New American version. But I told you in passing that the papyrus manuscripts, which are the oldest, in

the first three centuries, ninety percent of them agree with the King James Greek text. You see, they know that. Now he just set in your mind to undermine the first four centuries by saying the early guys who translated by hand, the first four centuries, they weren't thinking of the canon, that is, how many books were in it. So they were free to change and do whatever they want. But boy, in the fourth century it all stopped!

Now why do they say that? Because they don't want you to put your confidence in the manuscripts of the first three centuries because they [the manuscripts] by and large, agree with the Greek text that's behind the King James. I hope you are following this. I know some of you are saying, “Wow. It is serious.” This is one of the leading evangelical textual criticism scholars in America today—very interesting!

Let me just read a little bit more. Then we've got to get on.

It should be noted that no significant doctrine of the New Testament hinges on any of these variants.

How many times have you heard that? Well, excuse me. In [1 Timothy 3:16](#) it is pretty significant doctrine, the deity of Jesus Christ. How significant do you want to be? [1 John 5:7](#) is pretty significant. That's the only mention of the Trinity in the entire Bible, with the exception of the baptismal formula, which they say doesn't indicate the Trinity. But anyway... “In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,” sounds like it to me. But anyway...now he comes back to [1 Timothy 3:16](#).

The confusion about the rendering in [1 Timothy 3:16](#) that causes Christians to be upset, the difference between God or He who can be easily understood when one recognizes the similarity between how they would have looked in the early

manuscripts. If they were capital, the masculine relative pronoun, it could easily have been a *Theta*, they were really looking at. And maybe the word was an abbreviation for God or they thought it was.

Now what he's doing is not dealing with the evidence. What he's doing is trying to suggest why the word "God" got in the text when it's actually reversed. The word "God" appears in the early manuscripts, the whole evidence is for God in the text. But see, to get you to think, he switched the order of talking about it very subtly and said, "Well, they probably misunderstood the relative pronoun to be an abbreviation for the name God."

I don't know if you're Jewish or not, but let me just tell you what a few of us with Jewish blood would say. Nobody ever, who ever did any translation was ever confused about the word God. And I'll tell you something else. Nobody abbreviated it with two letters instead of four. You see how subtle this stuff is? It's unbelievable. Now he's going to attack the King James.

Defenders of the word "God" in the text, [which would clearly indicate that Jesus is God and I wonder if he believes it?] based their argument on the fact that the majority of extant manuscripts...

Do you know the meaning of extant? E-X-T-A-N-T. That's a very important word. You will see it a lot. What are extant manuscripts? They are in existence, but what?—they are the oldest. Okay.

Wilbur Pickering in his book, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, says, "Fully three hundred Greek manuscripts read 'God,' while only eight read something else." Pickering and others would argue that the transmission of the

New Testament text take place under normal circumstances, but we don't have any proof of that!

Do you see what I'm saying? He's undermining a simple little fact about how it was done. Did he answer the problem of why out of three hundred Greek manuscripts in the early church, why do all of them read God, except eight that read "who"? Would you say that's pretty, you know, 292 against eight, pretty good odds that it's "God"? And how did he undermine it? He said, "Well, we're acting like it was translated under normal circumstances with, you know, carefulness and all." Do you see how he undermines you, right there? Why wouldn't it be under any other circumstances? It's very interesting what they do.

Where changes occur, these are largely introduced into the text to alter the theological meaning behind a given reading, usually for heretical purposes. Are we to assume that everyone who made copies of New Testament books in the early years was a fool or as stupid, asks Pickering? We have the majority text, today's King James Version, dominating the stream of transmission with very few individual witnesses going their own ideocentric ways [his answer to this]. But most biblical scholars contest this assumption. We err to presume that changes in the text were attributed to heretical tendencies. Leading textual critical scholar Gordon Fee of Conwell, Gordon Conwell Seminary, writes in the Westminster Seminary Theological Journal, "For the early Christians it was precisely because the meaning was so important that they exercised a certain amount of freedom to make the meaning clearer to one another."

Either he's misquoted here or I wouldn't want to sit under him. Do you really believe that the transcribers of the original autographs actually just kind of winged it for Jesus' sake? I'm sorry. Not only is that not the history of transcribing the text, I think it's close to an abomination and a blasphemy. And that's a scholar in the field!

I told you there were two texts, [1 Timothy 3:16](#) and [1 John 5:7](#). Will you turn in your Bibles to [1 John 5:7](#) for a moment? What are we going to talk about? We are going to talk about the difficulties of inspiration and boy, there's lots of trouble!

Go to [1 John 5:7](#), I'd like you to read that for me in NIV.

Student #1: "There are three that testify the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and the three are in agreement."

Is that verses [7 and 8](#)? Would you mind reading that again for us?

Student #1: "For there are three that testify, the spirit, the water and the blood..."

There are three that testify. They dropped out "Father, word, and Holy Ghost, these three are one?" "There are three that testify the spirit, the water, and the blood, these three are in agreement." Man, I couldn't have asked for it better! What edition is this? This is a Thompson Reference, but of course that goes in all translations. It's a New International and the date on it is 1983. All right, and the footnote...

Student #2: The footnote says, ([7 and 8](#)) Late manuscripts of the Vulgate testify "in heaven, the Father, the word and the Holy Spirit and these three are one." Verse 8, "and there are three that testify on earth the..."

Okay. Thank you very much. It says late manuscripts of what? What did it say, class?—the Latin Vulgate. That's what they said. They said "late manuscripts." Whenever you read "late," they are talking after the tenth century, A.D. All these late manuscripts of the Vulgate contain the reading. Did they say anything in that footnote about where else it might be found? No, they didn't. All they said was "late manuscripts of the Latin Vulgate contain the reading."

Student #3: It says, "It's not found in any Greek manuscripts before the sixteenth century."

Oh I love it! There it is. You heard it. Say it out loud again.

Student #3: It says, "Not found in any Greek manuscripts."

It says, "Not found in any Greek manuscripts before when? The sixteenth century!" Look up in the beginning of your New International under the back page behind the title, and see when the date on that was. This one was 1983. Copyrighted 1985, you heard it. No manuscript before the sixteenth century. Now when the King James was written they used the sixteenth-century Greek text by Stephanus in 1550 A.D. So, they are referring to the fact that is the first time any Greek text has the reading in it. Did you catch that? Boy, is that subtle!

The King James was translated off of a Greek text that was produced by Stephanus (a lot of Erasmus' influence), 1550 A.D. And Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-five Theses in 1517; so you see just some thirty-three years later we have a Greek text, which becomes the text upon which the King James was translated. The note says that there was no Greek manuscript before the late sixteenth century. What they are arguing (it's very subtle) is that the first known edition of [1 John 5:7](#) in Greek is the King James Greek text. So they added to God's word. Everybody follow that? That's exactly what they said. Oh I could not....Thank you both!

Does anyone have a New American Standard Bible? Okay, right over here. What does yours say? Read it, [1 John 5:7-8](#).

Student #4: "And it is the spirit that bears witness because the spirit is truth; for there are three that bear witness, the spirit, and the water, and the blood and the three are in agreement."

We left off heaven and earth again and left out Father, word, and Holy Ghost. Amen? That's what it said.

Well, you know class, I've been trying to tell you that we have a real battle going on in the evangelical world and I've been trying to tell you that this snow job that's been going on all

during this century is being undermined by some guys who started asking some questions. I started asking them in seminary. I took textual criticism under some very important scholars who did translation work. And they fed me the Wescott and Hort tradition and I started asking some questions and doing some research myself. So, nobody taught me in school what I'm teaching you now. That's a bottom line truth. I learned the other side.

What's the copyright on that Bible?

Student #5: 1994

David: Whoa! 1994! Praise God. That's what I've been looking for. All right. Say it again.

Student #5: "The rest of verse 7 and the first words of verse 8 are not original and are not to be considered as part of the word of God."

David: "Are not to be considered as a part of the word of God!" This is more interesting with every passing moment.

There's a librarian, master of library silence, uh science. It's a joke! A librarian from the University of Arizona, he's no evangelical scholar, name, nothing. But he became interested in this. I have in my possession, a book that hardly anybody knows about. But you now know about it. Are you ready for this? The entire book is a history of the debate over [1 John 5:7 and 8](#), with every documentation imaginable! And you know what? It's an anthology that traces it historically. In other words, it starts from the beginning and goes straight through. We go all the way back.

Let me just take the opening after his brilliant introduction. He starts right out with the first century A.D., goes to the second century. It goes blow by blow quoting everybody, all that they say, examining it. It goes all the way to 1990 in quotations dealing with [1 John 5:7-8](#), all the way from the time of Christ until now. However, within this book is not only the evidence to the contrary of everything you've heard, but he also nails down, quoting who and where it came from

and why. You see you get these old librarian types on a problem and they don't really care, all they want to do is research the accuracy of something. Very interesting! So all he does is put it all here, quoting them and all these documents. Documentation exactly where it comes from, what page, etc. It's the most amazing thing you ever saw in your life.

Now let me give you a few of the conclusions. First of all, it's a "lack of knowledge," that there are no Greek manuscripts that contain the reading before the sixteenth century. Secondly, the Latin tradition, which all these guys depend upon enormously because Latin of course was the language that it was put into. One of the first languages, we have thousands; we have more Latin manuscripts than we have Greek! So, all that evidence is very crucial. All of the translations that are used early would be off of more copies that are closer to the originals. Okay? And all of them into old Latin, all of them have [1 John 5](#), no exceptions! We have a problem here.

Let me give it to you another way. Most of the manuscripts that we have in Greek—5,500 of them and the Latin, some 10,000—you know most of them are after the tenth century. One of the big arguments that they have against King James is that there are a lot of late manuscripts involved, rather than early. And so, early is best. But when they found out that the papyri agrees more with the King James then they started to undermine that, as I read in this article.

Now they have another problem. And that is that if we go before the tenth century A.D., using their same arguments related to [1 John 5:7](#), low and behold we come up with an amazing discovery! There are only fourteen manuscripts that leave it out. Oops! But they have led you to believe that their remarks are correct. But if we use the same arguments about the oldest manuscripts, why would you leave this verse out? Why would most of the testimony start with the fourth century, exactly when we had the Arian and Athanasius controversy over the deity of Christ and over the Trinity? Why would you take it out of the text from then on? If you didn't

believe in the Trinity; if you didn't accept the deity of Jesus Christ! It is very interesting what this whole thing just completely undermines!

He quotes scholar after scholar, including Westcott and Hort and all of those guys, and what they said about it, and how they reasoned with it. It's unbelievable! I sat there and I just could hardly believe it. He shows you quotations that will appear in your Bibles, like what we have heard here and where they actually came from. And the guys who said them never even looked them up! And it's still being quoted?

Here's a little interesting thing.

Today the Syriac and the Latin Vulgate remain largely unexamined. The truth is no one in any field of scholarship in this endeavor with whom I consulted or read their works has any idea as to whether [1 John 5:7](#) is in any of those manuscripts. [Oooh!] Yet they take liberties in Bibles to say whatever they want to say in the margin, when the truth of the matter is nobody has ever checked. We don't even know the precise total of these manuscripts. The great scholar, Bruce Metzger, who dominates Bible translation in our time, who makes all these amazing quotations has in fact himself never seen the evidence. We do not even know the precise totals of these manuscripts, yet they are quoted in many people's books. [And I might add in the notes of your teacher.] Why, in this space age of abundant technological breakthroughs, do these scholars provide us with only estimates? Why do great Greek scholars as Kenyon, Metzger, Vobus, still refer to an outdated list? The likely answer is that all the Latin and Syriac manuscripts are not studied in a comprehensive manner because in fact, as we know from the studies we have already done of several of them, they all agree with the King James. Why is there not even a catalogue of manuscripts? Metzger, [He gives the

date, the documentation and his book.] on the Syriac manuscripts said, "In view of the abundance of the Peshitta, some of them of great antiquity, it is to be regretted that during the twentieth century so little effort has been directed to solving the many problems that clamor for their attention. [Yet he turns right around and gives his opinion without ever looking at them.]

What are we going to do about all of this, class? Listen to this. What's the name on the Greek text up there that you buy in the bookstore? You buy a *something* Greek text, a Nestle's Greek Text. It's about the twenty-seventh edition now. A lot of people don't know when it started. It was in 1904. But anyway, listen to Nestle's admission.

It was not until 1904 that a Greek text lacking [1 John 5:7](#) was widely distributed and accepted by professors of the Greek New Testament. [Boy, this is exactly the opposite of what those footnotes are telling you. Isn't that interesting?]
Eventually the Nestle text became the foundation for all current English translations, including New American Standard, Revised Standard, Good News Bible, New International, etc., etc.... The editors, according to Kenyon the great Greek scholar said, 'Only seventeen manuscripts from 8000 extant manuscripts left out [1 John 5:7](#).' [Bingo!] To put it in percentages, the actual amount of the manuscripts that leave it out, especially before the tenth century, represent less than one percent of the manuscripts.

That's interesting. Wow! Who are you going to believe? Sure like the documentation though. You can look it up for yourself. This is an interesting book.

Here's a good statement.

Old Latin is the most important translation outside of the Greek—[the old Latin]. The old Latin evidence for [1 John 5:7](#) is critical. And most editors of Greek New Testaments admit that the evidence for early versions has to be derived primarily from the manuscripts of old Latin. All of the Greek Bibles the United Bible Society, which have resulted in our modern English translations, state in their opening introductions that they depend heavily upon the latest old Latin evidence.

Isn't that interesting? He lists the translation committee, 1989 Board of Directors of the United Bible Society that produces a Greek text and all of that. You are going to find this interesting.

The Board of Trustees of this organization, which insists that it is a secret body, consists of twenty-five members. At the top of the list are three Roman Catholic priests. Next is Kurt Aland [his name is on the Nestle-Aland Greek text] and in the thirteenth place on the list of twenty-five is Mr. Bruce Metzger himself. [Who are these people? I inquired about a visit to this institute of scholars and was told that it is closed to the public].

How are you guys doing? And we're going to talk about the difficulties of inspiration! I just want to throw a couple more out at you. Did you know in the Greek text that is currently being used for this modern English, there were only twenty-nine manuscripts used for the epistles? They dismissed 99.63% of the quantity of 8,000 Latin manuscripts, many which were

never catalogued or glanced at. I don't know what to tell you here. I don't want to bore you to death, but this is just unbelievable. It just keeps going on and on with this.

It seems to me that [1 John 5:7-8](#) is in the Bible and belongs there and should stay there. And it means we have a reference to the Trinity for our Jehovah's Witness friends that come to the door. And it seems to me that [1 Timothy 3:16](#) is abundantly clear that the word "God" belongs in the text, which means we have a clear statement that Jesus was God manifested in the flesh.

What I'm trying to say is this will never be looked at, talked about or consulted or paid any attention to and that's been true all along. The business of selling Bibles is too big, too much money.

But seriously, the real issue is still not English. It's Greek. It's not English at all. I really am not here to knock New International translation methods or New American Standard methods. What I'm concerned about is our Bible. What is the word of God? It was written in Greek. What Greek text we use is critical and the English translation. I don't care if we have a new English translation, as long as we use the right Greek text. And that's what's bothered me for years.

Now you understand why the scholars of the Jesus Seminar can just pick and choose and say Jesus didn't say this, didn't say that and why they just throw things out. They just play games with it. That's where we are headed.

Do you know that the number one reason we are called "fundamentalists," which a lot of people have changed the meaning of that, now it's an Islamic Fundamentalist. So they have now made it the radical right. But the original meaning of the fundamentals, which were written by the way back at the turn of the century, we have had copies of the book up there. *The Fundamentals*. But did you know the number one thing is the verbal inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible? All that we are, all that we believe is from this Book.

I want you to know what you believe and why. I'm not afraid of controversy. I'm not afraid of difficult things. I want you to be students and not just check your brains off at the door.

Do not fight over English translations, but fight over the original autographs. We don't have them, but we have more manuscripts to guide us in determining that than any book in history has ever hoped to have or even to be worthy of sitting on the same shelf with the book of the Bible. There is no comparison whatsoever to anything ever written in ancient history. The Bible is the most copied, most distributed book in the history of the world, by far.

Now, we come to the difficulties of inspiration. And I want to start by talking about, the theories. There are various theories and you know a lot of Bibles will not tell you what the theory is in inspiration. They won't tell you. But these theories, at least five major ones, are what you will find in the Christian world today.

Five Theories of Inspiration

- 1. Ordinary** Men were inspired like Shakespeare;
A level of human genius
- 2. Dynamic** The thoughts are of God;
The words are of men
- 3. Degrees** Some parts more inspired than others
- 4. Moral** Spiritual and moral teachings inspired;
History and science questionable
- 5. Mechanical** Dictated by God to man

We have those who believe in what we call ordinary inspiration. It's inspired like Shakespeare. It's on the level of mere human genius. This is the number one view. I am sad to say. It's the view of secular people and liberal minds. "Oh yeah, the Bible. It sure has some wonderful things in it!" But it's just human genius that's all it is to some people.

We have the dynamic theory of inspiration, thinking that the thoughts of God are of God, the words are of men. So you have to realize that and men make mistakes. They will say God does not make mistakes. Which I am sure, God appreciates them saying. They will say the thoughts are important. They are of God. Now class, what's wrong with this? Well, you tell me how we express thoughts without words?

You cannot express thoughts without words. Watch out! This is one of the most subtle views of inspiration. It's used by a lot of evangelicals. People say, "Of course the thoughts are of God. Those were inspired. But you know the words are of man. You've got to deal with human error and all of that." You see how tricky it is? Wait a minute. The only way I know what your thoughts are is by the words that express those thoughts.

Number three, argument of degrees that is: some parts are more inspired than others. Now this gets them out of the historical and geological problems. By the way, the most accurate account of ancient history is in the Bible. We know that from archaeology. But you understand people are threatened by a lot of things. They say, "Well some parts are more inspired than others." And it's interesting how many Christian schools have decided that the first eleven chapters of Genesis of course are not inspired. "They are an attempt by a man in his generation trying to figure out how it all started. But, it's expressing some basic stuff. But really, you can't trust it. Some parts are more inspired than others." I asked you a question. Who is to determine which parts are inspired? Who makes the decision?

Here's fourth one, what they call the Moral Theory. This is very popular, very popular in a world where we're having a battle over moral values. You'll hear this quoted, "It's the moral and spiritual teachings that are inspired" This way you can continue to question history and science.

Then [the fifth view] we have what we call the Mechanical and what we mean there is dictation. Now I want to ask you, do you think the Bible was dictated? I don't know how many

Christians say it wasn't. The Bible says the exact opposite. Let me ask you a question. Did God ever say to a man who didn't have one blooming idea about anything God was talking about and did God ever say to him, "Write it"? Did He? Oh yeah, many times. The whole book of Revelation for instance. Or did God say, "Well you know, you guys, you hung around Jesus for a while. Why don't you come up with four unique views! Matthew, you were a tax collector, I'll bet you're interested in things like the king. So you do a king deal. Mark, you're nothing but a servant boy, so why don't you do a servant deal. Luke, hey doctor, physician, we need the human side, Son of Man deal. And John, you knew Him better than anybody else, you do the God deal."

Now if I'm being real critical you'll forgive me, but sometimes there's no other way to shock us into very commonly held views of evangelicals. You and I both know, you open a book on the gospels, that's exactly what they do. Matthew presents Jesus as king, Mark as servant, Luke as Son of Man, and John as Son of God. Watch out! Somehow these guys all of a sudden made it up. And that's supposed to explain things. You know, he saw it in the context of his own vocabulary and what he saw. It doesn't necessarily have to be accurate, the point is there.

Excuse me, most of the Bible is dictated, most of it. There are some exceptions but most of it is dictated. Here's a good question for guys who are liberal critics. Okay, Moses wrote the first five books. Okay, how did he write about his death? Joshua wrote it. Or the other possibility is that God prophesied it and predicted it and said, here Moses, I'm going to write about it. But actually it was after the fact because he was already dead. So, you understand? People come up with some brilliant things. Why is that brilliant? No, God did not use Moses after he was dead.

Now class, you are hearing a lot of junk out there. And it is parroted a lot of times by good men and I don't mean to be critical of them because some times we think, we read something, we don't really think about it that much. We just quote it and keep it going.

It's not just the theories that present the difficulties of inspiration, but it's in terms of the transmission of the text. And when you talk about transmission of the text, we're talking about

how we copy it. Whether one Greek manuscript is being copied onto another Greek manuscript or whether it's another version, another language. And class, when we try to analyze this, I put it down into five major categories. And I will want you to know this. In terms of the transmission of the text, we have five difficulties. We have first of all, inexact quotation, which we'll talk about. Two, variant reports where the same story is told differently. We have contradictory statements, unscientific expressions, and of course, the big one they all use, human errors.

Let's take a break and afterwards, we'll start in with five major problems in copying the Bible.

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History and Authenticity of the Bible
Lesson 14
Difficulties of Inspiration – Part Two

By
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We are dealing with these five problems and you will find them in almost every textual criticism book. That’s why I want you to just know what they are.

Difficulties in Transmission of the Text

1. Inexact Quotations
2. Variant Reports
3. Contradictory Statements
4. Unscientific Expressions
5. Human Errors

I’m not going to expect you to know a lot of details, but let’s start with a basic one that comes up often—inexact quotations. There are many of them. I gave you an example out of [Isaiah 40:3](#), matching [Matthew 3:3](#), “Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight His path.” And you can see that there’s just a little variation in how it’s stated. Well, literally scores and scores of Old Testament quotations are like that in the New Testament. They are not quoted exactly.

Now some people say, “Well maybe they are quoted off of the Greek Old Testament rather than the Hebrew, like the Septuagint.” That’s a big promoted thing among a lot of guys. A lot of pastors think that’s the deal. I think that is hustling too much. That’s like trying to “strain at a gnat” a little too much (cf. [Matthew 23:24](#)). I don’t think the New Testament guys relied on the Septuagint at all, but a lot of people do. I don’t think they looked at the Greek Old Testament to

quote it. First of all, I believe they were directed by the Holy Spirit and He was controlling the writer so that what was written was accurately reported.

So, how do you handle inexact quotations? What do you say? One is this: inspiration requires that the truth is told accurately, not that the quote be quoted verbatim. Did everybody get that? The truth must be told accurately, but the quote doesn't need to be quoted verbatim. For example, on the same basis I could prove to you that Jesus takes the same principle, many of them found in the Sermon on the Mount, repeats them at other occasions only with slight variations. A liberal scholar comes, they look at that—like the difference between the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew and the Sermon on the Mount in Luke—and they say, "There you see an inexact quotation! No way to prove inspiration."

What I'm saying to you is that it doesn't violate it unless the truth is not accurate. I don't need to quote it the same way. I can teach you the same truth in a Bible passage next week as I taught this week and not say it exactly the same way. When we say "inspiration," we're dealing with how accurate and reliable is the word. Well the truth is told accurately in every one of these without exception. Now, if we could find one where it altered the truth of it, then we'd have something here to go on. But we don't, and I'm glad we don't!

So we don't have to quote the quote verbatim to give the exact truth. As a matter of fact, listen carefully class, it may be that the intention of the quote is better served by teaching the truth rather than quoting verbatim. Now, that might sound a little tricky but let me give you an example. In [1 Corinthians 1:18-21](#) where it says,

The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world?...For the world by its wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save those that believe.

Now, the phrase, "where is the wise; where is the disputer of this world?" is a quotation from the book of [Isaiah 33:18](#). And it's the story of Hezekiah and the Assyrians—185,000 of them killed in one night—and it's referring to his counselors. The point of it is that going to worldly counsel instead of hearing from God is a mistake. Now in 1 Corinthians 1, the issue is trying to present some other gospel besides preaching the word of the cross is a waste of time, because that's the only thing God uses to bring the result. Are you following? So to quote Hezekiah verbatim from the story would only confuse the reader of 1 Corinthians 1 as to how it was applied. The truth of Hezekiah's quote is that we don't need to trust human wisdom. We need to go to the Lord directly. The truth is now quoted accurately and used accurately in 1 Corinthians 1, but it's not quoted verbatim. Is everybody following that?

You see, under inspiration, we not only do not have to quote verbatim to have the truth be accurate, but we also can have an interpretation of the Old Testament quotation.

Now, if you're Jewish—are you listening carefully? If you're Jewish, you would say we have no right to do that in the New Testament. But if you believe in the inspiration of the Holy Spirit for the New Testament writers, then you believe the interpretation of an Old Testament passage as found in the New Testament is also accurately presented.

Let me put it to you another way. If I removed all of the interpretations in the New Testament of Old Testament quotations, I would strip half of it of its message. Do we have Old Testament quotations that are interpreted differently than the historical context? Sure we do. How about David's betrayal by Ahithophel? That's applied in the Gospels to Judas betraying Jesus. Is that an accurate way to interpret that passage? Yes. Does it mean that Ahithophel is really Judas? No. But that's what, by the way, some people do. No. It means that the whole issue of the betrayal of Ahithophel to David is similar to Judas's betrayal of Jesus. That's why the passage is quoted there. Are you following? So, not only do we not have to quote it, we also know that the Holy Spirit who is guiding these men can give an interpretation of the Old Testament quote that was not the situation in the Old Testament.

There's a third matter, class, and that is that sometimes translation from one language to another may be involved. When you go from Hebrew to Greek sometimes they just don't go straight across the board. You have more letters, more words by far in Greek than you ever do in Hebrew. And Hebrew is a more flexible, fluid language. Greek is more mathematically exact. So when you go from one to the other, that's going to cause a variety in the transmission of the text, no doubt about it. But it doesn't mean it's not accurate; it is accurately reported.

Be careful about this because this is what liberal critics use to attack the fundamentalist view of the Bible. They say, "Look, if this was what you're saying, then all quotes must be quoted verbatim." My answer to them: "Let me give you a verse in Hebrew and see if you can quote it verbatim in Greek. It's impossible."

That's the problem we have in English, is it not? Can we always go straight from Greek to English and make sense? No. As a matter of fact, if you follow the word order you would really get confused, because the word order often in Greek is different than English. They might start with a verb and a participle and your subject is following it; whereas, in English it is always before it. Are you following?

So the problem of inexact quotation, I think is easily answered. But you watch out! A lot of people who attack the Bible—and we're trying to look at this in an apologetic way to make you prepared to answer—but a lot of people use this to try to undermine people's confidence in the Bible by simply saying, "Well, if it was accurate like you say, it would have to be quoted literally." But you can never do that from one language to another. Plus the fact it may be interpreted differently. Or there's a truth in the passage that's being used in the New Testament that if you quoted verbatim, you wouldn't understand.

Number two, another problem that is often brought out in books and writings—it comes in the newspaper too, in that Jesus Seminar deal—and that is variant reports. You have the same incidents, especially in the Gospels, which are reported differently. Another problem that is often mentioned to me is the superscription on the cross. They say, "Here is a flat out contradiction."

Why? First of all, we were told in [John 19:20](#) that the superscription over the cross was in three languages. That alone would make a difference! But let's just look at it again.

Matthew says, "This is Jesus, the king of the Jews."

Mark says, "The king of the Jews."

Luke says, "This is the king of the Jews."

Now class, what is common to all three?—"The king of the Jews."

If you ask me, "What was on the cross?"

Well, "They called Him the king of the Jews."

Another guy comes up and says, "What did you say was on the cross?"

They said that "Jesus was the king of the Jews."

Now those two are not the same. But did I give you a correct answer to what was on the cross? Sure. Do you understand what I'm saying? You're pushing something that's totally unnecessary. If you ask me...Let's say the only thing on the cross was the king of the Jews. And you say, "What's on that cross? What's written up there?"

"Uh, it looks like the king of the Jews."

Well, are the words "it looks like," are they a part of what's on there? No. I'm simply saying, "It looks like the king of the Jews."

"Well, what do they say about that guy on the cross?"

"Oh, you mean Jesus, the king of the Jews?" Do you understand what I'm saying?

"What's on that cross?"

"Well, it looks to me like they're calling Him king of the Jews."

There's another change. And each time I'm simply accurately reporting what's on the cross. Now if you look at it in a logical way, there is no contradiction whatsoever. None whatsoever! What was on that superscription?—"The king of the Jews." That was what they wanted Pilate to change. He said, "What I have written, I have written." That was a little rebuke to them. "I'll show you what your king is like."

Well, we also mention two other things under variant reports. One is that different views by different writers can still be reported accurately by each. Why not? Let's suppose you are out in a boat in the Sea of Galilee and a storm comes. One writer says, "Man, I'll tell you, that wind came up really rapidly!" The other says, "I'll tell you, that was quite a storm. Wasn't it?" One said wind. One said "storm"—contradiction? No. They are both saying exactly the same thing. The storm was caused by the wind.

Now if you are having trouble with this, I want to recommend something to you. There is a book called, *The Life of Christ in Stereo*. It was done by a Westminster Conservative Baptist Seminary. It's excellent, *The Life of Christ in Stereo*. It puts all of the reports of the Gospels together and over each word is a number when it's a variant like, "the king of the Jews." If Matthew had *the*, it would be number one. If it was Mark, it would be number two. If it was Luke it would be number three. If it's John, it's number four. So you can actually read it. And it reads beautifully by the way, just King James reading straight through the text. It's all coordinated and the numbers are above the words, so you know where the word came from.

When you do that, then you see the problem of variant reports just goes away. It just goes away. But if you try to, you know...over here in Matthew it says, and over here in Mark and over here in Luke...and your eyes play tricks on you. You can't see that. But when you see it all laid out and every word that's in all four Gospels about the whole thing is all there and the numbers are there to show you when it isn't the same in all four Gospels, it's very helpful. I use it a lot.

A. T. Robertson years ago had a book called, *The Harmony of the Gospels*. That's still being produced. It does somewhat of the same thing.

Okay, the third thing that people will use as difficulties deals with contradictory statements. I just had one this morning, a contradictory statement. It's not a contradiction, but people could easily find it a contradiction. It dealt with 2 Samuel the last chapter and Chronicles, where we have the Lord apparently inciting David to number the people and another passage saying that Satan incited it. Now among all the Bible commentators and scholars on this, there are

a lot of options. For instance "satan," a normal word in Hebrew, does not necessarily have to refer to the devil. It refers to an adversary or an enemy. So, it could mean that the enemies were inciting David to do this. That was the immediate situation that was causing him to do this. The Lord was allowing this to happen, so that he'd learn to trust Him and not himself.

But it also could refer to Satan himself. And if Satan did it, I don't have any problem with that. Why? Did the Lord ever allow Satan to do something to someone that would accomplish his purpose? Sure. He did in the book of [Job 2:6](#). In [2 Corinthians 12:7](#) Paul said, "A thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me." [1 Peter 5:8-10](#) says that "the Lord will use Satan to perfect us, strengthen us, settle us and establish us." God's final joke on Satan—he thinks he's trying to destroy you—God will use his temptation and attacks to actually make you stronger. How interesting!

So, who's in control of Satan? God is. So did Satan stir David up to number? Probably, but just like the Bible says—or his adversaries—and did the Lord do it? Absolutely! The Lord was behind it all. And it was a great lesson learned, even for us today. Did the Lord send an evil spirit upon Saul? Sure. The Bible says so. God's in control of that. So, we need to be careful.

Contradictory Statements?

Questions to ask when examining a seeming contradiction:

1. Is the passage in the original text or is there manuscript evidence?
2. Is the translation correct?
3. Is this the only possible interpretation?
4. Is our present knowledge final?
5. Is reconciliation impossible?

Contradictory statements, I ask these five questions. One: Is the passage in the original text or confirmed by manuscript evidence? That I want to know! Two: Is the translation absolutely correct? Three: Is the interpretation the only possible one? Four: Is our present knowledge final? Think of all the things from archaeology that's changed our view of that! It's incredible! Five: Is reconciliation impossible? You see, you need to ask all those questions before you jump the gun.

In other words, there are a lot of things that are seeming contradictions that you have to do a little study and you apply these questions to really hit it, and it's amazing how clear it becomes once you just take the time and walk through it. Is it possible that one of the reasons why we have this problem is because we are removed 1900 years? I'll tell you the first time I went to Israel I couldn't believe how my Bible all of a sudden looked different. I saw things I never saw before the moment I went there. I was always concerned about details, little details bothered me. I read in the Greek, when I was reading about the resurrection story about the stone, the angels rolled it up. It's a Greek word "roll up." So there had to be an incline. So when I saw

the garden tomb and saw the incline, the trough in which the stone rolled, I mean, of course! Of course, they really did do that. It's amazing.

Where Jesus died there was a garden. What do you have to have to have a garden? Water! But it's a dry, barren land. There are only three water systems in all of ancient Jerusalem that hold cistern water, hold rain water. How are we going to get Him to the right place? Well, right in front of the garden tomb is one of the three cisterns. It holds 250,000 gallons of water. So when you get there and you look into that—okay, settled that! And we also know it was a garden because there is an ancient wine press right in front of the garden tomb, from the first century.

They used to laugh about Hazor. It was a major city in Joshua's time and had to be conquered. Now you go and visit the excavations. One of the most amazing sites in Israel is Saphoros, the city set on a hill. It takes about forty minutes to walk to it from Nazareth, but it's only about three miles from Nazareth. And you realize that Jesus was not a wandering country bumpkin of some sort, who worked in this carpenter's shop. What we now know is that He was one of the most educated rabbis of His day. We have evidence of His being trained in the yeshivas and in the rabbinical schools of Saphoros and it is amazing!

And they had at the exact time the Bible says that He was a carpenter with His father, they were hiring artisans, carpenters from all around to work on Saphoros. It was one of the most amazing Roman structures ever. Now all those ruins are there, all of that. The Sanhedrin's location was there. Now you realize that all that happened down in Jerusalem, they knew Jesus very well. John the Baptist is a cousin, grew up in a priest's family. They all knew each other.

Your whole mind is just opened up to things you see that are wonderful. Geographical locations, going down to Jericho but up to Jerusalem, you find out why. There are just all kinds of things like that. So, be careful about contradictory statements. People throw them out, but hey, make sure you have taken the time to look them up.

The fourth thing is unscientific expressions. Boy, liberal critics love to laugh at this, "the ends of the earth." And yet, I see it in modern literature. Journalists who say, "You know I'll go

to the ends of the earth in my love for you." Well, it's just an expression. "Four corners of the earth." "The sun rising." We still use that today. Has the sun come up? No, it doesn't come up.

"Well, it is. It's up there now."

"No, it didn't come up. We just rotated."

"You mean the earth is rotating?"

"Yeah, it's rotating."

You see we have a common vocabulary that uses such expressions and also one major factor about the Bible we need to understand. It was written for *all* people. It's written in *Koine* Greek. *Koine* is the word "common." It was not classical Greek. It was not the Greek used in courts and law courts. It was a Greek that people spoke on the street. The Bible is for everybody. It uses the language of appearance because that's the way we all talk.

Now, we come to the serious one, human errors. What do we mean by human errors? This actually happened in my seminary class. The teacher said something to the first student in the first row and asked him to write it down. He then asked that student to tell the other person in his ear what he had told him and to write it down. We went all the way around the class like that. And so he brought up the last guy's little transmission from the first one and showed it. We all had a good laugh because it was so radically different. When the teacher did that I was sitting on the front row, and I didn't like it. But I sat there in the front row. I didn't like what he was doing. I thought to myself, "Well, neat little experiment. You got one problem here, they didn't do that. They weren't whispering in each others ear and passing along and asking them to write down what they said. They were copying off a manuscript in front of them!" Is everybody listening? Do you understand how simple people try to undermine you? They just use a little illustration. Watch out!

What about human errors? Are there human errors in the copies of the Bible? The answer is yes!

Errors in Copying the Bible?

- A Slip of the Pen
- Words that Sound Similar
- Words Similar in Appearance
- Omission of Words
- Marginal Notes
- Errors of Memory
- Errors of Repetition

What do we have? We have, one, the slip of the pen. That's easy to see. Have you ever done that in writing anything? Like the guy who handed me his prophecies he received directly from the Lord and I told him "I don't think they came from the Lord."

He said, "Why?"

I said, "Because He doesn't misspell words." Slip of the pen...that can happen.

Words similar in sound or appearance are confused. Did you know it's only a little one tittle, on one letter of three letters in Hebrew that can change it from praise to profane? Little slip!

Omission of words, you know your eyesight. You're copying down and maybe the thought is being repeated—that happens in many passages—and you leave them out. There are marginal notes, sometimes in the earlier manuscripts you see a marginal note that will say, "Check the quotation of this." Or it might say, "In Luke it said 'so and so,'" and we're doing Matthew and it's in a marginal note. What happens often, as these were transcribed sometimes, they'd put these marginal notes as the text.

They have errors of memory or repetition. People ask me, "I hear that walking after the flesh not after the Spirit is not in [Romans 8:1](#). It says, 'There is therefore now no condemnation to those who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit.' That last phrase is not in most manuscripts. It doesn't belong in there." Well, if you read the context, that's what it's about. But if you look down at verse four, it is there. It would be easy in the parallelism of a text, the way they are organized to see that twice or to leave it out once or whatever.

Have you ever seen a guy copy by hand the Bible? Have you ever seen the guys that work on these? Most of them have glasses that are like two inches thick. They are practically blind. All day long.... Do you understand what I'm saying? If you think this was an easy job, you don't know what it was all about. No, I can easily see human errors.

Now, does that mean there are errors in the Bible? No. No, it means there are human errors in the transmission of the text. Watch out how people talk to you about this, it's a very subtle difference. You see all those little slips and all that, I can examine other manuscripts on the same passage and find out whether this was a slip or a marginal note or whatever. That's a part of what textual criticism is all about. But the truth of the matter is we are not talking about an error in the original manuscript. We're talking about an error in the copying of the text. Boy, is that a big difference. And if you have only one copy, then it's very significant. But if you have a thousand copies and the error only appears twenty times, then probably if 980 times it doesn't appear, then you can understand it was a copyist error and then they kept copying the same error.

Now, have you ever heard anyone say there aren't any more than a thousand variations in the New Testament? And then you read another book and it says there are 250,000 variations. What they mean is it depends on how you count. If you count the number of copies that copied the error, then they aren't all separate errors, it's just continually copying the same error. So how many variants do we actually have? We don't have many at all. But if you want to know about copies of the bad copies, yeah we got a lot of those. But actually copying and counting the

number of errors, it's very, very small. In fact, again it's smaller than any other document in ancient history. And Greek is not nearly as accurate in its transmission problems as Hebrew.

Well, two more things about this whole issue of difficulties. We talked about this in terms of theories and in terms of the transmission of the text, but how about in terms of the truthfulness of Jesus Himself? Jesus said in [Matthew 5:17-18](#), "Not one jot or one tittle shall pass away until all this be fulfilled." In [Luke 24:44-46](#) He said, "All of these Scriptures are concerning Me." In [John 10:34-36](#) He said, "The Scripture cannot be broken." Do you think God is capable of preserving His text as well as originally delivering it? Sure He is.

You see that brings me to the fourth issue, the terms of the testimony of the writers themselves.

[Joshua 1:8](#) you take that. Next [Joshua 11:15](#); [24:26](#)

[1 Samuel 10:25](#); [2 Samuel 23:1-3](#)

[1 Kings 14:18-19](#), [29](#); [15:23](#), [31](#); [16:14](#), [20](#), [27](#), [34](#); [22:39](#), [45](#)

Next [1 Chronicles 29:29-30](#)

[2 Chronicles 32:32](#); [33:18-19](#); [35:26-27](#); [36:21-22](#)

[Ezra 1:1](#)

[Nehemiah 8:8](#)

[Psalm 119:89](#); [138:2](#)

[2 Peter 3:15-16](#)

[The following Scriptures were read aloud in class by the students from various versions of the Bible. In many cases the voices were inaudible, and therefore we have inserted the King James Version, read by Stephen Johnston.]

Here we go. This is the testimony of the writers themselves, so let's see what we have.

Let's start right over here with [Joshua 1:8](#) (KJV).

This book of the law shalt not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein. For then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

We are to be careful. We are to meditate on it day and night. Do you think anybody did? Yeah, I think they did then just like they do today.

[Joshua 11:15](#)

As the LORD had commanded Moses his servant, so Moses commanded Joshua, and so Joshua did. He left nothing undone of all that the LORD commanded Moses.

Whoa! Pretty strong! "He left nothing undone of all that God commanded him." Maybe he meant half?

[Joshua 24:26](#)

Then Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God. And took a great stone, and set it up there under the oak that was by the sanctuary of the LORD.

He actually did what? And he wrote it down. He probably just freely translated it. Don't think so?

[1 Samuel 10:25](#) (KJV)

Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book and laid it up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house.

He did what? Didn't he just trust their memory? Oh, he actually wrote it in a book.

[2 Samuel 23:1-3](#)

Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel said, The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spoke to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.

You mean the Spirit of God spoke to David? And he actually put the word on His tongue? You mean he really thought he got direct revelation from God?

[1 Kings 14:18-19, 29](#)

And they buried him; and all Israel mourned for him, according to the word of the LORD, which He spake by the hand of his servant Ahijah the prophet. And the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he warred and how he reigned, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

You mean he wrote them down? Everything he did? What does verse 29 say?

Now the rest of the acts of Rehoboam, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

Wow! He wrote it down. Hmm, that's interesting!

[1 Kings 15:23, 31](#)

The rest of all the acts of Asa, and all his might, and all that he did, and the cities which he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? Nevertheless in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet... Now the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

Well, apparently God is having them write all of this down. Hmm.

[1 Kings 16:14](#), [20](#), [27](#), [34](#)

Now the rest of the acts of Elah, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?... Now the rest of the acts of Zimri, and his treason that he wrought, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?... Now the rest of the acts of Omri which he did, and the might that he shewed, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

Aren't these just stories, myths somebody made up? You mean they are actual events somebody wrote down? How about verse 34? Maybe that's an exception.

In his days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the LORD, which He spake by Joshua the son of Nun.

Oh, you mean God? You know we read about Moses. You mean Joshua too? God told him all that? Man! This is a little different than I thought.

[1 Kings 22:39, 45](#)

Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, and the ivory house which he made, and all the cities that he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?... Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, and his might that he shewed, and how he warred, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

Why don't they just say, now the rest of the acts were told to all the kids? Apparently they didn't trust them.

[1 Chronicles 29:29-30](#)

Now the acts of King David, first and last, indeed they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer, with all his reign and his might, and the events that happened to him, to Israel, and to all the kingdoms of the countries.

Wow, all those guys are in the Bible!

[2 Chronicles 32:32](#)

Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and his goodness, behold, they are written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, and in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel.

Now, we've got Isaiah. We've got Samuel and Gad and Nathan and all these prophets and you're telling me they wrote down what they said?

[2 Chronicles 33:18-19](#)

Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and his prayer unto his God, and the words of the seers that spake to him in the name of the LORD God of Israel, behold they are written in the book of the kings of Israel. His prayer also, and how God was intreated of him, and all his sin, and his trespass, and the places wherein he built high places, and set up groves and graven images, before he was humbled: behold, they are written among the sayings of the seers.

And all that was written down. Amazing! Next—

[2 Chronicles 35:26-27](#)

Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and his goodness, according to that which was written in the law of the LORD, And his deeds, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.

Wow!

[2 Chronicles 36:21-22](#)

To fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfill three score and ten years. Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing.

So it was all by the mouth of Jeremiah the prophet and God fulfilled it and it is all recorded every last bit of it.

[Ezra 1:1](#)

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing.

What came out of the mouth of Jeremiah, his own ideas you meant, didn't you? What did it say? What came out of his mouth? How did it start? Read it again. Oh, "the word of the Lord!"

[Nehemiah 8:8](#)

So they read in the book of the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.

That's probably not true. They probably winged it a little bit. You don't mean they took all that time and tried to get people to understand the exact meaning of the written word of God do you?

[Ps 119:89](#)

Forever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.

You mean it didn't just happen? You mean this thing was all a shut case before we started? You probably didn't read that right. What was that again, it says forever, huh?

[Psalm 138:2](#)

I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.

He has what? He magnified His word above His name? His name is who God is. What are you telling me? Are you trying to tell me this would have to be infallible then? Whoa!

[2 Peter 3:15-16](#)

And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given to 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.

He did what? He wrote according to wisdom given to him—he didn't come up with it himself? In all his epistles that which is written—what do you think, class? Do you think God is concerned about a written revelation? Yeah, I'd say so.

Shall we pray?

Father, thank You that You have given us a complete, final, sufficient revelation from Your mouth through Your prophets to us in written form that we can read and know Your word. May we not take this lightly, but may we become students of the word of God. May the next time when we're alone, no one else is around to be impressed, when we open this blessed Book, may we remember it is Your word to us. Thank You, Lord, in Jesus' name. Amen.

History and Authenticity of the Bible
Lesson 15
Review and Issues of Canonicity

By
Dr. David Hocking

Brought to you by
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Okay, let's pray.

Father, we thank You for Your wonderful word, thank you for the Bible. Thank You, Lord that here is all the direction we need. Your word is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. Thank You for the freedom we have to learn about You and to preach Your word. And I pray that You will give us wisdom about how to draw people's hearts toward You. May our nation never forget that Your gracious hand has made all this possible. You told us when we are blessed, when we have eaten and are full that we will never forget what the Lord has done. We pray, Lord for our country's financial crisis. That the leaders might turn their hearts to You. Thank You for this class, in Jesus' name. Amen.

We are talking about the difficulties in inspiration. We were talking about variant reports. Variant reports are normally looked at in the gospels. Especially in Matthew, Mark, and Luke which are called the synoptic gospels. And I did not give you this fact last time, but I would like you to make a note of it. Approximately ninety-three percent of the material in John is not found in Matthew, Mark or Luke. In addition to the resurrection, the feeding of the 5,000 is mentioned in all four gospels.

Remember that these gospel writers are giving us a picture of Jesus' ministry which could have been as much as four years, perhaps three and half is better. And they could have had books three and four times their size. How do we know that? We know that from the statement in [John 21:25](#).

And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.

It would be impossible to record all the things that Jesus did. And I point that out because so many people when they look at the problem of variant reports, they act like Jesus only did something or said something on one occasion. And therefore there are three different views of it. The longer I have studied this matter, the more I have become convinced that they were spoken on many different occasions.

One of the major variant reports is the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew and Luke. People try to make a lot of that, but again if you realize that Jesus said things on different occasions, He didn't say them in exactly the same way. But there really isn't any variant report there. There is additional information in Matthew, so apparently the sermon that He delivered there was longer than the words that Luke heard on his occasion.

Sometimes when people are talking about variant reports, they haven't looked carefully at the background. For instance, in the context it may be that on one occasion He's in the wilderness, or out by a desert place. Or the other time it might be that He went up to a mountain, or one is in Northern Galilee and the other is in Judea. This is a very critical thing.

Just one example: some say that the supper He had in [Luke 7:36](#) is identical to the supper in [John 12:2](#). Now if you say that, then you've got a problem of variant reports. Let me just show you how people do this. In Luke 7, He was at the home of a Pharisee named Simon and a woman came in to wash His feet with her hair and tears. In John 12, He's at the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus in Bethany, or presumably so, since Martha serves there and Lazarus is there. Some say that that very meeting, that supper was a celebration of the resurrection of Lazarus. But I simply point out that if you think they are the same story because of one detail—the woman who comes in from the street—if you think that is the same, then you have to go to all kinds of contortions to solve the problem. So many people have argued that the actual dinner in John 12, though in the town of Bethany, was hosted by Simon the Pharisee. But under this view, you have no proof that Simon the Pharisee ever lived in Bethany.

So that's what I'm trying to say is with variant reports, people push these things to a point that they act like it's the same story. And I don't believe that at all. I believe those are two different stories with two different impacts by the way, two different conclusions. They were in two different locations and two different times.

Be careful about concluding that each thing you read that looks similar in the gospels is somehow the same event. Background will often show you that it's not the same event. That's like the blind men that are healed. One blind man in one case ([Mark 10:46-47](#) and [Luke 18:35](#)), two blind men in the other ([Matthew 20:29-30](#)) and Jericho is mentioned [in each passage]. But as we know now in archaeology there are two Jerichos, there was old and new. So the actual details of Him leaving the city versus entering the city is exactly correct if you know the old and the new Jericho. But if you don't know that, it looks like an apparent contradiction—a variant report.

Now the next one that we're talking about is closely related to a variant report, and that's contradictory statements. It's a little different than variant reporting. This is what people believe is a direct, provable contradiction. Now, here's what I do and you'll have to do the same. And by the way, books like Gleason-Archer, the Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties, normally they will give you some insight into these supposed contradictions, most of them are listed in there.

But here's what you need to ask. First of all, is the passage in the original text or confirmed by manuscript evidence? Now what I have found is that, that question has become a very unimportant one, even though I still ask it. It is largely fostered by those who don't believe certain passages are in the Greek text. The woman taken in adultery, [John 8:1-11](#). The last few verses of Mark 16, which they say are not in a majority of the manuscripts. Yet I think there's no question the evidence points to Mark being included.

Some people use the discipleship passages to prove other contradictions. A disciple, *mathētēs*, is a simple learner. If you would see a rabbi, with a bunch of kids running around after

him and listening to his every word, they are called his disciples. They may or may not believe what he says. They are just listening to him. You may not believe all that you are hearing, but you are at least required to listen. So you are my disciples, at least in this sense of the class. But whether you are true believers in all that I'm saying, that's another question. And sorry for the inadequate comparison to our Lord, I don't mean anything by it except to illustrate that discipleship does not mean that you are a believer in Jesus Christ. That has been often held. And so some people use the discipleship passages to prove other contradictions.

An example is that you have to be a disciple under the terms of discipleship in order to prove you are born again. So therefore, salvation is something more than by faith. This led people to talk about lordship salvation. That somehow there's a difference between believing in Jesus Christ as your lord and following Him as your lord. Now you can follow Him and not be saved, which almost seems like an incredulous thought to us. But you could follow, hang around with Him, travel in the same caravan, hear all of His teaching, ask Him questions, all of that, and never be born again.

So you see when people say contradictory statements, you've got to know what's behind that. And in this case, is the passage in the original text? And the answer is, yes! It does belong in the original text, but some people try to get out of the contradiction by it not being in the text.

Now, there are other reasons why they'd leave out Mark 16. Or they'd say it is a contradictory statement. And that is the statement Jesus made about "these signs will follow those that believe" ([Mark 16:17](#)). One of them says "they will take up snakes and drink deadly poison." It's not just speaking in new tongues. And I don't know if you are into snake handling and poison drinking to prove your great faith in the Lord, but there are actually people, religious groups, who actually believe that. They believe that passage. Then someone comes along to them and says, "Well, it's not in the original text." Then they lose their confidence in the Lord and all of that.

Well, it is in the original text and Jesus really did say that. The question is: does that passage refer to all of us today? Or does it refer to the apostles? That's a very important issue.

Now did any of the apostles happen to have a poisonous snake bite them? Yes, Paul did in Acts. So you see we need to just back up a moment. When you're looking at supposed contradictory statements you've got to ask: Is the passage there in the original text? Is it confirmed by the manuscript evidence? And we haven't even talked about that in this class yet, but we are going to. And that is a serious subject.

A second question is: Is the translation absolutely correct? Many times the translation is quoting Old Testament Hebrew. It's a quotation of that. Or it might be quoting the Greek translation of an Old Testament passage and it may not quite have it. There are rare exceptions, but there are some where the English itself is not accurate. The more you learn about Jewish things, the more aware you are that not everything clearly represents what's actually said. Sometimes a contradictory statement is intended.

For example, "Which is easier for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God or for a camel to go through the eye of a needle?" (cf. [Mark 10:25](#)). Now, to show you how people have trouble with that, pastors are still parroting this illustration. They say that in the door of the sheep gate there was a little smaller door through which you had to really push. It would be very difficult, but you could get a camel through there, but mostly it was for sheep and goats. But you just push and shove and kick and squeeze, but finally you could get him in. The point is that it's difficult to get in, but rich men can get in. You know all that struggle to try to help everybody understand the Bible is not helpful. The word needle means needle. We're talking a weaver's needle. The point is that Jesus Himself used a contradictory statement to show you that without God it won't happen. In other words, no one, not somebody pushing a camel through a little tiny door, but no one, no rich man, no one can possibly get into heaven without the Lord! It's an impossibility! So

Jesus used it in a figure of speech in an unbelievable, fascinating way in terms of what we call contradictory speech.

But we have that in the Bible; we have hyperboles also in the Bible—exaggerations for effect. They couldn't happen, but it's a figure of speech. Now later in our course before we're done, we're going to show you those things. I think some of you are really going to have your eyes open to how we really read the Bible. How do we interpret the Bible? Many times when you're dealing with somebody about contradictory statements, there's more to that issue than meets the eye. And you have to deal with that. Is the interpretation the only possible one? And is our present knowledge final? In the case of the two Jerichos it wasn't final until archaeological evidence showed it.

When I was in graduate school they announced to us that the first known contradiction in the Bible that's provable was discovered. The Assyrian obelisk stone, it's an eight-sided stone, it sits in front of the Assyrian room in the Oriental Institute of Chicago. I was so disturbed, I went to see it. And it has a list of all the Assyrian kings except Sargon and the Bible mentions Sargon. He was a great leader, a great conqueror. And so people announced that here's a known contradiction. We got the Assyrian list of kings. Sargon's name is not on it, there's nothing close to it. Everybody's panicking, writing articles and everything else. But some dear guys working over in Iraq in an excavation, actually uncovered Sargon's entire palace and his name was engraved in every brick! We even found out why his name was off the list. Because the guy following him was so upset at all the prominence he had, he decided to wipeout every vesture of his name so that people would never remember him. So he took him off the list of kings, trying to make people believe he never even existed. Kind of like a lot of people do with the Holocaust under Hitler, try to act like it never happened.

So you understand that when you are dealing with these contradictory statements, ask yourself: "Is our present knowledge final?" Often archaeology, often the things that we have

discovered have proven the validity of the Bible. They did the same thing with the city of Hazor. They said, "Why does the Bible mention such a great city and then Joshua attacked it? If the Bible was true, we'd have evidence of it." Well, in your time and mine, they have uncovered all of Hazor. It is now a tourist site and they now know the Bible is exactly correct for what it said.

So you see, what archaeology does is it just causes us to catch up with the Bible. I would suggest you'd be a lot happier if you'd just believe the Bible to start with.

I don't believe unscientific expression is a problem, but every now and then it comes up. The reason why I mention this is that sometimes it doesn't come up from unbelievers, it comes up from Christians who are trying to make a big deal over these statements that appear to be unscientific. They're going all over the place trying to figure out where the ends of the earth are—probably magnetic poles—to try to prove their point. And class, it's totally unnecessary! Remember that in the Bible we have common people's vocabulary. And they use expressions. We do that. It's a hyperbole.

I would expect to see this definition of inerrancy if I were you: "The Bible is without error in its original autographs, accurately reporting all matters which are written in the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments."

Why don't you just say that the Bible is without error in the original autographs and end it? Or why don't you just say the Bible is without error? Because it doesn't say all that needs to be said. What do you mean by the Bible? Some groups add the Apocrypha. Some groups add the Book of Mormon and so forth.

One of the most important words in that statement is original autographs. Why?—because we don't have them. Well then how do you know it's without error in the original autographs? Isn't that an interesting question? We're going to be dealing with all of this in terms of both canonicity and manuscript evidence. And when we talk about the Bible being without

error in its original autographs, we're up against it with a lot of people today in the Christian world. For example, there's a group called King James Only.

Now I happen to be a King James man, which I think you've fairly well concluded. I like the King James, but I'm not in the camp of King James Only. They actually teach, class, that inerrancy applies to the King James Bible. It applies to English. Now, if I was speaking another language from another culture, I would be offended. What do you mean? English is the language? Their answer is "Ninety-four percent of the world speaks English." Now I've never been able to evaluate that statistic. I just know there are a lot of people who don't. My personal opinion is that statistic is incorrect. And it's basically used by people who speak English. Why do they say that ninety-four percent of the world speaks English? It's because ninety-four percent of the entire population of the world lives in a country or a culture who has adopted English, at least as its second language.

Now you and I both know that when we go to school not everybody learns a [secondary] language. We both know also that not everybody goes to school, especially in third world countries. In my opinion this is overstating the case and will develop an arrogant prideful attitude about English. There are still languages and dialects in the world that have yet to receive one verse of Scripture in their own tongue. Be careful what you argue, class. Be careful what you say to people.

The Bible is without error in the original autographs but we don't have those, so how can we even know that it is without error in the original autographs? When we talk about inerrancy, we mean not that there aren't lies in the Bible. There are lies in the Bible. The devil, when he speaks, he usually lies. When men speak they are often lies, but they are accurately reported. That is the issue of inspiration and you add to that "without error." So you see, both of them have to go together. Some people say to me, "Why don't you just believe in the inspiration of the Bible? Why do you add inerrancy?" Because inspiration is stripped of its meaning if there is no

inerrancy. Inerrancy means there isn't any error. So if it's inspired, the writing, it means it's totally reliable. It's accurately reported. But if it has error in it then it can't be said to be accurately reported. Do you understand?

I don't know how many people have told me, just well-meaning Christians, "Why are you guys pushing this inerrancy thing? We have normally, you know, all of us have believed in inspiration. All Christians say the Bible is inspired, that's our unity. Why say it's without error?" Because there is no inspiration if it's not without error! That's why we had a few years ago what was called the Counsel on Inerrancy, which brought together leading pastors and theologians all over the United States and the world to discuss this issue. And it is a very important one.

The watershed of Christianity, if you'd put it that way, or the bottom line in this generation is the Bible itself. That is the battle. There have been many books written on the battle for the Bible, on inerrancy and all this and rightly so. Why? Because it is being undermined and Satan's behind it! And if they accomplish the goal to undermine people's confidence in the Bible, as the authoritative, inspired inerrant word of God, then we will eventually see Christianity crumble.

I am a very difficult person to talk to if you do not believe that the Bible is the word of God. I'm sorry; this is not a light issue class. I don't want to inflate the importance of this class, but it's one of the most important classes you can sit in because it really is a foundation behind everything else. You take a course in Isaiah or Daniel or something and you are reading through. I want to ask the question, wait a minute, do you believe that is without error and totally inspired of God? If you don't, it's undermining everything that's being said. This is a fundamental issue.

And so, I do want you to understand that it is not only without error in the original autographs, but it is accurately reporting whatever is said. If it's a lie it is accurately reported, that is what was said. There's no freedom here of private interpretation. The Bible says exactly the

opposite, “That no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation” (cf. [2 Peter 1:19-21](#)). So this is a very, very critical issue.

And connected to this issue are two main issues. One is what we call canonicity that we’re going to talk about now. How do you know that you’ve got all the books that belong in the Bible? And how do you know the ones you have here are supposed to be there? That is canonicity. Manuscript evidence, of course, deals with the text. How do you know what the original autographs are? And again, I do not believe the King James Version is the issue of inerrancy. I believe it is an excellent translation into English of the Greek text, the *Textus Receptus* that was received by the churches. But that isn’t the original autograph. The original autograph was in Greek with some Aramaic Hebraisms also, and in Hebrew in the Old Testament with some Aramaic. So we need to look at this very carefully.

First of all, the meaning of canon, I will expect you to know this. Canon, it is a rule; it is a standard, by which something is measured. Now the usage of the word canon, which is a Greek word, appears in four passages: [2 Corinthians 10:13](#), [15](#), [16](#), and [Galatians 6:16](#). Some translations translate that “rule” or “line of things.” Now it was first used in history by Athanasius. Athanasius was the advocate [who held] that the Bible teaches the tri-unity of God. He was the one who pushed [1 John 5:7](#) being in the Bible. Arius believed that this was not correct. [He believed] that the unity of God. God is one, therefore Jesus is not God; He is the Son of God. And that was a big controversy!

But Athanasius was the first one to use the term “canon” and here’s what he said: “It refers to the authoritative and inspired writings that are collected.” The term “canon” was used first by Athanasius in 367 A.D., to refer to the collection of authoritative and inspired writings.

Now the Old Testament canon (that is how we know what books belong in the Old Testament) was evaluated in a tremendous council meeting by men who were called the *Boulema*, a Greek word for council—BOULEMA. You know in Israel in the first century, we had the

Sanhedrin. You read about that in the gospels, Caiaphas, Annas, the Sanhedrin. Class, I hope you understand this. The Sanhedrin is a Roman puppet government. It is not something the Jews established. The priesthood was corrupt and [they] were treacherous betrayers to the people.

But there was a godly group of men who were loyal to the Bible. And they called themselves the *Boulema*. They were like Orthodox Rabbinical scholars who paid attention to the preservation of God's word. Seventy years after the destruction of Jerusalem, they immediately saw the need for their own survival protection and distinctness in God's plan, or uniqueness. They had a council at Jamnia. It went on for a long time. They evaluated every single book of the Old Testament and actually had some serious questions. For instance, the Song of Solomon because of its sensuality, they wondered if it should be included; Ecclesiastes because it seems so secular; Esther because it didn't mention the name of God. But all of those were eventually included on the basis of evidence that we're going to talk about.

Considerations for Canonicity

LANGUAGE:

Hebrew, Greek or Aramaic?

AUTHORSHIP:

Prophet or Apostle?

INSPIRATION:

Evidence: Divine, Human, Archaeological & Historic?

ACCEPTANCE:

Circulated, Read, Evaluated & Discussed?

COMPLETION:

Theological, Logical, Factual, Experiential & Biblical?

When you talk about canonicity, we have listed for you five issues. What determines the canon, or how many books are truly authoritative and inspired, and come from the Lord, are the following five things: Language, Authorship, Inspiration, Acceptance, and Completion... whether it's done or whether there is indication in the books you have that more is coming.

Now, let's take a look at language, class, these are just basic facts. But I expect you to know some of these that you are able to adequately explain to people. The Old Testament, in Hebrew has twenty-two books. I think I have mentioned this many times. Jews call it the Tanach. T-A-N-A-C-H. "CH" has a hard sound like "K." Tanach. Now they are the exact same materials as the thirty-nine books in the English Bible. But here's what I want you to watch out for. The verse numberings in your Protestant Bible do not always match the verse numberings in a Hebrew Bible. So, you have to be careful. In fact, in Proverbs some whole sections are reversed and turned around. So it's something to understand. But you have the same content. It's organized differently. Like Jeremiah and Lamentations being one book and Chronicles and Kings and Samuel are not divided up like we do in the English Bible.

Also, understand that the Aramaic, which is a form or a derivation of Hebrew. Aramaic is in Ezra and in Daniel. And it was the court and trade language of ancient Babylon and Persia.

Now the New Testament contains twenty-seven books in Greek with frequent expressions from Aramaic. And more people today are saying that they are Hebrew, not Aramaic. But Aramaic was the language spoken by Jews in Israel during the first century A.D. Although class, recent discoveries are proving maybe more than we ever understood that Hebrew was spoken by the Jews in Israel first century. Now, what would be the reason for this mix-up? Well first of all, Aramaic was spoken by all those who came from the captivity of Babylon. They learned the court language, they learned Aramaic; it was the trade language. They brought it into Israel. But do you remember in Philippians 3, when Paul was listing his pedigree? He said he was

a Hebrew of the Hebrews. Remember that? Now what that means is that he spoke Hebrew and he was therefore not what the common people were speaking.

Apparently the common people were speaking a little mixture of Aramaic and Greek. Greek was forced on them, since Alexander the Great through the Roman Empire, they spoke Greek. It was the international language. That is why you have in the Bible the term Hellenist, which sometimes people confuse for the word Gentile. But it doesn't refer to Gentile. Hellenist refers to somebody who speaks Greek and has been influenced by Greek culture. Do you remember in Acts 7 when they selected seven men of honest report to handle the distribution of funds to the widows? The problem was that the Hellenistic widows were being neglected. Now that wasn't a simple oversight. It's just that a lot of Jews when you don't follow strong Hebrew and Orthodox teaching, they put you outside the camp of Israel.

I received a form letter that had been made up in paper by the Orthodox Rabbinical Council of America. This Orthodox Rabbinical Council sent me a paper to tell me that Zionism is not Judaism. Zionism refers to the movement to return people to the land of Israel. They literally do not recognize Israel and do not believe they are true Jews. These are Orthodox rabbis. Figure that one out!

You see the same thing was there in the New Testament. They believe Israel has adapted itself to the secularism of our world and its culture and they are not following what God said. The article is interesting. I was fascinated by it!

They said, "We will not get this land until the Messiah comes."

Actually that's true.

They said, "We should not build the temple until the Messiah builds it."

And that's true also. But we know in the Bible, don't we, that Israel will build the temple in the Tribulation. And we also know in the Bible that Israel will in unbelief become inhabitants of Jerusalem. So see the Orthodox rabbis have not been listening that carefully. If they heard me

carefully they would understand that I never said that they had come to believe in the Messiah. What I said was that they are a fulfillment of Bible prophesy because they are there exactly like the Bible said, "inhabiting Jerusalem, they are there waiting for the Messiah to come whom they will look on the one they have pierced and mourn for Him as one mourns for an only son" (cf. [Zechariah 12:10](#)). So you see there is some truth to what they said; there is also some error, but the big message that comes out is not all Jews are real Jews. And of course, it just delights me to be able to communicate with them that a very Orthodox Hebrew of the Hebrews wrote long ago that "A Jew is not one who is one outwardly, but is one who is one inwardly. That circumcision is not in the flesh but is in the heart" (cf. [Romans 2:28-29](#)). Of course that will not be well received by them.

But needless to say class, what we have in the New Testament about Hellenistic Jews being neglected, what's new under the sun? The problem would be no different today. So, we need to understand that Aramaic was what common people were speaking. They had brought it from Babylon, also Greek. But that Hebrew was still being spoken and especially by those who want to be committed to what God taught in His word. They wanted to be committed to the word, so they had a tendency to show their opposition to the Roman Empire by refusing to learn either Aramaic or Greek. This is all very interesting, as it relates to what the Bible is. For God put the Bible not only in the language of all of those who were faithful to the word of God, the Old Testament Tanach; but He also put it in the language of all the people of the world so they could hear the wonderful good news of Christ. And this New Testament in Greek quotes voluminously from the Hebrew Old Testament. So God sort of sealed the whole thing up.

Let's take a look at authorship and then we'll take a break. The second issue of canonicity is not only language. If I handed you a book that was in Arabic and I said, "This belongs in the canon of the Bible." You see, on the basis of the principles of canonicity that they use, it would never be accepted. Why? It's in the wrong language. If I hand you a book and say,

"You know, this is in the Songo language of Central Africa and it's definitely one of the original books of the Bible." I'm sorry. It's in the wrong language. But class, can't you see how troublesome this would be if we presented to you twelve books, all from the first century, all written in Greek and said they belong in the New Testament? So you see language isn't the only issue. We've got to keep moving. That's just one thing.

We do have to talk about authorship. What do we mean by that? Well, we're trying to determine what books belong in the Bible. Well to be part of the canon, the book has to be written by a recognized prophet or apostle. You say where did you learn that? In the Bible itself! Turn to [Ephesians 2:20](#). Ephesians was written by whom? Paul was a crucial element in determining canonicity. Why? Because not only the scholarship, but he's well known in history. There is no doubt; nobody can fight the influence of the apostle Paul. So therefore what Paul says about these matters is very important, since he himself claimed to have direct revelation from Christ in [Galatians 1:1](#).

In [Ephesians 2:20](#) he said that "This church, household of God, is built upon the foundation of *the* apostles and prophets" (cf. [Ephesians 2:20](#)). Now the definite article in front of apostles specifies it, among all the rest of the apostles. Are there apostles who did not write Scripture? Yes. Timothy, Silvanus, Epaphroditus, Epaphrus, Titus, Andronicus, Junius, none of them wrote Scripture; yet they are all called apostles. So it is *the* apostles. Notice he does not repeat the definite article in front of the word prophet. This is an elementary rule of Greek grammar, which says that when two nouns are connected by "and," and the definite article "the" is in front of the first noun but not the second, it connects equals. In other words, there is something about apostles and prophets that makes them equal. It is a particular group of them. Now, in case you missed this and didn't pick up on it, he specifically deals with it in chapter three as he continues on his discussion.

[Ephesians 3:3-5](#),

How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his [what is it now?] holy apostles and prophets....

Once again, the definite article is there, though not indicated because there is an adjective, holy. And once again it is the same construction as [Ephesians 2:20](#). Why did he put the word holy there?—because all these men were sinless? No. The word holy means to set apart. The point is in [Ephesians 2:20-22](#), you know, is that there are only certain apostles and prophets that are the foundation of the church. So don't let anybody tell you that any old apostle could be. No, there are only certain ones who are the foundation. And in [Ephesians 3:5](#), we learn that these certain ones also had a specific task that made them that foundation. They were set apart for the communication of this revelation. Is everybody with me? I hope you did not miss that. Therefore, the early church demanded proof that a true apostle and prophet was the author of the book. It became one of the most serious issues of canonicity because many of the books were not written by a true prophet.

Now, how do you know who a true prophet is? You have to go back and examine like in Deuteronomy 18 or Deuteronomy 13. If he ever predicts something and it doesn't come true, you know he's not a true prophet. Now the reason why I'm telling you this is specific books called *The Lost Books of the New Testament*, which have been printed to kind of make us all think there are other books, in fact have authors who in the early centuries were predicting things, prophesying things that were ludicrous and never came true.

Now let me ask you a question. What about Joseph Smith? How do I know that these books do not belong in the Bible? Some people use the argument, "Well, we have a complete and

final revelation from God.” That is one of the arguments, but it isn’t the only argument. Is Joseph Smith a true prophet? I can give you one thing alone that tells me whether or not he’s a true prophet. He said there were “people on the moon.” Flat out, I don’t care how many Mormons respect him; he’s not a true prophet of God.

By the way, if they’re involved in more than one wife, they also go off our list. Did Joseph Smith have more than one wife? Did you know that the beautiful film they have in the temple in Salt Lake City tells the story of Joseph Smith. But you talk about a smooth lie! Joseph Smith is presented as having only one wife. Mormons aren’t dumb.

You see, there are many basis, when we look at how early church leaders and people examine whether a book is truly from God. How do we know? One of the most important is authorship because of [Ephesians 2:20](#) and [Ephesians 3:5](#). Now you’ve got a specific that you can deal with people on.

And now you need a break.

History and Authenticity of the Bible
Lesson 16
The Inerrancy of the Bible

By
Dr. David Hocking

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To be a part of the canon they had to have evidence of divine inspiration. Here are the key words: must be proven by the testimony of the writers themselves, by Jesus Christ Himself, by eye-witnesses of what is recorded, by the witness of the Holy Spirit in the believers as they read the books, and by archaeology and historical accuracy. Wow, they actually considered those things? Oh yes! We still do today.

When you look at the Book of Mormon, you have no record anywhere of the testimony of any biblical writers that anything in that book belongs in the Bible. But contrary to popular opinion, we have a lot of remarks by the writers of the New Testament and Old Testament concerning other writers of the Old and New Testament. So you see, early Christians were wise on inspiration. They kept asking the question, "What is the evidence of divine inspiration? And if it is there, then we should expect to see it proven by the testimony of the writers or by Jesus Himself."

How do I know that David, when he was running around those limestone caves really had God speak to him directly like he says? There wasn't anybody there checking on it. And the answer is that we have Jesus Christ Himself saying in the gospels that "David, by the Spirit said..." Do you see? This seems like a simple issue but it's not. When Luke wrote, he spoke about the eye-witnesses. When you read in the book of [Acts 1:1](#), "The second treatise, O Theophilus," then you immediately know that he is referring to the Gospel of Luke.

You see throughout the Bible, those who study this issue—and this is a whole science—we have two kinds of criticism, class. We have higher criticism and we have lower criticism, and they don't refer to the height level of the critic. Okay? Higher criticism deals with matters like authorship, history, background, dates, etc., whether the writers quote one another. That is higher criticism. It doesn't mean they are liberals. There are liberal higher critics and there are fundamental higher critics. Lower criticism refers to the actual text, manuscript evidence. And

again they may be liberal in theology or fundamental. But inspiration was a very critical matter. Is there any evidence?

Also you know, when the early believers would read a book, if the early believers who had the Holy Spirit in them, if the Bible is true in 1 John 5 about the witness of the Spirit and about the Spirit bearing witness with our spirit, Romans 8, then we should see some evidence among all the believers as they read the chapter and pass it around. Let's everybody read it and what do we think? Now that wasn't the only test.

But folks, listen to me. If the Holy Spirit is truly in you, then one of the things that happens in you is He bears witness with your spirit as to the validity of what you read in the Bible. I trust that many, many times when I read something like in the Book of Mormon or somewhere else. I don't feel anything. It's not because I'm against the Mormons. There is nothing in there that compares with the impact of the Bible. I know it in my heart. Am I the final authority? No. But it's one of the evidences. And when all the Christians were unanimous, that's from God. And then when all the Christians were unanimous and said, that's nonsense. Well of course it wasn't accepted into the canon if they all rejected it by reading it.

Considerations for Canonicity

LANGUAGE:

Hebrew, Greek or Aramaic?

AUTHORSHIP:

Prophet or Apostle?

INSPIRATION:

Evidence: Divine, Human, Archaeological & Historic?

ACCEPTANCE:

Circulated, Read, Evaluated & Discussed?

COMPLETION:

Theological, Logical, Factual, Experiential & Biblical?

This brings me to number four, which is related to it, namely acceptance. To be a part of the canon, the books needed to be circulated, read, and accepted without reservation as being divinely inspired. That's the other interesting thing. They didn't take any doubtful books, none of them. They took only that which was unanimously accepted by the churches. Which I think is a rather interesting argument. In other words, they took the position when in doubt, throw it out.

The three major periods of history in which these issues of the canon were evaluated and discussed:

Historic Periods of Evaluation

- Circulation and Gradual Collection
(A.D. 70-170)
- Extensive Theological Writing
(A.D. 170-303)
- Formal Collection and Acceptance
(A.D. 303-397)

We have what's called Circulation and Gradual Collection. That was just in a hundred-year period from the end of the destruction of Jerusalem to about 170 A.D. It includes some of the most important church leaders that you could ever know. Why?—because they wrote voluminously and they had contact with the apostles. Polycarp was a disciple of John himself. We have men like Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, Marcion, Papillus. And other writings included the Epistle of Barnabus, the Didache—the Didache means teaching. The expanded title is *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*. I read it in graduate school and it's an interesting volume. It quotes about early church practices. It's dated from the first century A.D. And apparently it might have come from the apostles trying to let the churches know what was to be practiced and what wasn't. It deals with baptism. It deals with communion. It deals with bishops and deacons. And it tells people about church order and it's of course, quoting a lot from the New Testament.

We have also *The Shepherd of Hermas*. Has anyone ever told you that the view that the Lord would come before the Tribulation was designed by a Scottish woman named MacDonald and came into America through Darby and the Plymouth brethren as a rather late view of

prophecy on pre-trib and that there's no evidence at all in church history for any pre-tribulational view. Not true. In my prophecy notes, which I didn't bring here, I have a whole passage out of *The Shepherd of Hermas* that's definitely pre-tribulational. And this is one of the earliest books we have. Is it in the Bible? No, because it's not written by an apostle or prophet. It was not inspired of God. But it's a wonderful book. It's just a book that was written by Christians.

We have also what's called the Extensive Theological Writing period. For about, oh I don't know, 160 years—something like that maybe less, 130 years—you have Irenaeus, Clement, Tertullian, Origen. Some of those names might be familiar. You might have heard them at some point, though you know very little about them. But they were just unbelievable in the amount of literature that they wrote.

Origen is probably one of the most prolific writers. He was from the Alexandrian school of textual criticism in Egypt. He was an allegorical man. He didn't strongly emphasize the literary, historical value of things; but rather saw the interpretation of it. He was a brilliant man. One of the things he did was put six different translations into columns next to each other. That was very helpful for us when we discovered it. Because then we could see a comparison of what was the original text. But he used a lot of manuscripts that I think were very questionable. And we'll talk about that before we're through here.

We also have a period called Formal Collection. The word here, just to remember it, is church councils. When we talk about Formal Collection and Acceptance, we're talking the fourth century A.D., namely 303 to about 397, and the church councils were basically accepting what was already universally read and accepted by the churches. But it needed to be done because of all these spurious books that we now call pseudo-graphic writings. I have a volume called *Pseudo-graphic Literature* and it has all these books and it's interesting to read them. But they are not in the Bible. So these church councils had to deal with this. Do these belong in the Bible? And it was a very, very important period of time. A lot of people criticize the church councils.

Jehovah's Witnesses love to tell you that many of the doctrines we believe now came out of these church councils. That's not so at all. Church councils simply were publicly dealing with what was already an issue among the people.

But there's a fifth issue about canonicity and that's completion—the reasons why the Bible was considered to be a complete and final revelation from God; therefore, nothing could be added to it. Although they kept considering all the books that people said should be added, but they also taught that it was a complete, final revelation.

Why the Bible Is Complete and Final

Theologically: Contains everything we need to know

Logically: Early church fathers' close involvement

Factually: No attempts to change until Council of Trent

Experientially: Has the power to change lives

Biblically: God's personal testimony of completion

First of all, we have a theological reason. The believers looked at all that they had and said how can you add to it? They read other books and they didn't contribute anything. The theological reason for a completed Bible is that nothing is omitted that believers need to know. I actually still believe what those early Christians believed. I believe there isn't anything you need to know that isn't in the Bible. "Well, it doesn't tell you how to fix a toilet." Well, it might tell you about your attitude while you do. Everything of the spirit, everything of the mind, everything of the emotions, everything of the will is all in the word, everything I need to know, the truth

about all of it. As a matter of fact, the truth about decisions in life is found in the Bible. And the older I get the more I realize the Bible has everything in it that I need.

It amuses me sometimes—and I've had more books than I know what to do with—but I still refer to them. But you know, I guess it bothers me that we in this culture who have all of this, we've come to believe that we need all of it—that the Bible's not enough. Twenty-five years ago I was in the poorest country, according to the United Nations, that's on the face of the globe. The average salary was less than a hundred dollars a year. There are no paved roads in the country. The little huts that are along the roads, that's just about all they've got—agricultural. No industry. And I spent several wonderful weeks out there preaching the gospel, staying in those huts, and living with those dear friends. And I can still remember coming down the road to those villages and seeing one chair—a chair was a luxury—one chair sitting in the village alongside the road. And that was the pastor's chair. And the pastor of the church would sit on that chair with his Bible that he just got in his own language. And that's all he had. And he was studying, reading. He had no other books to go to. He had no concordances. No computers, never been to Bible college. And all over that country, I preached at churches that had thousands and thousands of people in them, coming to know the Lord.

You see, there's something about all this that bothers me. You should know by now that I'm not against education. But I do believe that you can get educated beyond your intelligence. Where you don't think straight any more because you're so educated. I think we better understand that the Bible and the Holy Spirit is all that you need to build a ministry. You don't need anything else.

Now I'm not going to go out of here and tell you all not to get anything else. "To whom much is given, much is required," so we ought to take advantage of the books that we have. But just understand that to say we don't have everything in the Bible would make church leaders in

the first few centuries roll over in their graves. They wouldn't believe you. How can you call yourself a Christian and say that? Nothing is omitted that believers need to know in that Bible.

One of these African pastors came to visit me in the States, a dear guy, Simone Pierre Nabazuina—Simon Peter. He preached like him too! But he was a dear friend of mine. And I'll never forget when he walked into my office, the first pastor's office that he had ever seen. And he looked at those books. He fell down on his knees. His eyes wide open and started crying. He was so overwhelmed with all we have to help us, and he had nothing. You know I can't forget that. I'll never forget it. Maybe the Lord wanted me to know that so I could talk to you about it. Be very careful what you say about the Bible. I don't take lightly when people try to tell me this is not a complete and final revelation or that God spoke to them the other night and it's really Scripture and should be added. I don't believe in progressive revelation. I believe in final completed written revelation. And it's very important to me.

It's not only theological, it's logical reason. The early church fathers and leaders were closer to the issue. Isn't it a little bit of arrogance for us to be 1900 years away and say that we understand more? If these men felt they had a completed Bible and they were unanimous in it and even had church councils to list them, what makes us think that there should be some more?

A guy came up to me recently and said, "Hey what do you think about the Gospel of Thomas?"

I said, "Absolutely nothing. God bless you but I don't want to have anything to do with it."

"Well, have you read it?"

"Yes."

"Well, what do you think about it?"

I said, "I think it's a bunch of nonsense."

Do you understand the devil's trap? Do you understand what he is getting us to do?

I'm telling you folks, these things may seem simple to you, but we've got a battle out there! A guy came up to me and said, "Is it true that Revelation was written in the late 1800's, you know the last book of the New Testament?"

I said, "No it was written in the first century A.D."

"You're kidding!" He was just as serious as he could be. He said, "Well how do you know it was earlier?"

I said, "Because we've got manuscripts of it."

"Wow! Gee, the other guy must have been wrong."

You know I wouldn't tell you these things, folks, unless they happened. These things are happening. You never saw that kind of stuff forty, fifty years ago. You never saw it. There was a deep respect and devotion to God's word. What I see now, I see Satan's using all kinds of things just getting people not to think it's a big issue. You know what else I think he's done? He's got us so we don't carry our Bibles and bring them to religious meetings anymore.

I got in a pastor's car the other day, looked all around, I opened the glove compartment. He said, "What are you doing?"

I said, "I'm just looking for your Bible or a New Testament."

"Well, I don't have it with me all the time."

I said, "Why not?"

He said, "David, you're impossible."

I said, "How do you know you're not going to have a flat tire and somebody there is going to need to hear the word of God! You ought to have something here." You need the Bible. I think there's something seriously wrong, friends. I believe our pastors need to get more serious about what's actually happening out there.

You know my dad used to say, “When you go to church, make sure you’re fully dressed. You got your Bible?” That’s what he used to say. Fully dressed...is he talking about my shirt, or what? No, you always carry your Bible!

I’ve lived long enough to watch now what’s happening. And my dear student friends, please understand that the Bible is the word of God. It has everything in it you need to know. When we talk about what books are in the Bible and the canon of the Bible, when we talk about the completion of the Bible, nothing is omitted. And these early guys that came to that conclusion, they were closer to the issue.

But there’s also a factual reason and that is that no attempt was made to change the canon until the Council of Trent. What was the Council of Trent? Well, Luther nailed his Ninety-five Theses on the door of Wittenberg in 1517; the Council of Trent was 1540—a counter-reformation movement by the Roman Catholic Church—a reaction to objections by the Reformers that church tradition was more important than the Bible.

Do you think that maybe, we have traditions that we hold onto that maybe are not in the Bible? How about celebrating Christmas? Now, mind you, I’m not for throwing out Christmas. But I tell you something, we’re gong to make sure that we talk about the incarnation and virgin birth. We make sure we’re going to read the Bible because that’s the only thing that’s important. But have churches kind of picked up the tradition? Sure they have with the yule log, the trees, the ornaments—it’s interesting.

There’s also an experiential reason the Bible is considered to be a complete and final revelation from God. It has the proven power to save and change lives. There’s a biblical reason, however, that we are very concerned about. God indicates that His written word would be a complete and final revelation. Now we’ve dealt with some of this, especially the last line of Scriptures we have walked through. “That in the last of these days in which God spoke, He spoke unto us by His Son” ([Hebrews 1:2](#)). And then Revelation 1 saying “it is the revelation of Jesus

Christ." And that book saying you can't add or take away. Jude 3 says, "Once and for all delivered to the saints." But let's just look at some others.

Look at [Exodus 20:1](#). It's just a little different kind of look at this. Have you ever read this statement? It's just a simple very short verse. "And God spake all these words." Do you believe that the Bible is the word of God? "God spake all these words." That's what it says.

[Deuteronomy 4:2](#)—you might have wondered where [Revelation 22:18-19](#) came from—it's a quote from the Old Testament. "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish ought from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you." God never gave people freedom just to add whenever they want. This is the revelation of God and all the way through He indicates it's complete and final. Do you understand? It's not telling you when it's going to end, but it's telling you that God spoke all this and you can't add to it or take away from it. So the issue of direct revelation is very important. Extremely important!

In [Deuteronomy 8:3](#), right at the last phrase Jesus quoted. "Man doth not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live" ([Matthew 4:4](#)). This came out of the mouth of God; it didn't come out of the mouth of men.

[Psalm 19:7](#) is a wonderful psalm on the word of God. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. The testimonies of the Lord are sure, making wise the simple."

The word is to complete, to finish a project. The law of the Lord is complete. That means you can't add to it. Whatever it was, it came from the mouth of God and it's done. In other words, all these statements are implying a complete revelation. The law of the Lord is complete. It's a finished project.

[Psalm 119:89](#), "Thy word is forever settled in heaven."

[Proverbs 30:5-6](#), "You can't add or take away from"—again, the message of Revelation

In other words, that is enough to say canonicity deals with how we know that we got all of the books we're supposed to have that came from the mouth of God. And those five tests were definitely considered by the early church in determining what is the word of God. That battle was fought and won over and over again. There were never any disputes until the Council of Trent, 1540 A.D. And we know the reason for that. The thing I'm trying to point out is, isn't it interesting we're in the battle again, a battle that was fought long ago.

But the worst battle of all is manuscript evidence. These are some of the most critical issues of all. First of all class, when you read MS it means one manuscript; when you read MSS that's the abbreviation for more than one manuscript. Okay. Let's see if we can handle the Old Testament.

The greatest evidence for the authenticity of the Old Testament was the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947. Fragments were found in fourteen caves, and included portions from every book of the Old Testament except Esther. There were numerous portions from Deuteronomy, as well as commentaries and manuals on communal life at Qumran; which is where they were discovered. But the most important thing is rarely noticed by people. The expression "it is written" appears frequently in the Dead Sea Scrolls, but clearly refers to authority of canonical Scriptures. No non-canonical writings are ever referred to in this manner in all of the Dead Sea Scrolls. And there are tons of non-canonical writings. But they never say "as it is written." Why? Because that little phrase to the scribes who were doing that at Qumran represented the authority of God and His word. Now, isn't that interesting? No non-canonical have it. You say, "Well that's an argument from silence." But all the canonical writings have it. Do you understand? So you've got a double whammy there as it relates to the authority of God's word, known 150 years before Christ.

Interesting stuff! When I say interesting, of course all of Scripture is interesting, but there's a mention of a teacher of righteousness in the *Manual of Discipline*. And it's interesting.

I've read a lot of it. I don't believe it refers to Jesus, but what I think is the value of it is that it shows that one hundred years before Christ there was tremendous messianic expectancy. There were a lot of these so-called messiahs—all of that.

A student's voice: Are there any other books they found there in the Dead Sea Scrolls?

Besides the Bible?—oh yeah, lots of them! Those are what we mean by non-canonical.

That is they don't belong in the canon of the Bible, but they had a lot of literature.

Our earliest Hebrew text that we had before the Dead Sea Scrolls, just round it off about 1000 A.D., the ninth century actually, but about 1000 A.D. and it's called the Masoretic text. Masorite meaning tradition, and that's our earliest one. So you see, we've got a gap here of over a thousand years. And what happens here is that when we compare the Dead Sea Scrolls to the Masoretic text, we notice the Hebrew's the same. Now that's not always true in Greek; you see wide variation, but it is very true in Hebrew. So, that remarkable identity and similarity and agreement was powerful. It also emphasizes to us the Jews are extremely careful and amazingly accurate in their copying of biblical writings.

I have been on trips to Israel when we go to the Shrine of the Book—the Shrine of the Book looks like a giant, ice cream cone. Inside of that building, called the Shrine of the Book, is the Dead Sea Scrolls' copies of the Scripture. And in the middle, the major shrine is of the scroll of Isaiah; which is scores and scores of feet long. You can walk all the way around it, the entire book of Isaiah. And I have often brought people, as we were touring through there; I pulled out a Hebrew Bible of today and showed them the text that we are reading. So people could actually match it with the verse that is behind the glass. And you know it really is interesting. I've done it with other text like from Habakkuk and other fragments that are around in the various displays. And that's a remarkable thing, when you think of a thousand years' difference and the copying is so accurate! I wish that were more true in the New Testament, but it isn't. But it definitely is true in Hebrew. They are much more careful and much more exact.

Now in the New Testament, how many Greek manuscripts of the New Testament are there? Five thousand, five hundred have been cataloged. Now class, there's a difference between saying something is discovered and something is cataloged. A lot of manuscripts that were discovered or picked up out of the Middle East were put in somebody's museum basement and have not been put on display because they have not been cataloged. That means no one has really read them. It might be surprising to you. But often men will say that some of the greatest things that possibly we could ever discover might still be in the basements of all these Middle Eastern museums around the world. And that's true. Often they find things down in the basement. Stacks of stuff that they've taken from some dig and it takes years to go over that, you understand. So it isn't all immediately assimilated. They are still working on the Dead Sea Scrolls and that was found in 1947. So it takes time.

But there are 5,500 cataloged manuscripts, there are 10,000 Latin manuscripts. Latin is very important because it's the first language, the language of the Roman Empire, into which the Greek New Testament was translated and many, many times. Another 4,000 in other languages, and 86,000 separate references quoted in the writings of the church fathers. This volume of evidence is unparalleled in the history of ancient writings, meaning before the inventing of printing. When was printing invented, class?—1450 A.D. What was the first book printed? The German Bible! Now, before that everything was copied by hand. So, can you believe it? All of these manuscripts copied by hand?—before printing, enormous amount of evidence!

I've been told for years that next to the Bible the ancient manuscripts that have been copied the most were the writings of Demosthenes and that there was about four hundred copies. But saying even 200 or 400 or 500, next to 5,500 Greek, 10,000 Latin, 4,000...do you understand? The evidence of the Bible is absolutely overwhelming.

We have more evidence to determine the original autographs, which is our issue here. Inerrancy is without error in the original autographs. We have more evidence than any other book

in all of history. I know more about the Bible's original autograph than I know about whether George Washington really existed or not.

It's time to quit, but I want you to understand that the science of textual criticism which looks at manuscript evidence has become such a threatening thing to people that they have been scared of it or intimidated or just don't want to listen to it or whatever. Class, we're going to break it down and make it as simple as possible. But it is the issue concerning the Bible in the present time. And it's becoming hotter and hotter with every passing year. It's getting very severe because it deals with inerrancy.

Do you believe that the Bible is a complete and direct and final revelation from God, totally sufficient for all matters of faith and practice and totally without error in the original manuscripts? The majority of Christians do not believe what I just said. You are a minority if you believe what I just said. Be interesting to see in the years ahead how you handle this.

Let's pray.

Father, I pray that You will continue to give us a heart to know Your word, to understand the importance of it being without error. That it is the sufficient, final, complete revelation from God in written form. I pray, Lord, that everyday will be Thanksgiving to us, for You told us to give thanks always for all things. So, thank You, Lord. Thank You that You want to use us more than we want to be used, in Jesus' name. Amen.

History and Authenticity of the Bible
Lesson 17
Manuscript Evidence

By
Dr. David Hocking

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Father, we delight in Your word. We thank You that we have an accurate, reliable, written revelation from You. We delight in calling it the word of God. We know it was forever settled in heaven and that no one can add to it or take away from it without experiencing consequences from Your hand. I pray Lord that You would bless our study as we get into the details of manuscript evidence. Things many folks seem to ignore, try to treat as unimportant; yet we know that the enemy is working hard in this area to undermine our confidence in Your word. And I pray Lord that You would give us wise hearts, and kindness towards those who disagree. But give us conviction Lord that is based on the facts that we know. Thank You Lord for what You are going to do in our class today, in Jesus' name. Amen.

We're talking about manuscript evidence. There are two ways that we discuss inerrancy. One is canonicity which we've already talked about. Canonicity is the rule or standard by which something is measured. Determining how many books belong in the Bible is a big, heavy issue. But the second issue is far more important, believe it or not, and that's manuscript evidence, the actual facts.

There are two kinds of criticism. This is criticism used in the good sense, not talking about a critical spirit. There is higher criticism and there's lower criticism. Now, we've mentioned that along the way. I just want to keep repeating it so you know what you're talking about. Higher criticism deals with things like date, author, geography, background, etc. Lower criticism deals with the actual text, manuscript evidence. And so it's the lower critics that we are looking at now.

We have talked briefly about the Old Testament. And until the Dead Sea Scrolls, we didn't really know if that Masoretic text of the ninth century A.D. (which we still have today) was

truly representative of the original Hebrew. But to find manuscripts that are a thousand years before that and find hardly any variation at all, speaks well of the Jews who transcribed it and copied it. It's almost a miracle really, not having printers or computers, etc. And we begin to see the importance of those Dead Sea Scrolls.

In the Dead Sea Scrolls, class, we mentioned this at the end of our last session. I just want to make sure that you heard it. You might see it again. And that is, that every time it refers to canonical Scriptures, remind yourself this is 150 to 200 years before Christ. They always put the phrase "it is written." The Dead Sea Scrolls include a lot of other literature that is non-canonical. They don't belong in the Bible. But they were other literature that they were copying. And they never, not once, put "it is written" on any of them. So we know the Jewish people at least 150 to 200 years before Christ, this Essene community at Qumran down on the Dead Sea, were copying manuscripts. We know that at that point they already understood what was the completed canon of the Old Testament. That was confirmed in A.D. 90 at the Council of Jamnia, some twenty years after the destruction of the temple. And the Bouleme Orthodox rabbinical scholars are the ones who examined every single book. And we talked about some of the tests that they used, but we wanted you to know five and I hope you remember them: language, authorship, inspiration, acceptance and completion and some reasons behind that.

Now we're talking about manuscript evidence. When we look at the New Testament, we all of a sudden have a new ball game, so to speak. This is a much bigger problem in the New Testament than it ever has been in the Old Testament. We have 5,500 Greek manuscripts, a little bit more than that now. That doesn't mean there aren't some other fragments lying in museums around the world in various universities. But so far, we have 5,500 Greek manuscripts.

But we have over 10,000 Latin manuscripts and some estimate it as high as 20,000, because there is so much of this still laying around that hasn't been catalogued. Remember the Western church, which represents primarily the imperial government of Rome and churches around the Mediterranean, not counting the south, Alexandria, Egypt or the east from Antioch,

Syria and on. Those are other traditions. But the Western tradition, west of Constantinople, including Greece and Italy and Europe, they primarily are using Latin. That's why there are so many of them available. Latin becomes the dominate language at that particular period of time. So, contrary to what a lot of people seemingly so casually say—like it's not important—no, it's very important.

What is a version?—into another language. Okay, that is a version. The New International is not a version of English. The New American Standard is not a version of English. English is a version of the original Greek text. Okay, it means going into another language. And it's extremely important to understand that the number one version used throughout the Christian world was Latin. When Jerome translated the Latin Vulgate, the purpose of that translation was not to reduplicate all the efforts that were already going on. The purpose was to put it into the language of the people and not use the Latin of the Roman courts. That's why it's called Latin Vulgate. Vulgate means common, for the common people. So the translation of Jerome became critical. In fact, for a thousand years it was the only Bible people were using. Remember our English translations don't begin until the fifteenth century.

So these are some of the things we need to keep in our minds as we're looking at the problem. There are 5,500 Greek manuscripts, but there's over 10,000 Latin and 4,000 in various other languages. Once again class, be very careful what you say about this. It's not meaning that we have the whole Bible in every one of those, like we have 5,500 Greek Bibles. No. It's talking about a fragment. It may be just one or two verses, or it could be the whole Bible. But there are very few that contain the whole Bible. We need to understand that. So you have multitudes of fragments and portions of books and etc. This whole science dealing with the New Testament is just so big that one wonders how you could come to any accuracy of statement regarding it. It's huge.

In addition to that, we have the quotations of church fathers called Patristic, after the Latin word for *pater*, also in Greek for father. Church fathers do not mean like the fathers who are

Roman Catholic priests. Church fathers are the church leaders. So I kind of prefer to call them early church leaders. They were outstanding. Why?—because the average person was uneducated. These men were educated. And so they became very, very important forces in the protection of God's word and of the doctrines taught in the Bible. Eventually the leaders, key leaders gave way to church councils. There were so many leaders disagreeing with one another, they came together with church councils to deal with issues of doctrinal orthodoxy.

In the church fathers you have 86,000 separate references to quotations from the New Testament. That is pretty powerful! So when you talk about what was the actual original text, church leaders, Irenaeus or Polycarp, Clement, these men who lived in the second century and were actually born in the first, they are very close. Polycarp studied under John. Irenaeus knew John, the Apostle John. So there's a lot of close proximity here. And what they said and quoted from the New Testament would be extremely important, especially if continuous quotations by multi church fathers came out exactly the same. Then you'd know that's pretty good evidence of what the original text was. Because these quotations and the old Latin are all before we ever have these manuscripts called codexes—like *Codex Alexandrinus*, *Codex Sinaiticus*, *Codex Vaticanus*.

So class, we have a preponderance of evidence regarding the New Testament text and the job of the lower critic is to simply take the evidence of the manuscripts and draw some conclusions about the original text. This has been a long history. Now, we're talking about everything before printing. Class, when did the printing press get invented? 1450. What was the first book printed on it? The Bible in German. Boy, what a class! When did Martin Luther tack his Ninety-Five Theses on the door of Wittenberg? 1517. When was the council that the Roman Catholics fought Luther on the Apocrypha? When was that council? A.D. 1540, the Council of Trent. It actually went on for seven years.

Okay, the classification of manuscript evidence. I have in my background, stuff about textual criticism. I've worked on translations and I've had courses in it. Okay. I don't want to bore you with that evidence and what I've tried to do is streamline it. And you will find in some

courses on textual criticism that what I'm doing is really a summary because there are as many as five and six traditions of the text. I'm going to try to explain to you why they exist. In my opinion, there are only three major ones. And I do preface it with "my opinion." But, I think any scholar who would look at this would say, "Well yeah, that's a basic look at it." And that's what we're trying to do. We're not trying to bore you with a lot of details. But you cannot really understand this issue from the standpoint of where we are today without dealing with this. You have to deal with it.

Greek Manuscripts

There are three basic traditions or classifications of Greek manuscript evidence.

Byzantine – The Eastern Text

Western – The Latin Text

Alexandrian – The Modern Text

And so we look at three basic traditions of Greek manuscripts. Now class, wouldn't it make sense without cars, trucks, planes, trains, telephones—all of that—wouldn't it make sense that because it takes months to go from one region to another that the traditions of the text would kind of line up geographically? Do you understand? That would make real sense. If you lived in Syria and Turkey area and all of that, you're not going to have much contact with those down in

Egypt—rare! It would only be just a few very wealthy, intellectual, or military-oriented people, who are ever going to come to your area that you'll ever meet or see.

So, one of the first and simplest things that we understand about manuscript evidence is that they are controlled by geography. When we speak of the Western Text, for instance, that's most frequently quoted by the church fathers. Why?—because they are the ones who live in the area. They are the ones who are the leaders of the church. And it is primarily based on Latin manuscript evidence, so all those manuscripts in the Western church.

Now who's in charge of that manuscript evidence today? Exactly right, the Vatican is. So for years the Vatican preferred the Latin text of Jerome's Latin Vulgate. They preferred the Latin over the Greek. People sort of said, "Well, you are not trusting the original text." But now, looking back on it, scholarship thinks differently about it. The truth of the matter is we know that these old Latin manuscripts did a wonderful job translating the original Greek text. So we understand that they were trying to communicate with people. But eventually it became a problem because the church was not able to disseminate Latin throughout the empire, as you probably well know if you know anything about history.

So there were multi-languages being spoken. The church decided that they had a measure of control over people by simply continuing to use Latin. So Latin actually became, though it was a dominate language of the Roman empire of the first three or four centuries, it actually became a language of only churchmen. That's what happened in history. So the individual dialects and languages of the empire, people would continue to speak them. They'd grow up talking at home that way and unless they went to school and studied formally, which very few people ever did that. So that's what happened when we got plunged into what is called the Dark Ages.

The Dark Ages was not only the collapse of Rome in A.D. 476, when a barbaric Visigoth tribe came down and sacked and burned the city; Rome had fallen morally long before that. But the official collapse in 476 did not collapse the church. As a matter of fact, the term Pontifex Maximus, which all the Roman empires from Augustus who was the old Octavian, all the Roman

empires took the term Pontifex Maximus, Supreme Pontiff. You had to burn incense in most of the Roman centers around the empire saying, "Caesar is lord." That's the belief of the Romans. It was polytheistic. You can follow any god you want, but ultimately you have to recognize Caesar as the number one god.

When Rome fell politically, the bishop of Rome who by now had taken on a great deal of prestige and power, you could imagine how easily that would happen. If the governments of the world were controlled by one imperial city, namely Rome, how easy it would be for that church in Rome and its leader to become the predominant person. For instance, I read in my church history background, statements from other church leaders, one from Irenaeus and Antioch of Syria, who wrote the bishop in Rome basically rebuking him for thinking that he had more authority than any other pastor or bishop. So it became a great controversy.

In A.D. 250, a man named Cyprian wrote a treatise called "On the Nature of the Church." And that was the first official document arguing that the church can be represented by its clergy. So, the idea of clergy and laity though it always has been a problem, became a severe doctrinal problem and therefore the clergy was kind of an entity unto themselves. They believed the whole church was represented by the clergy alone. They were the only ones who could interpret the Bible. They kept using Latin. The average person was not using it. They totally dominated and before long they were buying up property also, in the name of helping people. So we have the feudal state that developed over the years. And the church literally owned the people and they were slaves to them.

The world was plunged into the darkest period of history it's ever known. It was caveman time again for a thousand years of terrible plagues and pestilences, the filth and the lack of sanitation. But on the church level there was increasing wealth. All the wealth of the world—I know this is a generalized statement, but I believe it could be proven with the facts—all the wealth of the world was being poured into the Vatican. That's why today when you visit the Vatican and you see the treasury rooms and all that, I mean, it's an absolute mind-blower. You

just cannot believe the wealth of the Roman Catholic Church. There is no CEO, Fortune 500 Company, or bank in the world that can equal the wealth of the Vatican.

Now I've told you all of this to give you somewhat of an understanding of why this traditional problem of where the manuscripts are coming from developed. Syria and what we call the Byzantine text. Now Byzantine is a term that refers to the Eastern Church, whose capital was at Constantinople. Whose leader was called a patriarch and they actually split the east and the west in the eleventh century A.D. Just totally split. And the Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox they are all part of that tradition, the Eastern or Byzantine. They are Greek oriented; they spoke Greek. They are the ones who translated the Bible into various dialects in Russia and Armenian languages and so forth. They are part of what we call the Byzantine tradition and they definitely didn't trust Rome.

Rome has a tendency to be dominated by Latin manuscripts. So the Greek manuscripts that will appear behind that are generally held by the Vatican. Anyway, that's called the Western Tradition. But the Eastern Church with Constantinople, Antioch of Syria, churches all over Turkey, into Russia, into the Caspian and Baltic Sea areas, all of that was known as the Byzantine Text.

Now, there was a third tradition that was developing down in Egypt down in Alexandria. It's an Egyptian tradition. It is encouraged by the church leader named Origen, who was an amazing scholar. It's promoted in modern times by Westcott and Hort's revision of the Greek text. That we'll be talking about. And it's primarily based on two manuscripts, *Codex Sinaiticus* and *Codex Vaticanus*. And this particular tradition has become the foundation of most English translations in the twentieth century.

Now, why do we have these manuscripts down in Alexandria? It's because the city of Alexandria was one of the three great cities of the Roman Empire—Rome of course, believe it or not, Ephesus, and then Alexandria. This is where the great libraries of the world were. There were other important cities, like Corinth, Troas, Antioch of Syria, etc., but the three great intellectual,

educational centers of the world were Rome, Ephesus, and Alexandria. The libraries of the first century, just so you get an understanding of what we're talking about, this is before printing, this is hand copied works that numbered in the hundreds of thousands—250,000 to 300,000 volumes in these gorgeously built libraries. So they became centers of intellectual leadership. So it's not surprising that around Alexandria there was a tradition developing.

Now the problem with the Alexandrian text and the tradition of this Egyptian educational system is that it was dominated by a lot of heretics. It was dominated by people who did not believe in the tri-unity of God. They denied the deity of Jesus, the whole problem of the Arian controversy. Arius against Athanasius was a problem over the deity of Jesus Christ. A major church council dealt with it. And the text, interestingly, has become the foundation also of the Jehovah Witness Bible. Their Greek text was called the Emphatic Diaglott and pretty well matches *Codex Vaticanus*.

Now one of the things that happened, Christianity became the state religion. Around A.D. 325 is the turning point. It started around 313, but in A.D. 325 we have the Council of Nicea. We have the Emperor Constantine who decides that Christianity is going to be the official religion of the empire. In many ways, that's when Christianity went down the tubes. In one day, thousands of people were forced to convert at the edge of a sword. It was said of Constantine that he saw a vision in the sky, a cross, and he felt he was under divine instruction to turn the whole empire into Christianity. There were forced baptisms and everything.

At the same time Constantine's mother, whose name was Queen Helena, took a little trip to the Holy Land to reinforce all of this and launched building projects which still exist today in the Holy Land. But she did this and as a result it still stands today. It's the biggest problem we have in the Holy Land when you go for a tourist trip. When you want to see what the original sites were, if you go down to Bethlehem, it's the Church of the Nativity. You know it's the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem. They are all over the place. This was done by Constantine's mother, Queen Helena.

Now, what is happening as far as the Bible is concerned is very severe. Naturally there are godly leaders who see what's going on and are opposing it. And they are being suppressed by all kinds of means.

In the Byzantine tradition it remained pretty separate and pretty clear of influence politically. That's why many people believe that the Byzantine tradition is more likely to represent the true Greek text than any other tradition.

Now if you have any desire to pursue this, there's a book *Byzantine Text Type* written by Dr. Harry A. Sturz, who is now with the Lord. He was a very close personal friend of mine and the head of the Greek department at Biola University. He also became the general editor of the New King James Version, put out by Thomas Nelson, which used to be an upgrade of the Old King James. Dr. Sturz was one of the most amazing Greek scholars that ever lived because he was a quiet humble man. He never was dogmatic in any way; he just did his work and he was quite a scholar. He loved the Lord with all his heart and I talked to him by the hours on this problem. He was one of the major influences to pull me out of the trap that I was under, for I had been trained in the Westcott-Hort tradition of manuscript evidence. He's the one who began to show me clearly from the manuscripts that this is not a conspiracy but close to it. His book on the Byzantine text is still the number one book on the Byzantine tradition. In it he proves that it in fact represents the original Greek text far more than any other tradition.

Now, I'm not saying he's right or wrong. When you open a Greek text and it says on the front "The Majority Text"...how many of you have seen that already? There's one by Farstad and Hodge, from Dallas Seminary and you can look at the book and you know if you read the introduction and go over the details, you will hear some of this. The Majority Text basically takes all three traditions and they make judgments based on it. And one of the judgments that they make is that the majority of manuscripts would probably favor what was the original text. Now, I can prove to you that is not always true, but pardon the pun, in the majority of cases it's true. The Majority Text in the majority of cases is definitely pointing to what the original text was.

When you buy a Majority Greek Text up there and it has a critical apparatus at the bottom, it is really taking all three traditions. It's trying to take all known manuscripts that have been catalogued on that particular passage and gives you a summary at the bottom. Now, the actual one they choose to put in there when there's a variation, the actual one they put in there favors the majority of manuscripts. Let's suppose you have twenty manuscripts on 1 John 1:1. That is on that particular verse, there are only twenty manuscripts in Greek known on that verse. If fifteen of them read a certain way and five read another way, they will take the reading of the 15. Do you follow? That's why it's called The Majority Greek Text.

The Peshita is Aramaic. The Peshita is an Aramaic translation. Aramaic is a form of Hebrew. It's a derivation of Hebrew. Because there's a big argument over whether Jesus and the disciples spoke Aramaic or Hebrew, many feel that the Peshita might have been the original language of the Bible. That theory is just blown out of the saddle by numerous things that I won't get into here. But the original language is Greek. It was translated into Aramaic and that's the Peshita. There is also Old Syriac that's involved here. I just don't want to complicate where we are now with that. But simply to say it is one of the versions, what we call primary versions into which the Bible was translated.

What's the difference, class, between a primary and a secondary version? The answer is whenever you have a primary version you go directly from Greek into that language. A secondary version is going from another language rather than Greek. For instance, if the English translated Jerome's Latin Vulgate, which many English versions did, then it's a secondary version. It's not primary. If it uses a Greek text like the old King James did, then it's a primary translation. Okay.

The book of Revelation has probably, out of the 5,500 manuscripts, only about 350 fragments. In the controversial text for instance, in Revelation 5:9 about the new song that the elders are singing in heaven, whether they are singing it about themselves—"we've been purchased of God with His blood"—or about those that are on earth that are going to get saved, is the difference between being a pre-tribulationist and a post-tribulationist. That's how serious it is.

So, it's a matter of manuscript evidence. Some manuscripts read "them." Some manuscripts read "us."

Now if these twenty-four elders are singing a song of redemption about themselves, then they aren't angels, which is the number one view of the post-Trib. So you understand, if they are singing a song about themselves, they are representing the church of Jesus Christ in heaven all during the Tribulation period, which makes you a "pre-tribber." So, many manuscripts read "them or thus." In fact you'll see a number of NIV, New American and all of that saying in the margin, "most ancient authorities agree with this," Which is a flat out lie. Why? Because there are only twenty-four Greek manuscripts on [Revelation 5:9](#) that we know are in existence—twenty-three of them read "us." The only one that doesn't is *Codex Alexandrinus*, the Egyptian tradition.

Now, why is that? Not because there is deliberate deception on their part, but there may be by those who started this. But the translators, these lower critic guys, like I told you, they are not preachers. They are not going around, you know, yelling and screaming about it. They're paid to do a job. They translate the text that's given to them. The text that is given to them is Westcott and Hort, a Greek text, which by the way doesn't even have the book of Revelation in it.

I told you, class, when we began, you're going to hear a lot of things that are going to blow you away and they're going to upset you. But at the end, you are going to come out very well established and I hope thoroughly convinced of what we have is an authoritative, inerrant, totally reliable Bible. I know it is a little troubling right now. It's going to get more so. I want to warn you about it, but I'm not afraid of it at all. I love this stuff.

Okay. Now we have listed under Byzantine Text, notice it says it is often called Textus Receptus or the "Received Text." It's a Latin word that was put on one of these Greek texts. It actually didn't come until A.D. 1633, the name Textus Receptus. What it means is the text that was universally read and accepted by the churches. Which text was universally read and accepted by the churches, class? This is not a difference of opinion. This is a fact. What text was

universally read and accepted by the churches? What tradition? Was it Byzantine? Was it Western? Was it Alexandria? It was Byzantine.

You see the Western Text became quickly Latin. That's all it was. So what Greek text was used universally by the churches? The answer is Byzantine. Not Western. That's why this whole issue is kind of interesting. When you come to the King James translation, people are always trying to undermine that one. People are always trying to say it was dependent upon a text that is not that reliable. No, excuse me. It's not only reliable, it's the one everybody used!

Is everybody still with me? Unless you were a dedicated Roman Catholic priest, which then of course you didn't use that one at all. Which one are you using? Jerome's Latin Vulgate. Is everybody understanding me? I don't want you to misunderstand here. If you were a Roman Catholic, you weren't paying attention to the Greek text. You were following Jerome's Latin Vulgate—for over a thousand years they did—from the 400s clear to the 1500s, when they had a revision and the Douay-Rheims Version, which is now in use today.

So all of those Protestants, those Reformers, which Greek text did they use? The Byzantine, there wasn't any exception to this. Well how did we get into the mess we are today? Thought you would ask, and we're going to answer it.

My assignment here is to give this class an apologetic understanding of how you have an inerrant, totally reliable Bible. I hope you will walk out of this class with no fear anymore or hesitation whatsoever about what is the word of God.

I said *the Greek text* that was universally read and accepted was the Byzantine. Now, if you put that another way, *the Bible* that was universally read...the answer would be "no." The Bible that's universally read was the Latin Bible, but the Eastern Church wasn't using Latin. Do you understand? What was dividing the east and west and eventually led to the split was not just over the pope. There was the Patriarch in Constantinople and the Pope in Rome. It wasn't just over idols vs. images. You know the Greek Orthodox people have pictures rather than statues. That isn't all the issues; the issue also related to the Bible they were using.

The Orthodox, let's call them "Orthodox" because there's Eastern, there's Armenian, there's Greek, there are all kinds of them. By the way, they are in numbers equal to the Roman Catholics. We sometimes forget that because we are so far removed here in the west from them. But Eastern Orthodox, Romanians, Russian Orthodox etc., you're talking about millions and millions of people who are in that tradition, okay. They look very Catholic, and by the way, you will see them all over Israel also. You go into the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and you'll see every branch represented. But they aren't depending on Latin, they're depending on Greek. That's why, still today in the Eastern church you will see the leaders using Greek very strongly because they believe that that was the original text. And they are correct, it was in Greek.

One of the reasons they stayed with Latin was so that they could control the people. That went clear until the present day. This generation is not so much, but do you know the parents of this Catholic generation, never understood the church services. You see, what you have is ritual. What does ritual or liturgy mean? It means the participant is doing something—kneeling, genuflecting, crossing themselves, lighting candles, taking communion, the Mass—in other words it's performance oriented.

Were people in these Catholic churches actually opening their Bibles and learning it? No. In fact until Vatican II, they really didn't feel they had permission to do that. Only the priest could interpret the Bible for you. Now they still believe that, but they've opened it up now in order to include all the separated brethren, they are fostering Bible study movement. So there are a lot of Catholics in this generation who are studying the Bible, to which I say, "Praise the Lord!"

But my generation, the people I knew that were Catholics, they were astonished to learn that we are actually studying the Bible. "What gives you the right to do that?"—they used to argue with us about it. They didn't understand worship our way at all. It was frightening to them. See, I remember. I was alive and in part of this controversy when they decided to allow English in the Mass. Do you know there were many Catholic people who left their Catholic churches that

went to English to go to the Latin because they thought they were more true to the faith. That controversy kind of died now.

We're talking multitudes of fragments and we've got to put this together. We've got to find out what is the basis of determining the original text. We haven't even gotten to that yet. So where we are so far class, I want you to understand there are three traditions. They are largely traditions because of geography. The lack of communication, of course, forced those traditions to exist.

They become also linguistic, as well as geographic. Why?—because the Western starts using Latin. The multitude of manuscripts is Latin and it becomes the official text of the Western churches. The Eastern churches say, "No, it's Greek." So the division that eventually led to the split in the eleventh century was caused, I believe probably in a primary sense, by language more than anything else. Okay?

Now, class when we look at the tradition of the New Testament manuscripts, please don't misunderstand, I'm not saying every Catholic who is loyal to Latin is therefore not following the correct tradition. On the contrary, the Old Latin literally supports the Greek text behind the King James. So these weren't bad translations at all. The trouble didn't start until the late nineteenth century—didn't start until then at all! And you're going to see the history of that. We're going to walk through it carefully.

Okay, let's take a break.

History and Authenticity of the Bible
Lesson 18
Greek Translations

By
Dr. David Hocking

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When we talk about Greek translations, I guess the thing that hits you right off the bat is, “Wait a minute! We’re already up to the sixteenth century!” And that’s a part of the problem. The assimilation of all these Greek manuscripts and fragments into a given total Greek text doesn’t start until pretty late. So right away class, know what you’re talking about! Why is this so? Because when the New Testament was written, it wasn’t written as one complete volume and given to the church. You might have gotten Ephesians. And another church over here might have gotten Philippians, because it was written to Philippi. Now it was true it was passed around and copies were made, but that’s how this whole problem developed and we need to understand that. We are at a great advantage to believe that fourteen of these twenty-seven books were written by one man, Paul.

But when you think about it, all these different men writing these books and then trying to assimilate the information and put it into one volume when you don’t have a printing press. You’re hand copying it! Did you know this was so severe that they literally chained and locked up a given book or manuscript to the pulpit? They only used it when they gathered as Christians. Or if you wanted to come in during the week, you could only use that copy. There isn’t any other way to do this at the time of persecution, when they hit the catacombs. And there were ten general persecutions of the Christians. I mean, sometimes these fragments, they ripped off a copy before the book was destroyed. Maybe it was one book, Philippians. They just ripped off a page of it and kept it in their dear possession. And we know in the catacombs that these people who loved the Lord, they actually were memorizing vast portions and then copying it down in the catacombs.

They would say things like, “Does anybody have John 16?”

“Well, let me check my little piece. Well, only the first three verses.”

“Oh, that will be helpful. Does anybody know John 16?”

And somebody will say, “Well, I memorized it.”

That's actually how it was done! They tell us, now we don't know this for sure, but there's a lot of evidence to the fact that some of these catacomb believers actually could reproduce almost the entire New Testament. Isn't that interesting? In some countries they do that. They definitely did it at the time of the Holocaust, passing little pages of Scripture around and people copying it down. They especially did that with the book of Psalms. What a blessing! You can imagine getting a little Psalm, like twenty-three.

So anyway, all of this has to be assimilated, all these fragments. So, we are moving into modern times—modern in the sense of the sixteenth century. The first Greek translation to be printed in 1514 was called the Complutensian Polyglot. You say, "I prefer just saying King James." But the most significant work done on this was done by Desiderius Erasmus. You've probably heard the name Erasmus. He was Roman Catholic. He was a part of that Reformation time. And his was the first to be published. There were many copies made and he had editions. Well, at least four of them that we know of: in 1519, then again in 1522, then 1527, then 1533. Erasmus's work was trusted by others. He did a fantastic job assimilating all the manuscripts that he knew, that were available. And by the way, they represented the Byzantine tradition because they were the ones using the Greek Bible; so most of these fragments and books are coming from them.

We have a man named Robert Stephanus. He is very important. In your notes you want to circle A.D. 1550 because that happens to be the Greek text that was used by the King James translators, A.D.1550. You say, "Boy I'd like to see what that's like!" Great. You can get the Greek computer program of Logos and it has the 1550 on it. You can actually see the Greek text that was behind the King James. They have four different Greek texts on there.

Another key little note in all these notes is the Elsevier Partners. They produced editions in 1624, 1633, 1641. Just circle 1633, that's when the name *Textus Receptus* was given to the Greek text. Interesting that it would be done and there was no attack then saying, "Hey you guys, that is not the received text." There was none of that. That's only done today, 300 years removed.

When it was done, everybody knew that it was the received text. They knew it was the Greek text used in the churches if they did use Greek. All the western churches used Latin. Isn't that interesting? So in 1633 it wasn't trying to start anything. But it just put in Latin letters on it *Textus Receptus*, the received text. Nobody complained. Everybody knew that was true. Today we have a war over that.

Now, can you get a copy of the *Textus Receptus*? You sure can. As a matter of fact, it's in that same four Greek pack that I just told you about on the Logos computer program. So, having Windows, we open one window on our screen. We can actually put four. We open one and we've got A.D. 1550. We open the other and we've got the *Textus Receptus*. And I have noticed, because I've been comparing them over and over again, in every passage I teach on they are almost exactly the same. There's hardly any change between the two. Well then, we did have a received text. Well then we did have a tradition that people recognized represented the original text. There wasn't any variation at all. That's interesting!

Now there are some variant readings—very few between those texts—more so with the texts I'm going to tell you about in just a little while. But a man named Brian Walton put together a collection of these in 1657. He used the text of Stephanus from 1515. But for the first time, he pulled in a text from the Alexandrian school, called *Codex Alexandrinus*. He also used another text called *Codex Bezae*. The reason why I put it in there is because it's the first time we had a mixture of the traditions. Today when you buy a Greek text it shows all of them put together. But that was the first time we started having a mixture.

Now class—codex—it's time to remind ourselves of that. Codex is really like our books. They are leaves, pages that are on animal skin. It comes from about the fourth century A.D. on and they are sheets that are tied together with leather thongs. So they are book-like. You can flip them. Because we have complete Bibles or almost complete Bibles in codex, they became dominant manuscripts. They also were in what we call uncial letters. Class, what are uncial

letters? Capitals. So people felt they were more reliable. They were easier to read. They became very significant.

Now John Mill, I put him on the list because he's the first editor to collect evidence of the patristic quotations. You see, even back there in the 1600s, they began to ask some serious questions about the text. How do we know the Greek text used by the churches, called the Received Text, how do we know it's really the original? John Mill said, "Well the way to check it out is by all the quotations that are in the church fathers. He made it his life's work. We owe a lot to him...all these verses quoted among all the church father's writings. Church fathers' writings are so voluminous. We were just looking at a catalog a moment ago and one set has thirty-eight volumes in it. I mean it just goes on and on. He began to assimilate that and we now have catalogued over 86,000 references or verses out of the church leaders. So it helps us to see that original text, especially if the church leaders lived in the first three centuries. That would be very significant before Constantine.

A man named J. A. Bengel, almost a hundred years ago, and he's the first to classify the manuscript authorities. When we say there are three traditions, he was the first one ever to do it and he put them into two categories. Called them Asian and African, which would be the Egyptian category. The African had the fewest manuscripts, but they were the oldest ones they had. Why is that? Because in Africa, or in Egypt (primarily they were all in Egypt) we have dry arid climate. So papyrus manuscripts and the actual preservation of them, they would last more. Even if they were buried in the sand, they would last more in a dry climate. You put humidity and rain in there and you destroy the manuscript. So that's why a great deal of them were found in Africa that are old. But in terms of actual numbers, the majority of manuscripts were of course in Asia. And his idea of Asia included the western and the Eastern Church and a majority of them were there by far.

Now a man named J. J. Wetstein. I'm not going to expect you to know these names, except in certain cases and I've already noted two of them for you—the 1550 and the 1633 where

we got the name *Textus Receptus*. But this J. J. Wetstein, he put out editions of *Textus Receptus* in A.D. 1751-52. Here we have for the first time a critical apparatus, a system of cataloguing the manuscripts. Today class, if you get a Majority Greek text, you look at the bottom of each page, all those little footnotes at the bottom, from what's in the text is what we call a critical apparatus. What it is telling you is the manuscript evidence behind a given reading in the text. It tells you the manuscript evidence. The first guy to put that in the Greek text was J. J. Wetstein, so we put him in the Greek translation hall of fame.

Semler & Griesbach

1767 Classification of Manuscripts

Alexandrian: Syriac, Coptic & Ethiopian

Eastern: Antioch & Constantinople

Western: Latin & Patristic quotations

We have actually two men, Semler and Griesbach, who classified the manuscripts into three groups that we still use today. A.D. 1767, so over 200 years ago, we're still using the same traditions. He pointed out that there are really three traditions and he wasn't trying to attack Bengel. But thirty years after Bengel he is examining this and saying really what these manuscripts represent are three traditions. We have Alexandrian, which includes Syriac, Coptic, and Ethiopian as well; and the Eastern, which is Antioch, and Constantinople; and the Western,

which is Latin and most of the church father quotations. We have not changed from that clear to this day. Those are the three basic geographical traditional areas of manuscript evidence.

Now a name I do want you to know about is Constantine Tischendorf. He's a German who visited the Saint Catherine's monastery at Mount Sinai, in the Sinai Desert. And he observed the monks in this monastery burning pages of an ancient book to keep themselves warm. Because he was a scholar dealing with manuscripts of all sorts, not just biblical, he was fascinated. Went over and grabbed a few of them out of their hands and notices they were pages of the Bible. He asked them to stop. Of course he offered them big money and they gave it to him and then burned other books to keep themselves warm. But that hit the world like you cannot believe!

I have seen some newspaper articles, written back at the time of Lincoln even, on this discovery. And it came like a shock through the Christian world. It was a manuscript that had thousands, not hundreds but thousands, of differences from the Received Text that had been used all these centuries. So you see it got everybody stirred up. The other thing is that it was a codex. They were leaves that went together. This manuscript, I won't tell you the whole history of it, but eventually was bought by the British Museum in London and that's where you would see it today. I have been there and I have seen it.

The problem is that it would take about 330 leaves to make the whole New Testament. There are only 148 of them. And you know I still read in a lot of books of good men that *Codex Sinaiticus* was the first completed Bible that was discovered. No, it wasn't completed at all. I think there are parts from almost every book. But there are a lot of pages missing. Of course, they'd burned a lot. It's got a lot missing in it. But it had enough, over half of the New Testament, to tell scholars we've got to do something about this. This thing has thousands of changes from the Received Text.

It also has some other interesting little things in it. It contains *The Epistle of Barnabus*. It contains *The Shepherd of Hermas*, these are apocryphal literature. Totally, they have estimated

there are 9,000 changes in that manuscript from the *Textus Receptus* and they are both in Greek! So can you not see why the scholarship of the world—finding this down in Mount Sinai, the very atmosphere, the very geography of it, that it goes all the way back to the fourth century, one of the earliest manuscripts we’ve ever found almost, the whole Bible is there—can you imagine how the scholars felt? They called it one of the greatest discoveries in manuscript evidence in the history of the world. I think there are parts from almost every book.

Now, the very next thing that happens... Tischendorf found this in 1844, but it took a while for it to, you know, hit the scholastic world and all that. And they are now saying, “Boy we’ve got to re-evaluate what is the original text of the Bible. There was just a massive explosion of scholarship saying, “Wow!”

So, how interesting that the Catholics would produce *Codex Vaticanus*. Some of these things I’m talking about are in your notes. The Catholics produced one that looks like Codex Sinaiticus. And the Catholics said it had been in the Vatican library since at least 1481. That’s the first time it was noticed among all their treasures. It was written on vellum. It had three columns. There was no ornamentation on it. And it ends at [Hebrews 9:14](#). Once again, when you hear somebody say that these were complete Bibles—wrong! They were not. It ends in [Hebrews 9:14](#). It excludes all the pastoral epistles, and of course the book of Revelation. It had 7,579 changes from the *Textus Receptus*. It also had all the apocryphal books of the Old Testament. Not as a separate section, but as though they were a part of the text all the way through. Amazing!

Two men, B. F. Westcott, who was a wonderful Greek scholar—commentaries by him are still used today—and A. J. Hort, who denied the deity of Christ, was a liberal in many areas, but was a Greek scholar. These two men got together. This story alone has been told so many different ways. I don’t know what the truth is. But it’s called *The Westcott and Hort Greek Text* and I was trained in it. It became the foundation of all modern English translations and still is to this present day. Now we have some evidence we didn’t have at the time. They now believe that these are two of fifty manuscripts that were ordered by Emperor Constantine, as he ordered them

to be printed. And Eusebius, the great church historian, Eusebius undertook the project. We know about the project and we now believe these two manuscripts were two of the fifty that were ordered by Constantine. They needed a new Greek text. It came out of the Alexandrian school.

But let's take a look at some of this. By the way, when Westcott and Hort put out this Greek text in 1881, not only did everybody say here is the original now, because they were the oldest manuscripts and codexes that we had ever known about. And because it was so much of the New Testament and everybody was going wild. They thought now we're getting to the true text. And now textual criticism classes begin to develop all over both Britain and the United States, saying that the oldest manuscripts are best.

Do you understand that they didn't have any fragments to speak of on papyrus, which is the very oldest writing material? Papyrus would have been the writing material of the original text. They didn't have any. Most all of the ninety-some fragments on papyrus have been discovered in this century. By the way, ninety percent of their material agrees with the Received Text, not *Vaticanus* and *Sinaiticus*. So you understand they didn't have the papyri, but they told the world these are the oldest manuscripts and this is showing us what the true text is and everybody went along with it. Why? The major translation and Bible committees and organizations around the world hooked into it lock, stock, and barrel. The hook-up with the Catholic Church was enormous. The Catholic influence in this was very powerful and that's a well-documented fact. "These manuscripts [listen to this] differ in the gospels over 3,000 times with each other." They sort of failed to mention that.

Now class, you can put the facts of this up to anybody's scrutiny, I'm not afraid of that at all. This is not David Hocking giving his view. These are facts now. Which then have to be interpreted, don't they? It is also a fact that Tishendorf made several editions of his Greek text on *Sinaiticus*. His eighth edition was changed in 3,369 places when compared to the seventh. Now how could you do that if you're simply copying the *Codex Sinaiticus*? You know something? I

didn't live then. I never talked to Tishendorf. I don't know anything about it other than what I read, but I'll tell you something's wrong.

In terms of English translations based on this codex, over 36,000 changes have been made because of this so-called evidence. And you ask me, is there any difference between the New International and King James? Yeah, there is a lot of difference. Now 36,000 changes are not that much when you're talking hundreds of thousands of words and more, but it is quite significant, isn't it?

The condition of these manuscripts—they are beautiful by comparison. I have seen them. When you compare them with other fragments we have that look worn, and you can hardly read the letters, and they're torn, and they're burned on the pages. These are like, well preserved. Now some people thought that was thrilling, but to me, that makes them highly suspicious. Before printing, can you imagine how these copies were passed around? Nobody had a copy! You didn't have a copy of your Bible to carry into class. You were lucky to ever see one, let alone touch one or even read one. Why are these manuscripts so well preserved? They don't look used. And if they were true texts that the early church knew existed, they would have been used.

I mentioned that the evidence of the papyri, that's the writing material of the first three centuries, has largely been found in this century. It was not available when the Greek text of Westcott and Hort was. And the papyri evidence is older than these two manuscripts and by and large supports the readings of the *Textus Receptus*. Now we have a real problem. We've got a war. They're claiming both *Sinaiticus* and *Vaticanus* are two of the fifty that Constantine instructed and he's about A.D. 325—fourth century—shortly after that time.

Now class, we need to talk about a lot of things here and I don't want to confuse you. I just want you to see some facts, first of all before we start putting this together. I don't know how many times in Bibles you'll see a footnote that tells you the oldest manuscripts agree. But you see, class, because it's old it doesn't mean it's the best. Papyri number forty-seven is the oldest manuscript of Revelation that we have, for an example. But it is definitely not the best. As a

matter of fact, there are only ten out of what should have been thirty-two leaves. So we have less than one-third of it even in the manuscript. Many, many scholars will say that the papyrus forty-seven is one of the best, but it's not the best. Why?—because even other fragments on Revelation do not agree with it. Interesting!

You say, “Wow, how is all of this happening?” That's a very good question. You see when the books were not assimilated together (were not in one volume) there were many other books being written and claiming to be...we had heresy running rampant! We had men denying this and that. And guess what? They could produce Scripture. It was all hand copied. You could do your own and make the changes you wanted to. And if you don't think that happened, it happened continuously with the New Testament. That's why it's important for a textual critic to evaluate all the evidence, not to jump to conclusions based on one or two manuscripts. Plus the fact, that when a given heretical manuscript that had been changed was then copied, and all of the copies now are a part of the evidence. So, it may be only one variation, but it had been copied 200 times. Now I've got a problem that looks like 200 manuscripts agree. No. Two hundred manuscripts copied one. So you've got to break that problem down. Are they separate manuscripts? Or are they copies of a bad copy? Do you understand how difficult this is? This is not an easy subject.

Now, to add to our problem, let's talk about English, which of course we know is spoken in heaven. Amen? The worst language in the world grammatically undoubtedly is the one God would choose. I doubt it seriously. But let's talk about English. We have John Wycliffe. Today we have the Wycliffe Bible Translators in his memory, the largest missionary organization in the world by far with over 6,000 employees. Long before printing, John Wycliffe translated from Jerome's Latin Vulgate. John Wycliffe is the one who used Jerome's Latin Vulgate. Tyndale is the first to be printed from the Greek text and he used the one of Erasmus. William Tyndale—a tremendous story, *God's Outlaw*; it is one of the most thrilling stories you'll ever read about a man who lost his life to just get the Bible into the hands of the people. And you will get a new

appreciation for the importance of your Bible—William Tyndale—that's why his name is remembered today. There's also a publishing house called Tyndale Publishing House.

Miles Coverdale was the first English Bible to be printed. You say, "Wait a minute. What about John Wycliffe?" Well, he translated from the Latin Vulgate, but it was never printed. Why? Printing press wasn't discovered until 1450, long after his death. Did you follow those dates? Tyndale was a printed edition, but it was from the Greek text of Erasmus and was the New Testament. The first total (complete) Bible was the Miles Coverdale Bible in 1535, which was shortly after Tyndale.

There are a lot more Bibles, by the way. I'm just mentioning some, the Geneva Bible in 1560. Why did I put that one on here?—because it was the first to use verse and chapter divisions. That ought to explain something to you. When you're reading your Bible, those verse and chapter divisions, they've been revised a lot, but they come from the Geneva Bible, an English translation. So what did they have before that? Just the text! Sometimes they are in natural breaks and sometimes they are not. But they put chapter breaks and verses in there to help the readers to locate where they were and so on and to give the general context. They tried to do them at important points that would indicate subject matter breaks. And as I look through, especially in the Old Testament, they've done a really good job. Really, that's a hard job. And they've done a pretty good job. But sometimes, they make a mistake. Sometimes the Greek text continues, the paragraph doesn't end until the opening verses of the next chapter. Just remember the chapter breaks and the verse divisions are not inspired. Okay?

Now we come to King James. I feel like we just have the Hallelujah Chorus played. I was asked earlier if I've ever seen a 1611 King James. The answer is yes. I purchased one and I have it in my possession. It's a 1611. All of the "S"s are like "F"s. That's the way the "S"s were written. It's a little bit difficult to read. And it was the most important project ever undertaken for a lot of reasons. Let's see if we can find out what they are.

First, fifty-four men did the work. Did you know that when the New American Standard Bible was done they wanted fifty-four men to be like the King James. Fifty-four men! They began work on the King James in 1607, they finished in 1610, the King James. Now they didn't have fax machines, telephones, cars, trains or automobiles. The story is unbelievable. It's well documented, but these men spent hours daily in prayer. Having had exposure to modern translation work, it's usually a quick opening prayer and they were now working. I don't know what this means to you, class, but I believe that God answers prayer. These men, when they saw differences in a manuscript would get on their knees and pray by the hour that God would direct them. There were many difficult decisions to be made, variations among the manuscripts, and they wanted to know which one was the original text.

Another thing they did which isn't often done today like it should be. Today, portions of the Bible are sent out to individual people (this happened to me) and you do work on a given fifteen or twenty verses or a chapter or whatever. You send it back and there's an editorial committee that makes the final decisions. It's interesting. All fifty-four men checked and rechecked with each other less the slightest mistake would ever be made. The primary Greek text was A.D. 1550 and it's the same *Textus Receptus*. It has dominated Bible translation in English for 385 years, in spite of many attempts to show its inadequacies and its archaic expressions.

One of the purposes of this text is to warn this generation of what's happening. There's a great undermining by Satan of the authority of the Bible and it is being done in the field of textual transmission. It's a very serious matter.

English has not been improving in our schools; it's been going downhill in case you didn't know. My point is: be very careful, class, what you argue about the King James. Are there some archaic words, meaning, we no longer use them today? Yes. Does that mean they should be removed? That's another subject. We're now discovering that many of the archaic expressions that we were dedicated to removing, in fact express the truth of the text far greater than the new word.

An example: [1 Thessalonians 4:16-17](#)

For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trump of God. And the dead in Christ shall rise first.

Then we which are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

The verse preceding that, verse [15](#) says,

For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain...shall not prevent them who are asleep.

Everybody loves to say, "Well prevent, what it really means is precede." No it doesn't. It means prevent. Is everybody listening? Now all of a sudden we are realizing what a mistake we've been making correcting it. Because the intention of the writer was to show that the Rapture will not prevent the dead from ever being raised, which was the issue of the context of 1 Thessalonians. In fact the word prevent, more represents what the writer intended than changing it to the word precede.

You see, we've often jumped to conclusions about archaic words. It reminds me of one of my favorites, the sackbut. It's a musical instrument mentioned in the book of Daniel. And they do everything under the sun to tell us what it is. You know what the bottom line truth is about that Hebrew word? Not even the Jewish rabbis know what it is. Nobody knows what it is. Sackbut is just as good as anybody else's word. Nobody knows what it is. But whatever it was, it was a musical instrument in ancient Babylon.

And you know, half the time they're making it harder on us. I see that all the time in English because I look at all the English translations before I teach any passage. And I put all of

them out in the margins of my text. Everything every other translation says about any of the variations whatsoever.

You want to hear something funny? The Living Bible (that everybody laughs at) often gives the correct interpretation and it's a paraphrase. Ken Taylor was just a dad doing this for his children. That's how the Living Bible happened, but he was deeply versed in King James. So you see when he made his little Living Bible, what the King James said was dominating his interpretation for his children. That's why many, many times his translation more accurately reflects what the Hebrew text is than even the modern English. It's unbelievable! Now, you wouldn't know that except by experience. I see it every single week.

I'm currently working in the book of Exodus and on a computer program I have sixteen translations, including the Greek Old Testament, the Septuagint. I go through every verse of that chapter and write down everybody's variation. So when I go into the pulpit I know what every English version says about it. And you know what I see over and over again? They do not match the accuracy of the King James. The longer I do this, the more convinced I am of the importance of what we are talking about in this class. You see, what I really think is, people aren't really studying this. They're just parroting something they read in a magazine article about why a new translation is better than the old King James.

In [Hebrews 10:10](#) the Lord says, “By the which will we are sanctified....” It is not we have been. It is an aorist tense. The whole argument about sanctification is an interesting one because they are all aorist tense, even though some of them look like present tense.

In [John 17:17](#) when Jesus said, “Sanctify them through thy truth: for thy word is truth.” It looks like a present tense, continuing to do that. But it's not, it's aorist in Greek. In [Ephesians 5:26](#), where it says that the washing of the water of the word has cleansed and sanctified the church. And they talk about present cleansing and present sanctification. No, it's not. It's the aorist tense again. Aorist means a point of time in the past and according to the Bible, the point of

time in the past by which you and I are sanctified is the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. So is there a continuing sanctification? There's no proof of it in the Bible at all.

When it says "those who are being sanctified" it is not talking about sanctification as a process, it's talking about people who are coming to know the Lord. As they are coming to know the Lord, they are being what? Sanctified.

In [Hebrews 10:14](#), "By one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." In that text it's a present, but it's not talking about continuing sanctification. It's talking about those He has perfected forever are being sanctified. They are being set apart the moment they get saved—by what?—by the once-for-all sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let's pray.

Thank You, Lord, again for Your word. It seems to me rather silly that we would discuss all these things and not be students of the word. That we would talk about manuscript evidence but never read it ourselves. Lord, I pray that You would give us great hunger to know Your word. To know You in this word. We thank You, Lord. We praise You in Jesus' name, amen.

History and Authenticity of the Bible
Lesson 19
English Versions

By
Dr. David Hocking

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Let's begin with a word of prayer and ask God's direction.

Father, we thank You so much for Your wonderful word. And thank You, Lord that you have given us the written revelation that's inspired and inerrant in the original autographs. Help us Lord, as we again examine the evidence that we might be good students of the word and hungry to know Your truth. Thank You Lord, for what You're going to do, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Okay. We're talking about the English translations.

English Translations

Wycliffe (1320–1384) • **Tyndale** (1525) • **Coverdale** (1535)

Geneva Bible (1560) • **King James Version** (1611)

English Revised Version (1881-1885)

American Standard Version (1901)

Williams Translation (1937) • **Revised Standard Version** (1952)

Phillips Translation (1958)

Good News for Modern Man (1966) • **The Living Bible** (1971)

New American Standard Bible (1971) • **New International Version** (1978)

The Good News Bible (1979)

New King James Version (1982)

When the King James finished their project, it was a masterpiece. You know there are a lot of students who are exposed to the other side who think that what we're doing here is kind of a King James only type thing and all that. And I hope I've made that clear all along that is not what we're trying to do. But we are concerned about the Greek text that is behind our translations. And it seems to me that if you really did believe the other side of the argument (as I did for years) and

you really did follow it, then you would never want to ignore all the majority manuscripts that are behind the King James text.

See, that always has fascinated me. Why would you choose just a couple of manuscripts and make it the basis of your translation? Wouldn't you want to consider all of it? That's why if you do buy a book in the bookstore to get all of this in one book then get *The Majority Text* by Hodges and Farstadt, the two authors that put it together. And if you're going to get a Greek testament, and it does have a critical apparatus at the bottom that shows you all the manuscript evidence that they knew was catalogued up to that point, so you can make some judgments. But to simply follow an English translation that based itself on a Greek tradition based on only two or three manuscripts, to me is ludicrous. And yet, that's exactly what New American, New International and many of them have done. And I'm sorry they've done it. They're good English translations of the Greek text they used. But it is definitely prejudicial and it is getting us away from the majority of the manuscripts.

Now, when we look at the whole issue of King James, they did a wonderful job—so good that even additional Greek manuscripts, which they did not have available but became available in a hundred years or so following, only confirmed that the King James' dependence on the received Greek text, the *Textus Receptus* was in fact the correct way to go. The very term, *Textus Receptus* as we told you, class, didn't come until A.D. 1633. But it was commonly understood that this was our Greek text. And if you take your trusty computer program, Logos again put up the Greek pack, you can parallel the A.D. 1550 with the later seventeenth century Greek text and you can see that there's no difference. It's primarily the same text.

The changes don't happen until the Westcott/Hort tradition of *Codex Vaticanus* and *Codex Sinaiticus* at the end of the nineteenth century. Well that caused the furor in the English world! Just to kind of give you an update of English. The first edition that was based on this new Greek text was the English Revised Version. And naturally the Americans wanted one, so it

became the American Standard Version of 1901. If you have a New American Standard Bible, it's just an update of the 1901.

In 1937 under the direction of the Moody Bible Institute, we had the Williams translation, completed and named after the man, Charles P. Williams. He followed the Greek text of Westcott and Hort, but for the first time we had a guy trying to translate the thought of the passage. The New International is called a dynamic equivalent translation, meaning they try to put in English an equal thought, not a word-for-word legalistic translation, so to speak.

So in 1937...and by the way, when I was going to school, Williams' paraphrased was everywhere. We all read it and so forth. And it was very popular. It was before the Living Bible and people just thought it was great. When we started having trouble, real serious trouble, was in 1952, the Revised Standard Version came out and the Hebrew word *almah* in [Isaiah 7:14](#) was changed from virgin to young woman. The implications of that, of course, were enormous. Why? At the same time in the early 1950s, we had among the schools of America, especially on the graduate level, a lot of doctrinal heresy—German rationalism, Liberalism. We had an argument at Andover-Newton Theological Seminary that Jesus was the illegitimate child of German mercenary soldier who had sex with Mary. You know, the undermining of the basic doctrines of the Bible was enormous in the 1950s. The whole evangelical world was just up in arms over this Revised Standard Version.

Now a lot of scholars laughed at the fundamentalists for their concern. See, it was the tip of the iceberg. What you need to understand is sometimes a person tries to speak scholarly to you, but is really avoiding that there is a serious problem here. Was there a serious problem among the denominations and seminaries regarding the doctrine of the deity and virgin birth and incarnation of Christ? The answer is, yes, there was. So the smoke screen out here was translating a Hebrew word in [7:14](#). Now there are two other Hebrew words also that could have been used. But they can't refer to a virgin. The only word that you can use that would refer to a virgin is *almah*. The

reason why we knew these translators were wrong is because in [Matthew 1:23](#) when it translated the verse, it used the Greek word *parthenos*, which always means virgin. So, the Greek in the New Testament clarified that the meaning of the Hebrew word was a virgin in [Isaiah 7:14](#).

The reason why I want you to note it is because this started the undermining of what was actually the original text. That somehow we have the freedom to say whatever we wanted to say, all in the name of scholarship. And from then on, things got really rough.

Now in 1958, kind of following up on the tradition of the Williams translation, we had the Phillips. Now the reason why it became popular is that Billy Graham picked it up and offered it as a book offer on his program. And before too long, he was doing it in sections. Like he would give you the Living Epistles or he would give you the Living Gospels or whatever. And this is a number of years before the Living Bible came out. It's the Phillips translation. I still have one and sometimes they really express, in a paraphrase, the beauty of what's in the language. So they are interesting reading.

Well the American Bible Society decided to put out a translation in modern language to communicate to the contemporary generation and also to kind of suppress all the controversy about the Revised Standard. So in 1966, they produced the *Good News for Modern Man*. It's still being sold.

What really became a hit with Bible readers was the Living Bible in 1971. It became the most popular paraphrase ever done. All your little Precious Moments Bibles for kids are usually using the Living Bible translation. It was done by Kenneth Taylor of Tyndale House and it was basically to communicate with his own children. Many, many times the Living Bible does express in our current English what is in the actual text. I have found it to be a lot better in the Old Testament than the New. But he did a great job with the Old Testament. And sometimes, it's interesting reading. But you've got to be careful, remember it's a paraphrase.

So the Williams, the Phillips, the Living Bible, they're all paraphrases, okay. There are others like Weymouth that people will mention, but these are kind of the biggies. The New American Standard Bible was done by the Lockman Foundation in 1971. And they tried to sell this as the update of the King James. This was not an update of the King James. As a matter of fact, they consulted the Westcott-Hort Greek text instead. But they got fifty-four evangelical, fundamental scholars. I was very much involved in this project. Campus Crusade for Christ sold this Bible everywhere. It was an updated version of the 1901. When it actually came to us, when the final editorial committee had their say-so, there was a lot in it that was from Westcott and Hort Greek text rather than the *Textus Receptus*. Even though they said they were going to try to follow the majority view of it.

Well, it was the best thing in English and in the New Testament they kept all the verb forms exactly the same, which was very helpful to English readers. Like if it's a participle, they put *ing* on the end of it—teaching, baptizing, going, they kept consistent throughout the Bible. If it was an imperfect, which is like a continuous action in past tense then they say "they were teaching." It was the first translation ever to do that. So it was extremely helpful and a lot of university students really went for this because it did help explain some of the Greek grammar. And I guess in a certain sense it wasn't that bad, but more and more as we look at what was actually the product, we realize that they had succumbed to following the Greek text of Westcott and Hort a lot more than they did the *Textus Receptus*. But they even tried to sell it on the basis of the number of men involved. They got fifty-four just like the King James, but unlike the King James they did not all meet together for hours of prayer. Nor did they check and recheck; nor did every man submit his copies to everybody else, but rather to a central committee who had a lot of power.

Now some of the men involved in this project are some of the greatest fundamental men of this century, some of whom have already died and some of whom were my teachers and I

respect them greatly. So the New American Standard Bible was a worthy project, but it got a little confused. And that will always happen when you get scholars together who are trying to put together a Greek text and they don't want to make a decision between the two traditions, so they're going to just kind of make judgments. But sometimes somebody higher up calls the shots and whatever good work people have done is changed. That happened frequently.

Then we have The Good News Bible in 1979 and that's still a good seller. It was originally called *The Bible in Today's English Version*. It's the United Bible Society's, which was committed to the Westcott-Hort tradition and also had a lot of Catholic influence. They began to use this. Now their stated goal was not to follow traditional vocabularies and styles in other versions, but to present the message in every day natural English. And I think they did a good job with that. There's just one problem, when you match the Greek text behind what they're saying, there's too much difference. So you don't know what the word of God is or isn't.

Now the next major project, which was indeed a critical one in terms of this whole subject of our Bible, was the New King James, 1982. Now this is a reaction to the others—to New International and New American. They say, wait a minute they've been using the Greek text of Westcott and Hort. Let's don't do that, let's go back to the *Textus Receptus*. Let's just update the King James, get rid of the archaic words, change the *ye* and *thee* to just you, and make it easy to read.

However, when the final committee made the decisions, they made more extensive changes than they should have. One very important one [change] comes right away in the book of Genesis and that was that the word for seed was translated descendants. Now the word seed can refer to descendants and sometimes it does mean that. But we know from Paul's argument in Galatians 3 that the prophecy related to how the seed will bless all nations of the world is not talking about seeds as of many, but as of one, Christ the Messiah. They said that it was a natural rendering of the word. Now this is an example where both sides are correct. Is it a natural

rendering of the word seed to say you are descendants? Yes. But it's like the word fish. Is it one fish or is it two or more that you are talking about when you say fish? It's what we call generic terms that can refer to either singular or plural. That's the way the Hebrew word is for seed.

Here's another one, *Elohim*. It's actually a plural form in grammar, but it can refer to singular—God is one, or plural—pagan gods. So there are a lot of words like that in every language. We have them in ours, in English. And that's what the word *seed* was. So, are they right in saying it's natural to translate it descendants? Yes. But are they wrong in doing that in the book of Genesis when it refers to the seed blessing all nations of the world? The answer is yes. They're wrong. Why?—because Galatians 3 clarifies the argument. Jewish people wouldn't care. You understand? Because they don't believe the seed in [Genesis 3:15](#) of the woman is referring to the Messiah. They believe it's referring to the Jewish people. So they would be delighted with the translation, descendants.

But overall the New King James did a good job and I wouldn't quibble. It does follow the Greek text behind the King James. And I wouldn't quibble with the New King James. If it's easier to read, fine.

The same things that I was saying about New American Standard would be said about NIV. See, the NIV chose a different principle than New American Standard. If you gave me New American Standard and NIV to evaluate and tell you what I believe—and I have done quite a bit of research on this—one, if you're asking me to read in the New Testament, I'll take New American every time. They follow the Greek grammatical endings, all of that sort of thing. If you're asking me to go to the Old Testament, I'll pick NIV every time. Why?—because the dynamic equivalent that is trying to express the thought is easier in Hebrew than it is in Greek. Greek is a mathematical, teachers' language. Hebrew is one of our romantic poetic languages. It's very flexible, so dynamic equivalent goes good with that.

Let's take a beautiful Hebrew word like *chesed*. The interesting thing to me is that that word which is translated lovingkindness or mercies in the King James Old Testament. That Hebrew word with New International was totally removed from the concept of lovingkindness. They didn't do a bad job. They translated it with unfailing love and that's not bad because behind *chesed* there is certainly faithfulness. It's part of the meaning of the word, but it's a broad, expansive word. And so the New International really felt like unfailing love says more than lovingkindness. What it does is it drops the mercy concept out of the word. I'm not trying to be overly technical here. But class, in *chesed* there is a lot of mercy, a lot of compassion. It's like removing the kindness, compassionate side of the word to say unfailing love. Their answer would be, well the word love itself should say that. But, I believe the King James is proper in some context to say, "tender mercies," which it does many times in the Psalms in translating *chesed* because other words for mercy or compassion are in the text which would show that.

Let me give you an example, [Lamentations 3:22](#). "It is of the Lord's mercies [*chesed* or unfailing love, or lovingkindness] that we are not consumed because His compassions fail not." This is another word. So, you see, I know that the King James did a proper thing in saying it is of the Lord's mercies that we're not consumed, because in the same parallelism of that passage it says "because His compassions fail not." So the compassion (mercy side of the word) was definitely being introduced in that context. Am I making sense? Okay.

When translators make these decisions, they've got reasons for them. Now the interesting thing about the New American Standard that I feel doesn't really express the beauty of Hebrew as it should; yet, they chose lovingkindness to be more consistent for the word. Because the New American wanted to have English readers not having several English words for one Greek word or one Hebrew word, they wanted to have a similar one. So their usage of lovingkindness is like twice as much as even the King James. That's because the principle behind the New American was to get consistency of translations—make sure it's the same in all the passages. That's why I

still like King James and New King James because it isn't just being consistent that rules the day. It's whether the context determines that is the meaning that should be delivered for that word. Because Hebrew, especially in the Old Testament, has a lot of possibilities; so the context sometimes determines which (among the possibilities) is the one that should be there. There are just a lot of problems here and I don't want to make it more difficult.

The key about the Westcott and Hort text, the changes they made in the late 1800's based on that, from the majority of manuscripts are too great to ignore. That's the bottom line. These changes were based on two manuscripts—*Codex Vaticanus*, *Codex Sinaiticus*. They also throw in a third, *Codex Alexandrinus*. They are not the best. They are not the oldest. They are not the most accurate. And they add so many marginal notes in modern English translations that try to tell us it really isn't the truth.

But the truth is that the Greek text used for producing the King James Version is still the most reliable and is based by and large on the majority of manuscripts. May God give us all the wisdom we need to evaluate these matters and the kindness of the Lord towards those who may disagree because there are many who disagree.

The simple facts: one, the King James translation has the fewest multi-syllabic words. So that's why it is easy for little kids to memorize. One of the things that the Bible publishing companies are thinking about now is they're asking the question...and I want you to think about this question...why is it that the children of this evangelical generation are not memorizing these new Bible translations like they once did with King James? I just want you to think about that. There's been a dramatic drop in the memorization of verses by children.

And I'm kind of a bear for memorizing Scripture. I know that. But do you realize (those of you who want to go into ministry) what a blessing this is? You need to learn the word of God, so you get familiar with God's word, so people ask you a question and you may not know the exact passage, but you know pretty generally where that is. Memorizing God's word is so

important to your life. And it saddens me to see kids growing up in good Christian families who are not memorizing God's word any more.

Now if you came out of secular culture or a background that wasn't into that, I mean, you're not to be blamed for that of course. But let's be smart as students and ask why? Is it just because the parents were more disciplined then? Is it just because they rewarded them? I have not been able to prove that either for my own sake or for anyone else's.

Is there a possibility that the multiple translations in a given congregation have added to this problem? And I say yes! For instance, if the child has bought or if the parents buy him a Precious Moments Living Bible and the parents are using King James or New American, they themselves will not be as active in memorizing. In our home, we had a verse to memorize every week as well. And I put them on little verse cards and we'd pass them around the table. And every morning we'd go over our verse. And then we'd cross out a word and see if we could still say it. Cross out three or four and we had memorized one verse.

A few years ago I did a TV production for a company on a given number of pastors and they wanted the children of these pastors who were grown children, to come in and comment on what it was like to grow up in a pastor's home. I was very interested because, you know, you want to hear what your kids had to say. But my kids, all three of them, said that the thing they remembered the most are the devotions around the table. Out of all the things that we did, that's what they remember. I'm not trying to overload you or trying to use this to prove the King James. I'm trying to analyze, why is it that we don't learn God's word as we once did?

Now see, today we don't want to be exposed like that. And these things have just been mushrooming, the multiple translations, and nobody knows which ones to follow. The fact that parents don't insist that their kids learn the word of God anymore...there's something wrong! I'd like to pray and believe that some of you will have a greater commitment to God's word and be more dedicated to learning it than we have seen in the past generation. It's been very poor.

I find people who have known the Lord twenty and twenty-five years have a crisis. I visit them in the hospital and they can't remember the basic verses. And they've sat in church year after year after year after year. It astounds me. I know it exists. I don't try to expose them or make them uncomfortable or anything like that. But it just startles me. I think, what have we been doing? This is the word of God. We need to know the Book.

All right, anyway...I have a pastor friend of mine. It's a wonderful story. He was a high school drop out, into drug—all that had messed up his life. He was the kind who said it doesn't matter. He was on fire for God and he's really going to go after it. And you know that lasted for a while and he ran out of gas. He wanted to know what to do. And I said, "Listen, you can do this."

He said "I can't even learn English much less Greek. I never even learned English.

I said, "You can learn English if you wanted to. You can either do it on your own or you can go back to high school. Adult programs are in every city in America and you can learn English and start all over again." Well, I say that to a lot of guys and they don't listen. This guy listened. He went back. He not only learned English, he learned Greek. He got a hunger for Hebrew. And the guy just kept going and going. Today, that guy is very articulate and eloquent. It's hard to believe!

If you want to do something about it there are plenty of ways to do it. And the reason why we don't understand our Bibles well when we get out in the ministry and want to preach, is because we've never been trained grammatically even in our own language, let alone the language of the Bible. And so we don't think logically. We don't think mathematically. We don't think in order and sequence. And that's some of the problem too.

I also believe that the parents stopped asking their kids to do anything. They didn't discipline them. Don't you understand what's happening? Because all of you have different testimonies of how you bombed out or went here or went there or came from this country or that place or that culture and God brought you all here. And I say thank God for whatever those

parents did, because it got you here, whether you know it or not! That was one of the things that the Lord used in His marvelous plan.

Well, as long as I live, I shall continue to follow what God says.

Hey, take a break. See you in a few minutes.

History and Authenticity of the Bible
Lesson 20
Interpretation of the Bible – Part One

By
Dr. David Hocking

Brought to you by
[The Blue Letter Bible Institute](http://www.blbi.org)
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Okay. We come to the next gigantic subject related to the history and authenticity of the Bible and in some respects one of the most important that we've got, and that is the interpretation of the Bible. There are 12 principles we are going to give you about the interpretation of the Bible. Anybody ever say to you, "Ah, you can't understand that Book" or "That's just your interpretation—well, there are many interpretations anyway."

First of all, the very word for interpretation is a word that is in the Bible. Hermeneutics is just set into English from the Greek word *hermenuo*. Hermeneutics, it means interpretation. There is only one interpretation of the Bible, the one the Lord intended. There are lots of opinions and lots of applications, but there's only one true interpretation of the Bible. The one the Holy Spirit wanted when it was written. Now that's our job, you see, in interpreting the Bible is to get back to that and find out how we could understand that. Is that just a quickie little fix? Attend Bible College for at least one year and you will now always interpret the Bible completely accurately. No!

How do we do accurate interpretation of this Bible? It's one thing to know how it came into our hands. It's another thing to know how to interpret it. These principles must be there if we are going to accurately interpret the Bible. And there are twelve of them. And we will spend more time on some of them, especially the last three we're going to spend quite a bit of time on. But let's get started.

Principle number one is faith. Faith. If you begin to try to interpret the Bible in your study without depending upon the Lord, you're going to be in big trouble. Big trouble! I wonder how many of you, when you start to prepare something from God's word get on your knees and pour out your heart before God, ask for His help.

Turn to Psalm 119 and let's just see what God has to say about it. I've come to believe that we get into more trouble because of the lack of prayer than anything else. We just don't pray. I've seen people have critical spirits towards people they don't even know. And you know every time I see it I say, "You must not be on your knees much

before God." I just want you to know that we can find fault with each other any time we want to.

In the final analysis, if you and I aren't serious before God and do some changing, who cares what anybody's saying. And I wonder when people get into this Christian game, and I see attitudes, I wonder have you been on your knees before God?

Prayer is a serious matter. I cannot interpret this Book without prayer. But I'll tell you something, the real school is the school of prayer. That's a school.

I love that series by Andrew Murray. But he has a beautiful little book, if you've not read it, it's called *With Christ in the School of Prayer*. Excellent. I also recommend to you all the books by E. M. Bounds. They were original lectures to preachers about prayer. They now come in that little set, you know, in the bookstore, by E. M. Bounds. In fact, they now have a larger edition where they take all those little booklets and put them together, beautiful stuff that E. M. Bounds wrote about prayer and our need of prayer.

I was in Korea this summer, and was talking to the pastors about what an example to see all these people early in the morning going up to the mountains to pray. One of the pastors came to me and he said, "It's not as great as you think."

I said, "Why's that? He said a lot of these people were Buddhists and that's what we did under Buddhism. The question is what are they saying once they get there?"

And I thought to myself, isn't that the truth?

What are you and I like when we are all alone with the Lord? Do you really want Him to show you God's word? Or do you kind of just want Him to bless what you already decided you're going to do? Where's the heart of humility and brokenness before God? Do you really believe it's the word of God? Do you really believe that God will answer prayer and show you?

I was stuck on a problem the other day. Two passages of Scripture looked contradictory one to another. I have studied and studied. I got no where. And as I often do

when that happens, I went in my office and shut the door, got on my knees and said, "Lord, I'm stuck." I could almost hear Him say, "Well it's good to see you, David. You've been messing around over there in the library a while. You should have started with Me. It would have made those books a lot more interesting."

It's just like you get on your knees like you're embarrassed. All of a sudden you're aware. "I probably should have done this before I started. Please forgive me." It was amazing how the Lord just...the answer was there. The very thing I'd been struggling about. And you know it's a reminder to me over and over and over again. We need prayer. We need faith. We need dependency on the Lord.

In Psalm 119, we have a lot of beautiful statements. Let's just highlight a few. Verse [18](#) here's a prayer: "Open Thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." The Hebrew word for wondrous is incomprehensible, meaning too difficult to understand. Now class, let's be honest. There are things difficult to understand in this Bible. Lots of it—very hard to understand! Then what's the secret? Go to the Lord and depend upon Him. "Open mine eyes that I may behold difficult, incomprehensible things out of Thy law."

There's a prayer to understand. Look at verses [26 and 27](#). "I have declared my ways and Thou heardest me. Teach me Thy statutes. Make me to understand the way of Thy precepts. So shall I talk of Thy wondrous works."

Do you ask God, "Teach me Your statutes?" Do you say, "Make me understand?" To say, "Make me understand"—and it's because of a grammatical form of the word that it's translated "make me to understand"—it suggests that there's a natural tendency on our part not to do this. Somehow God needs to give us these gentle nudgings and proddings to make us understand. The psalmist was recognizing his own depravity and resistance when he says "make me to understand."

[Psalm 119:33-34](#). "Teach me [again the prayer] Teach me O Lord, the way of Thy statutes." Notice back in verse [26](#) he said, "Teach me Thy statutes" and here he says, "Teach me the way of Thy statutes." See when you come to study the Bible and find out the interpretation, some times it's not just the content that you get down, but it's the point of the content. It's the direction in which God wants you to go by what you have learned. And sometimes we see people who are very intelligent in the Bible, but they don't know what it means. They don't know how to apply it. They don't know the direction they should walk because of it. And that comes as a result of dependency upon God as well. "Teach me [not only Your statutes, but teach me] the way of Your statutes and I shall keep it unto the end. Give me understanding. I shall keep Thy law. Yeah, I shall observe it with my whole heart." Sometimes we have no commitment to follow what God says. So don't expect Him to answer prayer in understanding your Bible. "Lord, show me what this passage means. I will obey You no matter what it comes out as."

See, frequently I find the Bible contradicts what I previously thought. Then I'm faced with the issue of whether or not I'm going to bow myself down to the word. Or whether I'm going to keep doing what I thought. And sometimes when the Bible clearly shows you something you should do, but it's contrary to what you do, all of a sudden your mind thinks, "I wonder if there's another interpretation?" Oh, there'll always be another one in those books. But the one interpretation that God intended is the most important. That's why we use all these principles to help us, of which the first is of course prayer.

In [Psalm 119:68](#) it says, "Thou art good and doest good. Teach me Thy statutes." Here we have a motive for it—because everything behind it is good. "All things work together for good" ([Romans 8:28](#)). God is good. "His goodness leads to repentance" ([Romans 2:4](#)). So Lord, I want to learn. I know that behind all of this is Your goodness.

Verse [73](#) says, "Thy hands have made me and fashioned me. Give me understanding that I may learn Thy commandments." You know you can learn something by memorizing it. But did you learn it. You might be able to reduplicate something on a test, but has it become part of your lifestyle? Very important!

Verse [169](#) says, "I love the way this is expressed. "Let my cry come near before Thee O Lord. Give me understanding according to Thy word." All the way through this, there's a hunger. There's a thirst. There's a cry from God's servant to the Lord. "Lord, I want to know Your word more than anything else."

This morning before I came here, we had a call from Philadelphia. A man said, "I heard you on the radio years ago do a series on Psalm 119. Twenty-two messages on that one chapter.

I said, "That's true."

"Do you still have them?"

I said, "Yes."

He said, "I want them desperately."

I said, "Why?"

He said, "Well, when I first heard them I guess I wasn't paying a whole lot of attention, just listening. But now I've got such a hunger for the word of God. What will it take to send them priority mail?"

I said, "You don't have to do that. We can just send them regular mail."

"No, no, no. I want them now!"

I said, "You're really desperate aren't you?"

He said, "Something significant has happened in my heart and I don't want to settle for anything any more than hearing from God and His word."

Boy, that blessed me! I thought—I can use that in my class today! May God give us all that same heart.

In [Hebrews 11:6](#) it says, "Without faith it's impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those that [what?] diligently seek Him." You see if you're going to go after this and you really want to know it, God's going to reward you. And you come with faith believing that He will. He'll show me. He'll reveal to me.

And I guess all that we impart to you here at this college, praise the Lord for it. But if we haven't taught you to depend on the Lord, what have we taught you?

But the issue I'm trying to say to all of us is our need of prayer and dependency and faith and confidence in the Lord is crucial. And I believe that one of the reasons why we get into trouble is because we hurry. I know that's why I do it. "Man, I got to get that message ready. I've only got about three hours left. You know, I usually look up all the passages. I've got to get a commentary. Maybe he's already looked them up." Flip through it. I get another one. I'm flipping through. I'm going like crazy, you know. "Oh man, now what I'm going to do?" Get on the phone, call a pastor friend of mine, "Hey, you know that passage over there, have you got anything on that?"

Don't tell me guys don't do that. They do it to me—every week! Yesterday a friend of mine called me up and said, "Hey man, I need something on"... he told me the passage and so forth.

I said, "Have you ever thought that the Lord could give it to you?"

"David, I've got two hours. I need the answer to this"

I said, "I'll bet ten minutes in prayer will do it."

He said, "You're not going to give this to me, are you?"

I said, "No."

"Do you know the answer to it?"

"Yes."

"Well come on, give me the answer."

I said, "But you wouldn't know it yourself. You wouldn't experience the joy of digging it out." I said, "I'll make a deal for you. You pray. You study it. And if you still haven't found it in two hours, you call me and I'll give it to you before you go in the pulpit."

He said, "You're rotten."

I said, "I know it."

He hung up. The next day he calls me back. He said, "You know, I really want to thank you for that."

Do you understand, many of us are suffering what we're suffering because of the lack of prayer. We're not going to the Lord. "Do you have notes on that? Send them to me. I need them for next week."

"Really? No. What you need to do is get on your knees before God in front of that open Bible and ask God to speak to your heart."

Prayer is a school. Prayer is hard work. Prayer is discipline. I'd like to suggest the following simple things for you. One is to have a prayer list. I don't know about you, but I get down on my knees to pray and my mind wanders. Or I think about a lot of things I'm going to try to do or whatever. So a prayer list is helpful with names of people and specific requests. And I like to put the date of answer down when you see God answers it. You know when people ask you to pray for them about something, you either do it then or you write it down because you usually don't remember it. But if you do remember and a week later ask them, say, "Hey what happened?"

People are often surprised. "What are you talking about?"

"Well, you asked me to pray about that thing."

"Oh that—yeah!"

I've had that happen over and over again. I said, "Well what did happen?"

"Oh the Lord worked it out great."

"Praise the Lord. It was a joy to pray for you."

"Oh, you prayed?"

"Yeah."

"Oh, I really didn't expect you to."

"Well you asked me. The Bible says, 'God forbid that I should sin in ceasing to pray for you,' if I promise to do it..." You see, so we need a prayer list with specifics.

Another thing that I think is missing is worship; in other words, how to pray. We need to focus a lot more on praise and blessing and exalting and magnifying the Lord. And for that, I use the Psalms. I need direction. I love to pray with the Psalms in front of me. I love to read this. "I will praise You, Lord, with my whole heart. My heart sings to You, Lord. My heart speaks of Your wondrous works. Lord, You are so full of compassion and kindness and You're so gracious."

Before I know what's happening, God's melting me. His Holy Spirit is just melting me. Some call it pray-reading but I like to do that, just pray through the Psalms. Righteous art Thou, O Lord; Upright in all Thy judgments. God, I want Your word in my life. The entrance of Your word gives light. It gives understanding to the simple. I need that. Do you understand? It puts a new little kind of boost and life into your prayer life, so it doesn't become routine.

Without faith we can't please Him. And if we're going to see God answer, He will answer if we "diligently," the Bible says, seek Him. I've always wondered about that in [Hebrews 11:6](#) where it says without faith it is impossible to please Him. "He who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek..." Commentaries? Seek to put it together themselves? What is it that we seek in order to be rewarded with the answer? Him! Sometimes in your desire to be blessed by the Lord, you miss the Blessor.

I'll give you an illustration. My four-and-half year-old grandson, I had a great time with him—a wonderful time playing. We crawled on the floor in a race through the house. My wife says if only your students could see you now. But I had a lot of fun with that little kid. But nothing blessed me more. After a long day of playing and everything else, he crawled in my lap, put his arms around me, kissed me on the cheek and said, "I love you so much, Grandpa." I just started crying.

He said, "What's the matter?"

I said, "Nothing." I gave him a big hug.

Imagine what our heavenly Father feels. I was made in His image after His likeness. And if that means so much to me, that little hug from that little kid, made my month! I mean it was so fantastic, that little grandson just saying, "I love you, Grandpa." But that little hug was all I needed.

Do you understand that in prayer, the focus needs to be on the Lord? Relate to Him as your heavenly Father. Tell Him all that He means to you. Speak of how He's such a blessing to you, how much you love Him. Very important, class! In diligently seeking Him, He's promised to reward us. Very important!

Let's pray.

Father, thank You for Your word. Help us, Lord, as we begin this section of learning to interpret the Bible that we might truly seek Your face and depend upon You. Thank You, Lord, in Jesus' name. Amen.

History and Authenticity of the Bible
Lesson 21
Interpretation of the Bible – Part Two

By
Dr. David Hocking

Brought to you by
[The Blue Letter Bible Institute](http://www.blbi.org)
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Okay. Let’s get on to interpretation of the Bible. And we started last week with prayer, faith, dependency on the Lord, and boy is that crucial!

So let’s pray.

Father, thank You so much for Your wonderful love. Lord, I thank You for the joy of being a part of that. May all of us do what we can where we are to introduce people to the real reason for the season. Thank You, Lord. Bless our class. May we again understand, Lord, that there are principles revealed in Your word as to how to study and interpret Your word. So Lord, keep us on track and loyal to You. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Okay, take your Bibles please and turn to Proverbs 28. When we come to the interpretation of the Bible, we are talking about one of the most serious subjects as it relates to our Bibles. The authenticity of the Bible—I’ve often said—is revealed in or manifested in the field of hermeneutics, which means interpretation.

Principles of Interpretation

- **Faith** (dependency and prayer)
 - Ps.119:18, 26-27, 33-34, 68, 73, 169; Heb.11:6
- **Holiness** – Ps. 66:18; Prov. 28:9, 13; Heb. 12:14;
- **Obedience** – Ps. 119:100; John 17:17; James 1:22-25
- **The Holy Spirit** – John 16:13; 2 Peter 1:19-21
- **Jesus Christ** – Luke 24:44-45; John 16:13-14; Acts 8:34-35
- **Spiritual Maturity** – 1 Cor. 2:6; 3:1-3; Heb. 5:11-14; 2 Pet. 3:18
- **Diligent Study** – Ps. 119:99; Acts 17:11; 2 Tim. 2:15
- **Simplicity** – Ps. 119:130; 2 Cor. 11:3,6
- **Context** • **Language** • **Culture**

I see the glory of the word in the guidelines for the interpretation of the word. And one of those guidelines, of course, was faith. But a second guideline is holiness. It's interesting to me that God reveals more to those who walk with Him than those who don't. And we're going to show you some things that, well, it might be an eye opener.

We see first of all, in [Proverbs 28:9](#), that "He that turneth his ear from hearing the law, even his prayers shall be an abomination." So if you're not walking according to God's word, then it affects principle number one. See how interestingly they are intertwined.

Down in verse [13](#), "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

Now [Psalm 66:18](#) says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will [what?] not hear me." At the end of our last session we talked about wonderful verses, many of them in the 119th Psalm that are prayers. "Open mine eyes that I may behold wondrous [difficult] things out of Thy law." But here I learn that if I'm entertaining sin in my heart, or if I'm coveting, there's something I'm trying to hide, the Bible says the Lord will not hear me. So you see the desire to know God's word and to interpret it correctly is affected by the way I'm walking with the Lord. That's why even though it's not in anybody's hermeneutics books that I've ever found, I find it's in the Bible.

Some guy says to me, "I just can't seem to understand the Bible. He doesn't want to hear from me." Well, it may be because you are not walking with the Lord. I mean, that's a negative start and I don't know the guy, so I'll be talking to him about other principles, context and so forth. But isn't it interesting that you can have all the best studies you've ever had in hermeneutics and really got it down as to how to interpret the Bible; but if you in fact are not walking with the Lord, God's shutting it off right there. It's a closed door. Boy how we need to hear this! Like [Hebrews 12:14](#), "...without holiness no man will see the Lord." Boy, that's powerful!

But I'd like you to go to [1 Corinthians 2:9](#). I want you to see something in 1 Corinthians 2 to prove the point I'm making that if you're not walking with the Lord, you don't actually have the ability to understand the word. You may think you do, but you may not see where God wants you to see simply because of it. [1 Corinthians 2:9](#) is an interesting passage as it relates to the Bible itself. Verse nine tells us that by human comprehension, it's impossible to understand the things God's prepared for us. Your eye can't see it. Your ear can't hear it. And your heart can't receive it without God's help.

And so basically, what we are told in verses [10-13](#) is that the Holy Spirit who knows all the things of God that's been given to us. He can show us those things, can't He? He can reveal them to us. So we need to trust the Holy Spirit. We read in verse [13](#), "Which things also we speak not in the word which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual." The Holy Spirit, who of course is another key to interpretation!

But what I want you to see here is [1 Corinthians 2:14](#). Look at this: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned." Look at [1 Corinthians 3:1](#). Remember there are no chapter divisions in the text.

And I brethren, could not speak unto you as to spiritual but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with meat. Because you are not able to bear it, neither are yet now are you able. For you are yet carnal. There is envying, strife, divisions. Are you not carnal and walk as men?

But there's no chapter division. If you're following this and he's talking to that church, then the ones who are the natural man are not unbelievers but they are carnal believers—the opposite of being spiritual and understanding all things.

Now, when I look at the “natural man” in [1 Corinthians 2:14](#), everybody interprets that as an unbeliever. But I notice it’s a Greek word *psychikos*—*psychiko* man—in contrast to the *pneuma*, the spiritual man. Now an unbeliever has a soul and so do we (Christians), but his spirit is dead. When you come to Christ your spirit is active; but in fact, you can quench and resist. And the Holy Spirit of God (the fire in our bosom) can, as it were, have water thrown on Him by our own sin. We grieve the Spirit of God and our spirits get all messed up so we can’t discern and understand the things of God because of sin in our life, which grieves the Spirit. Well, the unbeliever, I expect him not to understand the word. But there are many believers that don’t understand the word and have never been confronted that the problem is carnality, not lack of schooling. Is everybody following me?

Carnality is a bigger hindrance than the lack of education, by far. You can have all the education in the world, but if you’re not walking with God, you are not going to understand the word. You see when you take that tactic on verse [14](#) seeing it in its context that the Corinthians are being called carnal, not spiritual. It’s the spiritual man that understands and discerns. That’s why they didn’t discern the body of Christ at the bread and the cup and had drunkenness at the communion table. Why they did not discern God’s holy, righteous standards of morality and tolerated a guy who had committed incest in their membership and hadn’t repented and hadn’t been confronted. You know, all kinds of things happen. Carnal things happen in a church that claims to know the Lord but doesn’t walk in the Spirit. So you see when we talk about holiness and clean life, pure motives, that is fundamental. “Create in me a clean heart, O God; Renew a right spirit within me,” said David in [Psalm 51](#).

Now, these are very much tied together. Look at them again: faith, holiness, obedience. It’s hard for me to separate obedience from holiness. Some call holiness, the state of being right with God. Well, I’ll tell you, you can confess your sins in one moment and the next moment be sinning either by mind or motive. It’s easy, isn’t it? One moment you say, “As far as I know I’m all confessed up.” And then the next moment lie to somebody. So it is a struggle as we try to deal

with this. I see them as all relating together. Obedience to specify, to me is just simply doing what God commands and pleases Him. That's what it means.

Now, we have clear-cut teaching in the Bible that tells us that is a key to learning. I like [John 7:17](#) where Jesus said, "He who wills to do His will, will *know* of the doctrine whether I speak of Myself or of God." So, apparently doing what God wants you to do is the key to understanding what Jesus is teaching you. So faith, prayer, calling upon the Lord, holiness, where we're not entertaining sin in our hearts, and obedience, doing what God tells us to do. They're all related, and related to number four, the Holy Spirit. He not only is the One who inspired the word, but He's the One that illuminates our minds. "He will guide us into all the truth," says [John 16:13](#), which He did to those apostles that heard Him. All the truth is in the word. And the Bible tells us the Spirit guided those who wrote the word, those holy men of God who were separated for that task, (cf. [2 Peter 1:20](#)). And said that "no prophesy is of any private interpretation [there's our word] but holy men of God spake, as they were moved [or directed, or carried along] by the Holy Spirit." So in the interpretation of the word, guess who controlled the one interpretation that God intended? The Holy Spirit did.

Well, He's also the One who indwells us and when we walk under the control of the Spirit, you see, these two things come together. He who inspired and controlled the original writers to produce an accurate and reliable record is also the One inside of us, who guides our minds and opens up our minds, who illumines us to what the original intent is of this Book. You know, after I go through these four I feel like saying *hallelujah* all over again. I get real excited about it. And he hasn't said one thing yet about seminary or college or anything else. About whether you're smart or you're not.

First of all, we know that most of the Christians are not smart. I'm sorry, if you think you are, but 1 Corinthians 1 calls you foolish. And the majority of Christians are also extremely weak and vulnerable. That's what he told us. And the majority of Christians aren't worth much to the world. But did you know the majority of people in the world are in that category. "There are not

many mighty and not many noble and not many wise." It didn't say "not any" but he said, "not many." The majority of people are not wise, worldly wise. The majority of people are not educated. You understand? It's easy, isn't it to get full of pride, arrogant. God choose foolish things to confound the wise. We need to walk humbly with our God. [1 Corinthians 4:7](#) says that you haven't got anything that didn't come from the gracious hand of the Lord.

I just think we'd better get this straight, class. You want to understand the Bible? That's what our course was called. I was motivated to try to help you understand the Bible, its history, its authenticity, its reliability, how to work with it, to give you some basics on this. And that was my assignment. And I think to myself, boy, I've really failed if I somehow give you the idea that if you just know this course, that's all that's necessary. No it's not. No these first four things, you leave them out at any point and you're in trouble. You've got to walk with God. I don't care how smart you are.

I want you to learn with your heart. I want you to learn about your need of the Lord. I don't want you to think that somehow you're going to just walk out of here and know the Bible. You see, you're not going to fool God. You are not going to fool the Lord. And that hunger and thirst for God's word has to be just as strong today as it was if you are looking back fifty years. It has to be as strong. I would never want to go back to where I was coming out of school. And I thought I knew it all. I never want to go back there. I have a greater hunger now for God's word and for learning and knowing than ever before.

A good example was this week I got a new computer program on the Dead Sea Scrolls. And I'm going through them and looking at them. Couple of the volunteer employees came through and said, "What's that?"

I said, "Oh, it's the Dead Sea Scrolls." Well, to me it was exciting! I am reading the word of God, looking at manuscripts. I'm sitting there looking at this and I'm just marveling at God's gracious hand in this whole thing. I've got a hunger for this. I can't quit and I don't want to quit.

It reminds me of Billy Sunday you know the old evangelist, he preached up a storm. And they asked him, “What are you going to do when you get to be an old man and your teeth fall out?”

He said, “Then I’ll gum it to death. I want to go down preaching.”

Dr. McGee did that. He could hardly walk into the pulpit. One of his last messages was done in my church. I hardly recognized him when he walked in that day. I hadn’t seen him in about three months. Suit hanging all over him, shriveled up. We had to carry him up to the pulpit. When he got up to the pulpit, he turned around, I looked at the audience and he did it again. Three times! Turned around! He looked at the audience and he said, “You know the good thing about cancer, when it eats away your body, you can turn around in your suit and your suit doesn’t move.” He had humor when he was dying because he had the joy of the Lord. And you know something? He got up there and said, “Though I’ve preached many times on Psalm 2, the Lord just gave me a wonderful new insight.” He could hardly talk and the moment he started in it was just like the Holy Spirit of God came on that man and he was the McGee of old. And when he was done, he could not walk away; we had to carry him off. We got down there and he said, “You know the word is wonderful, isn’t it?” God bless him.

You see, you can never think that all your study and all that you learn is somehow all you need to understand the Bible. You’ve got to walk with God. And it will be more wonderful to you fifty years later if that’s so. If you don’t, it doesn’t matter how much you know. There are a lot of good friends of mine who graduated from seminary. They knew much more than I did, but they thought they could do it without walking with God. No you can’t! You’ve got to walk with the Lord.

So all of those four things [faith, holiness, obedience, and the Holy Spirit] to me are crucial and that’s why I spent time with it.

The fifth essential of understanding how to interpret the Bible is simply Jesus Christ. And what we mean by this is found in [Luke 24](#)—would you turn there please? And that is that the

entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation is about Jesus Christ. The old time evangelist used to say if you don't see Jesus in the Bible, you'd better go study it again.

Now, here's where we get this from. [Luke 24](#), this is the night of the resurrection. He's with the disciples. Verse [44](#), "These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses [that's the Torah, which means law in Hebrew] and in the prophets and in the Psalms." That's the section called "writings" of which the Psalms is the majority of it in length. And the chief book of the writings, so they always call the writings by the Psalms. But look at this, the three-fold division of the Hebrew Old Testament still exists today. The law of Moses, five books; the prophets, twelve books; the writings, five books; a total of 22 in Hebrew. He says it's concerning what? What does it say? "...concerning Me. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures."

Let me tell you class, you won't really understand the Scriptures until you see the centrality of Jesus Christ. That's what this Book is all about. God sent His Son into this world. The whole story of the Old Testament; there's a Messiah that's coming! The whole story of the New Testament, He's come, He's going to come again too, much of which the Old Testament said as well. So this is a very important principle of knowing God's word. It's concerning Him.

I love [Acts 8](#), when Philip was with the Ethiopian eunuch and the Ethiopian eunuch was reading from [Isaiah 53](#). He was a Gentile proselyte to Judaism. We know that because it calls him a "worshipper," which is a technical word for a Gentile proselyte. He comes into his chariot. He sees it and says, "Do you understand what you're reading?"

"How can I unless some man should guide me?" Boy, there's principle of interpretation. And the next thing is, "He preached unto him Jesus." It's all about Jesus.

I hope you see that because if you don't, you don't have the eyes that the Lord wants you to have to interpret the word of God. Sometimes I have to back off and say what did I see about the Lord here?

Number six, spiritual maturity. Now I don't expect a brand new baby in Jesus Christ to have a great, in-depth understanding, interpretation of the Bible. And it's not because we're proud and we've known the Lord for years. It's because the Bible itself reveals that.

See the principles are from God's word. We aren't making them up. Spiritual maturity is crucial. Now even referring back to that 1 Corinthians 2 and 3 passage, he called them “babes in Christ” as well as “carnal.”

Now go to Hebrews 5, please. Would you agree with me, those of you who have done some study in Hebrews that this is a hard book to understand? I remember the first time we were assigned the translation of it in Greek. Man, did we ever struggle with that. This is a tough book to translate. It's not like the simple Greek of John or 1 John. It is hard translation, very Hebraic. That is, it would be easier if it was in Hebrew. The original letter may have been in Hebrew. But you understand that this is a heavy duty book. Not only is it heavy in its vocabulary, but its heavy in its message, its content. And it takes some doing. You have to figure out who he's talking to and why and all those warning passages and all that sort of thing.

Right in the midst of this discussion about the priesthood, in [Hebrews 5:11](#), telling us that Jesus was after the order of Melchizedek—which he will continue in later chapters—but right away he says,

...of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time you ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and have become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that uses milk is unskillful. [There's that word, lacking in the ability to interpret, unskillful] in the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even to those who by [How'd they get this way?] by reason of use. ([Hebrews 5:11-14](#))

Notice, you don't become a strong Christian by the number of years that you have been a Christian. You become a strong Christian by reason of use, using the word of God. You have your senses exercised to discern both good and evil. You don't need to ask people. “Is this right? Or is this wrong?” That's typical of new believers and toddlers spiritually. But once we get strong in the word, we know that whatever the answer is to that, it's in the word. I need to find it for myself. “Study to show thyself approved unto God...” ([2 Timothy 2:15](#)).

Now sometimes we'll run into a real snag and we'll choose an older mature Christian to ask about that problem to get their viewpoint. I understand that. But do you understand that a mark of spiritual maturity is that you don't need to go asking everybody. You need to go ask the Lord. You need to search it for yourself.

I have found that every time I search the answer to a question, I know the answer. Whereas when somebody tells me, I don't know it, I parrot it. Is everybody listening to me? So if I go and say to pastor, “what do you think about that passage?” He tells me. I heard it and I'm going to parrot it. But you know something, I don't really know it. But if I did the same work he had done originally on it and I went through and studied it and came to that conclusion, then I know it. You see, so sometimes be careful. It's easy to just ask somebody you think knows it, trust what they say and then never study it for yourself. You don't really know it. You need to go through the process of searching it out too.

Did the Lord incite David to number the people or did the devil incite him? It looks like a contradiction to me. Now, which is it? I can tell you what the answer is, but wouldn't it be better for you to search it out as to what the doctrine in the Bible is about God using Satan to accomplish His purposes. It would be a much better task. And then you'd really know the subject. That's what I'm trying to say—spiritual maturity.

[2 Peter 3:18](#) says, “Grow in grace [interesting] and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” There are two things there. Grace means all that God gives you and what He's working in your life that comes from His wonderful hand—His kindness to you. So you need to

grow in that. A lot of us have not grown in that because of sin or bad attitudes or whatever. We're not growing in the Lord. And we need to grow in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus. The more we study the Bible, the more we know. That's so important to find out. Spiritual maturity is a key.

Number seven. You won't like this word, but diligently study. Diligent study or put in parenthesis after that, hard work. [Psalm 119](#), which is to me a key chapter all 176 verses in it, to study if you want to learn about the word and how to know the word. You really ought to master [Psalm 119](#). But verse [99](#) says, "I have more understanding than all my teachers." That's a favorite verse of a lot of students. "I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Thy testimonies are my meditation." Not because I'm higher educated or because I heard some stuff the teacher didn't know about. No. He said, "I understand more for Thy testimonies have been my meditation." I've been delighting in and chewing on the word. And the idea here is that when you depend on the word you don't need to depend on the teachers.

You see that's the principle we all need to learn. You have to learn and relearn and renew constantly what you already know. You might memorize it. You might know the truth. But it comes to you in a fresh and powerful way. That's the wonderful work of the Holy Spirit, and all of a sudden it's a blessing in a new way and a fresh way. Yet you know exactly everything that was said, but it hits you. The Holy Spirit took that and just melted your heart with it and did something special in you. How many of you have felt that?

I've listened many times to some preacher who hasn't said one thing the entire time that I didn't know about. But see, the Bible rebukes those who come to hear God's word just to hear some new thing. No, we don't come to hear some new thing. I want to hear the word preached in the power of the Holy Spirit. Don't you worry about it! I'll get blessed because the Lord has a way of showing us constantly with the power of His word. And I may know everything he's saying, but I'm blessed in a fresh and new way. And that's the beautiful thing about the work of the Holy Spirit. But diligent study, don't try to get out of it. The Berean Christians in [Acts 17:11](#)

were commended because they searched the Scriptures, they examined them daily. That’s the work of interpretation. That examination is hard work. It takes time.

Two things represent to me diligent study. One is time. Now class, we can waste time too. You know, you can say I spent two hours studying the word, but maybe for an hour you just daydreamed. So I don’t mean merely time, but time studying the word. Never believe that diligent study doesn’t require time.

I just got a letter from a pastor who told me that he had lost the joy of preaching, studying, all that stuff. And I just told him it takes time. That’s all I said. It was just a casual remark. And the Spirit of God went in like a knife into his soul because he was trying to walk into the pulpit without taking time. God’s blessing is on the man who does his own homework. I told him that too. Don’t think you can escape these principles of interpretation. You can’t. Time is crucial. It takes time to study.

Number two is hard work. And if you don’t want to do that, then stay out of the ministry. It takes time. And it takes hard work.

Now turn to [2 Timothy 2:15](#) and let’s prove that. If you’re going to interpret accurately the word of God, that takes a lot of study. In fact, if you’d like to put it down. As a principle, I believe that study is the key to accurate interpretation. Not your background. Not your knowledge, none of that. Not your denomination. But study is the key to accurate interpretation. You’ve got to hit it. [2 Timothy 2:15](#) tells you that. Study! Now the reason I translated it “diligent study” is those of you even with the New American Standard know that it’s translated “be diligent.” Agonize. Our English word agony comes off it. Sweat. It’s talking about athletes in a contest of wrestling. This is struggle. “Study to show thyself...” The words *show thyself* is translated “present your body a living sacrifice,” in [Romans 12:1](#). It’s translated “yield your body to God,” in [Romans 6:13-19](#), same words, “show yourself.” It literally means to stand yourself alongside of something—in this case, the word. You want to know how to preach right? Stand

yourself alongside that Bible and don't walk away. Spend some time and do a lot of hard study. God will bless you for it.

How do I know I'll be blessed? Because it says, study to stand, or be diligent, or agonize, really work hard to stand yourself alongside of it and you will be approved unto God. Now it's approval from God is the way grammatically. It's kind of like the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval, but it's coming from God. The approval on a man's ministry comes from God based on his own study. Not stealing somebody else's sermon. Now the outline may direct you, may guide you, whatever. Somebody else's sermon may help you. But if you don't study, you aren't going to accurately interpret the Bible.

“Study to show thyself approved unto God.” Now to emphasize the hard work, he says, “a workman that needeth not to be ashamed” or has no cause for embarrassment. You know the number one reason why we're embarrassed for somebody after the sermon we preached or the class we taught, they bring up some things because we didn't study carefully. And that is so true.

I was preaching a couple months ago and a portion of the text that I was in...I have to admit I didn't have time to look up as to what it really said...I sort of trusted my memory. Dangerous! I preached my heart out that day and so forth. A Bible student—loved the Lord, I mean they're in the church, people who really study—he comes out there and says, “By the way, you know this verse here, I think that is used over in...” And he gave me the context of it. “And I think you came out with the wrong... uh... I'm just curious how you came up with yours?” So you know discretion is the better part of valor. And I said to him, “You know something, that's the one phrase in that whole text that I didn't look up and you nailed me, brother.”

He threw his arms around me and said, “It's okay.” He walked away.

But see a workman, if you work at it you won't have any cause to be embarrassed. So then when somebody comes up, you know what they're talking about. You've studied it. You've been through it. You can say, “Well I appreciate your view but here's the reason why I came to mine.”

God has some really strong stuff there in [2 Timothy 2:15](#), but the blessing is in the last phrase, “Rightly dividing the word of truth.” So study is the key to accurate interpretation. To “rightly divide” is a Greek word, to cut and to cut straight. It dealt with a guy going into a very thick forest who was making a path for others to walk on. So he’s chopping it all down, he’s cutting a path and the others can walk on it. So if you want to rightly divide the word of truth, study is a key to it.

Number eight, the simple principle of simplicity! [2 Corinthians 11:3](#) says, “But I fear as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your mind should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.” If people don’t understand what you’re saying—we’re talking about just average people listening to you, if they don’t understand what you’re saying—is the possibility not that they are carnal or immature, but that you are not a good communicator? Or number two, you don’t know what you’re talking about—isn’t that a possibility? Why do we always see the problem in the audience? Can’t the problem also be in the pulpit? If they don’t really understand what you’re saying, maybe you’re down too deep in the well and you don’t frankly know how to get out either. “We need to get into the deep things of God’s word.” I hear people say that and I don’t know where he is. I can’t follow him.

Simplicity. Jesus said, “Out of the mouths of babes, God has ordained wisdom” (cf. [Matthew 21:16](#)). Is it simple? “The entrance of Thy word gives light, it gives understanding to the simple,” says [Psalm 119:130](#). I like to say, “Put the cookies on the bottom shelf so all the kids can get them.” It isn’t the job of us teaching the Bible to show how much we know that the audience doesn’t know! Our job is to help them understand what is very difficult in the Bible and make it simple, so everybody gets it. And I’ll tell you, it takes a real smart person in the Lord to be able to do that.

That’s a principle that God wants you to understand when you go to interpret His word. He didn’t make it in the language of the court. He didn’t use classical Greek. He used *koine* Greek, which is common Greek spoken by the average people on the street. God wasn’t trying to

trick people. He made it so that little children could understand. He even told people, "Unless you be converted and become like this little child, you can't enter the kingdom of God" (cf. [Luke 18:17](#)).

"Hey Jesus, let's get these little toddlers away from You." He grabbed them and put them in His arms and said, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Don't think they weren't squirming too. I love that picture! Although I don't really like pictures of Jesus, but there's one that's kind of as a rough Jewish carpenter look that I kind of like in the Christian bookstore, and it has all those kids all over Him. Have you seen that one? Man, I love that picture. That's Jesus to me. There are a couple of little maybe first or second graders around His legs. And He's got a baby in one arm and kids hanging over His shoulder. And they're all over Him, those little kids. And I say, "That's my Jesus! That's my Lord right there."

"Suffer, allow the little kids to come to Me cause of such is the kingdom of heaven."

He never made it hard. What do you think parables are all about? Parables are stories that everybody knew everyday. But boy, sometimes we preachers make those parables hard for folks. There is really only one central truth, but we think there's thirty-seven. We're into "Never-Never Land" and they've missed the central point, which is the only point of the parable. It's unbelievable to me sometimes how we can complicate what is so simple in the Bible. If the plain sense makes good sense, seek no other sense. But you've got to be walking with the Lord in order to say that.

Let's take a break!

History and Authenticity of the Bible
Lesson 22
Interpretation of the Bible – Part Three

By
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Principles of Interpretation

- **Faith and Prayer**
 - Ps.119:18, 26-27, 33-34, 68, 73, 169; Heb.11:6
- **Holiness** – Ps. 66:18; Prov. 28:9, 13; Heb. 12:14;
- **Obedience** – Ps. 119:100; John 17:17; James 1:22-25
- **The Holy Spirit** – John 16:13; 2 Peter 1:19-21
- **Jesus Christ** – Luke 24:44-45; John 16:13-14; Acts 8:34-35
- **Spiritual Maturity** – 1 Cor. 2:6; 3:1-3; Heb. 5:11-14; 2 Pet. 3:18
- **Diligent Study** – Ps. 119:99; Acts 17:11; 2 Tim. 2:15
- **Simplicity** – Ps. 119:130; 2 Cor. 11:3,6
- **Context** • **Language** • **Culture**

When we come to the subject of context, if you were teaching a course on hermeneutics, there are pages related to context, not just this one point. Why?—because context is one of the more serious matters of hermeneutics, or interpreting the Bible.

Now class, when I say context, we need to know what we are talking about. In a simple statement that we have given as a definition, it means: observing the passages surrounding a given word, a phrase, a sentence, a paragraph, a topic, or a book. All of those are crucial. They aren't just said to fill up the line. There's not a one of those statements you can leave out of your understanding of context. And I'm going to now try to demonstrate that to you okay?

To rightly interpret the Bible, let's start with a book. What do we mean by the context of a book? First, of all we mean how the book itself is organized. Who wrote it? To whom did he write it? When did he write it? And how is it outlined? Not how you're going to outline it, but how is it outlined? How is it organized? That is crucial to understanding the passages within a book and sometimes tells you all you need to know.

Now some of them are obvious, aren't they? Like you look at Ephesians and the first three chapters are the doctrine of the church. The last three chapters apply it. You know he begins in chapter 4:1, "therefore..." and you can pretty well get the idea. First doctrine, second principles, then practice.

Now in the book of Hebrews you have an interesting division. It doesn't come until almost the end of the book, in chapter [10:19](#). Where he says, "Therefore brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way... let us therefore do this and let us therefore do that." But see, before that we were talking about the person of Jesus Christ. Now the way it is outlined, is that "He is better than." I have my own ideas about outlining Hebrews. But if you're looking at Hebrews, how it's written, you've got to first of all say, "Well, who is it written to?" Well, it's written to Hebrews. Are they believers or unbelievers or both? That effects the interpretation of passages. Why?—because in the book of Hebrews we have alternating pronouns all the time; they or them, but you or us or we, and those are important in understanding. That's all related to context.

So when you talk about a context, you have to talk about a book. Do some books tell you how the book is organized? Sure. The book of Proverbs does in the first seven verses. It tells how it's organized. The Gospel of John tells you at the end of the book, chapter [20:30](#) and [31](#), "These signs are written that you may believe." So it's composed around the signs that Jesus did. I've noticed he constantly points out the signs to the people. And even when he's in another passage, he reviews and keeps it in our minds. Why?—because that's what John says. It's John's outline of the book.

When we come to Romans, everybody realizes the first eight chapters are kind of laying out all the doctrines relating to the righteousness of God. Then you come to chapter 9, 10, and 11 and he has kind of like a little parenthesis dealing with where Israel fits in. And then in chapter 12 on, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, on the basis of these mercies of God, that you present your

bodies....” So the whole last part of the book of Romans chapters 12 through 16 is practical application of these great truths. So the book itself reveals the context.

So class, if you’re going to study the Bible, you’ve got to start with a book. Now within each book, class, there are topics. Now sometimes the book itself indicates a multiple group of topics. For instance, in the book of 1 Corinthians, do you remember this phrase? “Now concerning spiritual gifts...now concerning meat offered to idols... now concerning....” There are multiple subjects in the book—topics. “Now concerning the things you wrote to me about marriage...now concerning these matters of immorality...now concerning the resurrection.”

You know, sometimes when you teach 1 Corinthians you wonder how they’re all related—spiritual gifts, resurrection, immorality, drunkenness at the communion table. I mean, it’s like it doesn’t fit together. I guess it all fits under the subject of carnal believers, but there are multiple subjects and how did he deal with these? He dealt with them much like a teacher did. He said that the people wrote to him about these. So the problems in the church at Corinth are being answered by Paul in his letter according to things that were written to him about what was going on. You see? So there is an example of how topics affect the context of what you’re talking about. And that’s true in many, many books of the Bible, the topic itself.

Now you can have a topic in a given passage that has multiple examples of being used, for example, redemption. We might be teaching Ephesians where it says, “In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sin.” Well, is there not a context in the whole Bible around redemption? That’s why the computers are so handy now, because we can look up that word and find articles from dictionaries on it as well as see its many, many usages in the Bible.

But one of the key issues is a paragraph, class. I started with book, then came to the topic and now came to a paragraph. Why are paragraphs crucial to interpreting the Bible? The answer—that’s the way it’s written.

Now sometimes I have to check with the original text to make sure the paragraphs are the same. And sometimes we're not real sure where the paragraph divisions are, but most of the time we are. And sometimes they are indicated in English Bibles. Would you believe me if I told you that the number one problem in outlining is they didn't pay attention to paragraphs. Would that surprise you? That the biggest difficulties pastors have in outlining is they try to impose something on the text rather than let the text say what it is saying. In other words, it's not up to us to try and figure out what kind of good outline goes on this chapter. But rather let the chapter tell you what the outline should be.

Here's my point. In Greek a lot more than in Hebrew, there's a central thought in each paragraph. That's why it's a paragraph. Much like when you write a letter, you do the same thing. Sometimes when you change and the thought is different, you make a paragraph. You indent it and you have a new paragraph. Well that's the way it is in Greek.

So class, if I gave you a chapter to make a sermon on, a Bible lesson, or a teaching, whatever and in the chapter there were three paragraphs, how many major points would you have? Three! It's as simple as that! Don't make Bible study hard. Now, I didn't tell you what the three points should be because you would have to study the paragraphs. But you understand that there's only one central thought in a paragraph.

Now, I'm going to try to illustrate this for you so that we really get a grasp on what we're talking about here. Turn to Ephesians chapter one and let me show you about paragraphs. Ephesians chapter one is familiar to most people who have been around the Bible for a while. So let's take a look at it. The first paragraph is the opening two verses. So that's just a greeting. "Grace to you and peace..." so forth.

Now would you believe that in the original text from verse three down to verse fourteen is one paragraph! And there's only one central thought in each paragraph. Well, I don't know if you've ever studied this, but there sure is a lot more than one thought there. Boy, you've got

predestination, election, adoption, grace, redemption, forgiveness, wisdom, His will, dispensations, inheritance, the Holy Spirit’s ministry sealing you—and you tell me there’s only one thought? Yep. There’s only one thought!

Now to make it even tougher on you and I’m going to ask you to figure it out. There’s only one main verb in the whole paragraph. That’s very typical of Greek. There’s only one main verb and everything else is related to it. What do you suppose it is? Blessed! When we read in verse three, it’s not the first one, “Blessed be God and the Father....” That’s not it. It’s the next one, “Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings.” This whole paragraph tells us how God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings.

Now here’s something else. Within a paragraph, often there is symmetry or rhythm or meter. In other words, it’s organized for us already so that we don’t have to. So if I’m teaching this one paragraph and the one central thought is how He’s blessed us, if I don’t have any more paragraphs, then that one thought becomes the title of the message. If there were three paragraphs, it’s only one of the three major points. But if I’ve only got one paragraph, then whatever is the central point is the title of the message. So the title of the message is: “How Has God Blessed Us,” if I’m going to do a message on [Ephesians 1:3-14](#).

Now here’s an example where I’m not imposing my outline, I’m just using what’s already there. To outline that message, I’ve got to find out within the paragraph, the context. How is it organized? You can see that in English if you look at it carefully. In [Ephesians 1:6](#) it says, “To the praise of the glory of His grace.” You see that? Now look down at verse twelve, “That we should be to the [what?] praise of His glory.” Now look at verse fourteen, last phrase, “Unto the [what?] *praise* of His glory.” You see what we have here are three stanzas. That’s why this particular paragraph was a hymn in the early church. They sang it.

There are three stanzas. It’s in symmetrical order, it’s perfect. “Unto the praise”—the word praise of the glory—glory, *doxa*, which is where we get doxology. “Praise God from whom

all blessings flow.” They call that the doxology. *Logos*—word. *Doxa*—glory. It’s a word of glory or glorifying God. Praise God. It’s a doxology. You have three doxologies. So you have three points to your sermon on how God has blessed us, if you are only using a paragraph. So you do three things in your sermon. Three points and each one focuses on the praise of the glory of His grace. Well, how do you know what all that is? Well, let’s take a look at it. Verse [three](#) says, “Blessed be God and [what?]—Father.” It’s the Father who blessed us, the Father who chose us, the Father who predestinated us, the Father who made us accepted in the “Beloved,” verse [six](#). So the first doxology is to the Father.

Now look at verse [seven](#), “In whom.” Now we have to say, “who is it talking about?” It’s not the Father. It’s the last words of verse six, the Beloved. Literally, “the Beloved One,” meaning Christ. The Father made us accepted in the Beloved One, namely Christ, and it’s in whom we have redemption. And it even ends with the doxology, verse [twelve](#), “that we be to the praise of the glory who first trusted in [who?] Christ.” Doxology number one, verses four to six, is to the Father. Doxology number two, in verses seven to twelve, is to the Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Now what do we have in verse [thirteen](#)? “You are sealed with the Holy Spirit who is the earnest of your inheritance” So the third doxology is to the Holy Spirit. So you’ve got a doxology to the triune God in [Ephesians 1:3-14](#).

Is everybody having fun? You see you’re getting your message ready. Amen? And all we’re doing is doing what? We’re using a basic principle of interpretation called context. I haven’t done any detailed work. I haven’t really studied it a great deal. All I’m doing is looking at the context. How is this paragraph put together? Now do you understand what I’m talking about? The front of your Bible should tell you how they have marked the paragraph. If they haven’t marked it, get a Bible that does or make sure when you are studying you have one. That’s why I always have a study Bible I can mark up and you know. And I keep my preaching Bible clean. So I’m not confused by my notes in it.

Let’s go to the matter of sentence. Is there a context around the sentence? Certainly! It would be the paragraph in which the sentence is found or whatever precedes it or follows it. For example, [Ephesians 1:5](#) says, “...predestined us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself.” Well that happens to be a clause or a phrase, within an overall sentence. In this case I have a real problem because the paragraph is only one sentence. There’s only one sentence here in Greek—not that obvious in English. But from verse three to verse fourteen is one sentence. So in this case, I would have to look at the clauses and phrases and there are lots of them. Chosen, predestinated, accepted—all these things, clauses and phrases within it—they have a context, as you look at the sentence in which they appear or the paragraph in which they are found.

Can you have a context of a given word? Sure, everything the Bible says about the word, everything your particular passage says about the word. Is it possible that the context of a given word is different than the Bible’s context of that word? Did you hear that? The context of a given word in the Bible, is it possible that what’s in that passage, telling you the meaning of that word, would be different from all the usages of that word in the Bible? Oh yeah. I’m going to give you an example.

Go to [Romans 3:24](#). I’m not expecting you to know all of this; I just want to illustrate it enough so that you can get the general idea. That’s why we have to do a detailed study of words, when we’re studying the Bible. It’s important how they’re used and what they mean. And I’m going to get into that at our next point of interpretation. Right now it’s just context. Context refers to how things are put together.

[Romans 3:24](#), “Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” I want you to look at the word *freely* and tell me what it means. What does it mean to you? Without cost!

Now go to [John 15:25](#), "But this cometh to pass that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, 'They hated me without a cause.'" Guess what? The word without a cause, C-A-U-S-E, is the exact same word in Greek translated *freely*, in [Romans 3:24](#).

Just for fun let's go back to [Romans 3:24](#) and translate it that way and see how you come out. You might be surprised, class. Here we go: "Being justified without a cause by His grace." That makes sense too, doesn't it? There was no cause in us that caused God to redeem us. You see here's an example where you're going to have to make a decision. Does it mean without cost? C-O-S-T as it sounds in English? Or does it mean without a cause? Meaning that there is no cause in us as to why we should be redeemed? Actually the word grace there could emphasize the latter, without a cause. Because grace gives us what we don't deserve. But it could also emphasize cost because of the word redemption, which is the word for the payment of a price. Does everybody follow me? You say, "what's the right answer?" I'm not going to give it to you. If you're interested you'll have to study it. And I don't know that there is a right answer. What I'm trying to say is that you see there is a context around a given word, not only what is said in your passage, but how it is used in different passages in the Bible. Everybody clear on that now? Okay.

Before you leave the word context, I want you to write something in your notes. There are two kinds of words that determine context: one, adverb and two, conjunction. I always begin, like when I make my notes and I'm scratching notes out, always put the conjunctions and adverbs, one of the first things you do is put them out in the left-hand margin. Just put them out there, one after another. That way, while you're studying, you'll always see the connection. The conjunction might be *and* or *but*. These have become very important. [Ephesians 2:1-3](#) tells us how "we are dead in trespasses and sins, walked according the course of this world, were by nature the children of wrath, BUT God, who is rich in mercy..." tremendous contrast there. So it determines the context of the passage, the conjunction. If it says therefore, you want to find out what it's there for, right?

Let me give you one [an example] over in [1 Peter 4](#) to show you how important it is. This is related to spiritual gifts. I believe that hospitality is a spiritual gift. People always ask me, "Where did you get that in the Bible?" [1 Peter 4](#), it's easy, provided you are a good student interpreting the word based on what it says. I'll tell you why. Look please at chapter [4:9](#). "Use hospitality one to another without grudging, as every man has received [it's not *the* gift, it's just *a* gift] even so, minister the same one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." Now, what's the adverb, class, or the conjunction? Which is it?—as. When we look that up, we find out it's *cathos*, which means "just as," which means "equal to." In other words, hospitality has to be a spiritual gift. There's no choice in the matter. Amen? Now, it may not appear on people's spiritual gifts list, but it's on God's list in [1 Peter 4:9](#) and [10](#).

You see? That isn't my interpretation. I'm required to do that because of one simple thing, an adverb that showed the context that showed hospitality is a spiritual gift in the context of those two verses. Okay, everybody all right now? Do you understand a little bit of what I'm saying?

Let's come to number ten, Language. Can we express the thoughts of God without words? No, we can't. We can't express our own thoughts without words, try as we may. The hardest work in interpreting the Bible is language. It takes the longest time. That's why a lot of people skip it. You're going to stay loyal to the study of God's word. Now this takes hard work. It takes time and most of the time of ever studying the Bible it's all in this field called language.

Interpreting through Language

- 1) Finding the root meaning of words
- 2) Finding the biblical and historical usage of words
- 3) Syntax – finding the connection of clauses and phrases
- 4) Finding the grammatical form of words

Let's look at the paragraph I've given you and I'll break it down for you. This principle of interpretation, language: finding the root meaning of a given word, noting its biblical and historical usage, understanding how the various clauses and phrases are connected together in a given passage and making sure of the grammatical form of the words. Let's break it down. Class, there are four things to study to accurately interpret the Bible as it relates to language. Four things! Number one is what we call the root meaning of the word, which means in terms of human history, the original meaning is the root meaning of the word.

Whether you are using a computer or book, if you open a lexicon, not a concordance, you find your word in either Hebrew or Greek spelled out in English letters if you don't know the language to just follow it. And you see a little paragraph which is very hard to understand under it. You'll often see a numbering system. Sometimes they're in parenthesis, sometimes not. It will say number one, number two, number three, number four. And then it will go on to another word. It will have little ditties after it. A lot of people look at that and don't know what in the world...!

Now the reason they don't know what it's all about is they didn't read the introduction to the lexicon. Now if you go back and read the directions, it helps.

I remember the first time I got a Hot Wheel for my kid. Man, I couldn't put that together. I told my wife, "there's something wrong with it; we've got to take it back to the store." I took it back to the store.

He said, "What did you do here?"

"Well I put it together."

He said, "You read the directions?"

"Well, I..." it was just a Hot Wheel.

He said, "Next time read the directions. It explains it to you step by step."

I don't like doing that. I want to just do it. Just get it done. You know. Is everybody with me? That's what I'm trying to say to you is if you read the directions on the lexicon, they'll tell you. And normally, there are very few exceptions.

Whatever is listed first under the word is the root meaning of it. For instance, there is a spiritual gift of ruling, [Romans 12:8](#). Some say it is leadership. That it means to lead rather than to rule, because there's another word for rule. And they may be right. But in order to really understand it, we go back and look at the original root meaning. The Greek word is *proistēmi*. It's a compound word. *Histēmi* is used all the time in Greek today. It means to stand. *Pro* means "before," either in terms of time or before a crowd, it means before an event happens or in front of people. So, to stand before in this context means to stand in front of people. So the gift of leadership is a correct one if you mean a people person, who is motivating people. He's not task oriented, he's people oriented. Now I learned all of that by just going to a root word. That's all I did. So going to the root word is very, very important.

It will also show you the relationship of lots of words. Let's take *A-G. Alpha Gamma*,

A-G. Did you know those two little letters, if you start with them you can see scores of Greek words off of that—all of our words of purity, holiness, chastity, all of them. They are all off of that. And there's dozens of forms of that word all off of that little root. I'm trying to say, root meanings are crucial.

Now, you say, "I don't know Greek. What am I going to do? I want to study my Bible." Then buy Spiros Zodhiates. It's a two-volume set, New Testament and its concordance. He tells you what the root meanings of those words are. [You can also use the [Blue Letter Bible](#) search tools.]

Usage: root meaning first. The second thing is usage. Now class, there are two things that you've got to study in terms of usage to understand your Bible. One is biblical usage; for that you use a concordance. How many times is the word used? Where is it used in the Bible? Look them up! Most words are used less than fifty times, so most words you can look up. Now that's biblical usage.

But you also have historical usage. How is it used in history? For example, in [Ephesians 1:14](#) where we were a moment ago, the Holy Spirit is called the "earnest of our inheritance." But you know I got to thinking about down payment. It does not mean you've got the inheritance. In fact, if you don't make the payments, you don't get it. Sounds to me like a little legalism in that. But if you go back to the historical usage of the word *arabōn*, you realize that what it meant at the time of Christ it still means today. It's kind of interesting. It refers to the engagement ring. I kind of like that because one day there's going to be a marriage to our bride groom, Jesus. The engagement ring is the Holy Spirit, that's been given to us. Isn't that neat? What a different idea comes on that text, all because you looked up the usage of the word. Okay.

Number three. We have first root meaning, then usage. Number three is what we call syntax. S-Y-N-T-A-X. Syntax means how clauses and phrases are connected together. And

normally you're right back to what we said under context. You're back to conjunctions and adverbs. How important is it? Let me show you.

[Titus 2:13](#). “Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.” Is syntax important? Oh yes. Because one of the rules of syntax is that when you have two nouns connected by *and*, and the definite article *the*, is in front of the first one but not the second one, it connects equals. Is that a rule? Well, it's used 256 times in the New Testament with no exceptions. That's a rule. What does that mean in [Titus 2:13](#)—“Looking for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of *the* great God [great an adjective, God the noun—the great God] and Savior Jesus Christ.” It means God and Savior are connected as being equals. In other words, Jesus is called God, the great God in [Titus 2:13](#). Everybody following me? That is the result of syntax. Seeing how phrases and words and clauses are connected together and the grammatical laws that effect that. Okay? This was just an illustration, but there are many of these.

Number four when you're looking up language and this is what takes time in studying the Bible, finding out the root meanings of words, finding out how they're used both in the Bible and in history, and finding out syntax. But number four is the grammatical form of the word—grammatical form of the word. I can't begin to tell you how many mistakes are made on this. It's like the number one area where mistakes are made.

What do we mean by grammatical form? One, what person is it? That's the very first thing you've got to ask. The grammatical form tells you. Is it first person? Is it second person? Is it third person? You can't interpret the passage unless you know that. Number two, is it singular or plural? The grammatical form tells you. Is he talking to one person, or is he talking to two or more people? Is it he? Or is it them? Is it thee or ye? Is it I or us? That's very important. Do you know that most of the warning passages in Hebrew could be solved if you just looked at the change in the pronouns and the grammatical forms of the word? When he said, “It's impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift and been partakers of the

Holy Ghost, and have fallen away to renew them again to repentance” (cf. [Hebrews 6:4](#)). But then the verse following, verse [9](#) says, “But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, things that accompany salvation.” So the “them” and the “you” are not the same. So the “they” of the warning passage are unbelievers. Your problem is solved. Is everybody following me?

You see, we get into so much trouble, so many arguments over interpreting God’s word. Why? Because we didn’t see the grammatical form of the word, as to whether something is in aorist tense or not, meaning a moment in time in the past or whether it’s a present tense, meaning it continues. Do you know that every time God tells you how to love, every time He tells you, and illustrates it, He always illustrates it with the aorist tense? You say, “What are you talking about?”

“By this will all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another even as I have loved you.” Did you know it never says, “Love one another as I have been loving you, or as I am now loving you?” Does Jesus now love us, continue to love us? Of course! But that’s not the point. The point is it’s always referring to His cross, the moment that He loved us is when He died. That’s how it’s described in passage after passage in the New Testament. So the major example to all of us in how to love each other is the cross. How did I learn that?—because I heard it in a sermon? No, because I saw the aorist tense used every time. There was no other example.

Here’s another one. “I have been crucified with Christ” ([Galatians 2:20](#)). And I heard a sermon the other day on the radio. I won’t mention who, but a guy was telling how we ought to crucify ourselves. You wouldn’t teach that stuff if you had read the grammatical forms of the words. And he used the very text I’m talking about. It says,

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:
and the life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who

loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ is dead in vain. ([Galatians 2:20-21](#))

When I go back to "I am crucified with Christ," I notice in the Greek, the grammatical form of the verb is perfect tense. Perfect you usually indicate by an auxiliary verb, like have or has or had. I have been, because it's passive voice also. I have been crucified, means it happened in the past and it has present, finished results. We don't crucify ourselves, in Christ we already have been. You were nailed to the cross. It's not God's fault you don't believe it. We're to walk by faith not by sight. You don't go out and do that job; it's already been done for you. What a glorious truth!

It's almost like the difference between teaching works and teaching grace, you know. All because a guy failed to look up the grammatical form of the word and taught it was present tense. Which he said on the radio—which it is not, it is perfect—and you lead the body of Christ astray. So don't tell me this isn't important. You can't accurately interpret God's word without looking carefully at language. It's very important: root meanings, usage, syntax, grammatical form. What person is it? Is it singular or plural? What tense is it?—tense means time, class. Was it past, present, or future?

On my way in one of you asked me about the passage in 1 John where it says, "Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, if they don't believe that they're an anti-Christ" (cf. [1 John 4:3](#)). And he [the student] said, "'is coming in the flesh' doesn't that mean the future?" No, it is not the future tense. If it was it would be translated, "he shall come" or "shall be coming." But it is not.

So again, we come back to a fundamental issue. What is the grammatical form of the word? It's crucial to understanding. You not only have tense and time, you have another thing to add to your list and that's what case is it?

Now, case controls the following words: nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and participles—nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and participles. What do we mean by case? Well, we have what's called the nominative case. That means subject, the subject of a sentence. It can be a predicate nominative, which always follows the verb to be. And that can be in the predicate, looks like an object but it really isn't. It's the subject, nominative. We have also what is called the genitive case. In English, it basically means possession. This is a book of mine, meaning, my book. I possess it. Okay.

We have also dative case. Dative refers to the sphere in which something operates. I am in Christ. Dative. I've been baptized in, with or by the Holy Spirit. Meaning the sphere in which this occurs is the Holy Spirit. If I've been baptized in water, it means the sphere in which it happens is water. We have the accusative case. Which means, the direct object. And we have what's called the vocative case. Which means a direct address, "O man of God, flee these things"—that's vocative case. Okay. So, what case it is becomes important. It may interpret the whole passage for you. It may make all the difference in the world.

For instance, did you know that the case of the words answers the contradiction that people bring up in the book of Acts? In [Acts 9:7](#), we have a statement about Paul hearing a voice, but seeing nothing. And then in [Acts 22:9](#) they see something and don't hear anything. But the difference between the two passages: in one passage it sounds like they heard something, the other passage it says they didn't hear it. And people say, "Ah ha, direct contradiction!" No. If you go to the Greek grammar, the case is different that follows the word, hear. One means that they heard a sound but couldn't distinguish the words. And another means they heard the sound and distinguished the words. So you see it depends on what case is used to determine what is meant by that grammatical form.

In other words class, I'm not trying to bore you to death. I'm trying to tell you it's not a simple matter to interpret God's word. It takes hard work and it takes time. And especially when you get to the subject of language, you've got a lot of things to look up.

Now let me give you an illustration how extra-biblical sources can also help, like archaeology or whatever. There's a Greek word translated in the New Testament many times in the Gospels, called a multitude. Also in the Acts, "All the multitude heard Him." What does a multitude sound like to you and me? It sounds like a lot of people, doesn't it? If you translate that Greek word into Hebrew, it's a word still used today. It just means the people who were there. We now believe that is a "Hebraism." That is, it was a Hebrew word because the Lord and His disciples spoke Hebrew, we now know. It is not Aramaic. They may have been familiar with Aramaic, but they spoke Hebrew.

Now the interesting thing is that if you do what we do a lot in English, we transliterate a word. A "hypochondriac" is Greek. A schizophrenic is Greek. Sometimes we don't bother to translate, we just say it. The word baptized is Greek. We never translated it. We just set it into English, *baptizō*—baptize. The same thing was done to that word, multitude. So it's really not referring to a multitude at all. It's just referring to the people who were there. Boy, is that an eye opener! But it solves a lot of problems also, if you see it that way.

The point I'm making is that we need to take the time to study God's word if we're going to interpret it. Study is the key to rightly dividing the word of truth. God said so in [2 Timothy 2:15](#).

What kind of books do you use to find the historical usage? Sometimes many books tell you that. For an example, Zodhiates tries to trace that word and show you some backgrounds. Sometimes there are books that are word studies. Sometimes they deal with cultural background. Sometimes they are books in Jewish circles. There are a lot of different sources for them. But you

can also go to books that are like, in its simplest form, like a Vine's Expository Dictionary. But that's a simple attempt.

I have a little book by Herschel Hobbs, who was a Southern Baptist preacher but also an archaeologist. He has a little book rarely known called *Preaching from the Papyri*. It's absolutely fantastic. It's just great. It's one of those books. It dealt with the usage of Greek words in the new papyri fragments that we found in the twentieth century and it adds new light to a lot of the meaning of those. You see? So all those things are helpful, they will help you understand the Bible. So will Jesus and the Holy Spirit!

Okay class, you're dismissed!

History and Authenticity of the Bible
Lesson 23
Culture

By
Dr. David Hocking

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Father how thankful we are for Your wonderful grace and mercy to us. And thank You, Lord, for Your goodness. You tell us, "All things work together for good to those who love You and those who are called according to Your purpose" ([Romans 8:28](#)). We thank You for the privilege of studying about the Bible itself. You've honored Your word above Your name, which is very hard for us to understand that one. We realize this is the word of God. We don't make it the word of God. We realize it has power to change our lives. As we continue our discussion of interpreting this blessed Book, may we again understand that we have no right to private interpretation. That these holy men, chosen, separated by God for this task, were guided and directed and moved about by the Holy Spirit of God (cf. [2 Peter 1:20-21](#)). So that what was written was definitely what You wanted, fully trustworthy, totally reliable and accurate. Thank You, Lord. And we look forward to what we'll learn, in Jesus' name. Amen.

All right. Are we ready? Culture. What is culture? Some people think it's sophistication, but culture is critical to the interpretation of the Bible. To illustrate before I start with this, I have spent maybe ten to twelve hours this week alone on culture, to help me in teaching where I am in the book of Exodus. It took me a little longer because I'm not familiar with a lot of things that have happened since the last time I was in Exodus. So I want to upgrade my knowledge and find out what's going on. And much to my surprise there was so much that it was just, well it was really exciting. I love learning things about the Bible. Don't you? And it just seemed like there was no end to the blessing.

I bought a book that has recently come out by Josephus. And I'm not talking about the *Wars and Antiquities* that everybody knows about, but this is a commentary. And I looked at Josephus' commentary on Exodus and it was really interesting. A lot of facts that he brought out

that aren't in the Bible and as far as I'm concerned are not reliable either. He contradicted himself in the same page or two about facts dealing with the culture of ancient Egypt. And had literally numbers contradicting themselves in the same almost paragraph, at least on the same page. And it reminded me again of the importance of getting accuracy as you're looking at culture.

It was a joy to go over a lot of things about ancient Egypt. I spent a lot of time trying to figure out who that Pharaoh was that drowned in the Red Sea. All the updated stuff that we know has only confirmed what I felt previously. So the early date of the Exodus, which the biblical chronology points to, is in fact totally reliable with archaeological discovery. So that encourages me too. I have a real heart for this.

Now in regard to culture, there is a whole section of this that is not here. This is not a course in interpretation, but if I were doing a course on hermeneutics, the culture section here would go on for several pages. I would tell you about the cultures that you ought to be interested in and it would probably surprise you. For instance, you could hardly understand Genesis without understanding the Sumerian culture. S-U-M-E-R-I-A-N. When I went to college it was not the oldest civilization. They said the Egyptian was the oldest. Today, by archaeological discovery we know the oldest was the Sumerian culture, which was in the Mesopotamian Valley. Now, by that we mean, what has been uncovered. It doesn't mean that there isn't one previous to that. But this is all we know. The Sumerian culture is the one out of which Abraham came. And so learning about that gives us a lot of insights into the stories of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

All of those things are valuable, but there are many cultures—the Assyrian, the Egyptian and all. And the longer you study them, the more you are aware of the fact that the Bible is quite accurate in how it pictures things. Things that you didn't see as culture really are. And so culture is important. But we don't mean what a lot of people do by the study of culture. They believe that somehow, we need to change or adapt the Bible to the current culture in which we live. We certainly want you to be contemporary and we believe the Bible is true in every generation and applicable in every generation. But that's not what we mean here by culture. We're talking about

the culture behind the facts of the Bible at the time it was written. And that's all the difference in the world. Sometimes, people say of the Bible, "Well, it's not culturally relevant—meaning maybe today. Even then its principles never change. So, you've got to substitute that which is cultural, that is, from the historical point in which it was written from that which is a moral principle in that story that applies to every generation. It's not easy to deal with this, believe me. But it's, very, very critical to our understanding of the Bible.

Pastor Chuck is a great student of culture and history. When he paints an Old Testament story, one of the things I like about it, before he really even examines the text is he lays out the whole history and background. What nations are in power and so on and so forth. And that type of stuff takes time to learn—doesn't it? It takes time to learn, study it, read about it. Get it under your belt so it's like second nature with you when you try to teach the Bible. Culture is an extremely important matter.

In addition to all the Assyrian and Babylonian and Persian and Greek cultures that parallel Bible times, one of the biggest items for study is the most neglected. If you can believe it, this is the biggest area of culture affecting the Bible and one that's most neglected. What do you think it is? That's exactly right, Jewish culture! Jewish culture is throughout the Scriptures. You can't really understand Old or New Testament without understanding Jewish culture. Yet that's one of the most neglected fields in the church today. We've almost paganized a lot of things in the New Testament. Put a Gentile view on it that came out of Greek mythology, not out of Jewish culture and understanding. Now there's more attention being given to this today than ever before. But it is a very critical matter, extremely critical.

Now let's just give you some basics, okay, so that we understand what we're talking about. The definition of culture is: "The ways, methods, the manners, the tools, the literary productions and institutions of any people." Therefore, I could adequately say to you "there is a Hittite culture." Would you agree with that? Why? It's a people mentioned in the Bible, the Hittites. There is a Philistine culture. It's a people mentioned in the Bible. Now, at the turn of the

century, we hardly knew anything about the Hittites. But we now know it was one of the biggest empires in the ancient world. It covered all of Turkey down to Syria, constantly effecting Israel. And so it all of a sudden adds a lot of things. There are books you can buy on the Hittites in biblical history. You can read about them. You can do the same about Philistines.

Sometimes the culture of a given people in the land of Israel has roots in another culture, which adds to your understanding. Let me give you an example. In the land of Israel we have the Gaza Strip. We have cities in the Gaza Strip and also in Israel that are known as the Philistine cities. There are five major ones mentioned in the Bible. Gath and Ekron and Ashkelon and Ashdod, so forth. We have those cities mentioned in the Bible.

Now at an excavation in Ashkelon, there was a tremendous find not too many years ago. They found a perfectly preserved bull or calf in solid silver from ancient times. Now the reason why this was so critical, in fact it's being used by the Palestinians and PLO today to prove that they were in Israel before Abraham was, which they probably were, and they're proving by *a priori* right that Israel belongs to them (the Palestinians) not to Israel. That's a very heavy-duty discussion in the peace process.

This little artifact, this little all silver bull, became very critical to the discussion relating to this culture. Why? Because it matches in artwork what's on the Island of Crete at the Minoan civilization. And it proves what many people have long felt, that the Minoan civilization that were seafaring people, literally are the ancient ancestors of the Philistines who settled along the Mediterranean coast. And the fact is they probably were there before Abraham. By the general term "the Canaanite was in the land" (cf. [Genesis 12:6](#)), when Abraham came there was a generation, a culture of people, in the land of Israel before Abraham ever arrived. No, the issue of who owns that land or who it belongs to is based on divine edict not on cultural presence. God said, "This land is Mine and I'm going to give it to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" (cf. [Exodus 33:1](#)). So it's a biblically divine right that gives Israel that land. And no other

reason is going to ever solve this problem in the Middle East. Everything else is going to be a big up-for-grabs issue. It's going to be a serious problem. That's why it's still serious.

See it's interesting, but one of the things that I enjoyed about going to the Island of Crete was examining the Minoan civilization because I see how that paganism through the Philistines came in there. And I see the things now that are mentioned in the Old Testament and they all of a sudden take on a new light. We get more understanding because of it. And you're going to find, though this is one of the difficult areas of Bible study, it's one of the most needed to give you an adequate explanation of things. For instance: the god Molech, and offering children to Molech, and all of that, to understand what that is all about is extremely vital to understanding God's judgment upon Israel for following those abominations. Every culture that's there adds to our learning.

There are so many things that are over there that are mentioned in our Bibles that, you know, if you're not exposed to it and you don't see it you don't quite understand what's going on. All of this is valuable to Bible study. But what I want you to see is that every culture ever mentioned in the Bible with any detail regarding it has only been confirmed by archaeological discovery, never contradicted; which if you think about it, is an amazing testimony to the accuracy and reliability of the Bible. Because that's almost unheard of! How in the world that could have taken place when the books were written over 1500 years is remarkable indeed! How in the world they would even be exposed to one another culturally and give accurate information is another amazing thing. So, this whole subject is critical.

Culture is best understood, in terms of accuracy, by archaeology. Culture is best understood, in terms of accuracy, understanding what you're talking about, by archaeology. Archaeology—*Archae*, it's archaic. It's old, ancient. It's the study of old things. Particularly, archaeology is the study of ancient cultures. This is done by taking a hill or a mound or a mountain, which in fact is just one city built upon another. It's stratification or layers clearly

reveal that. And it is studying the cultural factors in each level, which determine what culture it is, what time period it is and factors such as coins.

I'm going to try to illustrate as much as I can because I don't want anybody to be confused here about what we're talking about. We know that Bethsaida from which some disciples came on the Sea of Galilee, which has now been totally excavated, now is open to the public. We know that it was *not* a Greek city. This has been a...well I'd say a shock! We thought that Bethsaida was a part of the Greek Decapolis around the Sea of Tiberius. For years I preached it so. We now know that Bethsaida was a Hebrew town and village, Hebrew coinage, Hebrew culture, everything in it. And that has really kind of shocked archaeological thinking about the time of Jesus. So we realized that Hebrew culture and Hebrew language was much more dominant than anyone has ever argued before.

We used to say something like this: "The primary language and culture was Aramaic that came from ancient Babylon and Persia when the Jews returned to the land." They probably spoke Aramaic. We argued that Jesus and His disciples spoke Aramaic. And that the Hellenists are those who have adapted to the Greek culture which the Romans of course imposed upon Israel.

Now we are finding, also by recent discoveries from Dead Sea Scroll material by the way, that probably Hebrew was the language of the Jewish people, even though they might have spoken Greek or had knowledge of Aramaic. They spoke Hebrew. They were actually deliberately trying to restore their own culture in the midst of this pressure from Rome to do otherwise. Now we believe that Jesus and His disciples spoke Hebrew and not Aramaic.

It used to be said, "Well there are so many Aramaic words in the Bible. That has to be a Babylonian—Persian background." They would use such statements as on the cross, *Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani*. You know, all those terms. *Maranatha! Talitha cumi*, "My daughter arise." But we now know those are not Aramaic, they are Hebrew.

Do you remember when Jesus said on the cross, *Eloi, Eloi Sabachthani*? When He said that on the cross, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me," they said: "He's calling for

Elijah.” Do you remember that? If it was Aramaic, no one would have suspected He was calling for Elijah. But if it was Hebrew, they would suspect that. Why?—because the Hebrew would be *Eli, Eli. Elohim* is God—*El*, the shortened form. The little *i* on the end is the possessive for my. My God, My God. *Eli* is also the Jewish abbreviation of Elijah. So you see, if it were said in Hebrew, which we believe it was, then that explains something in the text that you can’t explain any other way—why they thought He was calling for Elijah. He wasn’t. He was calling out “My God, My God. Why hast Thou forsaken Me?”

Now where do you get that knowledge? Where do you get that understanding? It depends on whether you understand culturally what is happening. What conclusions you draw. And for years in church history, all the way up to the present century, we have ignored Jewish culture to the point we thought it was a Greek Hellenistic environment so we interpreted everything that way.

For years in commentaries, they would take a phrase like *the Son of God* and give it a Greek understanding. No More. They did the same thing with *Son of Man*. But we now know that Son of Man was an official title of the Messiah, not only mentioned in [Daniel 7:13-14](#), but it’s everywhere throughout messianic writings by Jewish rabbinical scholars. So we know that a little cultural understanding, a little knowledge is going to open up a lot of things in the Bible you wouldn’t see any other way.

Here’s another eye opener. Every parable that Jesus told, every one that is recorded, is all found among rabbinical sayings among the Talmud or the Mishnah. Every one of them! There’s not a new one there. Now that’s an eye opener, because then you can begin to look at the Jewish culture as to how that was interpreted, you begin to understand a little bit more. If you want to see some of this, it can become almost comical. “It’s easier for a camel to go through the eye of the needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God” ([Matthew 19:24](#)). Many rabbis said that. Jesus was simply pointing out to them what they already knew. The meaning is impossible. He’s

talking about the eye of a weaver's needle. We find it's a hyperbole, an exaggeration, meaning that you're not going to make it.

So all this cultural understanding is vital to us. Remember the Old Testament especially is filled with multi-cultural settings. Israel was coming in contact with the nations of the world. And what we have done for years is paid no attention to it. But what a culture is affects what is being said by the Lord, to all the nations of the world.

So, what is culture again? It's best understood in its accuracy by archaeology. It deals with the ways, methods, manners, tools, literary productions and institutions of any people.

Now class, if you need to underline something, I'd underline literary productions. You rarely find them, but when you do, what an eye opener! Can you imagine digging in some dig and finding actually on a clay tablet or something some actual writing in an ancient language? Now we have a lot of this assimilated in books today and it's helpful, very helpful. That can also be of New Testament times. For example, wouldn't it be interesting to know how words that are used in the New Testament are used in non-biblical material? Sure it would.

When Paul wrote in [Ephesians 1:14](#) that the Holy Spirit is the "earnest of our inheritance," the Greek word *arrabōn* is very interesting when you go back to the first century and see in other writings how *arrabōn* is used. It refers to an engagement ring. Now right away we have a new slant, don't we, on what that passage meant. By the way, in this case, not only did it mean that in the first century, you're still using that today in Greece for the engagement ring. So here's a word that's remained consistent throughout history, yet we've been using it over and over again as a deposit and a down payment. And that can just add wonderful thoughts to your mind that the Holy Spirit is like an engagement ring guaranteeing that I'm going to be married in the future to Jesus Christ and receive all of the inheritance. What a wonderful, wonderful promise that is! And it adds to your understanding. Where did you get that from? You got it from culture. By examining the literary productions of any people the way, the methods, the manners, the tools.

When I came to Daniel 11 years ago, I heard all kinds of arguments about what Daniel 11 was about—trying to figure out what was going on there. Verse by verse kings are changing and different facts are given. All along the Aswan Dam are all these ancient structures of ancient kings, beautiful archaeological discoveries, huge palaces and buildings all from the time period of Daniel chapter 11. There were cultural factors that were found in there that completely substantiate Daniel 11. I assimilated all that material and what a joy that was because I found out that Daniel 11 verse by verse, phrase by phrase, is exactly accurate with the history of the battles between the Ptolemys and Seleucids, the break up of Alexander the Great's empire, fighting over Israel. What an insight! Bringing you all the way down to Antiochus Epiphanies, who becomes a historical symbol of the antichrist himself. And when you read all of that, I mean, my heart leaps for joy! I already believe this book is the word of God. I wish the whole world knew all of this.

Culture is not a subject to put on your shelf and never look at again. So if you're in an old bookstore and you see some old books on Egypt or Syria or Babylon, flip through them. There may be some history, there may be some value—pick it up. Put it in your library. You'd be amazed at what you can learn. A lot of people don't pay any attention to those books. That's why they're in our old bookstores. They don't want them any more. Culture is so important. Many, many times the coins and tools alone tell us what period of time it is.

Cultural Factors

Four basic cultural areas that can assist with biblical interpretation

- 1) Geography – location, elevation, travel, wars, etc.
- 2) Politics – kings, rulers, governments, taxation, etc.
- 3) Customs – traditions, foods, clothing, coinage, etc.
- 4) Religion – Judaism, Christianity, Pantheism, Paganism

Now there are four basic factors—and this you should know—the four basic factors of cultural understanding, of anybody's culture. One is geography. Boy is that important! Did they go up or down? We always go up to Jerusalem. Why, because it's up! We always go down to Jericho. Why, because it's down 1300 feet below sea level. Do you understand? It's just amazing. When you see a picture of the ancient fortress of Masada, you say, boy that's really up there. You forget the fact that the top of Masada is sea level.

There are a lot of interesting things geographically. There's a difference between the high plateau of Galilee or the Golan Heights and the hills of Samaria. You can see how Abraham on a clear day can stand on Mount Nebo and literally see the entire land of Israel, all the way to Mount Hermon, all the way to the Mediterranean Sea, all the way down to Beersheba. The exact thing God said is true. He (Abraham) could see the entire land (cf. [Deuteronomy 32:49](#)). So geography is vital. It's absolutely vital to everything. Do you understand Paul's shipwreck? Do you understand that voyage he made to Rome? I tell you when you know geography and you know

what actually happens you know why he went the way he did and why he had the wreck he did.

It's interesting, just to see all of that and understand that.

Number two is politics. Politics is crucial to culture. What king is in power? What are the actual facts? Let me give one where culture can really help you. In Luke chapter two, it says that "There went out from Caesar Augustus a decree that all the world should be taxed or registered." And this census took place when Quirinius was governor of Syria (cf. [Luke 2:2](#)). Now by studying culture, I learn that there were three empire-wide taxations that were called for by Caesar Augustus. I know that number one and number three cannot possibly be the dating of the birth of Christ—not even close, give or take ten years. So, it has to be number two.

Now I also know the problem of Quirinius because at the time when that taxation took place Quirinius was not the governor of Syria. When I went to school they did everything under the sun to explain this to me. They said, "Well, I think Quirinius ruled Syria a couple of times." I never found that to be true. Do you understand? Do you have an inquiring mind? Inquiring minds want to know. Do you want to know the truth? Do you? I want to know the truth. I don't want somebody snowing me [giving false facts] about it. So I'm looking at this and I'm thinking, "Wait, what's going on here?" And so the Bible appears to be inaccurate. It's not close to anything—and I'm thinking: "Oh great, one glaring contradiction!"

Well, that's why a little Roman history is good. I don't know if you've ever read Roman history. It's interesting just to look at all the Roman emperors and see what happened. Well, as I was looking at the time that is under discussion in Luke 2, I noticed that in the Roman annals Quirinius was not governor at that time Varus was. V-A-R-U-S. But guess what else I found? I found that Quirinius was head of foreign policy and that Varus made him over all his troops and handling all the relationships with foreign powers. It got me thinking. So I turned back to Luke 2, looked at the Greek text one more time, and realized that it didn't say governor at all. It's a verb. It's not a noun. It says, "when Quirinius was *governing* Syria," which exactly was the truth. No, he wasn't the governor, Varus was. But he was ruling and governing in Varus's place.

The Bible is very detailed in its grammatical form was totally accurate to what we know that cultural understanding had proven. So, you understand? It's important. It affects many, many things that you and I study in the Bible.

Did you know that the names of people and political leaders mentioned in the book of Acts, for instance, including all the priests that we have a lot of information in non-biblical sources about all of them? And what an eye opener! You begin to understand things you never saw before. So politics alone is crucial.

Customs. What are the customs of these people? You can't understand John 13 without understanding customs. Jesus washing the feet of the disciples was a break with tradition and custom and that's what makes that story so powerful, once you understand how things actually took place. And by the way, did they sit on chairs while they did it? No. Because the Greek text tells us they were reclining, just like we learned, that's the way people ate in ancient times. The central table has the food on it and you lay on a couch, leaning on one hand. And with your other hand reach the food and eat it. Now it makes sense how John could easily lean back on Jesus, leaning on His breast. You see there are so many things.

Now we understand because of the courtyards in which these gatherings were that often people would hang around there from the community and the town. We could understand how that woman came in off the street and could sit at the feet without interrupting the conversation at the table and wash His feet and wipe them with her hair. It all begins to make sense when you understand customs of the people. And that I think is crucial, crucial to us.

When I look at archaeology and I see on walls, figures of men with beards, and I think they are probably not Egyptians because they shaved. Remember in Joseph's day? They required Joseph to shave before he even appeared before Pharaoh. And these beards represent either Jewish people or another culture who also wore beards. All of this is helpful to us and it's fascinating.

I remember walking through the Temple of Carnac in Luxor, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Ten men with their hands outstretched around the pillars of those can barely touch their ends of their fingers—that's how huge it is. Gigantic! Rows and rows of these giant pillars, these giant lions in the entry way, it's spectacular beyond belief! We were in there and the Egyptian guide is telling us about a lot of things and I mentioned to the guide, "You know, it's interesting to see all the comparison with biblical history."

And she looked at me and said, "There isn't anything here that tells you about any biblical history." She proceeded to tell me the late view of the Exodus in Ramses period and all that.

I said, "Excuse me? On a wall of this temple is the whole story of Shishak the time of Rehoboam."

She said, "That's not true."

I said, "Oh, yes it is!"

She said, "Where?"

I said, "Well, it's not where we are. So anyway, we go over and on the wall, the southern wall of this Temple of Karnak there engraved in there is the whole story of Shishak's invasion mentioned in the Bible. She's hunting her guidebook, flipping through all of that. And I said to her, "You know there's a major reason why nothing's in your guidebook."

She said, "Why? It's an Egyptian guidebook."

I said, "If modern Egypt does not put Israel on the map, can you not understand that ancient Egypt wouldn't mention either anything about Israel ever being here?"

She said, "No more!"

By the way, we had a big service of praise and I preached a little bit. I wasn't going to let the opportunity go by. But you understand that culture, customs, politics, all of that is fundamental.

Now also, the fourth basic factor is religion. And that comes into play big-time in the Bible. But all the way through the plagues of Egypt, the Egyptian pantheon, the paganism of Egypt was being attacked by all ten plagues. I mentioned all the gods that were being attacked, the names of them, what they represented, and all of a sudden the story comes alive to people. Well, culture is helpful.

When you study the religious system of Egypt, you all of a sudden realize what was happening there. God was literally smashing everything the Egyptians believed in, tearing it completely apart, specifically and clearly so that no one would have any mistake. Remember God said He was going to show His power over all the gods of Egypt. That's exactly what He did. And then He continues to mention it in all the rest of the Bible to remind us never to forget what God did there. He is the only God. He is above all gods that people come up with.

So it's interesting when you study all of the religious backgrounds, even the religious backgrounds of Jews. How many of you have ever really studied the Pharisees, and the Saducees, the Herodians and all that? Have you ever really studied it or have you just read a sentence of two? Let me tell you something, if you read about the Pharisees in detail, you will teach differently the story of the Pharisees in the Bible. Did you know there are still Pharisees today? I'm not talking about the coinage Pharisical, meaning hypocritical. I'm talking about actual Pharisees that are still here today. They call themselves Pharisees.

There's a wonderful book called *The Hidden Pharisees* by Elvis Rifkin, who is a part of ordaining council of rabbis in this country. And it's an excellent book. But you get a whole different understanding of who the Pharisees are. They were the most respected and religious people of their day. They were orthodox. They held a high view of inspiration and inerrancy of the Scripture. And they were sincere, but they were sincerely wrong. They were protectors of God's law. They were protectors of many, many things, even during the Roman invasion and attack on Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

It's interesting when you see the background, when you understand the religious situation, it's fascinating how these religious parties even arise. How they became a part of the Sanhedrin, which was a Roman governmental situation. It wasn't set up by the Jewish Orthodox people at all, like Christians have taught for years. The Sanhedrin is a Roman puppet government. The Jews by the way, had their own, called the *Boule*, which is a Greek word for council. And these men were loyal to the Scriptures. It's just interesting when you see things in their proper cultural perspective and understanding. It never contradicts the Bible. It just opens and explains things that you never saw before. And that's why I just emphasize it over and over again.

However, people have gotten so messed up studying culture that I decided at least in this brief discussion, we need to lay some rules down. In a course on hermeneutics I have multiple rules that go on and on. But these are the four basic things to know when you come to the study of cultural understanding of the Bible.

Cultural Interpretation

Remember when interpreting a given culture:

- 1) Don't treat cultural factors as moral absolutes!
- 2) Don't use cultural factors alone to determine the interpretation!
- 3) Don't confuse cultural factors with the application of biblical principles!
- 4) Don't ignore cultural factors in your understanding!

Number one: Don't treat cultural factors as moral absolutes! They are helpful to our understanding, but it doesn't mean that they are a moral absolute. That's very important when Jesus teaches. Do you remember what they said about Him? "He teaches as one having authority and not as the scribes." What do they mean by that? Well, we know by understanding how the scribes taught. The number one way you teach, in fact you are required to teach, is never to authoritatively state a position yourself. You always quote other scholars. That's a sign of your humility and your respect for other scholarship.

Do you know that rabbis today do the same thing in the synagogue, or when they're even counseling you? You bring up a problem to them and they'll say, "Over here in Roshe, he said this about that. And Rabon said this, you know." And a lot of people are kind of confused over that kind of teaching. But that's rabbinical teaching. They refer to other scholars. They quote other people. Jesus didn't bother to do that, He just flat out puts His finger on the problem and tells them. And they said, "He teaches like one having authority, like He's the original source!" Right, He is! Do you understand? That passage all of a sudden opens up to you and you realize, because you know how the scribes taught, what is actually taking place there. Don't treat cultural factors as moral absolutes.

Number two: Don't allow cultural factors alone to determine the interpretation, because it may or may not be a factor! It may be helpful to your understanding, but it may not be the point of what Jesus was saying. Why do I say that?—because frequently He is saying things against the culture. He is attacking the culture. He is not commending it and that's important. That's also true about Paul. He's attacking the culture. So be careful. Don't use cultural factors to determine the interpretation.

Number three: Try not to confuse cultural factors with the application of biblical principles! I've seen this happen, where I hear a guy teaching and he is applying what is a cultural factor and it isn't necessarily what the biblical principle is. So we have to separate those two. That's true in symbolic language, which we're going to study here in just a moment. That's true

in symbolic language. You need to know what the difference is between the symbol and the truth that we are to apply; otherwise, you are applying the wrong thing.

And number four: Don't ignore cultural factors in your understanding! That's so easy to do. Here's what I do when I study a passage, I always just look through. Are there any nations, any cultures here that I need to study that would effect the interpretation of this passage? Sometimes there is not, but often I find, especially in the Old Testament, there is. And taking the time to look that up will always be beneficial to you. It may not be anything you're going to use, but it will help you to understand what's taking place there. That's very important.

When you ask about good books on culture, there are so many you don't know where to start. Sometimes you will find in the Christian bookstores, they'll have it in the historical section. They'll have history, archaeology, and sometimes lumped together. You will find a lot of the Bible dictionaries try to give you some of them. For instance, *The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Encyclopedia*, they try to update theirs every couple of years, they upgrade it so new information that's been uncovered is in there. So sometimes your encyclopedias bring a lot of that information.

I like, personally, a given book on a given nation. That helps me. Now in the case of Egypt, because there's so much material, you've got old kingdom, middle kingdom, new kingdom, and you've got to decide what period of time you want to study. So I've got a parade of books on Egypt. And it doesn't matter whether they are secular or sacred. The basic facts that people learn from archaeological discovery are there. I prefer if it's an evangelical scholar, but not always is it. But I'd say if you see a book on a culture that's mentioned in the Bible, just flip through it. There may be some information that is helpful.

In Jewish culture there's lots of stuff. I would say buy everything Alfred Edersheim writes because his books are just filled with Jewish culture. It's not just *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, but he's got a lot of books. Emil Schurer has a set on Judaism in the First Century that's just absolutely vital to your understanding. But there are lots of them. If you really want to

get into heavy expenditure in this area, of course, *The Encyclopedia Judaica* series and that has everything you want to know about Jewish history and culture.

Interestingly when you get secular books, when people ask about Jewish culture, I recommend simply *The Jewish Book of Why*. It comes in two volumes and you can buy it in the secular bookstore. *The Jewish Book of Why*. And what you do is any question like: why do they use matzo bread? Why do they have a cloth? Why do they have bells at the end of this? All this kind of stuff and there are little brief synopsis of what the rabbinical scholars have taught on that—a lot of cultural understanding there. Then you can go to Jewish organizations like Friends of Israel, Jews for Jesus, Beth Sar Shalom, a lot of organizations put out books helping you with Jewish culture and understanding. But I get most of my stuff on other nations just out of secular bookstores. I have a lot on Rome because I majored in that area, so I have a lot on Rome. And it's helpful in understanding the Bible, boy, that's for sure!

Yes?

Another voice: "Do you recommend *Manners and Customs in Bible Times*?"

David: Yes, that's a real good book. There are a lot of books, class. You know, not all of us are going to be that kind of a person. I don't know what the Lord's going to do in your life. But I think just a little sampling helps us all. Maybe get a book or two on manners and customs. That would be helpful. It discusses things like tools and coinage and all of that. And you get an understanding of why that's so important. Pottery is another thing.

We know for instance in a Jewish wedding process, the engagement is always announced at the bridegroom's home. He takes his fiancé there and introduces her to his parents and they announce the engagement. And it takes a divorce to break up a Jewish engagement. A year later you always have it at the bride's home, and of course the bride's parents are either at their home or they rent a hall, they are responsible to pay for it. We still do that today of course even among Gentiles. That's why we think the wedding supper is on earth, see, one of the reasons.

Okay. Take a break.

History and Authenticity of the Bible
Lesson 24
Symbolic Language

By
Dr. David Hocking

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Symbolic language. It is a difficult area but the simple definition doesn't seem to be too difficult. It means: “Making a literal fact or truth more graphic or visual.” I don't know how you were raised; some of us are raised without being exposed to this kind of conversation.

In Jewish homes, Jewish people like to illustrate what they say to give you the chance to think about it and come to a conclusion rather than point-blank say it to you. Now if you grew up in an accounting, engineering, mathematical, computerized home, they probably just wanted you to say what you want to say. I mean, some people are like this. I don't know how you grew up, but understand that this Book is bathed in Jewish culture, Old and New. And so stories or telling a story to get across a point is very Jewish. So before you wonder why they don't just say it, well because they want you to exercise a little discipline in thinking it through and making sure you understand.

So sometimes in symbolic language you get kind of overwhelmed with all this and you wonder: “Wait a minute, what's going on here?” And it's almost like you think if you were raised in the other environment that they're complicating it. And I have been interested to notice the commentaries I have, especially on the parables you know like in the Gospels, if the guy is of the kind that I was speaking about where he grew up with: “Just the facts, man, just the facts. Just tell me straight what it is you are trying to say.” If he's grown up that way, he is always ignoring the significance of the symbolism and he's trying to get to the central truth. Do you understand me?

In other words, you'll find preachers doing that. “Now there's really only one thing being said here and here's what it is.” Well, maybe. But maybe we ought to think about it just a bit more. So understand it's very Jewish to take our time, especially with great moral truths. We want to illustrate it. And practically all the teaching of Jesus—one reason I know He's a Jewish rabbi, no wonder people called Him rabbi all the time—because He taught that way, with stories.

Now when Jews tell stories, they love stories that relate to your life—what it's like to live—common stories. Today they would say something like: “You've got to put water in a radiator, brother, or you're going to get overheated.” You know, and so you've got to think about

what they just said as to what it means. Okay. And some of the times you get the point. It's their way of telling you there's something wrong here, but they have a story to kind of illustrate it. Okay.

Now that's throughout the Bible and we need to appreciate that. A lot of people who were liberal in theology, not paying attention to symbolic language, have come to conclusions about passages that are not true at all. For example in the book of Revelation alone, how in the world could anybody understand that who didn't break down symbolic language? I'll never know. When he (John) says something is *like* something, or *as* something, he doesn't mean it is that. The liberal critics have used this to laugh at the Bible.

Or here is another one: "Ye are the salt of the earth" ([Matthew 5:13](#)). The other day I heard a guy on the radio explaining how we really are salt. He could prove why Lot's wife turned into a pillar of it. But you see he was sincere, but he was sincerely wrong. Why? Because he didn't see it was a metaphor. Now there is a point about salt that is being applied in the passage, but he's not saying you are salt any more than saying you are a city set on a hill. But you and I both know if you've been around the church long enough, you've heard a lot of this stuff. And it gets a little mind boggling and you sometimes wonder: how did he get that?

Usually when something is quite simple and you have to ask, how did he get that? He probably didn't get it. See, if you know something about the passage that no one else has ever figured out, there's a chance that you might be wrong. Everybody understand that? All you're doing, class, is making a literal fact or truth more graphic, more visual. Jewish people raised in that culture, that's easy for them. It really is. And if you grew up in a family, as I did, that not only had a Jewish flavor to it but told stories, you learned by stories. I did it to my kids and I'm doing it to my grandkids. And I've demonstrated this before, but when you're telling the story of Daniel and the lion's den, you've got to make that kid understand. So you say, "He (Daniel) got in there with a lion. Do you know what a lion is like?"

"What!"

“ROAR”

And boy, they don't ever forget that story again when they read it! You need the Lord when you're in a lion's den. See? You get the point, right? We're going to make it more graphic. We're going to make it more visual. It's symbolic language.

Now I have listed for you eight examples of symbolic language, but there's a lot more. Some of them are more technical and more isolated. These are kind of what we call the eight biggies, you know, of symbolic language. And I do want you to know them.

Symbolic Language

Simile – a comparison using “like” or “as”

Metaphor – comparison without connecting words

Parable – extended simile that reveals truth

Personification – animation of inanimate things

Hyperbole – exaggeration used for effect

Paradox – a truth that seems absurd

Riddle – statement designed to puzzle

Anthropomorphism – attributing physical characteristics to God

Now one of the most frequent symbolisms in terms of the language of the New Testament is a simile. The reason that it's important to understand a simile is because we all know about parables, but a parable is simply an extended simile. And a simile is a very brief sentence that compares two unlike things, always with a connecting word. The key here is “such as,” “like,” or “as.” It always has a connecting word. If the connecting word is left out and the two things are unlike each other and don't make sense—“Ye are the salt of the earth”—it's a metaphor. All a metaphor is, is a comparison without making any connection between the two.

“Ye are the light of the world.” “You are a city set on a hill.” These are metaphors and there are many of them in the Bible, many of them in the book of Revelation.

I counted up over seventy examples of similes in the book of Revelation. There are a lot of them. “He had eyes as a flame of fire.” It’s like a flame of fire. Then you have to define what you’re talking about, maybe the penetrating? Burning up the dross of your life and seeing straight through you. I don’t know what he’s saying. I have my own opinion, but do you understand, just at first glance. So I’ve got to look into it a little bit. I’ve got to study the simile a little bit. “His feet are like brass burned in a furnace” (cf. [Revelation 1:15](#)). Does that mean He has solid brass feet? No. It’s *like* that and so the picture of it is important.

And all of that through Revelation is critical. I believe there’s a demonic plague in chapter nine being pictured, the demons of hell itself. But they come out looking like locusts and the most unusual locusts you have ever seen in your life. They’re really strange looking locusts.

So again, all the way through God’s word you’re going to see this. What is a simile, class? It has a connecting word and it is a comparison of two things. Now, before you move off of this, let me explain a Jewish simile. Jews love to compare by contrast. Exactly the opposite of what you and I do. We try to find comparisons so we understand how this is like this. Well Jews, often in the two things they are comparing are talking about something exactly the opposite. But there’s something about both of them that’s the same.

Now let me give you an example. There’s no other way to figure out the unjust judge parable ([Luke 18:1-8](#)). Why?—because the unjust judge, who hasn’t got a moral bone in his body, happens to be compared to our Blessed Lord, who is perfectly righteous. There’s a problem, a real serious problem.

We also have a thief who robs a house in [Matthew 24:42-44](#), representing the coming of Christ. So you see, it’s a tactic of Jewish symbolic language, poetic to take contrasts. Think of how often that appears in the Proverbs. What are they contrasting? Usually it is the way of a fool with the way of the wise; the way of the righteous with the way of the wicked. And sometimes

they're two parallel statements and you think to yourself: “What is the point here?” And we Americanized [minds] think: “Oh, the point is to show the contrast between the two.” And the answer may be that, but often it is not. No, it's to show what is similar in the two. So the Jews like to make it more graphic or visual by making it a contrast. But there's something about the contrast that makes the two things exactly the same. And figuring that out is not always easy. That's why Proverbs is such a hard book to figure out sometimes.

Similes are throughout the Scripture. And if you're Jewish, you appreciate it. If you're not Jewish and you haven't been exposed to that kind of thinking, it's a struggle. In fact, you find yourself trying to interpret it different than what the intention is behind it. So what I'm basically trying to get you to do is to back up a little bit, take a look at symbolic language and say, “What is the point of symbolic language here?” before I start trying to figure out the interpretation. Back up, take a longer look and say: “Is this a simile? What is being compared?” before you draw a conclusion.

“The kingdom of heaven is like unto...” so we can begin to see that these extended similes—called “parables” just because they go on longer—they may be having a lot of details. For example, the one in Matthew 22 about the kingdom of heaven likened to a man given in marriage. He happens to be a king and it's a king's son. And he invites certain people who find they have excuses and can't come. So then he instructs the servants to go out to the highways and byways, get in the blind, the lame, and it says, “Bring them in here that my house may be full.” A man comes in without a wedding garment. He's thrown out. And the application is that he's in hell! And it kind of wraps it all up and says, “Well, many are called but few are chosen.” And sometimes we jump too quickly without backing up and taking a look. The whole thing is a simile. Two unlike things are being compared. What am I to learn from all of this? And that's the critical point.

So symbolic language is everywhere in the Bible. The parable of the ten virgins, boy there's one! One time when I was in seminary they asked us to take certain passages and we were

supposed to look up in all the commentaries and list all the views and try to explain why they came to the views they came to. This was a good practice by the way, interrogating the commentaries instead of thinking that what they're saying is right, investigate it. Well, I had gotten assigned the ten virgins in Matthew 25 and I'm telling you, none of them agreed! How do they come up with all this stuff? It didn't say “the kingdom of heaven is like unto the bride and the bridegroom.” It says, “The kingdom of heaven is like unto ten virgins who went out to meet the bridegroom.” And just the details of it...like who are the wise? And who are the foolish? And what's the point of the oil? And how, what does it mean? And apparently the five who were virgins, they were supposed to be attendants at the wedding, they never got in. In fact, they go to hell also. You think, wow! You better have a lamp or carry a flashlight around with you or you're going to go to hell, you know.

So you see all kinds of things like the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds and how people apply it. That's why it's important if you're going to trust commentaries, and there is a reason to consult them, but if you do, make sure you don't just have one because you're not going to see the variety of interpretation. That's why I try to buy books that are different, you know. And it helps you also to think through things a little bit better and try to really find out what God is saying in this passage.

Now, if a parable is an extended simile, then an allegory is an extended metaphor. All an allegory is—there aren't many of them, there is one in [Galatians 4](#)—but an allegory is an extended metaphor.

Now go to [Galatians 4](#) and let's just see if we can take a look at this and understand it a little bit. Now the advantage of this passage is it tells you that it's an allegory. So I don't have to worry about whether it is or not. It already says it is. [Galatians 4:24](#), “...which things are allegory.” Now there are no connecting words like *like* or *as*. In verse [22](#), “Abraham had two sons, one by a handmaid [a slave] and the other by a freewoman.” Right? Who's the son by the

handmaid? Anyone?—Ishmael. Who's the son by the free woman?—Isaac. The name of the handmaiden?—Hagar. The name of the free woman?—Sarah.

Now watch this. "...which things are an allegory for these are the two covenants." Excuse me! Do you know if I did not have verse [24](#) and following, I wouldn't have figured that out? That's why people have a hard time with metaphors and allegories, why they can't figure them out. Why? Because there's no connecting words there and you're not sure what is what. It takes a little time. But one thing is for sure, those are two unlike things. Is there any way that when you read the story of Hagar and Ishmael that you immediately thought it represented the Old Testament law? No way! You never even saw it. But that's what he says. He even says "the one's from Mount Sinai gendereth to bondage" and that's Hagar. So Hagar is likened to Mount Sinai in Arabia. You see, the point is that if you carry a metaphor and an allegory, if you push it to what it's actually saying that's what you come out with. We've got a woman here the size of a mountain!

Now the next interesting statement is "Jerusalem, which is above, is free; that is the mother of us all." Then he quotes a passage about: "Rejoice thou barren that barest not, break forth; for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath a husband" ([Galatians 4:27](#)). I don't know if you've ever taught this passage. Wait a minute. What does the Scripture say in [Galatians 4:30](#)? "Cast out the bond woman and the son. For the son of the bond woman shall not be heir with the son of free women. So then brethren [writing to believers] we are not children of the bond woman but of the free."

Here's where an application in the allegory—you don't always have this—explains the point of it. What's the basic point of the allegory? It's for us to understand who the true children of the promise are. They are people who have faith in the Messiah. That's the whole point in the argument of Galatians. They are not the ones who have been circumcised. They are not the ones who are physical descendants of Israel. Because not all are of true Israel, the remnant, who are of Israel said Paul. "He who is a Jew is not simply one outwardly, but inwardly," [Romans 2](#) says.

So you see the whole point of this is dealing with the difference between dealing with legalism that does not lead you to Christ and faith that does. And that's why the conclusion of [Galatians 5:1](#) is, "Therefore, stand fast in the liberty in which Christ has made you free. And don't be entangled again with a yoke of bondage." He said earlier in chapter three, "Did you receive the Spirit by the hearing of faith or by the works of the law? Which is it?" So the whole argument of Galatians is an attack against the legalistic attitudes of traditional Judaism. Very fascinating! And an allegory was the crux of the argument. It's the key. In other words, the truth is made more graphic and visual by an allegory.

Now can you imagine what trouble we would have if you pushed every detail of that? "Well, Hagar represents the carnal Philistines. And Arabia represents the carnal Canaanites. And Mount Sinai represents all the trouble they both can get into." Is everybody following me? I'm not being facetious for facetious' sake, I'm here to tell you that you and I both have seen a lot of that kind of preaching. This allegory tells you what the point is. So not always are all the details to be pushed to represent something. There's an overall truth that is there and the details lead to that truth. Here fortunately, we've got the application; but not always is it there. So again, it's a specific fact or truth that's made more graphic or visual by the symbolic language.

Let's move to a parable for a moment since that's something that we all are going to deal with as we study God's word and read the Gospels; although there are parables in other parts of the Bible, not just in the gospels. The word parable comes from two Greek words. The word *ballo* you spell in English, B-A-L-L-O. *Ballo* means to cast or to throw down. And the word *para*, a preposition meaning alongside of. So a parable is to cast something alongside of it or to throw it down alongside of it. What is being cast alongside of is a story, usually an earthly one; one that is very common to human experience. And it's cast alongside of the spiritual truth to make the spiritual truth clearer.

When the Lord wanted you to know how valuable you are, He cast alongside of that truth that you are very valuable to God, a story of a merchant man who would give up all to just find

one little jewel. Amen? What a wonderful thing to do. He searched for it. He was willing to give up everything just for that one little deal. That is beautiful teaching. It makes it graphic. It makes it visual.

When the Lord wanted you to understand that not everybody who is listening to the word is really going to apply it, He told the story of a sower who went forth to sow (cf. [Luke 8:5-15](#)). He even gave you the application so there would be no mistaking what the point of it was.

Parables are simply telling very common things in people's lives. You know I was thinking about this as it relates to our class, listening to Pastor Chuck. And I don't know why, it just didn't hit me. He is a parabolic teacher. He really tells simple stories to illustrate deep truth. And it's amazing. I guess because when you're not thinking about it you don't realize how much he's doing it. But it's just like our Lord taught. He's constantly giving little earthly stories. He might illustrate it with his grandchild, or how he's in a car on the freeway or whatever. And it's interesting how many, many times he illustrates with something that's very easily understood in our midst. And that's parabolic teaching, just casting an earthly story alongside of a heavy-duty spiritual truth, so that people will understand it more.

I was in Central Africa many years ago trying to teach on faith. And as I was struggling to communicate how faith operates, and all of that, and having difficulty going through different languages as well, one of the old men in the village came up to me. He spoke some broken English and he said, "After what you have said, faith is the hand of the heart." And he walked away. You know, I've never forgotten that. What a simple truth. Faith is the hand of the heart. Simply reaching out and accepting what God offers. Now, I spent an hour. He spent about 10 seconds. And I thought his was better than all I'd done. Faith is the hand of the heart!

I was teaching on Matthew 18 about how Jesus said, "Except ye come as a little child you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." And I decided to illustrate my message. So I set it up so I could tell it. But I went out in the Sunday school facility on Sunday morning early. And I sat down on the cement in a little hallway and had my back up against the wall. And in my hand I

had some candy. It was wrapped. I just laid it out there. And I purposely sat over by the little toddler department. Those kids came running up. Stopped! I mean they got brakes when they want it! Kid looked at me, looked at it, grabbed it and ran! So I put some more out there. I did this for several minutes. They all did the exact same thing. Not one of them stopped there and wanted a thirty minute lecture on whether this was good for you or not. Or is that paper real or whatever. Or why is it in your hand? That little kid just walked up, looked at it, looked at me, and whoosh off he went!

Now that's what I call a great parable. That's a great illustration. A lot of us make it so complex. Jesus said "You've got to come like a little child." And He used the word for toddlers. Isn't it interesting? They don't ask anything. They just grabbed it. "Well you've got to give me thirty-six reasons why I just make this decision." Well, you're not really coming like a little child. Maybe you'd better think it over. You see, you come as a little child and it's the hand of the heart that just reaches out and takes what God's offering.

See, so really the more we get into this, the more we see the importance of graphic, visual presentation of truth that's in the Bible. It's helpful. That's what symbolic language is. And there are many, of course, parables as you know. If you want some help on this, there are books like Richard Trench, called *Notes on the Parables*. He also has a book called *Notes on the Miracles*. And if you want to see why it's so difficult, get three commentaries and look at what they say about the parables. Watch the differences and you'll realize why it takes some time and some thought.

Now personification is one that causes liberal critics of the Bible to laugh. It makes an inanimate object animated. It's not an exaggeration. Well, it's a personification, that's all it is. This is very much like anthropomorphism which is attributing physical characteristics to God. For example: "the eyes of the Lord, the hand of the Lord, the arm of the Lord." But personification can have a tree talking. There's a great amount of this in the Bible, where an inanimate object that really is a thing, all of a sudden becomes animated. It takes on personal

characteristics. And that is a simple tool. Jews love to do that. “You know those pages just leaped out at me!” Well the pages didn’t jump over to you, but we understand what you mean. See, we have them in English to get a point across, it’s to show you the point.

Hyperbole is actually a word in the Bible [in the original languages]. It appears quite a bit. Again, *ballo* means to cast—only *hyper* is over or above. So in this sense it’s like a parable. A parable you cast down to an earthly illustration. Hyperbole you cast up, in other words, you exaggerate it for effect. It’s not lying. It’s to show you the point.

Paul wrote in [Ephesians 3:19](#) about the wonderful love of Christ that “...the Holy Spirit He would strengthen you in the inner man, Christ would dwell in your hearts by faith, and you’d be rooted and grounded in love, and you may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the surpassing greatness of the love of God—passes all human understanding.” The Greek has a word hyperbole. Does that mean no one can understand anything? No. But it is so wonderful that the average human being trying to understand it, they’re not getting a hold of it because there’s a depth there. So it exaggerates for effect. It is not telling a lie. But if you take it literally, you’d say it’s lying. It’s not telling the truth. No, it’s a hyperbole.

Now sometimes hyperbole is your exaggeration for effect to get somebody to respond to you. Like the day my wife called me and told me that one of our pipes under the kitchen had broken and there was water “all over the house!” No, it was just in the kitchen, but the way she was presenting it, it was the global deluge! I had to do something. We’re talking Noah’s flood here, man. I had to get up, run home and fix this thing and all of that. And I realized it wasn’t as bad as she had created, but it definitely got my attention. See sometimes we exaggerate for effect. Some of these are not good exaggerations obviously. Why?—because they are rooted in a bad motivation. So when people say to me, especially those who are trying to attack the Bible, when they see the exaggerations, they try to make an issue out of it. The issue is motivation. What’s your motivation? Was it to make yourself look good or was your motivation to get a point across to people that couldn’t be gotten any other way? Exaggeration for effect is a very effective

communication, as long as your motivation is not evil and you're turning people away from the truth and being deceptive and manipulative, which of course the Bible's not doing. But there's a lot of hyperbole.

We also have paradox. And I think you know what a paradox is. It's a truth that seems absurd at first glance. And there are quite a bit of paradoxes in the Bible. You'll find them in the Proverbs especially, a truth that just seems absurd, but there's a point there. And in Jewish homes they love these. They love a paradox. What's another word for paradox, class? A riddle, yes.

A riddle is like a paradox. But what's the difference? Well, in a paradox you've just got a truth that seems absurd and it's done that way so you will really learn the truth. But the riddle is actually a statement designed to puzzle or hide the truth. Samson had a riddle and the Bible speaks about it in [Judges 14](#). Do we use riddles? Yeah. A farmer had twenty-six sheep. One died. How many are left? Anyone?—nineteen! Twenty sick sheep. It's a riddle. It was designed to puzzle and hide the conclusion, and takes you a little while to figure it out.

And of course, we've already mentioned anthropomorphism. *Anthropos*— man. *Morphism*—the nature of. It's taking on the physical characteristics of man and applying it to God. By the way, there are many of these in Jewish writings, more than are in the Bible and it's very common practice.

Principles of Examination

- 1) Accept the literal meaning if it makes sense
- 2) Examine the context carefully
- 3) Distinguish between literal and figurative
- 4) Discern spiritual truths by inductive study
 - ◆ Find any parallel passages?
 - ◆ Find conflict of truth within the passage?
 - ◆ Find agreement from other Scriptures?

Now in giving a simple explanation here, I've listed for you four principles. Again, we'd take longer if this was a hermeneutics course, but just to give you a general idea. If the literal sense makes sense, then don't seek any other sense. That's a very common practice in the Bible. The Bible's not trying to trick you. It's trying to make things more understandable by the visual aid or the graphic description. So if the literal sense makes sense, then there's not reason to seek any other sense.

When it doesn't make sense, class listen, when something doesn't make sense, I always consider two possibilities. One, I'm not thinking good today. I'm just not thinking good. Maybe I need to get away from it and come back to it. Or number two, it is symbolic language. And that's the way I usually think, it's just like automatic. Maybe it's me. I'm the problem or maybe this is symbolic language. So, normally I find that most of the passages are easy to understand if the literal sense is there. Secondly, always examine the context carefully because what went before or after may help you understand what the meaning is of it.

By the way, that’s very true isn’t it of the parables? Think how many of them in the context had something related to it. “It’s easier for a rich man to go through the eye of a needle than into the kingdom of heaven,” was said immediately after the story of the rich young ruler who came to Christ, who had many possessions and went away sorrowful for he had all of this. So you see, there are a lot of contexts that show you what the point is.

Distinguish carefully between the literal and the figurative. That’s just a general rule. Always do that. Be careful. When Jesus sowed seed by the wayside and the fowls came and devoured it, do the fowls represent Satan? Well, we have to look at the story and it’s possible. In [Luke 8:12](#) we know that is the point of it. “Those by the wayside are they that hear. Then cometh the devil and taketh away the word out of their hearts lest they should believe and be saved.” So now I know that the fowl of the air, which comes down and takes the seed off the wayside soil, represents the devil. Should I therefore every time I see a bird story in the Bible say that’s the devil? No. So once again, be careful. Distinguish carefully between the literal and the figurative.

How does one do that? When you come to number four, you get your answer. Discern accurately the spiritual truth by inductive study asking three basic questions. One, are there parallel passages to consider? Well, there certainly was here in Matthew 4. When I compared Luke 8, I saw the clear teaching.

Does the truth conflict with any details of the passage? God’s word doesn’t contradict itself. And does it agree with other Scriptures? These questions can be asked and you can begin to find out whether or not the truth is there. If the Bible, class, does not tell you the meaning of something, then don’t say you know it. Do you hear that? If the Bible doesn’t tell you the meaning of something don’t say that you really know what this means. No, you don’t. You can say “I think,” or “this is my opinion,” but don’t say you know unless God’s word says what it is.

Now in the parable of the sower and the wheat and the tares, Jesus gave the interpretation—not always does He. So if there’s no interpretation given, there’s no sense of that, then don’t tell people that you know what it is. Just say, “Well you know, in my opinion it could

possibly mean this on the basis of these facts." But don't become God in the situation unless the Lord has revealed in His word what that means.

Here is one other thing that's not in your notes. When you see parabolic language or symbolic language, when you see it in the Bible and it's a quotation...the Bible may even say "as it is written the barren shall do something or other or whatever"...always take the time to look up the passage from which it is quoted, because your answer may be sitting there right in front of your eyes.

[1 Corinthians 1:19](#) tells us: "For it is said I will make foolish the wisdom of the wise and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world?" If you don't go back and look at that, you do not have any idea what the point of it is, let alone understand the meaning of it. You go back and you realize it's a quote from the time of Hezekiah. And it's a quote where he consulted his counselors and they gave him wrong advice instead of trusting the Lord. That's why it's put in that passage where it says, "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved it is the power of God; For I will destroy the wisdom of the wise." In other words, the preaching of the cross will excel all the wisdom of the world, because the wisdom of the world will think it's foolish to preach about a man who died! But no, it becomes the power of God because of what He accomplished there.

So understanding the background from the Old Testament helps me to see why this language is seen rather symbolic, why it was put there in that passage. So when it is a quotation, be sure to always look up the passage behind the quotation. That will help you and save your neck many times in interpretation.

We have one more session of very interesting material.

Let's pray.

Father, thank You so much for Your love and Your word, Lord. And thank You that we have a sure word that we can trust and depend on and can change our

lives. Lord, help us all to be good students of this word. We thank You in Jesus'
name. Amen.

History and Authenticity of the Bible
Lesson 25
Course Review

By
Dr. David Hocking

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Course Review

Let's have a word of prayer and begin.

Father, thank You so much for this privilege, for this school, for what it stands for, for the many people out sharing the gospel and using the word; and I pray, Lord, that You would prepare us well by the things that we have studied. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Aren't you all wondering what we're going to study today? Well, we're going to find out whether or not you learned anything. It's going to be a summary of the course. The whole thing on this course in the midst of the details, the overall objective can be lost. What are we trying to do in the course History and Authenticity of the Bible? We're trying to get you, from an apologetical point of view, to know what you believe about the Scriptures and to be able to defend it. And so what we're going to do, in this first hour today, is we're going to take a summary of the course, first of all giving you a definition. It's a little more detailed because in your notes you have a definition of inspiration. This is simple a definition on the Bible itself, a "We Believe" type statement.

And then we're going to give you seven statements that hopefully somehow have been caught by you during this course. I've already shown it to a number of people and it's interesting their reaction. I wish all of God's people believed what we're teaching. And there's not a word in here about the King James, but it's implied. What fascinated me by these seven statements are the people who have not been in our course, who are pastor types, who take a look at it, all of a sudden realize the implication of it. That's why we want to make sure that you understand what we have been saying in this course. So let's take a look at it.

“We Believe” Statement #1

- 1) We believe the Bible is the inspired, inerrant, infallible, God-breathed word, and final revelation of God.
 - a) We believe the thirty-nine books of the English Old Testament and the twenty-seven books of the English New Testament have been translated from the original languages written in Hebrew and Greek (with some Aramaic words) and does not refer to any apocryphal or non-canonical literature.
 - b) We believe they represent a complete and final, written revelation from God.

Statement Number One: First of all, the definition: “We believe the Bible is the inspired, inerrant, infallible and God-breathed word and final revelation of God.”

It is not the majority position of Christians that the Bible is inerrant. That might surprise you, but it's not. It's definitely not their view that it is infallible. And it's definitely not their view that it is a God-breathed word. They use a channel going through men and that qualifies what they believe about it. And they definitely don't believe it's a final revelation from God. See, the more you analyze what that definition is, the more serious it gets.

“The Bible is the inspired, inerrant, infallible, and God-breathed word and final revelation of God.” Now I consider two passages that are critical to this view. [2 Timothy 3:16-17](#) and [2 Peter 1:20-21](#). Those two are critical. I would add a third verse for the definition and that's [Revelation 22:18-19](#). And as you know, there are other verses that support those passages. But the two main ones that we want you to know and you really should try to get them down so you can quote it.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for correction, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

[\(2 Timothy 3:16-17\)](#)

Now [2 Peter 1:20-21](#) says,

Knowing this first that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation...but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

[Revelation 22:18-19](#),

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and [from] the things which are written in this book.

Let's see if we can break this definition down and see how critical it is to the applications that we will make in our ministries with people. First of all, we believe that this definition refers directly to the original autographs. Now is it possible that it could refer indirectly to other than the original autographs? The answer is yes. But this definition refers directly to the original autographs written in Hebrew and Greek (and some Aramaic portions and words) and does not refer to any apocryphal or non-canonical literature.

First of all, this view it means you're not a liberal theologian. You have eliminated the possibility of any other Bible books having been written. So you're not a Mormon. You're also not a Jehovah Witness in this view either. The interesting thing to me is that this view is going to

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isolate you in this world. Hopefully, evangelicals believe this view. But I've seen evangelicals question it continually. I believe that the original autographs, which we do not have, are the inspired, inerrant, infallible and God-breathed word and final revelation of God. Now we haven't said everything yet, but that's a start right there.

No Apocrypha—so goodbye fourteen apocryphal books in the Catholic Bible! No non-canonical literature. “Can you give me an example?” Sure: The Epistle of Barnabus and Shepherd of Hermes, both of which are in the Codex Sinaiticus. There is a lot of non-canonical literature. How do we interpret canonical literature? And that is referring to the canon, the standard by which books are accepted. So church history has confirmed over and over again which books are canonical and which books are not.

We gave you an example in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Whenever they quote Scripture, they say, “It is written.” But that phrase is never used for any literature in the Dead Sea Scrolls that is not Scripture. And so, once again, even in the Dead Sea Scrolls we have evidence of the difference between canonical Scripture—that which is accepted and known to be from God and that which is non-canonical. It might be interesting reading. It might be interesting history. But it is not on the level with the word of God. It's not inerrant, inspired, and infallible.

Now when you say it is “inerrant, inspired, and infallible” that means there are no errors in this Book, right?—in which language of the Book? So you see, that's why it says, point one, “We believe” the definition refers directly. We're not saying that translations into English, which have messed up the original meaning of the word, are inerrant because they're not. They're certainly well preserved and we hope that they come out basically reflecting the original language. But it's the original autographs of that Bible. And hopefully that has been established in this course. Okay?

Seven Belief Statements

- 1) We believe the Bible is the inspired, inerrant, infallible, God-breathed word, and the final revelation of God.
- 2) Inspiration refers to the writings and not the writers.
- 3) The 39 books of the English O.T. and the 27 books of the English N.T. have been translated from the original languages.
- 4) No author gave his own private interpretation, but was directly controlled by the Holy Spirit.
- 5) God has preserved the integrity and accuracy of His word by careful copying of the text.
- 6) The Bible is sufficient for all matters of faith and practice; Its authority is greater than any church, tradition, creed or ritual.
- 7) Eternal salvation and Christian maturity are results which only the Holy Spirit of God and the Bible itself can produce.

Statement Number Two: Now, number two. One thing do you remember when we discussed this we had a lot of questions about that day in class? I'm just reminding you that we believe that inspiration refers to the writings and not the writers. Now there are lots of evangelicals that don't believe that. Or they believe that the writers are also inspired. First of all, you have non-believers who believe that Shakespeare is inspired. So some of the writings of the Bible are inspired like Shakespeare. No. Inspiration refers to the accuracy of the Bible because it is the breathed-out breath of God and because God guaranteed its accuracy. He controlled the writers so that what was written was what He intended and totally accurate in every sense of the word. That doesn't mean I'm interpreting it right or that I'm translating it right, but this view refers to the writings.

When it says "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," the word "Scripture" is the word *graphe* in Greek, from which we get in English graphic arts—that which is written. So we believe inspiration refers only to the writings, not to the writers. We believe Paul and Peter could

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make mistakes, but not when they wrote Scripture. The Holy Spirit insured that they didn't—(cf. [2 Peter 1:20-21](#)).

Statement Number Three: Now number three and here's where it gets a little more difficult, and isolates us further from other people who call themselves Christians. "We believe that the thirty-nine books of the English Old Testament and the twenty-seven books of the English New Testament"...now stop right there before we go on! It is not proper to say "thirty-nine books of the Old Testament and twenty-seven books of the New Testament." That is not proper. Why? Because the Bible was originally written in Hebrew at twenty-two books, even though they are exactly the same as the thirty-nine we have in English. It was an English Bible that put together the listing. So, let's be very accurate when we talk to people about what we believe. I've had people do that to me and say, "Well you say there are thirty-nine books in the Old Testament. I heard the Hebrew Bible only has twenty-two. So which is it?"

So here's the view: "We believe that the thirty-nine books of the English Old Testament and the twenty-seven books of the English New Testament [now watch this language] which have been translated from the *original languages*." I didn't say "the original autographs." Why? We don't have them. Plus the fact that English came multiple years later. But they were translated from the original languages.

"We believe they represent a complete and final, written revelation from God." Is everybody with me? You understand? This is really a serious point that hopefully has been developed through the course. But if you don't know that Christians are going to attack you on that, welcome to the ball game because they don't believe it. A lot of people don't.

Just recently I made that statement in the pulpit was immediately questioned by people afterwards.

They said, "I think you made a mistake in your sermon."

I said, "What's that?"

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They said, “You seem to imply that the Bible is a complete and final written revelation from God.”

I said, “No, I didn’t make a mistake. That’s what I believe.”

“Are you saying God can’t add any more?”

“No, God can do whatever He wants to do, but He’s chosen to tell us He’s done.”

“Well, what if we discover another book?”

“No, any discoveries of any other books aren’t going to change one thing.”

Do you see how narrow minded we are? We really are in this issue. We’re very narrow minded here. And that’s going to affect our relationship with people. Why?—because the next question is whether or not that English translation truly reflects the original languages. That’s a very serious subject which we tried to expose you to. Okay?

By the way, you are not a scholar on it. You’ve only been exposed to it. I just ran into a problem on that with a former student who was trying to make people believe he was a scholar now in textual criticism. No, you’re not. You are just exposed to the problem of the different changes in Greek and so forth. You are not a scholar. That takes a lot of study, intensive study on textual criticism. And so don’t do that. What we try to do is give you enough information that you know where the problem lies. Now if you want to hit that a little bit more, you’re going to have to do a whole lot of study. Okay?

Statement Number Four: Now, number four is where the debate is among evangelical scholars, not liberals, evangelicals. Here’s where the debate is. It says, “We believe that no author of Scripture gave his own private interpretation, but was directly controlled by the Holy Spirit of God.”

The number one thing people will say to me after hearing that is, “Oh, you believe in mechanical dictation.” No. I believe in Spirit-controlled dictation. They weren’t robots, but the Holy Spirit controlled what they were to say. You see, the Bible is filled with dictation, word for word right off the mouth of God... “thus saith the Lord”...and word for word. When we say

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“the writers didn’t dictate,” that’s a lie! They did dictate. They took it down exactly as they were told. As a matter of fact, most of the writers were given information that they had no knowledge of or had any idea what it was talking about. It was dealing with stuff that would be in the future of their historical time frame. So they didn’t know what it was talking about, so they had to put it down exactly like God said.

This means that we believe that God spoke directly to the writers. Hello? This is going to isolate you further in the Christian world because most of them do not believe this. They believe the Holy Spirit kind of guided them like He guides us. I believe the ministry of the Holy Spirit in controlling the writers of the Bible is not like He controls us. They were holy men of God. The word means “separate.” They were separated from normal people in this regard. It was a special ministry of the Holy Spirit that did not allow freedom of private interpretation. Yet most people believe they were interpreting things, especially in the gospels. No they weren’t at all. They may have put the facts down in a different order, but they were not giving any private interpretation. The Bible says so. [2 Peter 1](#), “No writing is of any private interpretation.” That’s pretty strong. They were moved or directly controlled by the Holy Spirit (cf. [2 Peter 1:20-21](#)).

I believe the key foundational issue of all the doctrines of Christianity is the view you have of the Bible. Everything else is up for grabs because it’s all based on what the Bible teaches. So if you start undermining this Bible, everything else will crumble. It’s the foundation under it. That’s why a lot of schools no longer take a stand anymore on issues that they once did. Why?—because they long ago changed their view on the Bible.

A student’s voice: “I was wondering how that explains like a lot of books say, “This sounds like Pauline theology; this sounds like Johannine theology.” How does that explain that?”

Well, I don’t do much explaining of that. It sounds to me like Spirit-led theology. I know what they’re doing. They mean that the vocabulary and style of the writer is being reflected in that. But you know I see a danger in that. That’s a part of what they teach at liberal seminaries. There is not a Pauline theology versus a Johannine theology. There is a vocabulary and style of

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Paul and there is a vocabulary and style of John. The theology is of God and the Holy Spirit. Do you follow what I'm saying? It's technical, but how you say that...just the fact that you asked the question is Freudian for: "We've got a problem." Do you understand me? In other words, you wouldn't be asking a question had you not read it or heard it. And the point is if you don't tell people what you believe, then right away you can start concluding things. Somehow Paul came up with his own framework. This was the problem Martin Luther had over the book of Romans and the book of James. It's important to understand this because it affects everything in the Christian life.

Statement Number Five: "We believe that God has preserved [the doctrine of preservation] we believe that God has preserved the integrity and accuracy of His word by the careful copying of the text." Now, how do I know it was careful? One easy way is to compare it to any other extant literature. In spite of all the variations in New Testament manuscripts, there is nothing like it in the history of the world. We have more evidence as to what the text was than any other document before the ability to print. So before A.D. 1450, there is no comparison. So we're not intimidated by anyone's view on this. There was the careful copying of the text, almost miraculous in the case of the Old Testament.

Let's go to the second part of that statement. How do we know He's preserved it?—by the abundance of manuscript evidence available to us. The largest number of extant copies of any other document beside the Bible is the writings of Demosthenes. There are 200 extant copies, meaning "in existence before printing." But in the Bible, we have 5,553 Greek manuscripts. We have over 10,000 now, Old Latin and Latin and another 8,000 of other kinds of languages. There is no book in the history of the world that could compare with the Bible in this regard. None whatsoever!

So, how has God preserved the integrity and the accuracy of His word? "By careful copying of the text, and by the abundance of manuscript evidence available to us." The average unbeliever doesn't even understand that issue and has never even considered it.

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Statement Number Six. “We believe that the Bible is sufficient for all matters of faith and practice and that the authority of the Bible is greater than any church, tradition, creed, ritual, person or decision of church councils.”

This guy told me that under the same things that I attacked, tradition, creed, church councils, that I am *anathema*. Those same councils pronounced me *anathema* for stating that the Scripture is a higher authority over the leaders of the church chosen by God to interpret it. And I say to you, “What difference is there between the Catholic and the Mormon?” The Mormon says, “The Bible is the inspired word of God as it is correctly translated and interpreted.” And that can only be by the Mormon bishops and not by the people. Do you understand?

It’s Reformation time again. We need another reformation among the organized, quote “Christian” churches. Because we now have, even in so-called evangelicalism, we have people who decide that their view is the correct one—that they somehow become the authority. “Dr. So-and-so said that. Dr. So-and-so said this.” Hey, they’re not the authority and neither am I. It’s the Bible and God! He’s the authority. We’re not the authority. We fought a Reformation over this, the authority of Scripture. That’s the heart of the Reformation. And I think we are due for another one, frankly.

People are getting away acting like in this narcissistic, experience-oriented culture of ours, like: “What’s the big deal? David, why are you getting so upset? I mean people don’t really care about that.” That’s my point! People don’t care about it and we’re seeing a gradual undermining. Paul said, “In the last days they will not endure sound doctrine.” He actually said, “They would give themselves to myth and fable, rather than the authority of God’s word” (cf. [2 Timothy 4:3](#)). Well, that’s what we got going now.

You see, that’s why reading the Bible brings lots of insights to your viewpoints. There are things being said by all of us that simply are not true. This is a simple thing. This guy said, “The book of Revelation insists that every knee shall bow and every tongue should confess” (cf. [Romans 14:11](#); [Isaiah 45:23](#)). He said that with a lot of authority. There’s just one problem, it’s

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not in Revelation. Do you understand what I'm saying? People say, "What difference does it make? At least it was the general Bible." Do you understand? That's how sloppy we are right now. It doesn't make any difference to anybody any more. So we can quote stuff like "It's in the Bible" and nobody knows! "Well, that sounds like Scripture, you know!"

"We believe that the Bible is sufficient for all matters of faith and practice. And that the authority of the Bible is greater than any church tradition, creed, ritual, person, or decision of church councils." Well, we are really now isolated. Is there anything left? Well, among those of us who are now left, we're going to lose some more on this next one.

And what we believe is that "eternal salvation"—now, I didn't say whether you could lose your salvation there, did I? All I said was "eternal salvation." After all, we do believe it is forever, don't we? Even if you think you can lose it. Okay?

Statement Number Seven: "We believe that eternal salvation and Christian maturity are results which only the Holy Spirit of God and the Bible itself can produce."

In some recent publication that I'll not mention, it specifically says that "Christian maturity is developed by accountability groups." Now, I believe in being accountable to people. Don't misunderstand me. Whatever the Bible says I should do in that, however, is the truth. But I want you to know that nobody grew in Christ by an accountability group. Would an accountability group, where you met with a given amount of Christians to pray and read God's word, may that help to stimulate, motivate you to look into the word, which in fact will produce the maturity? Yes! Are you mature because you go each week? No. Are you mature because you know six people who know you? No. No, you're not. Do you understand? It's really interesting.

There's another one I read in a Christian magazine. "It's impossible to have strong Christian maturity without a good nurturing marriage and family." You know, they didn't know what they said. I thought to myself, poor single people. They're totally left out. There's no way you can become mature. Isn't that interesting?

Here's another one. In a well-known Christian magazine, "Arguments in a marriage can be helpful to growth and understanding of God's purpose and plan." Now I shouldn't have isolated the statement. I should have told you all about it. How sometimes by argument, confrontation we can really, finally, I guess be overwhelmed with the fact we don't know anything and we need to come to the Lord. I just want you to know that the statement is incorrect. Why? Because the Bible tells us that arguments don't do that—(cf. [2 Timothy 2:23-24](#)). The book of Proverbs is against arguments and tells you what's wrong with them (i.e. [Proverbs 13:3](#); [17:14](#); [20:3](#)). Why you shouldn't start them! Why you shouldn't even get started in them! (cf. [Proverbs 18:19](#)). "Don't even start them," it says.

And this article was talking about how people if they really just shared their view in marriage and get it all out, they can become closer. No. That's a lie too! The Bible tells us that arguments build barriers. They're like the bars of the castle (cf. [Proverbs 18:19](#)). Some people say, "Well, we fight because it's so much fun to make up." No. No, what's happening is that these are the seeds of destruction and one day you'll wake up and find out you're really far from each other in terms of intimacy.

Here's another one. This is a Christian magazine. This is justifying the importance of talking about your sins to find out why you did them. Interesting article! It says that "the reason why a lot of people don't grow in Christ is because they don't discover why they did what they did. So they remain in this bondage, which needs to be broken." And I read the article and I thought, "This is well done. There's just one problem. It's not true! It's not true at all."

But see, that's what I'm talking about. And when we read number seven that "Eternal salvation and Christian maturity are results which only the Holy Spirit and the Bible can produce," we just narrowed ourselves down in the Christian world.

Now, please understand that I'm not on any crusade to tell them all. I don't sit down everyday and say, "Boy, I got to write a letter to that guy or this magazine...." Hey, you're going to drive yourself crazy. When I read a book, I don't expect the book to tell me everything that I

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want to know about the subject or to be right. I'm just going to learn. Every man's my teacher. So what? Don't get ticked off, but know what you believe.

This is where I see the compromise in this generation. Instead of following what God says, we're into this, "Well you know, you don't want to hurt people and what harm is it? We do need to tolerate people and show love, you know." Well, the kind of love I understand doesn't compromise with sin and wrong. Now I've got to learn how to lovingly say that. That's a part of my problem. And I've got to follow the Bible on that. I've got to learn how to be kind and not to be attacking and critical and all of that sort of thing. And yet, at the same time, I want truth. Do you? It's only the truth that can set us free. And I think this is our problem right now and we don't see it. That's why I'm trying to take some time with it.

The importance of our course is not seen here in this classroom. The importance will be after you leave and you're out there mingling with people and hearing these viewpoints and reading these articles and listening to these programs and asking yourself, "Do I really believe that the Holy Spirit and the Bible are totally sufficient for eternal salvation and Christian maturity or do I need something else?"

After church recently a guy came up to me and he said, "Would you be my mentor?"

You know, Paul said "The things that thou hast, commit to faithful men who should be able to teach others also" (cf. [2 Timothy 2:2](#)). I understand all of that, but what does that mean, mentoring? Didn't Paul say follow me because I follow Christ? Isn't the real Mentor Christ?

It's interesting to me. There is almost a worship of people in our generation. In the very generation that's critical of heroes, to me it's a dichotomy. I can't understand it. Sociologically or philosophically, I don't understand it. We're very critical of leadership whether it's political, sports figures, whatever. We're critical of them, yet at the same time, there's this desire to worship people or to feel that the people that we need are somehow going to do for us what the Holy Spirit and the Bible are just inadequate to do.

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If you were on a desert island, had no church, no accountability group, could you grow in Christ? Well, according to these groups, no. It's impossible. Listen, all you need is the Spirit of God and the word. That's all you need, really it's the counsel of the Lord that will stand. I believe that God has everything you need to hear about every problem in your life right in this book. I believe that. The only time I go for counsel—and I do frequently—is when I'm lost. I can't find it. I don't know what I'm talking about. And so I'll ask somebody who I respect for their spiritual wisdom and maybe they'll give me a key or a verse that I was overlooking or whatever. Now I want to go study it, because I want to make sure what they told me is true. Is everybody following this? I'm really making an issue out of it, by intention! Please don't go out of here and not think that the study of the Bible and what it is does not affect your life. Oh yes, it does. Something is really wrong! And I happen to believe God about this generation and I believe this generation is leaning toward mythology more than theology. We are listening to things that aren't true and believing it.

Do you understand me? What's happening? It's going to affect every area of your life, every application, every counseling situation, every decision you have to make. You're going to have to decide: "Do I believe what God said in the word or am I just going to follow what everybody says is okay to do?" And many times people get offended when they say something and I say, "What verse was that?"

"Well you don't have to have a verse for everything."

"Why not?"

You know, class, I've heard this kind of stuff over and over again and I don't want to mess around with your brain or your lives. And I don't want to just sugar-coat anything over. I know what it is to experience the hardness of Satan's attacks and strategies in getting you to compromise here and there. Don't. You follow this Book. Your eternal salvation, your Christian maturity is totally dependent on the work of the Holy Spirit and this Book. There isn't any other

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way. There never has been. There never will be. Watch out because the majority of Christians around you are not going to take that view.

Now what we hopefully learned in this class are the following main issues. We learned about six issues in the class. Now they may not have come together for you like this. That's why I want to leave you with it, so you see it.

One is **Revelation**, which is the problem of communication. How God has communicated to us. Remember there was a whole section in your notes dealing with that.

Inspiration is always a problem of accuracy.

Canonization is a problem of recognition. How do we recognize what is the word of God? And we gave you several things under that which I think the test asks you for as well.

Illumination is a problem of understanding. We need the Holy Spirit.

Interpretation is a problem of study because it isn't up to us to put our interpretations in the Bible. It's up to us to find out what is the interpretation God intended in that passage. That requires study and then rightly dividing to interpret the word of God based on study.

Application is a problem of change. You can read all of this, but if you don't apply it, you don't obey it, no change takes place. That's why we want to make sure that you understand what we have been saying in this course and realize the implication of it and hopefully that has been established, okay?

Father I thank You for this privilege we have to study Your word. And we pray we shall always regard it as a privilege. And I just pray God that you would guide the students in the usage of their time. I pray You would give them wisdom. Lord I pray again that You would use this time to encourage us in learning the word of God. We thank you for it, in Jesus' name. Amen.

THE HISTORY AND AUTHENTICITY OF THE BIBLE

GENERAL OUTLINE:

THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS STUDY

As to reliability

As to revelation

As to results

THE INFORMATION ABOUT THE BIBLE

The Old Testament

The New Testament

The Apocrypha

THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

The definition of inspiration

The difficulties of inspiration

THE INERRANCY OF THE BIBLE

In terms of canonicity

In terms of manuscript evidence

THE INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE

(12 principles)

THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS STUDY

AS TO RELIABILITY

How ACCURATE are its statements?
cf. Mat. 5:18; Rev. 19:9; 21:5; 22:6

How AUTHORITATIVE is its message?
‘thus saith the Lord’ – 415 times

“saith the Lord” – 854 times

“saith the Lord God” – 257 times

“the word of the Lord” – 258 times

“the Lord hath spoken” – 30 times

“it is written” – 80 times

AS TO REVELATION

God speaks through what He has made – Psa. 19:1-4

God speaks through supernatural acts – Exo. 7:5; Num. 14:11; Deu. 4:35; John 20:30-31

God has spoken directly to certain individuals in the past (by direct revelation):

cf. the book of Genesis

cf. Mat. 5:17-18; 24:34; Luke 24:44-45; John 10:35; Heb. 1:1-2; Rev. 22:18-19

God speaks to us through His Son, Jesus Christ – John 1:14, 18; 14:8-9; Heb. 1:2

God speaks to us today through the Bible – cf. Psa. 119

Question: How do we know if a person is speaking from God’s revelation or not?

- (1) If it doesn’t happen, then God didn’t tell them it would! – cf. Deu. 18:21-22
- (2) If the gospel that is preached is not the gospel of Jesus Christ found in the Bible, then God did not speak to them! – cf. Gal. 1:6-10

- (3) If what they say does not agree with the Bible, then God did not speak to them! – cf. Isa. 8:19-20; 2 Pet. 3:2
- (4) If they add any additional truth to what the Bible says, then God did not speak to them! – cf. Rev. 22:18-19

AS TO RESULTS

The experience of salvation - 2 Tim. 3:14-15

The exercise of the senses to discern right from wrong – Heb. 5:11-14

The effectiveness for prayer – John 15:7; 1 John 5:14

The enablement for victorious living – Psa. 119:11; John 15:3; 1 Pet. 2:2-3

The equipment of the believer for every good work – 2 Tim. 3:16-17

THE INFORMATION ABOUT THE BIBLE

Writing and Language

Alphabetical writing – 1800 b.c.

Earliest – did not divide words

Written in Hebrew (Aramaic in Ezra & Daniel 2:4-7:28) – court language of Babylon

Textual History

Earliest copy before Dead Sea Scrolls – 900 A.D.

Massoretic text (“tradition” – ones who put a “hedge” around the Scripture)

Vowel markings – between 6th & 8th centuries A.D.

Marginal notes on the tradition of the text – scribes changed the text in only 11 places, according to one tradition, and only 18 places according to another tradition (all 18 avoid extreme anthropomorphisms)

Summary notes at end of every book – revealing number of verses, words, consonants in the book

Ancient Versions of the Old Testament

Aramaic Targums – “translation” or “interpretation” – cf. Ezra 4:18; Neh. 8:8
Synagogues translate orally into Aramaic – like “paraphrasing” (Living Bible)

Jews conducted business in Aramaic – the trade language

Returned to the land as bi-lingual

Aramaic because the language of Israel (Jesus spoke it – Mark 5:41; 7:34
– and Paul used it – 1 Cor. 16:22)

Aramaic used until time of Mohammed

Strong tendency against anthropomorphisms

Used “word of God” 179 times in place of “God”

Substituted “Shekinah” for “God”

Substituted “glory” for “God”

Highly interpretative and strong on paraphrasing – use with extreme caution!

Greek Versions

The Septuagint (LXX)

Background: A letter of Aristeas says it was dated 100 b.c. Supposedly, scholars came from Israel, six from each tribe (72), went to Alexandria, housed separately, and translated separately. When they came together, their translations were miraculously alike!

Consider these facts:

- (1) Jewish groups in Egypt as early as Nebuchadnezzar – a growing colony around Alexandria
- (2) Alexandria became the predominant place of Greek language and culture after the conquests of Alexander the Great
- (3) Translators probably Egyptian, acquainted with Greek, not Hebrew
- (4) Quotations from the Greek Pentateuch are found in other Greek literature before 200 B.C.

- (5) LXX probably the completion of other attempts
- (6) Associated with Origen and Alexandrian school of text criticism
- (7) Associated with Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus
- (8) Early evidence of Greek translation of Hebrew
- (9) Jew rejected the LXX when the Christians began to use it

Aquila's Translation – a word for word translation in 2nd cent. A.D. to make OT acceptable to anti-Christian Jews

Theodotian's Translation – tried to bring Greek text into harmony with Hebrew – revision of older, pre-Christian Greek texts – completed in 2nd cent. A.D.

Symmachus' Translation – tried to make a smooth reading, but did not revise old works with Hebrew idioms

Origen's Hexapla – six columns, including the above four Greek translations, with his own transliteration in Greek, along with the Hebrew text

Note: Today's Greek OT's date from 4th cent. A.D. – rely primarily on two MSS, Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus, and the work of Origen. Due to Dead Sea Scrolls, respect for Hebrew is greater!

Latin Versions

Old Latin - around 200 A.D. - North Africa - appears to be a translation from a Greek text, rather than Hebrew.

Latin Vulgate - 390-404 A.D. by Jerome – he translated from Hebrew, included the Apocryphal books, but questioned their canonicity. Council of Trent (1540 A.D.) did an update on the Vulgate – Sixtine edition appeared in 1590 A.D. – Clementine amended it in 1592 A.D.

Syriac Versions

Peshitta (Old Syriac) - 3rd century A.D. –quoted often in 4th century A.D. - did not include apocryphal books – translated from Hebrew, not Greek (left out the book of Chronicles originally)

Svriac Hexapla - translation of Origen's 5th column (LXX) - published in 616 A.D.

Patristic Quotations - the church fathers (leaders) wrote voluminously and quoted extensively from the Scriptures - Cyprian (died 258 A.D.), bishop of Carthage, for example, has over 740 O.T. quotations in his writings.

Other Versions - manuscripts from the 4th century onward include Coptic, Ethiopic, Arabic and Armenian versions.

Hebrew Translations - the first five were used to reconstruct the original text before the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls

The Cairo Codex of the Prophets - 895 A.D.

The Leningrad Manuscript - 916 A.D. (contains only the latter prophets)

The Aleppo Manuscript - 10th century A.D.

The British Museum OR 4445 (Gen. 39:20 –Deuteronomy 1:33 only)

The Leningrad MS B-19 A - 1008 A.D.

The Dead Sea Scrolls - discovered in 1947 A.D. Fragments from every book, except Esther - dated from 100-250 B.C.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

List of Books

Athanasius of Alexandria (367 A.D.) gives us the earliest list - 27 books

Jerome and Augustine - 27 books

Synod of Hippo (393 A.D.) - confirms 27 books

4th Synod of Carthage (397 A.D.) - 27 books

Writing Materials

PAPYRUS - (plant/paper) - used in Egypt 3000 years before Christ - used up to the 4th century A.D.

NOTE: In 1912, Kenyon lists 19 Biblical papyri; in 1925, A.T. Robertson lists

34 fragments; in 1945, Henry Thiessen lists 53; in 1955, Bruce Metzker lists 63; in 1958, Driver lists 68; today, some 92 have been catalogued. Written in uncial script using large, upper-case letters with no separation between words.

LEATHER - Leather scrolls did not wear out as fast as papyrus - only these two (papyrus and leather) were used in a scroll format.

PARCHMENT - skins of sheep and goats – used up until the 10th century A.D. - main material for books from 4th century

VELLUM - calf skins - used to the invention of printing

Types of Writing

UNCIAL - capital letters (Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus) - used from 4th century A.D. to the 9th century A.D.

NOTE: In 1912, we had 168 uncial MSS; in 1943, we had 212; in 1956, we had 232; in 1958, 252; today, we have about 270 of these MSS that are catalogued.

MINUSCULE - cursive or script writing, using smaller letters - the majority of Greek MSS –about 2800

Age of Manuscripts (How it is determined)

Writing materials

Letter size and form

Punctuation

Text Divisions

Ornamentation

Color of ink

Texture and color of parchment

Languages

GREEK VERSIONS - over 5500

PRIMARY VERSIONS - made directly from Greek

Syriac

Coptic

Latin

Gothic

SECONDARY VERSIONS - made off other versions than Greek

Vulgate (from Old Latin)

Persian (from Peshitta)

Armenian

Georgian

Ethiopic

Arabic

Patristic Quotations (church fathers / leaders)

Problem - determining the accuracy of the text which the church father quotes

Value - fixing the time of a certain text type and its geographical location

Categories:

Apostolic Fathers (up to 125 A.D.)

Ante-Nicene Fathers (125-325 A.D.)

Post-Nicene Fathers (325-600 A.D.)

Eastern Fathers (Syriac)

Western Fathers (Greek or Latin)

Lectionaries - selected portions of Scripture to be read in the churches (like responsive readings) - vary from a few verses to 3 or 4 chapters; average length = 10 verses - they appear from the 6th century onward, although Chrysostom used it and called it the

“lesson for today” - most begin with the phrase, “On a certain occasion” - in 1958, there were 1838 of these in both Uncial and Minuscule MSS; today, there are about 2200 lectionary MSS

NOTE: Out of the 5500 Greek MSS of the New Testament, only about 200 are complete; another 50 contain all but the gospels, and about 1500 contain all or part of the gospels only. MSS evidence in Latin numbers close to 10,000; and the total number of manuscripts reaches above 20,000. Before the 4th century A.D., quotations of the New Testament in the writings of the church fathers number over 86,000 separate references!

THE APOCRYPHA

The Apocrypha is a collection of ancient Jewish writings written between 300 b.c. and 100 A.D. - means “hidden” –regarded as canonical by the Roman Catholic Church at the Council of Trent (1540-46 A.D.), but rejected by the Protestants.

List of Books - refers to 15 books (14 if “Letter of Jeremiah” is put with Baruch) - 11 of the 14 books are considered to be “Holy Scripture” by the Roman Catholic Church

The First Book of Esdras

The Second Book of Esdras

The Book of Tobit

The Book of Judith

The Additions to the Book of Esther

The Wisdom of Solomon

Ecclesiasticus or the Wisdom of Sirach

The Book of Baruch

The Story of Susanna

The Song of the Three Children

The Story of Bel and the Dragon

The Prayer of Manasseh

The First Book of Maccabees

The Second Book of Maccabees

Acceptance by the Church

Contained in the LXX

A separate section in Jerome's Latin Vulgate

In Luther's German Bible of 1534 – separate section at end of the Old Testament

Separate sections in Coverdale's English Bible, the Bishop's Bible, and in the King James Bible of 1611 A.D.

Not found in Hebrew translations

Puritans rejected them - demanded they be dropped from King James Bible as early as 1629 A.D.

Reasons for rejecting them as "canonical":

Not a part of the Bible of Jesus and the early church

Never quoted in the Bible

Church fathers separated them from "canon"

Not included as "Scripture" until Council of Trent

Historical and geographical inaccuracies

Lack of prophetic spirit

Lower level of writing

NOTE: New Testament refers to Apocrypha in Jude 14 and Hebrews 11:35 but does not cite it as Holy Scripture. It cites it the same way Paul referred to heathen poets (Acts 17:28).

THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

THE DEFINITION OF INSPIRATION

“The act of God by which His revelation is communicated in written form”

II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:19-21

Inspiration refers to the writings, not the writers -“every writing God-breathed” (the universe and humanity are also the product of the creative breath of God)

Inspiration refers to the control of the Holy Spirit over the writers so that what was written was exactly what God intended - John 14:26; 16:13; 2 Peter 1:20-21

2 Samuel 23:2 - “The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and his word was in my tongue”

Mark 12:36 - “For David himself said, by the Holy Spirit”

Acts 1:16 - “which the Holy Spirit by the mouth of David spoke before concerning Judas”

Acts 28:25 - “Well spoke the Holy Spirit by Isaiah, the prophet, unto our fathers”

Inspiration is the work of God, using prophets and apostles as human channels of His revelation to us – Ephesians 3:3-5; Hebrews 1:1-2; 2:3-4

cf. Matthew 1:22; 2:5, 15, 17,23; 3:3; 4:14; 12:17; 13:14, 35; 15:7; 21:4; 24:15; 27:9; Gal. 1:12; 2 Pet. 3:15-16

Inspiration guarantees the accuracy and reliability of the Bible.

In terms of FULFILLMENT - Matthew 5:17-18; Luke 24:44-46

In terms of INTERPRETATION - John 10:34-36 (cf. Psalm 82:6-7) (cf. 2 Peter 1:20-21)

In terms of COMPLETENESS - Matthew 23:35 (Abel is the 1st martyr - book of Genesis; Zechariah is the last martyr - book of 2 Chronicles, the last book in the Hebrew Bible of 22 books - same as 37 books in English) - cf. Revelation 22:18-19

THE DIFFICULTIES OF INSPIRATION

In terms of various THEORIES:

ORDINARY - inspired like Shakespeare - level of mere human genius

DYNAMIC - thoughts of God; words of men

DEGREES - some parts more inspired than others

MORAL - moral and spiritual teachings inspired; history and science questionable

MECHANICAL – dictation

In terms of the TRANSMISSION of the text by those who copied it:

INEXACT QUOTATIONS - cf. Isaiah 40:3 and Matthew 3:3

Inspiration requires that the truth is told accurately, not that the quote be quoted verbatim.

It may only be an interpretation of an Old Testament quotation.

Translation from one language to another may be involved.

VARIANT REPORTS - same incidents in gospels

Different views by different writers can still be reported accurately by each.

Jesus Christ no doubt taught the same truth at different times and in different ways.

The superscription on the cross was in three languages (John 19:20)

Matthew 27:37 - "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews"

Mark 15:26 - "The King of the Jews"

Luke 23:38 - "This is the King of the Jews"

CONTRADICTIONARY STATEMENTS

Is the passage in the original text, or confirmed by MSS evidence?

Is the translation absolutely correct?

Is the interpretation the only possible one?

Is our present knowledge final?

Is reconciliation impossible?

UNSCIENTIFIC EXPRESSIONS - like “ends of the earth” or “four corners of the earth”, “sun rising,” etc.

Common vocabulary uses such expressions.

The Bible was written for all peoples, and uses the language of appearance.

HUMAN ERRORS - by those who copied the text

Slip of the pen

Words similar in sound or appearance confused

Omission of words

Marginal notes treated as text

Errors of memory or repetition

In terms of the TRUTHFULNESS of Jesus Christ Himself - Matthew 5:17-18; Luke 24:44-46; John 10:34-36

In terms of the TESTIMONY of the writers themselves –

Joshua 1:8; 11:15; 24:26

1 Samuel 10:25; 2 Samuel 23:1-3

1 Kings 14:18-19, 29; 15:23, 31; 16:14, 20, 27,34; 22:39, 45

1 Chronicles 29:29-30

2 Chronicles 32:32; 33:18-19; 35:26-27; 36:21-22

Ezra 1:1; Nehemiah 8:8

Psalms 119:89; 138:2

THE INERRANCY OF THE BIBLE

DEFINITION: The Bible is without error in its original autographs, accurately reporting all matters which are written in the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments.

IN TERMS OF CANONICITY

“canon - the rule or standard by which something is measured.”

cf. 2 Corinthians 10:13,15, 26; Galatians 6:16 (“rule” or “line of things”)

The term “canon” was used first by Athanasius in 367 A.D. to refer to the collection of authoritative and inspired writings. The Old Testament “canon” was evaluated strongly by the Council of Jamnia in 90 A.D. Some books were disputed (such as Song of Solomon for its sensuality, Ecclesiastes for its secular emphasis, and Esther for its failure to mention the name of “God.”), but clearly established to be canonical on the basis of both external and internal evidences.

LANGUAGE - the Old Testament contains 22 books in the Hebrew Bible (called the “Tanach”) which contain the exact same content as the 39 books in the English Bible. Portions of Ezra and Daniel are written in Aramaic, a related language to Hebrew, and the court and trade language of ancient Babylon and Persia. The New Testament contains 27 books written in Greek, with frequent expressions from Aramaic, the language spoken in Israel during the first century A.D.

AUTHORSHIP - to be a part of the “canon” of the Bible, it was essential that a book be written by a recognized prophet or apostle - cf. Ephesians 2:20; 3:3-5

INSPIRATION - to be a part of the “canon” of the Bible, evidence of Divine inspiration must be proven by the testimony of the writers themselves, by Jesus Christ Himself, by eyewitnesses of what is recorded, by the witness of the Holy Spirit in the believers as they read the books, and by archaeological and historical accuracy.

ACCEPTANCE - to be a part of the “canon” of the Bible, the books needed to be circulated, read, and accepted without reservation as being divinely inspired by the believers in the churches.

NOTE: There are three major periods of history in which the issues of the canon were evaluated and discussed:

(1) CIRCULATION AND GRADUAL COLLECTION (70-170 A.D.) This includes the work of Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, Marcion, Papias, and the writings entitled the Epistle of Barnabas, the Didache, and the Shepherd of Hermes.

(2) EXTENSIVE THEOLOGICAL WRITING (170-303 A.D.) Includes the work of Irenaeus, Clement, Tertullian, and Origen, and clearly indicates the existence of a “canon” of Holy Scripture.

(3) FORMAL COLLECTION AND ACCEPTANCE (303-397 A.D.) Involves the work of church councils, which basically tested what was already there and universally read and accepted by the churches.

COMPLETION - the reasons why the Bible was considered to be a complete and final revelation from God

Theological reason - nothing is omitted that believers need to know!

Logical reason - early church fathers / leaders were closer to the issue!

Factual reason - no attempt was made to change the canon until the Council of Trent (1540-46 A.D.), a reaction to objections by the reformers regarding church tradition being more important than the Bible itself, and the failure of many church teachings to be supported by Biblical authority!

Experiential reason - it has the proven power to save and change lives!

Biblical reason - God indicates that His written Word would be a complete and final revelation!

Exodus 20:1; Deuteronomy 4:2; 8:3; Psalm 19:7; 119:89,152,160;
Proverbs 30:5-6; Isaiah 40:8; Matthew 5:18; 24:35; Luke 16:31; John
10:35; 16:13; Romans 10:17; 1 Corinthians 14:37; 15:1; Galatians 1:9
Hebrews 1:1-2; 2:2-4; Jude 3; Revelation 1:1; 22:18-19

IN TERMS OF MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE

THE OLD TESTAMENT - the greatest evidence for the authenticity of the Old Testament was the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 A.D. Fragments were found in 14 caves, and included portions from every book of the Old Testament except Esther. There were numerous portions from Deuteronomy, as well as commentaries and manuals on communal life at Qumran.

The expression, “it is written,” appears frequently in the Dead Sea Scrolls, but clearly refers to authority of canonical Scriptures; no non-canonical writings are referred to in this manner.

A simple comparison of the Hebrew of Biblical writings found among the Dead Sea Scrolls with the various Hebrew texts of later history (gap of 1000 years), reveals a remarkable similarity and agreement. The Jews were extremely careful and amazingly accurate in their copying of Biblical writings.

THE NEW TESTAMENT - with 5500 Greek manuscripts and 10,000 Latin manuscripts and another 4000 in various other languages, plus over 86,000 separate references quoted in the writings of church fathers, we have a volume of evidence that is unparalleled in the history of ancient writings (before the invention of printing) that were simply copied by hand.

Classifications of manuscript evidence

BYZANTINE text - began with Chrysostom, and includes the majority of manuscripts, and was universally read and accepted by the church - often called Textus Receptus, or the "Received Text."

WESTERN text - most frequently quoted in the church fathers, and primarily based on the Latin manuscript evidence.

ALEXANDRIAN text - an Egyptian tradition, encouraged by Origen - promoted in modern times by Westcott and Hort's revision of the Greek text - based primarily upon two MSS, Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus. This tradition has become the foundation of most modern English translations in the 20th century.

Greek Translations

COMPLUTENSIAN POLYGLOT - 1514 A.D. - first to be printed

DESIDERIUS ERASMUS - 1516-19 A.D. - first to be published (other editions in 1522, 1527, and 1533 A.D.)

ROBERT STEPHANUS - editions in 1546, 1549, and 1550 A.D., the latter being the primary text used by the King James translators

ELZEVIR PARTNERS - editions in 1624, 1633, and 1641 A.D. The 1633 A.D. edition gave the name "Textus Receptus" to the Greek text.

BRIAN WALTON - first to make a collection of variant readings - 1657 A.D. - using the text of Stephanus, and added Codex Alexandrinus and Codex Beza.

JOHN MILL - first editor to collect evidence of patristic quotations.

J. A. BENGEL - 1734 A.D. - first to classify the MSS authorities into two groups:

AFRICAN - fewest and oldest

ASIAN - majority of MSS

J. J. WETSTEIN - published editions of the Textus Receptus in 1751 and 1752 A.D. with a critical apparatus and a system of cataloging the MSS.

SEMIER & GREISBACH - classified MSS into three groups in 1767 A.D.

ALEXANDRIAN (Syriac, Coptic, and Ethiopian)

EASTERN (Antioch & Constantinople)

WESTERN (Latin & patristic quotations)

CONSTANTINE TISCHENDORF - found the Codex Sinaiticus in 1844 A.D. at St. Catherine's monastery at Mt. Sinai.

WESTCOTT & HORT - 1881 A.D. – published Greek text with no critical apparatus – based on two MSS: Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus.

NOTE: Consider these facts about the WESTCOTT & HORT Greek text which has become the foundation behind many modern English translations.

(1) Codex Vaticanus - reported to be in the Vatican Library since 1481 A.D. - written on vellum with 3 columns and no ornamentation. It ends at Hebrews 9:14, and excludes the Pastoral Epistles and Revelation. It contains 7579 changes from the Textus Receptus, and also contains the Apocryphal books in the Old Testament.

(2) Codex Sinaiticus - over half of the leaves are missing; it contains the Epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermes; it contains 9000 changes from the Textus Receptus.

(3) These MSS differ in the gospels over 3000 times with each other! Tischendorf changed his 8th edition of the Greek text in 3369 places when compared with his 7th edition, all on the basis of Codex Sinaiticus! In terms of English translations, over 36,000 changes have been made because of this "evidence"!

(4) The condition of these MSS (beautiful by comparison with others) makes them highly suspicious - they don't look used as they should have been!

(5) The evidence of the Papyri MSS of the 20th century A.D. was not available for the Greek text of Westcott & Hort. The Papyri evidence is much older than these two MSS and, by and large, supports the readings of the Textus Receptus.

(6) Because a given manuscript is older, does not mean that it is the best. P47 is the oldest MSS of Revelation, but definitely not the best, for we have only 10 out of 32 leaves!

English Translations

JOHN WYCLIFFE (1320-1384 A.D.) – translated from Jerome's Latin Vulgate, of which there are 8000 manuscripts.

WILLIAM TYNDALE - first to be printed from the Greek text of Erasmus - 1525 A.D.

MILES COVERDALE - first English Bible printed - 1535 A.D.

GENEVA BIBLE - first to use verse and chapter divisions - 1560 A.D.

KING JAMES VERSION - 1611 A.D.

NOTE: A committee of 54 men began work in 1607 A.D. and finished in 1610 A.D. They spent hours daily in prayer, expressing total loyalty to God's Word, and checking and re-checking with colleagues lest the slightest mistake would be made. The primary Greek text was the 3rd edition of Stephanus, published in 1550 A.D. It has dominated Bible translation in English for 385 years, in spite of many attempts to show its inadequacies and archaic expressions.

ENGLISH REVISED VERSION - 1881-85 A.D. - based on Greek text of Westcott & Hort

AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION - 1901 A.D. - based on Greek text of Westcott & Hort

WILLIAMS TRANSLATION – 1937 - completed by Charles B. Williams under the auspices of Moody Bible Institute, followed the Greek text of Westcott and Hart, attempting to translation the thought of the passage rather than a word-for-word translation

REVISED STANDARD VERSION - 1952 A.D. - generated a great deal of controversy over translation of Hebrew word, almak, in Isaiah 7:14, changed from "virgin" to "young woman"

PHILIPS TRANSLATION - 1958 A.D. - a paraphrase that received extensive promotion and usage for a number of years before the publication of the Living Bible.

GOOD NEWS FOR MODERN MAN - 1966 A.D. - promoted as an evangelistic tool - started to use more paraphrasing to communicate to the contemporary generation

THE LIVING BIBLE - 1971 A.D. - the most popular paraphrase ever - done by Kenneth Taylor, basically to communicate with his children

THE NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE - published by the Lockman Foundation in 1971 A.D. 54 Hebrew and Greek scholars of evangelical and fundamental persuasion were used in the project. It is an updated version of the 1901 American Standard Version.

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION –1978 A.D. - promoted widely and proclaimed often as the finest text in English today – its desire is to present a readable text for today’s English-speaking world.

THE GOOD NEWS BIBLE - 1979 A.D. - the official title is “The Bible in Today’s English Version” - it was produced by the United Bible Societies for use throughout the world. Its stated goal is not to follow traditional vocabularies and styles in other versions, but to present the message of the Bible in everyday, natural English.

THE NEW KING JAMES VERSION - 1982 A.D. - it tries to maintain the beauty and language of the King James, and at the same time, remove the archaic expressions. The changes were far more extensive than originally promised, but it seems to have accomplished its stated goals in the light of its sales.

NOTE: In one sense, it is sad indeed to see the controversies over which English translation is the best when so many languages have yet to receive one verse of Scripture in their own tongue. To view English as being the best language to communicate the original languages of the Bible is not only ignorant and immature, but may reveal the pride and arrogance of those who speak it! The problem behind Bible translation is not “English,” but rather what Greek text (in the case of the N.T.) one is using for that particular translation. The changes that were made in the Greek text of Westcott and Hort in the late 1800’s from the majority of manuscripts that had given us a Greek text we know as the “Textus Receptus” - are too great to ignore. These changes were based on two manuscripts, Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus, which are certainly not “the best” or “the oldest” or “the most accurate,” as so many

marginal notes in modern English translations have tried to promote. The truth is that the Greek text used for producing the King James Version of the Bible is still the most reliable and is based, by and large, upon the majority of manuscripts. May God give us all the wisdom we need to evaluate these matters, and the kindness of the Lord toward those who may disagree with us?

Consider these simple facts:

1. The KING James translation uses the fewest multi-syllabic words among the various modern English translations available today.

2. The KING James Version when compared with other English translations that have been widely circulated reveals a lower grade level of reading skill.

3. The King James Version is the only English version that clarifies the singular or plural use of the second person personal pronoun.

- "you" - found in modern English translations, referring to either one person or many persons
- "thee" and "ye" - used in the King James, clearly distinguishing between the singular and plural

4. The archaic expressions (words that have either changed their meaning or are no longer being used by English-speaking people) are fewer than most people realize, and are usually clarified in the margin or notes of most copies of this translation. They are also changed in the text of the New King James Version of the Bible.

THE INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE

The word "hermeneutics" refers to the science of interpretation. While this study is not intended to be exhaustive in terms of the subject, it needs some attention in this course because it is such a vital part in the understanding of the Bible.

Consider the following basic principles:

FAITH - the matter of dependency and prayer (cf. Psalm 119:18, 26-27, 33-34, 68, 73, 169; Hebrews 11:6)

HOLINESS - a clean life and pure motives (cf. Psalm 66:18; Proverbs 28:9, 13; Matthew 25:41; 2 Corinthians 2:17; Hebrews 12:14; 1 Peter 2:1-3)

OBEDIENCE - doing what God commands and pleases Him (cf. Psalm 119:100; John 7:17; James 1:22-25)

HOLY SPIRIT - the one Who inspires and illuminates (cf. John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:9-16; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:19-21)

JESUS CHRIST - the central Person in its message (cf. Luke 24:44-45; John 16:13-14; Acts 8:26-36)

SPIRITUAL MATURITY - our growth in grace and knowledge (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:6; 3:1-3; Hebrews 5:11-14; 2 Peter 3:16-18)

DILIGENT STUDY - examining and comparing Scriptures (cf. Psalm 119:99; Acts 17:11; 2 Timothy 2:15)

SIMPLICITY - seeing the text as it is and for whom it was written (cf. Psalm 119:130; Matthew 11:25-26; 2 Corinthians 11:3, 6)

CONTEXT - observing the passages surrounding a given word, phrase, sentence, paragraph, topic, or book

LANGUAGE - finding the root meaning of a given word, noting its Biblical and historical usage, understanding how the various clauses and phrases are connected together in a given passage, and making sure of the grammatical form of the words

CULTURE - the ways, methods, manners, tools, literary productions and institutions of any people

Four basic factors of cultural understanding:

Geography

Politics

Customs

Religion

Four basic facts about interpreting a given culture:

Don't treat cultural factors as moral absolutes!

Don't allow cultural factors alone to determine the interpretation!

Don't confuse cultural factors with the application of Biblical principles!

Don't ignore cultural factors in your understanding!

SYMBOLIC LANGUAGE - making a literal fact or truth more graphic or visual

Examples:

SIMILE - comparison of two unlike things, using words such as "like" or "as"

METAPHOR - comparison without connecting words

PARABLE - extended simile, comparing unlike things that are easily understood to reveal truth that is difficult to comprehend

PERSONIFICATION - making inanimate objects animated

HYPERBOLE - exaggeration for effect

PARADOX - a truth that seems absurd

RIDDLE - statement designed to puzzle or hide

ANTHROPOMORPHISM - attributing physical characteristics to God

Explanation:

- (1) If literal sense makes sense, seek no other sense!
- (2) Examine the context carefully!
- (3) Distinguish carefully between the literal and the figurative!
- (4) Discern accurately the spiritual truth by inductive study, asking three basic questions:
 - (a) Are there parallel passages to consider?
 - (b) Does the truth conflict with any details of the passage?
 - (c) Does it agree with other Scriptures?