



Twoedged Sword

A BIBLIOLOGY PRIMER

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Introduction

This short book was originally taught as a series of presentations in a local church. While it only scratches the surface regarding the doctrines of bibliology, I believe that this book will give the average reader a better understanding of the Bible as the revealed Word of God.

We will first look at general and special revelation, which concerns what we can learn about God by observing nature, and supernatural communication from Him, respectively. Next, we will look at the internal evidence of the Bible being God's Word. In the third chapter, we will look at the doctrine of inspiration, infallibility, and inerrancy. In chapters four and five, we will look at the canonicity and the manuscripts of the Old Testament and the New Testament, respectively. In chapter six, we will finally look at some general principles of Bible interpretation and some pitfalls to avoid.

I hope you enjoy this brief primer on bibliology, and that you may learn something new!

Chapter 1: The Heavens Declare the Glory of God

General Revelation

What can we know about God merely from observing creation? The subject of general revelation deals with what we can know about God just from observing the natural world. This sort of revelation goes to all people from every era; every person has access to basic information about the Creator God. Psalm 19:1-6 illustrates this for us.

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. (Psalms 19:1-6)

Though God created the universe by speaking (Genesis 1), we see the creation itself still “speaks” about the glory of God’s creating hand. This portion of the psalm deals with what can be known about God simply by observing the sky. We see that it “*declare[s] the glory of God*” in verse 1. We daily see the skies, with the sun, moon, and stars, and they are all very beautiful. But that is not the glory of God per se, but rather we can see God’s kingship and authority. God is all powerful, having power that is great enough to create the sky and everything in it, because the Creator is greater than His creation.

In verse 2, that “*day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.*” It is more than just day and night we are speaking about; from verses 4-6, we realize that David is talking about the process of day and night. As we see the heavenly bodies move across the sky, we see His power in action, because He has sustained this whole process day after day since the dawn of time.

Verses 3-4 shows that this declaring of God’s glory, day after day, can be understood regardless of what language one speaks, or where in the world they are. Everyone can know that the Creator God is all powerful by observing this daily occurrence.

The sun, as it seems to move across the sky, is likened to both a bridegroom and a strong runner. In our western culture, the prominent figure in a wedding is the bride. All of the bridesmaids are dressed alike, while the groom and his groomsmen are all dressed like penguins off to the side. But the bride is dressed radiantly and beautifully in white, and stands out from everyone in the room. In this illustration in Psalm 19, it is not so; rather, the groom is the prominent person. The sun, like such a prominent figure, is massive, bright and hot in all of its majesty. Like a strong athlete victorious in a race, it moves

gloriously across the sky. But what does this say of God? God, who sustains the process of day and night, and who seemingly moves the massive sun across the sky, is far greater than the sun. Whoever this Creator God is, His power exceeds that of the sun because He created it.

In verse 6, we see that nothing is hid from the heat of the sun. All people everywhere know its heat, and by it, they know that God created the world to be habitable. We can know that He is good and provides for our needs.

In the book of Acts, the apostle Paul appealed to general revelation when speaking to non-Jewish audiences. He did this because they were not familiar with the God of the Bible. Paul needed some way to communicate the gospel to the masses, but they did not have the right starting place: a Creator God who was interested in the affairs of life. Non-Jews often were polytheists with very different perceptions and beliefs as to the nature of the world and religion.

An example is in Acts 14:15-17. The Lord had performed a miraculous healing through Paul, and because the people who witnessed the event spoke a different language, they misunderstood what Paul was saying, and thought that Paul was a god. So Paul attempted to correct their thinking:

Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. (Acts 14:15-17)

Paul appealed to the Creator God, who gave us rain and harvests, providing for our needs. Everyone can know to some degree that the Creator God sustains us by providing us the food we need.

A significant passage is Paul's sermon on Mars' hill. Addressing a group of Greek philosophers of different persuasions, he told them about the Creator God:

Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their

habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. (Acts 17:22-31)

The Athenians believed that the Creator God was unknowable. This is very common among religious people of all persuasions, and we will return to this notion shortly. We also see that God is not territorial or limited to a geographical place. As Creator of all He is also the Lord of all, who transcends His creation and sustains it. In verse 25, we see that we do not provide for God, but rather He is the great provider for us. He brought forth nations from one man, and scattered them across the face of the earth. But what does God want from humankind? *"That they should seek the Lord."* The purpose of humanity is for them to seek Him.

Humanity may know much of what is said of God by all that is written above. However, God is declared as an unknown, just as the Athenians had said in their monument. A prominent religious text says this about the Creator:

*But, after all, who knows, and who can say
Whence it all came, and how creation happened?
The gods themselves are later than creation,
So who knows truly whence it has arisen?*

*Whence all creation had its origin,
He, whether he fashioned it or whether he did not,
He, who surveys it all from highest heaven,
He knows-or maybe even he does not know*

When I was in missions school, a former missionary who had served in an animistic tribe reported to us that the people he served believed in a Creator God, but he was aloof, and did not care about the affairs of humankind. He just sat in the sky, smoking a pipe and making clouds. The people's real concern was the evil spirits; these were the spiritual forces the people had to appease in order to survive. Whether animistic tribal religion, or the major religions of the world, if they have a Creator God, he is seen as remote, and not getting involved in daily life.

Though we can know a lot about God through the created order, we realize that there are many things that we cannot know by simple observation. Even the things we can

know we naturally suppress because of personal sin and deception by evil spiritual forces at work in the world. We see that there is yet another way we can learn from God, and that is through special revelation.

Special Revelation

There are different types of special revelation. These include dreams, visions, the Urim and Thummin (used by the high priest in the Old Testament, which we do not know much about today), the casting of lots, and theophanies (where God Himself appeared to people). Throughout the Bible we see examples of these. However, these things are not the primary means of God's communication. God's written word is the way God communicates to His people. This brings us to the second half of Psalm 19:

The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward. Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer. (Psalms 19:7-14)

Notice the abrupt shift in direction David takes, from discussing the patterns of heavenly bodies, to God's written word. The one thing that is noticeably different is how he refers to God. David refers to God once in the first six verses, and it is the generic term "God." Throughout the Old Testament, we see that when we see the name God, the emphasis is usually on God's mighty power. However, David is now calling Him LORD. This is symbolic of the Tetragrammaton, which are the four letters that spell God's personal name in Hebrew. Why the change of name? David is no longer talking about God as the mighty King; he is now calling God by His personal name. We may know Him as the remote powerful king by observing nature, but by the LORD's word, we know Him personally.

There are several different terms that David uses to refer to God's word: law, testimony, statutes, commandment, fear, and judgments. Many of these sound like legal terms, but I think we would be remiss to think that we are only talking about the *torah*, or the Law in the Bible, consisting of the first five books of the Bible. I believe this is talking about the entire written Word of God. More than anything, the Gospel of Jesus Christ epitomizes everything stated here in this Psalm. Think about this as we look at the rest of this psalm.

The Psalm 19:7 is most intriguing: *“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul.”* The Word of God has the power to change a person. We cannot but think of Romans 10:17: *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* The Word of God stimulates faith in a person unto eternal life. Just think about that for a minute. The Word of God is “quick,” or alive (Hebrews 4:12), and it gives us life, and is the incorruptible seed that gives us eternal life (1 Peter 1:23).

The Word of God not only changes a person and seals one into eternal life, it also gives us wisdom (19:7). It gives us practical skill in this life and teaches us to walk away from evil. It makes us rejoice (19:8). God gives us His word to live and walk with Him, and this gives both Him and us joy. It enlightens the eyes; it allows us see the truth about God, the world and ourselves. We can see clearly when we have the Word of God.

Many other words are used to describe the Word of God: clean, true, and righteous. There are no impurities or lies in God’s Word. By verse 11, because of the pureness of God’s Word, David looks into the Word like a mirror, and sees himself as he really is. He takes heed and is warned, and goes further, saying, *“cleanse thou me from secret faults.”* The Word of God is clean, and is able to clean us. The Word of God is a light that exposes unrighteousness in us, so that the Lord can change us through and through.

The special revelation in the Word of God does what general revelation cannot do: it communicates to us the way of salvation in Jesus Christ and how to live the Christian life. We see this in Romans 10:18 which quotes Psalm 19:4. The former is talking about the gospel of Jesus Christ, while the latter mere general revelation. What general revelation could not do, the gospel could!

Thank God for His Word, and for His goodness to us.

Chapter 2: If the Thing Follow Not, Nor Come to Pass

When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him. (Deuteronomy 18:22)

In the Old Testament, if a prophet allegedly received a message from God, but it did not come to pass, he was a false prophet. I think we can provide this reasoning to the Bible itself, to see if it is a valid prophet. If it is a valid prophet, we have reason to seek out the message of the Bible. If not, then we can throw it out, and let it be lost in history forever.

It Shall Bruise Thy Head

The Bible made many predictions about the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah, most of which were filled at His first coming. It states how He was to come, from which tribe, family and ethnic group He was to come, where He was to be born, when He was to be born, and many of the circumstances around His coming. Let us explore some of these.

The first item we should look at is how Jesus was born. He was to be born of a virgin. The most notable verse is Genesis 3:15: *“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”* The context of this verse is God pronouncing judgment on the human race after they had disobeyed Him, committing the first sin.

This portion of scripture is a chiasmic structure. For a quick review of this, consider a five-lined poem. If it were a chiasmic structure, the first and last lines would be parallel, the second and fourth lines would be parallel, and the middle line would be the crux of the poem, where the author was placing emphasis. In the larger passage, you will notice that God confronted Adam first about their sin, then Eve, and then He pronounced judgment on the Satan in the guise of a serpent, and then on Eve, and then on Adam. What God said to Satan is the central significant line in the chiasmic structure, which is Genesis 3:15.

So what does this verse mean? There is enmity between the serpent and the woman, but also his seed and her seed. The children of Satan are mentioned in the New Testament as those opposing Christ (John 8:44). But what is the seed of the woman? Women typically are not to have seed (*zera*, LXX *sperma*, an exception being Genesis 16:10, since Ishmael and his children were not considered to be heirs of Abraham). This is a reference to the virgin birth of Jesus coming millennia later. Let us keep reading: *“It shall bruise thy head.”* The subject here is “it,” referring to the seed of the woman, and the object is the serpent. This seed is going to give a death blow to the head of the serpent. The serpent, however, will *“bruise his heel.”* In this passage, we not only see the virgin birth, but we

see a foreshadowing of Jesus' crucifixion, and the defeat of Satan. This is truly a beautiful passage of prophecy that we can see in retrospect: we see how this corresponds to the coming of Christ, and how He has delivered humankind from sin and Satan.

Behold, a Virgin Shall Conceive

Another passage of Jesus being born of a virgin is Isaiah 7:14: *"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."* This is rather a key verse concerning the virgin birth, but it is not without controversy. Higher critics of the Bible would argue that the word for virgin, *almah* does not necessarily mean virgin. It can also mean a young woman, who could also be newly married. However, we should not be so quick to discount this verse.

In the New Testament, this verse is quoted in Matthew 1:23: *"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."* One could simply argue that they are reading 'virgin' into this word in retrospect, to force the prophecy as being fulfilled. However, the word for virgin in this verse is *parthenos*, which is the exact same word used in the Septuagint's Isaiah 7:14, which nobody argues was translated later than 100 years before the birth of Christ.

Whom Thy Brethren Shall Praise

*Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.
(Genesis 49:8-12)*

Consider the above passage, which is laden with messianic implications. At times throughout the Bible, there is use of typology, where a personage is a "type" or foreshadowing of Christ. In this particular case, we see that what is said of Judah does not apply to the patriarch himself, but of a descendant (according to the flesh) of Judah in the "last days" (Genesis 49:1).

First, we see that the other tribes will praise Judah. In the centuries following this prophecy, Judah became the kingly tribe when David became king. At the beginning of David's grandson's reign, there was a division of the kingdom, but Judah was more faithful to the LORD, and had the Temple within its territory. However, since Jacob

specifically says that this prophecy refers to the “*last days*,” we are to look beyond that time to the New Testament and church period (Now! Hebrews 1:1-2). Who is praised? Jesus Christ.

Judah is also a “*lion’s whelp*.” This is referenced again in Revelation 5:5. We see in that passage that Jesus is the one who has “prevailed” and is setting the events of the seventieth week of Daniel into motion. He will destroy His enemies, like a lion.

We see again that “*the sceptre shall not depart from Judah*.” As we saw previously, Judah’s descendents were kings, but Jesus was the ultimate fulfillment as the true King: “*until Shiloh come*.” The word Shiloh means “tranquility,” and surely Jesus is our peace (Romans 5:1). The Septuagint has a different phrase: “until he comes to whom it belongs.” One can see how that either text could be appropriate in this case. The Lord very well could intend both meanings, though the Masoretic text seems more likely in the context. Let us keep reading to see why.

“*Unto him shall the gathering of the people be*.” Jesus is seen as one who desires to gather His people, and He will do so in the future. In Matthew 23:37, Jesus said, “*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!*” In the next chapter during the Olivet discourse, we read, “*And he [Jesus] shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other*” (Matthew 24:31).

“*Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass’s colt unto the choice vine*.” This is a reference to the famous story often referred to as Palm Sunday (Matthew 21:1-11). We often think of Zechariah 9:9 as the scripture that Palm Sunday fulfills, but how much does Christ fulfill this one also! Coming on a donkey rather than a horse, He came in peace, not as an act of war.

“*He washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes*.” Jesus, in the Upper Room before His death, inaugurated the Lord’s Supper, and He likened His blood to wine. This was not a coincidence; His blood was like wine, in the fact that it covers our sins, and we “drink,” giving us eternal life.

“*His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk*.” While His blood covered all of our sins, He no longer sees our sins, for we are justified by His sacrifice on the Cross. Regarding the reference to His teeth being white with milk, we know from elsewhere that having “*cleanness of teeth*” meant being hungry due to famine (Amos 4:6). Jesus left the riches of heaven and lived a very poor life, and associated with the sinner, the outcast and the poor and loved them as they were.

I am fairly confident that I have only scratched the surface of what is written here, but it is a good start. Judah here is foreshadowing the Messiah Jesus, and this passage clearly goes through many of the events of Jesus' last week leading up to and including his Passion.

But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah...

But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel. And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth. (Micah 5:2-4)

This passage indicates where the Messiah was to be born: Bethlehem. This is fulfilled in Matthew 2:1-6. Though He was born there according to the flesh, His *"goings forth have been... from everlasting."* To be from everlasting is to be eternal, and to be from eternity past is to be God. God the Son, Jesus Christ, is the Messiah.

Moreover, we read: *"Therefore will he give them up."* The antecedent of "he" is the one born in Bethlehem, Jesus, while the antecedent of "them" is *"the thousands of Judah."* "Giving them up" does not have good connotations; since Jesus was rejected as king, the Jewish nation was judged in A.D. 70, and was scattered the world over until this day, despite even the revival of the Jewish nation in 1948. But there is a time yet future when the *"the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel."* Jesus also clearly stands in the strength of the LORD, and He truly is great unto the ends of the earth. There are believers in Jesus throughout the world.

Unto the Messiah the Prince

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the

week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate. (Daniel 9:24-27)

This passage indicates approximately when the Messiah will be crucified. Many scholars have come across in the past place His crucifixion around A.D. 33, and sometimes can even name the date of April 6. I will not be so bold here, but I will say that this passage will place us in the ballpark of this date.

The prophet Daniel had just prayed to God about the return from exile for him and his people, since Jeremiah had predicted a seventy-year period from the fall of Jerusalem and exile to the return to the Jewish homeland. Now while this was true, God's messenger Gabriel came to him to give him the bigger picture of how God was going to redeem His people through the Messiah and bring in the millennial kingdom.

The "*seventy weeks*" mentioned are 70 weeks of years, meaning 70 seven-year periods. This time period was to "*make an end of sins... and to anoint the most Holy.*" All of that was completed in Christ's vicarious sacrifice on the Cross and His resurrection. The former took care of sins, while the latter was His anointing.

From the edict to rebuild Jerusalem to the Messiah, Jesus, was seven and 62 weeks. The breaking up of these two periods of weeks suggests that perhaps there was a break in between; we know there is a gap between these two groups and the final seventieth week, as we shall see. The fall of Jerusalem was in 586 B.C. Seventy years after, according to Jeremiah's prophecy (Jeremiah 25:11-12), would place us at 516 B.C. The seven plus 62 weeks of years, or 483 years would place us at 33 B.C. (note: not A.D.) If you allow for time for when the edict to rebuild Jerusalem (Ezra 1:2-3), which was not exactly at seventy years, and you allow for any gap between the seven and the 62 week periods, then you get into the first century A.D. There are resources out there of folks who have done all of the history and math to get more exact numbers; I believe you will find the results satisfying.

After the periods of seven weeks and 62 weeks, we see that Messiah is "*cut off, but for himself.*" This is Jesus' crucifixion. To be "cut off" is to suffer the death penalty, which is exactly what Jesus suffered. We also see the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple mentioned, which followed in A.D. 70.

But what about this seventieth week? There is a noticeable gap between week 69 and 70, since we have not seen the events talked about in week 70 happen in human history yet. The word "desolations" in 9:26 indicate that the land will not have Jewish inhabitants for some periods. This is the same gap as we discussed in Micah 5:3, where the people were given over for a time. We also know that there is a gap because we know the Temple is destroyed in 9:26, but by 9:27, the Antichrist is outlawing sacrifice, which is only allowed

in the Temple. The Temple was destroyed in A.D. 70, and it is still not rebuilt at the time of this writing in 2015 (though we know there are folks out there that already have plans and materials to build it).

The fact that the prophet Daniel had recorded these specifics is of divine origin; God wanted people to know what He was going to do. Since we knew God has kept His promise of the coming Messiah in the past, we also trust Him with the future and the events He has laid out as inevitable.

They Shall Look Upon Me Whom They Have Pierced

*And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.
(Zechariah 12:10)*

Here is another prediction of Jesus' crucifixion, and also confirmation that Jesus is God Himself. In this context, the LORD is speaking, and He states that "*they shall look upon me whom they have pierced.*" In John 19:37, this verse is quoted referring to Jesus.

Though the crucifixion is in the past, Jewish mourning for not recognizing Jesus as Messiah is yet future. A time will come when there will be national repentance in Israel.

Summary of Aforementioned Claims

Now critics first read about prophecies and usually conclude one of two things. First, you could say that since the New Testament succeeds the Old Testament, the New Testament authors could have written retrospectively. However, the number of prophecies fulfilled are quite numerous, and this would be more than a little difficult.

Second, one can make the dates for the Old Testament writings much later than traditionally accepted. This is an issue to discuss at another time. Let it suffice to say that both the Septuagint and the Dead Sea Scrolls, which are Old Testament translations and manuscripts, predated the New Testament by a few hundred years.

One more thing to consider: Within 30 years of Jesus' ascension into heaven, the world was permeated with the Gospel, and Christians did it without wealth, without violence, and with severe persecution. The propagation of the Gospel in such a short period of time under these circumstances was nothing short of divine.

Typology

We briefly mentioned typology before. Let us look at some types of Christ. A type is personage that prefigures the Lord Jesus. You see certain patterns or symbolism in Old Testament stories that portray Christ.

Here is an example, and a controversial one at that. Consider a king over the entire world that is approached by an adversary of God's people to condemn them. The king then seals a proclamation to destroy God's people, and all hope is lost. Risking death, a savior steps forward on behalf of the people to save them. The king accepts the savior's petition, and declares a new proclamation delivering the people and destroys the adversary.

You may be thinking I just described what Jesus did on the cross to save His people. However, I just described the book of Esther. Esther was the savior, and she is a type of Christ. She could have died if Ahasuerus did not extend the scepter to her, but she laid down her life to save God's people.

Joseph and Moses

The Bible explicitly says certain stories or personages foreshadow Christ. In Stephen's sermon in Acts 7, we see two significant examples.

Acts 7:9-14 describes Joseph. Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers, but many years later, he saved the whole known world of famine by his planning and the wisdom God had gave him. Again, in Acts 7:22-36, Moses broke up a fight between two Hebrew men, but one of them, having seen him previously slay an Egyptian, rejected his counsel. Moses ran into the wilderness for 40 years, but came back and delivered the Hebrews from the Egyptians' cruelty.

What do these two stories have in common? The one the Jews rejected came back and became their savior. The Jews, among many others, rejected Jesus Christ. However, this same Christ they had rejected will turn out be the one who will save them.

Isaac and the Ram

There are other examples of typology in the Old Testament. Consider Genesis 22:1-19.

The LORD commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, born to him in his old age. Abraham had the knife in his hand, about to slay his son when God stopped him. What happened after that?

And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold

*behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering **in the stead of his son.** (Genesis 22:12-13)*

God provided a ram in place of Isaac; the ram died instead of Isaac. What did Abraham say as a result?

And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen. (Genesis 22:14)

And it was seen in the mount of the LORD, because the Temple was built there nearly a millennium later (2 Chronicles 3:1). Animals were sacrificed there in the place of the people, just like the ram died on behalf of Isaac. Moreover, our Lord was crucified outside of Jerusalem nearly a millennium after that. Jesus died in our stead. On the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.

A Psalm of David

Psalm 22, a famous lament psalm, was written by David, as we see in the title. The very next verse, we read, *“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”* Jesus, as He suffered on the cross said those same words (Matthew 27:46). Though Psalm 22 was originally written by David by the Holy Spirit, and it was written about his experience, Jesus said this verse to show that this was very much His experience. Jesus quoting this portion of 22:1 indicates not only that He fulfilled this clause alone, but rather He was pointing the hearers to Psalm 22, and that He fulfilled the whole psalm.

The people that surrounded Jesus while on trial and on the cross did many of the same things to Him that David’s enemies had said to him. Psalm 22:8 says *“He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.”* Consider the words of Matthew 27:42-43: *“He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.”* Jesus’ hands and feet were pierced (Psalm 22:16, John 20:25). Jesus’ clothes were divided by the soldiers (Psalm 22:18, Matthew 27:35).

Starting in the second half of the Psalm, at 22:21, we see David beginning his vow of praise which is standard among many lament psalms. But you will see much about how God will receive glory for His great deliverance for the Jews (Psalm 22:23) and for the nations (Psalm 22:27). The Gospel of the risen Christ likewise has gone throughout the world, and many praise His name that otherwise would not have. Even the dead will praise Him (Psalm 22:29). We see all of these things fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

The Future

We see a lot that the Bible has predicted and has come to pass in Jesus Christ. Most of the prophecies of the Bible have been fulfilled. What is left before the return of Christ? Let us take a look at some of those things.

A World Government and World Religion: We see this in Daniel 7:23 and Revelation 13. In our current time, we see many hints of this forming with NAFTA, the European Union and the United Nations.

The Nation of Israel: Israel will be back in the land and there is a Temple. We saw this when discussing Daniel 9 above. The Temple was destroyed in A.D. 70, but it will be back during the Tribulation period. As we know, Israel became a nation again in 1948, for the first time since the destruction of Jerusalem A.D. 70. See 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4 and Matthew 24:15.

A Falling Away: There will be a spiritual falling away. We see this in 2 Thessalonians 2; 1 Timothy 4; 2 Timothy 4; and Matthew 24:12.

Increase of Knowledge: See Daniel 12:4. In the last century we have done more in the way of technology than in any other time.

A Cashless Society: See Revelation 13:16-18. You can't tell me this sort of thing isn't around the corner.

The Return of Jesus Christ: Jesus will return and set up His kingdom on earth. He carries for the sole purpose of the world hearing the good news of His death, burial, and resurrection (2 Peter 3:9f).

The summary of the matter? If we can trust God in how He fulfilled so many prophecies, we can trust Him in these other matters. Praise God for showing us the way of salvation, and what lies ahead for humankind.

Chapter 3: All Scripture is Given by Inspiration of God

Introduction

This segment on the Bibliology series will focus on some commonly used terms that pertain to the Bible: inspiration, infallibility, and inerrancy. Let us take a look at these concepts.

Inspiration

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. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

This verse is the one time the word inspiration is used in the New Testament. This Greek word *theopneustos* is a *hapax legomenon* (used only once in the New Testament), which captures the whole concept of *“given by inspiration of God.”* Though we may use the word “inspired,” we may want to think of the Word as being breathed out by God. In the Greek word, we can clearly see the root for the word ‘breath’ and for the word ‘spirit’ (the word for breath and spirit are the same word).

We can infer from this that the Scriptures originated from God. He is the author of the Scriptures given to the human authors to record. These are His own words, which is what makes the Scriptures authoritative and *“able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus”* (2 Timothy 3:15). Timothy had learned the Scriptures young, which made him the great servant of the Lord he became. If our doctrine, instruction, etc., comes from the Lord’s words, the logical conclusion is that we are properly equipped and empowered to do the good works God has created for us.

God’s Own Words

God’s prophets, who were the human authors of the Bible, only spoke the words of God. An example is Micaiah, the son of Imlah, in 1 Kings 22. The wicked king Ahab would only hear what he wanted to hear, so he surrounded himself with false yes-men prophets. King Jehoshaphat, who was interested in God’s truth, persuaded King Ahab to avoid these false prophets and get good godly counsel. Ahab then called Micaiah, a genuine prophet of the Lord. Micaiah was pushed to tell Ahab what he wanted to hear. The godly prophet answered: *“As the LORD liveth, what the LORD saith unto me, that will I speak.”* Under extreme pressure, he only said what the Lord told him to say.

Jeremiah wrote down all of God’s words in his book. Concerning the seventy years prophecy, he wrote, *“And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, even all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath*

prophesied against all the nations." God's spoken word written down by His prophets is sure, as we see the fulfillment of this Scripture in Daniel 9:2.

New Testament Confirms the Hebrew Bible as God's Word

In anticipation of coming persecution, the apostles pray this within their prayer:

And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? (Acts 4:24-25)

First, we see that God spoke by the mouth of David. David did not write down his own ideas in Psalm 2. God used the human king David to record what He had said. Second, we also want to note that the apostles and their close associates, who wrote the New Testament, affirm the Old Testament as the very words of God.

Again, we can glean similarly when Paul shows his frustration to Jewish folks who were not accepting the Gospel:

And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive (Acts 28:25-26)

We see that the Holy Spirit spoke by Isaiah; the words are not from any human author. We also see that this time, it is the Holy Spirit speaking. We should remember the word *theopneustos* written above: God-breathed, or by God's Spirit. God the Holy Spirit is the One who is behind the writing of the Scriptures.

When we also look together at these two passages, Acts 4:24-25 and Acts 28:25-26, we see God speaking in the former, and the Holy Spirit speaking in the latter. This comparison demonstrates the deity of the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit is God, then we know the Scriptures are of divine origin.

Oracles of God

The usage of the word "oracle" (*logion*) shows that the Word of God is verbal. This word for oracle appears four times in the New Testament: Acts 7:38; Romans 3:2; Hebrews 5:12; and 1 Peter 4:11. The first two references indicate the Old Testament (the first specifically referring to the Law received on Mt. Sinai).

We can also see that the Words of God are authoritative before they are even written down. In Galatians 3:8, we read, *“And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.”* The Gospel was not written down until 2,000 years after Abraham, but the Gospel was preached to Abraham.

Again, in Romans 9:17: *“For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.”* The Words of God spoken to Pharaoh in Exodus had authority before the Pentateuch was compiled in its present form years later.

Moved by the Holy Ghost

For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. (2 Peter 1:16-21)

This passage tells us a lot about the Word of God. First, once again we see that Peter is not coming up with his own ideas about the Gospel; he and the apostles *“were eyewitnesses of his majesty.”* They knew the Lord face to face, and recorded His words. They also heard the words of God the Father concerning the Son. They actually heard His voice. This direct communication from God authorizes the Gospel message, and legitimizes the apostles, being eye witnesses, as the human authors of the New Testament.

The scriptures are not *“of any private interpretation.”* They are not of human origin. Once again, we see that the Holy Spirit was the source of the truth of the Scriptures, taking the words of God and moving the human authors to pen exactly as He would have them written.

Consider also this pertinent Scripture:

Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into. (1 Peter 1:10-12)

The prophets of the Old Testament who recorded the Gospel long before the events of Calvary took place did not know the specifics of everything that lied ahead. The role of the Holy Spirit was to first use the prophets to record God's Word despite their lack of understanding of it, and then to use the same Word of God in the apostles to preach to both to the original audience of the epistle, and to us today.

Infallibility and Inerrancy

Some people use these words interchangeably, but there seems to be a slight difference between the terms at which we will look.

The word infallible is used once in the English Bible, and the *hapax legomenon tekmerion* is used in Acts 1:3, referring to 'infallible proofs': "*To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.*" The little I have read on this word does not seem to give any more insight on the English translation. Here, after Christ's Passion He was seen alive, with His pierced hands, eating food, and speaking with His followers. About 500 people saw Him alive after His crucifixion. These were infallible proofs; nobody can argue with them.

Likewise, when we are talking about the Scriptures, they are reliable and sure. The things taught within the Scriptures are factually correct, and are authoritative because of their divine source. They effectively communicate truths from God.

Inerrancy goes a little bit further in saying that there are no errors in the Scriptures and it does not contradict itself. We may see some minor issues such as the following:

Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. And his mother's name was Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem. (2 Kings 24:8)

Jehoiachin was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem: and he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD. (2 Chronicles 36:9)

So what is Jehoiachin's age when he becomes king? This goes beyond the scope of this essay, as this is an issue of textual criticism. It could be that this was a copyist error, and the original autograph would have the correct answer. Some propose there is something else at hand, such as Jehoiachin co-reigning with his father for a portion of the time.

Whatever the solution, these issues do not affect any real doctrine. We would easily say that inerrancy exists in the original manuscripts. Whatever the case, with careful study with textual variants, we can construct the original words and meaning, no matter how insignificant it may seem.

Other Scriptures About God's Word

Consider the following scriptures:

Proverbs 30:5-6: *"Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar."* All of God's Word is pure, so we conclude that it is both inerrant and infallible. The Word is pure because He is pure.

Psalm 12:6-7: *"The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever."* God promises to preserve His Word!

Matthew 4:4: *"But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."* We need the entire Word of God to live the life God wants us to live.

Matthew 5:18: *"For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."* We have every single word... even every piece of a word... of God's Word.

Psalm 119:160: *"Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever."* God's Word is eternal, from everlasting, to everlasting.

Romans 10:17: *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."* God's Word stimulates faith; in other words, it saves us.

Hebrews 4:12: *"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."* God's Word is alive.

Conclusion

If God's Word is not from God, and not inspired, inerrant, or infallible, then we are somehow left guessing about God, and cannot truly know or trust God. Since Satan said "Yea, hath God said" in the Garden to Eve, people have tried to undermine or corrupt

God's Word. However, we can see that God has left us His complete Word, and it is still available in completion today.

Chapter 4: The Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms

Defining Canon

Who decided what books go into the Bible? If we answer mere men, then we have a human, fallible book. If we believe that the Bible is from God, then ultimately He chose what books were included, namely, the books He wrote versus the books that people wrote. ***People did not choose what books to include in the Bible, but rather they recognized certain books as inspired.*** There was not always agreement what writings were considered canonical. It is not what is ancient or revered by men, but rather what speaks with God's authority.

The word canon comes from the Greek word *kanon*, meaning a rule or a principle. The canon of Scripture is the standard for our salvation and our daily living. The word itself is used in the Bible in 2 Corinthians 10:13, 15-16; Galatians 6:16; and Philippians 3:16. Let us look at two of these.

In 2 Corinthians 10:13, we see that Paul and Titus were not comparing themselves with other people or with human standards (2 Corinthians 10:7), but rather *“according to the measure of the rule (kanon) which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you.”* The **standard** of their ministry was not based on the approval of men, but by the power of God.

In Galatians 6:15-16, we read, *“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule (kanon), peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.”* The **standard** for salvation and the Christian life is not circumcision or other works of the Law, but rather being born again as a new creature.

The Bible, likewise, is **the standard** for all teaching concerning spirituality. We are reminded of our verse on inspiration: *“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.”* (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

In this chapter, we will examine how the Old Testament canon was developed, and in the next chapter we will look at the New Testament.

The Mosaic Law

The Old Testament canon is divided into three parts: the Law (*torah*), the Prophets (*neviim*), and the Writings (*kethuvim*), sometimes abbreviated with the acronym, *tanak*. Let us first take a look at the first part, the Law.

The Law is also referred to as the Pentateuch, which consists of the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Samaritans and Jews agreed to the Law's authority by the second century B.C. The Jewish sects of the Pharisees and the Sadducees also agree to its authority. Other parts of the Old Testament also confirm the canonicity of the Law:

And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel. And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month. And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law. And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose; and beside him stood Mattithiah, and Shema, and Anaiah, and Urijah, and Hilkiah, and Maaseiah, on his right hand; and on his left hand, Pedaiah, and Mishael, and Malchiah, and Hashum, and Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam. And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up: And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground. Also Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, caused the people to understand the law: and the people stood in their place. So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. And Nehemiah, which is the Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto the LORD your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law. (Nehemiah 8:1-9)

Let us observe some of what we see here:

1. **All the people gathered to hear the Word together.** The reading of the Law was important enough for everyone to gather together to listen (Nehemiah 8:1).
2. **Both reading and understanding was important.** The hearing of the Law was not sufficient without understanding, so Ezra made sure people understood what was being said (Nehemiah 8:2, 8).
3. **The reading was public.** Ezra read the law, not in a private building, but openly in the streets and on an elevated pulpit made especially for the occasion (Nehemiah 8:3-5).

4. **The people all respected the Law.** When Ezra opened the book, the entire congregation of people stood up (Nehemiah 8:5).
5. **The Law elicited a response from the people.** The Law has severe repercussions for those who reject it and sin, and the people wept at these pronouncements (Nehemiah 8:9).

Another passage from the 2 Kings shows us some other things:

And Hilkiyah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiyah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the king word again, and said, Thy servants have gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of them that do the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD. And Shaphan the scribe shewed the king, saying, Hilkiyah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes. (2 Kings 22:8-11)

King Josiah had a father and a grandfather who had rejected the LORD and His Law by serving false gods and murdering innocent people (2 Kings 21:3, 16). We see that nobody even knew much about the Law, having been hidden in the temple for generations. Notice Hilkiyah did not even mention what the book was that they had found; he read the book to the king, and the king rent his clothes in mourning. ***Josiah recognized the Law's divine authority, and immediately sought out a prophet to see if the LORD would appease His wrath against the nation.***

Note that 2 Kings 22:8-11 and Nehemiah 8:1-9 show that both the Prophets and the Writings establish the authority of the Law.

Many other references to the Law in other parts of the Old Testament show that it was accepted as canonical:

1. **Moses was an ancient prophet.** Moses is mentioned 113 times in the Prophets and Writings, and many times as the human author of the Law.
2. **The world was created by God.** The recording of God creating the world was in the very first verses of the Pentateuch. *"Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein"* (Isaiah 42:5).

3. **Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were the patriarchs of Israel.** Israel's foundation is found in these patriarchs, in which their lives were detailed in the Law (Genesis). *"And the LORD was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and had respect unto them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, neither cast he them from his presence as yet"* (2 Kings 13:23).
4. **The Exodus from Egypt was the key event in Israelite history.** Many references occur describing God's deliverance of His people from Egypt. *"And by a prophet the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved."* (Hosea 12:13).
5. **The commands of the Law were expected to be followed.** Not following the Law had grave consequences throughout the history of Israel. *"Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel"* (Isaiah 5:24)

The Order of the Old Testament Books

The Prophets, or *Neviim*, were originally ordered in this fashion: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve minor prophets.

The Writings, or *Kethuvim*, was ordered this way: Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ruth (with Judges), Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations (with Jeremiah), Esther, Daniel, Ezra/Nehemiah, and the Chronicles. These primarily were wisdom books and later writings, with the Chronicles serving as a summary.

The Old Testament Canon in History

Throughout history, we can see that the canonicity of the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings was established early on. Let us look at some examples.

Daniel 9:2: *"In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem."* Even in Daniel's day, he had the idea that the writings of other prophets were authoritative, referencing Jeremiah's seventy years prophecy (Jeremiah 25:11-12; 29:10).

2 Maccabees 2:13-14: "The same things also were reported in the writings and commentaries of Neemias; and how he founding a library gathered together the acts of the kings, and the prophets, and of David, and the epistles of the kings concerning the

holy gifts. In like manner also Judas gathered together all those things that were lost by reason of the war we had, and they remain with us." In the Apocrypha, we see that the writings of Nehemiah and other writings had canonical authority.

Prologue to Sirach: "My grandfather Jesus, when he had much given himself to the reading of the law, and the prophets, and other books of our fathers, and had gotten therein good judgment, was drawn on also himself to write something pertaining to learning and wisdom." The Law and the Prophets, as well as other books, were esteemed by the writers of the Apocrypha.

1 Maccabees 9:27: "So was there a great affliction in Israel, the like whereof was not since the time that a prophet was not seen among them." During the intertestamental period, when the Apocrypha was written, they recognized that there was not any prophet of the LORD in their days.

Number of Old Testament Books

Contra Apion 1. 8: "For we have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from and contradicting one another, [as the Greeks have,] but only twenty-two books, (8) which contain the records of all the past times; which are justly believed to be divine; and of them five belong to Moses, which contain his laws and the traditions of the origin of mankind till his death. This interval of time was little short of three thousand years; but as to the time from the death of Moses till the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, who reigned after Xerxes, the prophets, who were after Moses, wrote down what was done in their times in thirteen books. The remaining four books contain hymns to God, and precepts for the conduct of human life. It is true, our history hath been written since Artaxerxes very particularly, but hath not been esteemed of the like authority with the former by our forefathers, because there hath not been an exact succession of prophets since that time; and how firmly we have given credit to these books of our own nation is evident by what we do; for during so many ages as have already passed, no one has been so bold as either to add any thing to them, to take any thing from them, or to make any change in them; but it is become natural to all Jews immediately, and from their very birth, to esteem these books to contain Divine doctrines, and to persist in them, and, if occasion be willingly to die for them." (See source: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/apion-1.htm>) The Historian Josephus gives us this view of the Old Testament canon, where a certain 22 books were esteemed greater than other writings and were considered divine.

The number of books is not always clear, because sometimes books we think of as distinct are really one book. In many cases, the number of books in the Old Testament is 22 if Ruth and Lamentations were not distinct books, and 24 books otherwise.

The Old Testament as seen in the New Testament

Only inspired texts with a few rare exceptions are quoted as sources of authority.

Matthew 23:35: *“That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.”* Here, we see Jesus referring to personages of the Law and the Prophets.

Matthew 7:12: *“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.”* Jesus makes reference to the Law and the Prophets as authoritative.

Luke 24:44: *“And he said unto them, 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, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.”* Jesus mentioned the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings as authoritative.

Throughout the New Testament, most of the books of the Old Testament were quoted, and are done so because of their authority. One does not see quotations from the Apocrypha or other ancient primary sources (except for maybe one or two cases, cf. Jude 1:9, 14-15). By the time Jesus came to earth, it was well established that the books contained in the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings were the authoritative books that God had given His people.

After the New Testament writings of the first century A.D., Melito, the Bishop of Sardis in the second century A.D. lists the Old Testament canon, leaving off Esther and Nehemiah.

Old Testament Manuscripts

Let us now look at the Old Testament manuscripts. As canonicity discussed the authority of the Scriptures, we now turn to the physical writings of the Scriptures, including the various codices that have been discovered throughout history. We will consider the Old Testament here, and the New Testament in the next chapter.

The original language of the Old Testament manuscripts was Hebrew, with portions of Daniel and Ezra written in Aramaic. The oldest manuscripts discovered of the Hebrew Old Testament before 1947 is dated around A.D. 895. The Aleppo Codex, which contains the entire Old Testament, dates from the early tenth century. Another such codex, Codex Leningradensis, dates around A.D. 1008.

These medieval Old Testament manuscripts were maintained by scholars known as the Masoretes, and the medieval Old Testament is known as the Masoretic text. These

scholars added accents and phonetic vowel points to emphasize the importance of proper public reading of the text. They were also known for their meticulous copying techniques, copying and double-checking every letter and word they copied. A deviation in the number of letters or the number of words, or any other failure in their stringent tests would result in the destruction of the document.

Because of the late date of these manuscripts, scholars often relied on non-Hebrew translations of the Old Testament, such as the Septuagint. In 1947, however, the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in the caves of Qumran, which included every Old Testament book except Esther. Additional apocryphal books and intertestamental histories were also discovered. These Dead Sea Scrolls date from the third to the first centuries B.C.

Upon examinations of these texts, what is truly remarkable is that there are rather few discrepancies between the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Masoretic Text, which are dated about 1,000 years apart. ***It is amazing that across so many centuries that we have any Old Testament at all, yet we see how God has preserved His Word in a miraculous way.*** Any discrepancies found between the two sets of manuscripts do not affect any Biblical doctrines.

Critical scholars have often regarded Biblical books as composites pasted together by an editor. For example, Isaiah was often regarded as being written by at least two different people, with Isaiah 40 starting a different author's word (i.e., Deutero-Isaiah). The Dead Sea Scrolls show, however, that there is no disconnect between Isaiah 39 and 40. Other theories resulting from source criticism, such as with the Pentateuch, also seem far-fetched because of this great discovery.

The Septuagint (often abbreviated LXX) is a Greek translation of the Old Testament. Like the synagogues of the first century A.D. paved way to the evangelization of the world by introducing non-Jewish people to the God of the Bible, the Septuagint was a forerunner to the Gospel. As Greek was the lingua franca at the time of Christ, non-Jewish people across the world could read and understand the Bible for themselves. The Septuagint translation dates from about the third century B.C.

Chapter 5: Ordained to Be a Witness With Us of His Resurrection

When the 120 were praying together in the ten days following Jesus' ascension, they were moved to choose another apostle to replace Judas. The man that would replace the notorious traitor had to have certain criteria:

Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection. (Acts 1:21-22)

A "witness" for Jesus Christ was considered authoritative if he had seen the risen Jesus. Likewise, the New Testament canon was much like this chosen twelfth apostle: it had to speak with the authority of God, testifying of the risen Jesus. The human authors were all witnesses of the risen Jesus Christ, or one of their close associates who collaborated closely with such witnesses.

In the years following the deaths of these witnesses, many sources have come about to speak of the authority the New Testament canon. Let us look at some of these.

Sources Recognizing New Testament Books as Authoritative

1. **Clement of Rome** (late first century A.D., possibly the same Clement of Philippians 4:3) used materials from the gospels of Matthew and Luke, and had some Pauline influence. Together with Polycarp and Ignatius, most New Testament books are accounted for. Clement died around A.D. 99, so his works were written very early on in Christian history.
2. **Ignatius**, who wrote several letters of his own, made small references to several New Testament books. His letters would not have been later than A.D. 117, when he was martyred.
3. **The Epistle of Barnabas 4:14**, a second century source. The author quotes Matthew 22:14, and refers to it as scripture:

Moreover understand this also, my brothers. When ye see that after so many signs and wonders wrought in Israel, even then they were abandoned, let us give heed, lest haply we be found, as the scripture saith, many are called but few are chosen. (see source: <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/barnabas-lightfoot.html>)

4. **Polycarp's epistle to the Philippians**, in 12:1, he quotes Ephesians 4:26, calling it scripture:

For I am persuaded that ye are well trained in the sacred writings, and nothing is hidden from you. But to myself this is not granted. Only, as it is said in these scriptures, Be ye angry and sin not, and Let not the sun set on your wrath. Blessed is he that remembereth this; and I trust that this is in you.

In addition, his epistle quotes or references the New Testament gospels and epistles dozens of times. This is pretty impressive, considering this letter was written between A.D. 110 and 140; the copies of the New Testament books were already being circulated across the world even this close to the apostolic age.

5. **Papias bishop of Hierapolis** (second century A.D.) referred to the gospels of Matthew and Mark and accepted them as authoritative.
6. **Valentinius' work *Gospel of Truth*** (second century A.D.) also recognized New Testament writings as authoritative, with quotes from the Gospels, Acts, and Pauline epistles.
7. **Marcion's *Antitheses*** (second century A.D., preserved in Tertullian's *Adversus Marcionem*) accepted most of the Gospel of Luke and 10 Pauline epistles as authoritative.
8. **Justin Martyr** quotes the Gospels and refers to Revelation in his *First Apology* and *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew* (see source: http://www.ntcanon.org/Justin_Martyr.shtml):
 - a. Matthew 2:1 in Dialogue 106:4
 - b. Luke 22:42, 44 in Dialogue 103:8
 - c. John 3:3 in I Apology
 - d. Dialogue 81:4 refers to Revelation 20:4, 11-15
9. **Irenaeus** quotes from or refers to most of the New Testament books.
 - a. He insisted that there were only four gospels in *Adversus Haereses* 3.11.8 (A.D. 180, see source: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.ix.iv.xii.html>). He quoted from all four in this same reference:

It is not possible that the Gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are. For, since there are four zones of the world in which we live, and four principal winds, while the Church is scattered throughout all the world, and the "pillar and ground" of the Church is the Gospel and the spirit of life; it is fitting that she should have four pillars, breathing out immortality on every side, and vivifying men afresh. From which fact, it is

evident that the Word, the Artificer of all, He that sitteth upon the cherubim, and contains all things, He who was manifested to men, has given us the Gospel under four aspects, but bound together by one Spirit. As also David says, when entreating His manifestation, "Thou that sittest between the cherubim, shine forth." For the cherubim, too, were four-faced, and their faces were images of the dispensation of the Son of God. For, [as the Scripture] says, "The first living creature was like a lion," symbolizing His effectual working, His leadership, and royal power; the second [living creature] was like a calf, signifying [His] sacrificial and sacerdotal order; but "the third had, as it were, the face as of a man,"—an evident description of His advent as a human being; "the fourth was like a flying eagle," pointing out the gift of the Spirit hovering with His wings over the Church. And therefore the Gospels are in accord with these things, among which Christ Jesus is seated. For that according to John relates His original, effectual, and glorious generation from the Father, thus declaring, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Also, "all things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made." For this reason, too, is that Gospel full of all confidence, for such is His person. But that according to Luke, taking up [His] priestly character, commenced with Zacharias the priest offering sacrifice to God. For now was made ready the fatted calf, about to be immolated for the finding again of the younger son. Matthew, again, relates His generation as a man, saying, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham;" and also, "The birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise." This, then, is the Gospel of His humanity; for which reason it is, too, that [the character of] a humble and meek man is kept up through the whole Gospel. Mark, on the other hand, commences with [a reference to] the prophetic spirit coming down from on high to men, saying, "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as it is written in Esaias the prophet,"—pointing to the winged aspect of the Gospel; and on this account he made a compendious and cursory narrative, for such is the prophetic character.

- b. He quoted from Acts and the Pauline epistles (except Philemon) numerous times.
- c. He quoted or made allusions to most of the rest of the New Testament
- d. However, he also believed other texts to be authoritative, such as the Shepherd of Hermas and I Clement

10. The Diatessaron of Tatian is a four gospel harmony from the latter half of the second century.

11. **The Muratorian Canon** (ca. A.D. 170) names most of the New Testament books as canonical (see <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/muratorian2.html>).
12. **Origen** (early third century A.D.) considered most of the New Testament as inspired. He also included some others which were not canonical.
13. **Eusebius' Church History** (early fourth century A.D.) stated that the gospels, Acts, the Pauline epistles, 1 Peter, 1 John, and Revelation were universally agreed upon as canonical, James, 2 Peter, 2 John, 3 John, and Jude were mostly agreed upon, and that most rejected the Acts of Paul, Didache, and the Shepherd of Hermas, which are not in the New Testament today.
14. **Athanasius of Alexandria's Festal Letter** has the complete listing of the New Testament canon we use today.

Internal Evidence of New Testament Canonicity

The New Testament itself demonstrates its authority. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would come and guide His disciples into all truth. Much of that involved bringing to mind the words of the Lord Himself so that future generations would have access to the Gospel. Consider these scriptures:

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever" (John 14:16).

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of 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 shew you things to come" (John 16:13)

The commandment to publicly read the epistles shows that Paul knew the letters were authoritative: *"I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren."* (1 Thessalonians 5:27)

The message that the apostles had was the Word of God: *"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe"* (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

Paul wrote the commandments of the Lord: *"If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord"* (1 Corinthians 14:37).

Finally, even Peter in his day equated the Pauline epistles to the Scriptures:

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

Conclusion on New Testament Canonicity

With these witnesses in mind, we can see that many of these books were considered authoritative even in the apostles' generation. Also, contrary to critical scholars who want to place the New Testament books with late dates long after the death of the apostles, we can see that the books were written very early on. Within the first three hundred years since the ascension of Jesus Christ, numerous primary and secondary sources attest to the New Testament's authority. Consider this as we discuss the manuscripts of New Testament.

New Testament Manuscripts

Let us look at some important discoveries of ancient New Testament manuscripts.

1. **Manuscript P52** was the oldest manuscript discovery of the New Testament, which dates to about A.D. 110 to 125. This contains portions of the Gospel of John (John 18:31-34, 37-38).
2. **The Oxyrhynchus papyri**, dating from the first to the sixth centuries. These papyri contain 35 manuscripts containing portions of the New Testament.
3. **Chester Beatty papyri** have a large portion of the New Testament in manuscripts dating from the first to the third century A.D.
4. **Bodmer papyri** have portions of the New Testament in manuscripts dating in the second and third centuries
5. **Codex Sinaiticus** contains the entire New Testament (A.D. 350). Despite its origin from a corrupted family of the Greek manuscripts, it shows that a whole New Testament was compiled and available by this time.
6. **Codex Vaticanus** contains the entire New Testament up to Hebrews 9:15. It also shows many of the same corruptions as Codex Sinaiticus.
7. **Codex Alexandrinus** has almost the entire New Testament, and dates in the fifth century.

8. **Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus** from the fifth century was a document where the original text was overwritten by sermons. The original text was recovered.
9. **Codex Bezae** from the fifth century contains the gospels and Acts, which has a very different text from the texts mentioned previously.
10. **Codex Washingtonianus** has all four gospels and dates from the fifth century.

Numbers of Manuscripts

As far as the number of Greek manuscripts of the New Testament are concerned, there are about 5,600. Compare this with the next largest number of manuscripts of an ancient text, Homer's *The Iliad*, which is about 650 manuscripts.

The Iliad was written by Homer in about 800 B.C. for an event (the Trojan War) that happened in 1184 B.C., and its earliest manuscript is from the third century B.C. Compare this with the New Testament, where the events of the resurrection were recorded by eye witnesses, with the earliest manuscripts that were not too far removed from these eye witnesses. For an ancient text, these are pretty good statistics!

Two Manuscript Families

If you remember before, we mentioned that Codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus had corruptions in them. These corruptions were introduced early on, some of them because of possible Gnostic influence from Alexandria.

For centuries, the majority of the known Greek manuscripts we had did not have the changes of Sinaiticus and Vaticanus. Fourteen hundred years after these two codices were written, they were discovered, and immediately were considered superior because they were "older" and "more reliable." There are a few problems with this.

First, if God promised to preserve His Word (Psalm 12:6-7), why were the true, pure Words of God buried somewhere for centuries? Would God allow His people have corrupted Bibles for centuries? Did we really have 1,400 years of the impure Word?

Second, why do we conclude that the vast majority of texts have it wrong and a few manuscripts have it right? There is a reason why Sinaiticus and Vaticanus are "older" than most of the manuscripts. Let me give you an example.

When I worked in auto insurance claims some time ago, I would often get telephone calls from insureds lamenting that their brand new car, rather than the old clunker, was involved in the accident. "Of course the new one got hit. It couldn't have been the old one!" There is a reason for that. Nobody wants to drive the old clunker! You tend to want

to drive the new, beautiful, more reliable car! The car that is used the most is going to wear out the fastest, and is more likely to be in a wreck, stolen, flooded, etc.

It is the same with New Testament manuscripts. The ones that were used the most were the ones that wore out the fastest! Codex Vaticanus was sitting in the Vatican for centuries for good reason... no one wants to read the fake Bible!

So when you want to get to the original text of the Bible, if you have hundreds of manuscripts that say one thing, and one or two that say another, you know that the real text is in the majority, not in the few.

The sad news is that virtually all modern translations of the Bible depend on the few corrupted manuscripts, and not in the many. In the English language, if you go to most modern Bible translations, you will notice the following verses are entirely missing: Matthew 17:21; 18:11; 23:14; Mark 7:16; 9:44; 9:46; 11:26; 15:28; Luke 17:36; John 5:4; Acts 8:37; 15:34; 24:7; 28:29; Romans 16:24. Also, 1 John 5:7 is truncated to only a few words. Mark 16:9-20 and John 7:53-8:11 are entirely missing from these manuscripts, so these passages are usually undermined with marginal notes in modern translations. Luke 2:33 refers to Joseph as Jesus' father in these modern translations. In 1 Timothy 3:16, the word "God" is changed to "he" to undermine the deity of Christ. There are also countless little changes throughout the text which should cause concern, especially if we believe Proverbs 30:5-6: *"Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar."*

Conclusion

From this evidence, we see from first, second, and third century A.D. sources that the New Testament books were widely known and very early in church history. We see how God has preserved His Word, seen in the number of surviving manuscripts compared with other ancient texts. The preservation of God's Word is not in theory only, but also in archaeological evidence.

Chapter 6: Then Opened He Their Understanding

Luke 24:45 reads, *“Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.”* The Lord Jesus Christ gives us the ability to ultimately open the Scriptures. Before we proceed with any discussion on Bible interpretation, we need to remember this very simple fact. Trusting God that He can teach us all things is imperative before we decide to read from the Holy Scriptures.

Nonetheless, there are very well-meaning people who fall into certain pitfalls. Let us explore some basics of Bible interpretation.

Context, Context, Context

Some say that the three most important rules of Bible interpretation are context, context, and context. Let us look at some passages.

Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. (Matthew 18:15-20)

The final verse here is Matthew 18:20: *“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”* This verse is commonly associated with prayer. If two of three people get together and pray, God will hear them. However, when you read the larger passage, you can clearly see this has to do with church discipline. If somebody in church is in denial about their sin, then with you, along with two or three witnesses, the Lord Himself is there, pronouncing judgment on the non-repentant sinner.

Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye. (Matthew 7:1-5)

This is a famous passage often quoted by non-Christians or carnal Christians. The only problem is they only quote the first two words: *“Judge not.”* The motivation of such people is to justify their own wicked behavior, and obligate God and other people to tolerate it. But if you read past those first two words, we see that Jesus is speaking to people who are judging other people, but secretly do the same thing. Jesus then tells them to *“cast out the beam out of thine own eye,”* meaning clean up your own sin before you try to help someone out of the same sin. You can tell the idea is, if you finally have victory over a sin in your life, you will be able to help someone else out of it too. Your attitude will then be of gentleness and of a passion to help someone rather than being self-righteous and critical.

And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God. (Mark 10:17-18)

In this case, some religious cults use this scripture to show that Jesus was not really God the Son. Many Christians cannot figure this scripture out either, because they stop at this verse. Let us keep reading:

Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother. And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions. (Mark 10:19-22)

Jesus was trying to show this man his sinfulness and how not “good” he was. Instead, the man thought he had kept all of those commandments! So Jesus told him that everything that gave his life meaning, his wealth and his status in society, needed to be abandoned. Now the man could not justify himself; so he left Jesus there. Instead, this rich man should have seen that he was not good, and that he needed the good Savior, the good Shepherd, to save him from his sins.

Is Jesus good? He must be good, because He could not be the Savior without being good. Therefore, if and only if God is good, and Jesus is good, then Jesus must be God also. Jesus asked this question, just as God does throughout the Bible, to elicit a response from the man (cf. Genesis 3:9, 11, 13). If Jesus is not God, He is not good. If Jesus is the perfect sacrifice for our sins, He is good, and must be God.

[Narrator Versus Quotations of Others](#)

We can possibly quote the Bible, and possibly quote something that is not true. Now wait a second, that should you wake you up! Did I really just say that? Now give me a second, and it will make sense in a moment.

Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. (Matthew 4:8-9)

Is this true? If Jesus bowed before Satan, would Jesus receive the kingdoms of the world? No! Satan was lying. So what do we conclude? ***The Bible accurately quotes other people, but the quote itself may not necessarily be true.***

Another example would be quoting Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar in the book of Job. These men were not accurately speaking about God, so we cannot really quote these men and say, "Thus saith the Lord." So we must conclude another thing: ***If God or the narrator in a passage says something in the Bible, it is always true. Otherwise, if someone else says something, it may or may not be true.*** Let us see another example:

And yet indeed she is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife. (Genesis 20:12)

Abraham said this to Abimelech king of Gerar when trying to recover from his lie. Sarah was his wife, but was she also his half-sister? We do not know. Abraham could have lied to save face. One last important thing we must conclude is the following: ***Just because the Bible records an event, it does not mean that the Bible condones the event.***

Real Secondary Sources

Let us return to Mark 10 for a moment:

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. (Mark 10:25)

I have a problem when we quote something as fact when we have no idea if it is really true. It has spread around many pulpits and theological books that the "eye of a needle" is some special small gate at Jerusalem, and that it was difficult, but not impossible for a camel to get through it. There is no internal evidence or any secondary source that says this. On the contrary, we read two verses later concerning who can be saved and enter God's kingdom: ***"With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible"*** (Mark 10:27). This attempt to explain away the "eye of a needle" actually is a false gospel. Jesus plainly told us here that it is ***impossible*** for us to save ourselves, but God ***can*** save us.

In most (if not all) cases, the needed cultural information for us to understand the Bible is given to us. For example, in John 4:9, there is a parenthetical statement that Jews and Samaritans had animosity one with the other. Again, in Acts 23:7-8, we see the differences between the beliefs of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. If this “eye of a needle” was something different than what it plainly means, God would have included such a parenthetical.

Allegory

Sometimes, I have heard Bible teachers emphatically say that something in the Bible represents something else, often in the form of forced typology that is not warranted. Take for example, this verse:

And he went and found his carcass cast in the way, and the ass and the lion standing by the carcass: the lion had not eaten the carcass, nor torn the ass. (1 Kings 13:28)

If you recall, a man of God who disobeyed God was judged by being killed by a lion, and this is what happened to him. I have heard it said that the lion represents Christ, the ass represents something else, and so forth. This is not warranted. It simply says here that the lion did not devour the carcass or harm the ass. It was simply a demonstration that this was ordained by God to punish the sin of the prophet.

Another one I had heard was concerning Genesis 27, where Jacob deceived his ailing father into thinking he was Esau. Jacob allegedly represented Christ, and Isaac as God the father, and the goat skins Jacob wore represented a sacrifice. This kind of forcing is not warranted, especially since Jesus definitely never deceived God the Father. It is an allegorical interpretation that dangerously sets aside the real meaning of the text for some contrived application.

Things Not Found in the Bible

Another danger in Bible interpretation is thinking something is in the Bible, and it is not! Here are some examples:

1. **Repent of your sins.** The phrase is never found in the Bible, though there are similar phrases (Acts 8:22). People much more often than not assume that the word “repent” always means “repent of sins.” The difficulty with this is that God repents more than anybody else in the Bible, with the word being used more than 30 times in regard to Him.
2. **Speaking in tongues.** Also not in the Bible, but “speaking with tongues” is (1 Corinthians 14:6). Speaking in another tongue simply means speaking or

preaching in another language, not the entire doctrine and practice that was built up over the past few decades.

3. **School of the prophets.** Simply not in there.
4. **Ask Jesus into your heart.** Does not exist in the Bible. It is a false gospel invitation in western culture that does not make sense.
5. **The Lord works in mysterious ways.** This is rather a paraphrase of a verse from a hymn.
6. **God helps those who helps themselves.** From Benjamin Franklin, or an English politician, but whoever it was, it is not in the Bible.

Conclusion

The way we see the Bible denigrated in today's society, one would think the Bible is a product of Bronze Age myths, written centuries after the events it claims to record. No wonder why so many people think the Bible is irrelevant and fallible! I hope this short book gave you a snapshot into the subject of Bibliology, and that you know that we can indeed trust our Bible today.

There are many other subjects that could be discussed about the Bible. Having only scratched the surface on this wonderful subject, I hope you are inspired to learn more about the Bible, and more importantly, appreciate how God has preserved His Word throughout the millennia.

Of utmost importance is the need to realize that, apart from God's grace, we are His enemies, destined to face His wrath in the future. The message of the Bible is that the Creator God Himself sent His Son Jesus Christ, perfect and without sin, to die on the cross for us. He paid our sin debt, a debt that we could never repay. Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to heaven. The Bible predicted all of these events ahead of time, so we can also be assured that He will return to the earth, as He has said. The Bible's message is indeed relevant today: *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved"* (Acts 16:31).