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**Cameroon Biblical Seminary
Class Transcripts**

By

Earl Cooper, Ph. D.

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Cameroon Biblical Seminary
Class Transcripts
January 2014



ὁ λόγος ἐν τῷ λαῷ ὁ λαὸς ἐν τῷ λόγῳ

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PREFACE

It has been my responsibility since 2003 to be involved in International Theological Education with the Canadian mission Across Borders for World Evangelism. In seeking to evaluate my teaching performance I audio recorded all my first classes. For reasons I fail to remember, I continued recording every class that I taught over the following 15 years.

Due to health reasons I was unable to return to overseas teaching from July 2018 to the present (October 2019). Anxious to carry on some measure of ministry during this time of convalescence, Kathi and I determined to develop a book for each course I taught, by combining the student manuals with transcripts of the classes. These we intend to supply for the school libraries where I got.

This book represents our first attempt. The format we decided upon was simple. Each class transcript is clearly marked. Within each class transcript the interactions between myself and students are identified in italics. The lecture content for each class is in regular text with the major student manual outline interspersed. Bible text are from the NKJV. The Bible texts are italicized with regular text Bible references.

Please note: In the transposition of the recorded classes, the English portions of the recordings were used as the source. As a result, some of the French language recorded portions by the translator were omitted. These included clarifications and excellent explanations which were omitted, along with correction of the occasional verse number involving the differences between the English and French Bible verse numbering. If in the reading of Bible texts the reference is wrong for French language Bibles, a perusal of the verse context should enable finding the proper verse reference in question.

Bibliology is the foundation and starting point for all Bible doctrine. Bibliology defines the uniqueness of the Scriptures as the very Word of God distinct from any other book. Bibliology defines the authority of the Bible God's Word as final for life and practice. Bibliology determines the Scriptures to be God's Word by its internal references and by the external

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evidence supporting the truth that the Bible is the final authority, the power of God to change lives, accurate in all scientific, geographical and historical references.

It is my prayer that each person reading this book will read, memorize, study, and live by the Scriptures, being solely motivated by the awesome grandeur and insurmountable wonder of this reality: God has spoken!

CLASS 1

Prof. Question: *I Begin with a question; Who is Jesus Christ?*

Student Answer: *God the Son, the Saviour, God, the Incarnate Word, 2nd person of the trinity,*

Prof. Question: *Now define the trinity*

Student Answers: *One God existing in three persons, The Father, The Son and the Holy Spirit*

Prof. Question: *Now define Holy Spirit*

Student Answers: *He is the 3rd person of the trinity*

Prof. Question: *How do you know this?*

Student Answers: *The Bible reveals this.*

INTRODUCTION TO BIBLIOLOGY

I THE BIBLE - THE WORD OF GOD

I start the class this way to help us understand that Bibliology is the foundation of all theology. One of the fundamental truths that we hold is that the Bible is the Word of God, and because it is the Word of God, it is the authority for all theology. This distinguishes evangelical, fundamental Christianity.

Bibliology is the doctrine of what the Bible says about Scriptures. Normally, this is the first class you would take in theology. Because it is the Word of God that is the authority for all the theology we know about God, all the truth we know about God.

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Prof. Question: *Is the Bible authoritative only when it speaks about God? no. where else is it authority?*

Student Answers: *No*

Prof. Question: *Where else is it authority?*

Student Answers:

1- It has authority everywhere.

2- When it speaks of angels, it does not have the same authority as when speaking of the world and man.

Prof. Question: *Do you have a reason for this position?*

Student Answers:

Often times it is the angels themselves that bring the message, so how can it have authority over them.

Prof. Question: *Does anyone else agree with this.*

Student Answers: *Because the Word of God comes directly from God, even the messages from Angels, it has authority over all that God made, heaven and earth.*

My challenge to you is this: In the Scriptures did the angels ever bring a message other than exactly what God told them to bring? NO, that's why the term angel means messenger. We have especially in Africa the experience of demons that bring falsehood. I am not saying that demons are only in Africa. I'm saying that your historical background and your culture make you more sensitive to demonic influences. Satan does not have to use his host of demons to destroy Americans, we do this ourselves. We have materialism that destroys our values and turns us away from God. I have said before that every age of the church has its own theological issues.

If you go back to the early church you see the issue was "who is Jesus Christ?" There were those who saw Him who struggled with Him being a person, a human being. And there were those who struggled with Jesus being God. that's why Paul warned the churches to hold to the truth and not follow another Jesus. So the church is called to be the pillar and sup-

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port of the truth. And therefore, the church is always re-defining terminology to hold to the truth.

Prof. Question: *Does truth change?*

Student Answers: *NO*

Good, you understand this. Truth is absolute; it never changes, just as God does not change. The problem is that language changes, understanding weakens, so the church always has to restate Christ in the culture we are dealing with. Within the last 100 years, the issue has been the ministry and personality of the Holy Spirit. The confusion that exists brings division within Christianity. So we have different views regarding the gifts and different views regarding charismatic expression. For the most part the true church has made clear definitions and restated the doctrine of the ministry of the Spirit of God. What we are facing now in a transition period goes back to the foundation, which is the Scriptures. Now the terms that the church has used for many years are being redefined.

If God calls some of you to be professors you will have to deal with this in your own culture. So when we look at the Doctrine of the Scriptures called Bibliology, we will see that our notes are not as extensive as other doctrines. The implications of this are very important. If we weaken on our Bibliology, then every other doctrine has potential to be corrupted. So we want to look at our notes, some are simple statements of truth, our goal is to understand the significance and importance of the doctrine of the Bible.

In American churches the teaching of Bibliology has weakened, so people do not understand this doctrine anymore. Because of this weakening the study of Hermeneutics has also weakened drastically. You see how everything is connected like a chain, Hermeneutics, or the science of interpretation depends on what we believe about *what* we are interpreting. If I believe that every word in the original Bible languages was given by God, it will change my way of interpreting the Bible. But if I believe that

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only the ‘ideas’ in the Bible came from God and man decided how to express this, then my interpretation will be different, and I myself can determine the intent.

So theology is like a chain, only as strong as its weakest link. I encourage you to understand how important this is. I remember as a pastor I said to the elders that I wanted to introduce doctrine in Sunday School. One of the elders said, oh no, it is too boring! Many people think doctrine is boring. But doctrine determines what we believe which determines how we live. So in the area of doctrine of the Bible, you should teach your people repeatedly, what the Bible says about itself, its foundational to all Bible study.

Your notes begin with a poem that expresses the fact that the Word of God never changed. In every age of history there have been attempts to destroy the Bible. Every time this attempt was made, the Word of God became stronger in people’s hearts. So we want to begin by looking at this book. The word ‘Bible’ means ‘book’. For those whose first language is English, we borrowed the term from the French. The French borrowed the term from Latin ‘biblia’ and also from the Greek ‘biblios.’

So really this is called ‘the book’. But in the second century, Christianity, believers called it ‘the book’. If you study the Greek, you know the article with a noun is very significant. I notice that for most in French it is called the Holy Scripture. This is a term that comes from the use from man, not a Bible term.

A. The Two Testaments

When we look at the Bible we see it comes in two testaments. So it has the old testament and the new testament. How many books are in the OT? How many books are in the NT? How many years did it take for us to get the OT? 1400 years for the actual giving of it. How many years did it take for us to get the 27 books of the NT? Less than 100 years. So we see that there was an explosion of revelation by the Holy Spirit.

We find that the word ‘testament’ is really the translation of the Bible word ‘covenant’. This is really the Bible word, the Scripture word for it-

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self is 'covenant'. So the Hebrew and the Greek word have the idea of covenant; this can be defined as a compact made between God and Israel and then between God and all people.

Student Question: In the French language a covenant is between agreeing parties. My question is: If the Bible is a covenant between God and Jews on one side and God and all believers on the other side, did they both agree?

Prof. Answer: I can best answer that by going through the last statement on your page first. When we look at the OT and the NT, the common theme is Jesus Christ. Does everyone understand that statement? In what aspect does the OT refer as a theme to Jesus Christ? I'm not talking about the manifestation of Jesus; I'm talking about the theme of Jesus Christ. From Genesis to Malachi, what was the emphasis on Christ? It was awaiting the promise of the Messiah. Among what particular people did God promise to bring the Messiah? Israel. We see the OT is the contract or the promise between God and Israel. We have seen that a covenant/contract can sometimes involve only God Himself. So the OT is about the promise of the coming Christ. God chose to bring that promise through the people of Israel. Therefore, is it true that salvation in the OT is only for Israel? The answer clearly is 'no,' because Israel was to be a light to the nations. But the focus of Christ is through Israel in the OT. Now we come to the NT. It begins with Christ's coming, He's arrived. The focus now is reaching out to the world through the light of Jesus Christ. Did God continue to use Israel to reach out to the world since the NT? No, now it is the church. Is there distinction between Jew or Greek in the church? No. Is there distinction between slave and free in the church? No. Is there distinction between man and woman? No. So you see the emphasis is now on the arrival of the Messiah. Israel ceases to be the agent with the message; it is now the church.

I sat with a Jewish man and had a good discussion on my way to Cameroon. He disagreed with me regarding the importance of the church, the reality of God's people today. Of course, he was a Jewish man who believed nothing changed.

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I asked: "How is Israel doing sharing this message with the world?" He said, very few people become Jewish who are not born Jewish. Then I said we see the church growing; it is growing greatly in Africa. Doesn't this indicate that God has changed His method? This challenged his thinking. If God is working in Israel today, then He's fallen asleep because Israel is doing nothing to increase in size. But if God changed his method, the evidence would be seen in the world. This is seen in the church growth. So we have the NT which is the contract between God and believers in the NT.

Do you see the difference between the two testaments or covenant-promises. The OT promise of the Messiah focus on Israel. The NT announces "He is come," focusing on the Saviour and King, Jesus Christ. I don't want to confuse you.

Prof. Question: I have one question to ask. Was salvation different in the OT than in the NT?

Student Answers: No. It was always by faith in the provision of God.

Student Question: The Jews were waiting for the Messiah but in truth are they not still waiting?

Prof. Answer: There is a big difference in theological positions of the Jewish people today. Some still hold to a literal translation of the O.T. and are waiting for their Messiah to come. Others, like liberal Christianity, have a liberal aspect to Jewish theology. They would say that Israel as a nation itself is a Messiah. Israel itself will become the superior nation which brings peace to the world. As well, there are Jewish people who are atheists, not believing in the existence of God.

Prof. Question: Has God got a plan for Israel?

Student Answers: Yes

Absolutely, God has a plan for Israel. It ill as a nation believe in Him, at the end of the tribulation period. But until God achieves this by His power, Israel is in need of the gospel just like every nation.

Student Question: Do the Jews take into account what is written in the N.T.?

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Prof. Answer: No, the Jewish man on the airplane said that Jesus was the best Jew ever. Jesus completely obeyed the law, but his disciples were deceptive and changed his message after He died. If you know Jewish people, you need to know how to share the gospel from the old testament.

Prof. Question: Does the OT teach that Messiah is God and man?

Student Answers: Yes, “And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” Isa. 9:6b

Prof. Question: Does the OT teach that the Messiah would die for sin and rise again?

Student Answers: Yes. “Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.” Isa. 53:10.

Now we understand the two testaments and the benefit for the church to share the gospel from the OT when talking to Jewish people. It can be done. I shared the gospel with the man on the airplane from Isaiah 53. I shared how God made provision for salvation in the OT. We see the physical salvation in the Passover, the raising of the viper on the stick. All of these texts point to the ministry of the Messiah.

You can present the whole message of the gospel to an Israeli using the OT because the OT points to Jesus clearly. There is a relationship between the OT and the NT. Augustine defined it this way “the NT is veiled in the OT. The OT is unveiled in the NT.” Do you understand? There is much said about Jesus in the OT. But the idea of a church is not there. The idea of an empowered people around the world is not there. In the OT, we have the term ‘the day of the Lord’. Sometimes it speaks of great tribulation on the earth. Sometimes it speaks of Israel worshipping with the Messiah on the earth. So much of the truth is veiled, is not clear. But in the NT it is made clear through the ministry of the apostles and prophets. What term does Paul use that indicated he was sharing information that was hidden before but now was revealed? The term is “Mystery.” When the NT

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uses the term it does not mean there is something still hidden, it means it was hidden but is now made clear.

Now we see the relationship between the OT and the NT. The Bible is one continuing story. Should we preach from the OT? Of course. But we have to put things in the proper context. We have to preach knowing that certain things are only for Israel. For example, Israel was told not to marry outside their own nation. Should the church insist that we should not marry outside our nation now? No. The purpose of this command given to Israel was to preserve Israel in order to bring forth the Messiah. There is truth applicable to our life today in the OT, but you must be guarded regarding how you use it, even as in the NT.

The Bible, as the church has cared for it, has been divided in the church's own way. You understand that the books that we have in the English Bible are not in chronological order unless specified. The books of the OT have been grouped together according to how the Jewish people divided the OT. All theology is linked together. Foundational to it all is Bibliology. It is good to know there are 39 in the OT and 27 in the NT, but those facts will not help you preach accurately. It is all the Word of God. It is one continuing message. God privileged Israel to bring us the OT 39 books. God privileged the church to bring us the 27 books of the NT. According to 1 Tim. 3:15, God also privileged the church, "*the pillar and ground of the truth,*" to be the caretakers of the whole Bible. We have to fight for Biblical doctrines.

B. The Divisions of the Old Testament

In the OT we have the Jewish people who have grouped together the 39 books. It reflects the way the Hebrew people think. The Hebrew mind does not necessarily think chronologically in time, whereas the Greek mind thinks chronologically. From my understanding of African culture, you think chronologically as well, because your societies are dependent on seasons. So where time and hours may not be important in Africa, seasons are very important. When we look at the order of the books of the Bible, they reflect the culture of the people who cared for the Bible. We have

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first of all, what is called the Pentateuch, or the Law. The Bible called these books, the Law.

It is called the Pentateuch because there are five books of the Law. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. Write the meaning of the word beside the book.

Genesis- Greek means 'beginnings', the Hebrew word means 'in the beginning'.

Exodus- Greek means 'departure', the Hebrew word means 'now these are the names'. It follows the Moses and the patriarchs, it focusses on the patriarchs.

Leviticus- Greek means 'that which pertains to the Levites, which concerns the Levites'. The Hebrew name is 'and He called'. This refers to the fact that God called the Levites to be His priestly people.

Numbers- Greek word means 'arithmetic', it has the idea of numbering the people. Hebrew title is translated 'and He said'. With the wanderings, it was important the people heard God speak.

Deuteronomy- second law, a Greek term, the Hebrew name is 'repetition of the Law, or repetition of the words'.

With the different names that the Greek and Hebrews gave, the names are different. The Greek scholars translated the OT into the Greek Septuagint and gave titles to the books that reflected the content for the most part. But the Jewish or Hebrew titles reflect the significance of the books to the Israelites. For the Greek, Genesis was 'beginning' where everything begins. The Hebrew word has the idea of 'the source of all things,' focusing on God. The Greeks entitled the second book "Exodus" because the content is about Israel's departing. But the Hebrews gave it a title reflecting the relationship between the Hebrews and God, because God brought them out of bondage. We see the same with the other three titles of the Pentateuch as well.

I think it is significant that the Jewish people had names that reflected the relationship God had with them. The Greeks gave the titles that summarize the content of the books. That helps me understand how the Jewish

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people respected and honoured the privilege that God gave them in recording and keeping His word. The five books of the Law the Orthodox Jewish people still hold as very important books. The man that was on the plane told me that salvation is 'keeping the law'. He was even a liberated orthodox Jew because he told me the synagogue was not important, it is the law that was important. It was humorous for me when he asked for wine with his meal because he noticed I refused the wine and he was embarrassed that he accepted it. I said nothing to him.

The next section that Israel put together is called the History Books. There are 12, they are listed in your notes. Why are they called history books? They develop the history of Israel's travels and Israel's growth. And of course from our perspective we see how God worked supernaturally with Israel through these books. Which one of these books never even has the word "God" in it? Esther. It was questioned for a time if this was God's Word. Because the word 'God' is not in the book of Esther, does not mean it is not an important book. All Scripture is equally inspired. What is one great lesson from the book of Esther? It is the faithful provision and protection of God for His own. Remember that in this book God uniquely used one of His children to preserve the nation. I think it is unique that Israel had no regard for God, at the time as the absence of His name suggests, but God had made a promise, therefore, so even though Israel had no regard for God, God kept them.

We have 5 books that the Hebrew people determined as poetry, Job, Psalm, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and The Song of Solomon. Hebrew poetry has an unique style of writing. We looked at the different ways Hebrew poetry is expressed, repeated phrases, statements that mean the same but stated two different ways, all of these 5 books are written that way. They are not narratives like the historic books which just tell a story. But these books, although some do tell a story, are written in the style of Hebrew poetry.

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Prof. Question: What does this tell us about God?

Student Answers: Wisdom.

Wisdom, yes but the fact that God would give us His Word in poetry shows His creativity and understanding of different styles of language communication. Look at the many ways God has revealed Himself. He has revealed himself in terms of His existence and power in creation, He has revealed Himself in human conscientiousness, He revealed Himself in the Word of God, He revealed Himself in Jesus Christ. True God is a God of creativity, a God of many expressions, and we who are made in his image have followed God in the expression of literature. We express in simple terminology, we express in poetry, we express in song, which is what Psalms is- a book of songs. It is God using the various human communication expressions to give His truth, His Word.

Student Question: When we talk about certain things that may be applied to Israel that we should not necessarily search for application in our lives; for example we read in Psalms certain prayers of David, are we supposed to apply all of that to our lives.

Prof. Answer: The most important thing to remember is that it is poetry. And poetry is expressed in a unique way, so when we looked at the styles of poetry which when seen give us the key to understanding the interpretation. All of the Psalms are songs to God. Some of them speak specifically how God worked in Israel's life, like Moses' songs; others speak of how God worked in individual lives, like David. In all of this, we have the Word of God, that with good interpretation we can glean truth from it for ourselves. Sometimes the truth will be a teaching for us to follow, other times it will be just an expression of praise that comes from the lips of David that causes us to praise God as well. So for me, the key is to understand the style of literature, to understand the importance of context in grammar, and then rely of the spirit of God to lead us into truth.

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Student Question: Sometimes in the Psalms people are cursed and prayed to God to be destroyed, how are we to understand this? Do we pray for God to curse our enemies too?

Prof. Answer: First of all we have to remember that #1 David was a man after God's heart.... And so as God hates sin, so David hated sin. He called on God to deal with sin as God's passion would be. So in the sense of cursing, David's call was still dependent upon God's choice. He was praying to God to deal with sin. He never demonstrated that he has power himself to bring judgement on those he was cursing. #2, David was not perfect as God is. He sinned morally, and then to hide that sin he committed murder. So he was not a perfect man. And there are times in his songs that you see his imperfection. This is especially true when he is accusing God of not acting, or he is being angry with God at things that happened. But God allows us to see his own words as David expressed as his weaknesses so we will understand God's grace. It is legitimate for us to be like David and come before God and express exactly how we feel. Every time we see this in David's songs we see God working in his life and in the next psalm we see a change in his heart. So another thing we learn in David's songs expressing weakness, is that God continually works in our life. So again we check the context, we see what the situation is so we can understand. The psalms are not a licence to curse people. Like David, we have no power to curse people anyway. When individuals are seeking to bring a curse on others, that is not in dependence upon God, i the realm of God, it is in the realm of demonic activity. Even in this we understand that God is sovereign.

CLASS 2

We were looking at the divisions of the OT. I made an error when I said these were the Hebrew divisions. No, these are the divisions in our Bible. I was correct on the different names when we were looking at the law, especially the Hebrew names. So we have the Law, which we call the

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Pentateuch because it is five books, then the historical books, the poetry books, and finally we have the 17 books of the prophets in the OT.

The OT prophets are, from our perspective, broken into 2 groups. We have 5 major prophets and we have the minor prophets. There are 12 of those. They are listed in your notes.

Prof. Question: Can you tell me what makes a minor prophet and what makes a major prophet? Answer: Only the length of the book. It does not mean they are more important if we say 'major'.

So this is the order that we have the books in the Bible we use. The order has been influenced by the Hebrew methodology. But of course, we also have the NT. The Bible is to all people. The OT is the promise of the coming Messiah. That's why we call it the covenant with the people of Israel, but the promise began with Adam.

*Prof. Question: What was the Messiah called in the ears of Adam?
Student Answers: The seed.*

When Israel was called to bring forth the Messiah, they were also given the Law which illustrated and showed the means of salvation. They were also to be a light to the Gentiles so they Gentiles could have an avenue to salvation. Who can tell me during the ages of the OT what made Israel absolutely unique among all the other nations? God's chosen people, from God's perspective. From a historical perspective what made them unique? What was seen by the other nations? They had one God. That made Israel absolutely unique, and from the beginning of receiving the Law to times of Israel's last O.T. writers, God emphasized this fact to them: *Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD (De 6:4), And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one., one God. (Zech. 14:9.)*

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C. The Divisions of the New Testament

Therefore, Israel had this testimony among the other nations. It was clear in the story of Jonah, it was his God who calmed the storm. We have in addition to the OT promise of Messiah, the NT, which focusses on ‘the days of the seed’. The Messiah has come, this is the beginning of the NT. God shifts His focus, now he is not dealing with a single nation, He is dealing with the entire world, now being reached by a special people, the church. At Messiah’s birth the angel announced: *I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.* (Lu. 2:10). The N.T., with its focus on the days of the seed, is for all nations, all people, all societies. It is a Testament, a ‘covenant’ with the whole world, a promise of final redemption through the Messiah: *the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.* (Ro. 8:21).

The NT expands the OT by giving more information about the Messiah. For example, in the N.T. the coming of the Messiah is in two parts. The first coming is in humility; in this coming Jesus Christ died for our sins, was buried and rose again to provide salvation. The second coming, after the church is raptured and Israel redeemed through tribulation, is in triumph as Messiah takes the throne of the whole world and ushers in eternity.

The salvation that is accomplished on the cross of Christ is different from salvation in the OT. Although salvation is always by faith, always by the provision of God, yet in the OT it is called atonement. The idea of atonement is ‘covering’. Are ‘believers in the OT forgiven? Yes. Are men in the OT born again? Yes. But the essence of salvation was a ‘covering for sin’ until Christ actually became a sacrifice for all time. Now it is no longer a covering, it is redemption.

Salvation completed in Christ, is legal acquittal or removal of sin. Even in the OT believers knew this day would come as one of the earliest O.T. writers proclaimed: *“Behold, my Redeemer lives”* (Job 19:25). Then of course, in the NT we have more information about the Lord’s second

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coming. Paul tells us that in the N.T. he gives us mysteries; things that were hidden, or not fully understood in the OT. There are divisions in the NT as well: the 4 books of the gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John; history, the Acts of the Apostles, the 21 Epistles listed above, and the prophetic book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

Student Question: When we are looking at the major prophets, for example Jeremiah and Lamentations, do we count that as two different or one major prophet?

Prof. Answer: It is seen as two epistles or two books. It is the same as the Pentateuch, given by one man, Moses, but given as 5 distinct books.

This raises a very good point, when we think of God giving us many books of the Bible, some of them seem to be repeating themselves, such as Kings and Chronicles. We have to understand that God has a unique purpose for each book. A professor asked us ‘who has read the book of Chronicles?’ Only a few had. He said most people will read the book of Kings because that’s history and not read Chronicles because it is also history. But the professor wisely said if you have not read Chronicles you have missed something that God wants you to understand. The Bible is a complete story of 66 books, but when we read it we should look at the uniqueness of each book. We talked about this before in regard to the gospels, very much the same stories, but what is the difference, what is the emphasis of each of these books? Matthew- he is King/ Mark-he is the servant/ Luke-he is human/John-he is the Son of God. so you have the same idea in the OT for each of the books. When we come to the book of Psalms, it is not just one song.

In the NT we have the gospels which outline the story of Jesus Christ’s life but from different perspectives. That’s why because of emphasis, the stories are in different orders. We have to remember that the writers of the NT gospels were Jewish people as well. So the order is not as important as the emphasis.

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Continuing with the NT divisions, after the gospels we have one history book, Acts. It covers the history of the early church. Then we have the epistles, 21 in number. They are written by various individuals. We have Paul's epistles, James and Peter and John and Jude. And then Hebrews, most people accept the fact that it was written by Paul, although he does not say so. I am not one of those people. Then we have one prophecy book the Apocalypse.

D. The Divisions in the Hebrew Bible

Now we will look at the difference between our Bible and the Hebrew Bible. We see that in the division of our Bible there are four. This comes from the Septuagint, the OT Hebrew translated in the Greek language. It needs to be mentioned that this translation from Hebrew into Greek was done in OT time, in the 3rd century before Christ.

Why would the Hebrew Bible be translated into Greek 300 years before Jesus Christ? Greece had conquered the area and forced all the nations to use his Greek language. That is what Alexander the Great did to unify his kingdom, the opposite of what God did in the OT at Babel. God wanted to divide the people so he gave them different languages; Alexander wanted to unite the people so he had them use one language. For the Jewish people to carry on their business and to be successful, they had to use Greek to keep the government happy.

So the Hebrew Bible in Jesus' time was the Septuagint. In the synagogues and the temple when there was deeper study, they would have studied Hebrew text; but we know that at the beginning of the church there was turmoil within the Hebrew culture. Between the OT and the NT writing, the Maccabees rose up and tried to liberate the Jews. There were zealots that were so pro-Hebrew that they sought to bring war and turmoil within the Roman Empire.

But there were also many Hebrews who had businesses who accepted the Greek culture. So it is very difficult for us to see which would have been the most influential Bible for the Hebrew people at that time. Some would have refused to read the Septuagint; others only knew Greek and

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did not know Hebrew although they were born as Hebrew people. You can see why the Jewish people were passionate about the coming Christ. He would be the one to unite them again. So we do have the necessity of understanding the Hebrew Bible. The Hebrew Bible has 3 divisions. *The Law*, or the books of Moses called the Torah, the same as our Pentateuch; the second division is called the *Prophets*. These books were from the men who held prophetic office. So again we have to understand the distinction in the mind of the Hebrew people. The prophetic office to them could only be held by someone anointed as prophet.

Prof. Question: What people in the OT among the Hebrews were anointed?

Student Answers: Prophets, Kings, and Priests.

The books of the prophets in the Hebrew Bible only come from those who had official status as a prophet. They were anointed prophets, they had the office. You can see in your notes this group are divided into the former prophets and the latter prophets.

Prof. Question: Do you see the difference between the former and the latter?

Student Answers: The group of 12 were the 12 apostles.

Prof. Reply: No, the only distinction is the time of writing. The former are early ones, the latter are the later ones. Those are the first books of the prophets. Who wrote the book of Kings? Isaiah, Samuel, you determine which!

Not all the books dealing with the kings are grouped together. 1 & 2 Kings are grouped under ‘prophets’ and 1 & 2 Chronicles are grouped under ‘history’. This suggests the writer of Chronicles was different from the writer of Kings. There is a distinction between the books that came from the official of prophets and those who had the gift of prophecy such as Daniel. Yet, the Hebrew people accepted that both were from God. But they held to making a distinction between those who had the official office

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and those who had the gift. And so we have these 8 books that were from the prophetic offices, and then we have *the writings* that included the poetic books and then the scrolls that were from the prophets that had the gift, but not the office.

Notice that under ‘the writings’ there is a distinction in the Hebrew Bible between Psalms, Proverbs and Job and ‘the scrolls’. The scrolls include Esther and Ruth as part of these books. From a perspective of style, this is probably more accurate because the books of Ruth and Esther, although poetry, are not the same kind of poetry. Under ‘the writings’ are the historical books as well.

All of this is to help us get a background of how the Hebrew people and the church see the Scriptures. We can see this influence in the gospel, especially in Luke 24:44: *"These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me."* You notice the Psalms are part of the writings of the division of the Hebrew Bible. So Luke 24:44 is referring to the whole Bible as divided by the Hebrew Bible. When you read this passage, you have to understand it is referring to the entire OT. So throughout the gospels and the NT you do see reference to the OT in different ways.

E. The Claims of Jesus about the Old Testament

Read the following texts from your notes:

Mt. 5:17 *Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.*

In the sermon on the mount, Jesus is talking about the law and the prophets. What he is doing is talking about all the OT, but He groups both kinds of books that came from the prophets. The Law, Moses, the Pentateuch and the prophets being the books that came from those who had the prophetic office as well as those who had the gift of prophecy. When you understand the Hebrew divisions, you realize Jesus is talking about the whole Bible. He came to fulfill the whole OT, all the Scriptures. That fits into our definition of the OT, being the covenant which is between God

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and Israel. It was the promise of Christ's coming. Jesus Christ fulfilled that, He was the Messiah.

Lk. 24:27 *And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.*

In this passage Jesus has risen from the dead and He joins the men that are on the road to Emmaus. And they are dismayed because they don't understand why Jesus, their Messiah, has died. So it tells us that beginning with Moses and the Prophets, which is the whole OT, He teaches what the OT says about Himself. That would have been a great lecture to listen to! They are walking along the road together in 2 or 3 hours of time, Jesus tells them exactly what the Bible says about Himself. I wish I were in that class. What happens in verse 44? Here now Jesus is joined with His disciples. He reminds them that He spoke about Himself everything that was given in the Prophets and the Psalms, in other words, the writings. So among the 12, at this special time, when Jesus is speaking of the Bible He was speaking of all 3 of the divisions. And again He is referring to all the OT.

Jn. 5:39 *Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.*

What is the reference to the Bible here? It is "the Scriptures." Jesus is speaking to the Pharisees and He uses the term Scriptures to refer to all the OT. The Pharisees had the Bible knowledge but they did not accept Christ
Heb. 10:7 *Then I said, "Behold, I have come — In the volume of the book it is written of Me — To do Your will, O God."*

What is the reference to Scripture here? It is "the volume of the book," again He refers to all the OT.

Student Questions: *If the Hebrew Bible was so divided, why did they divide the Bible differently today?*

Prof. Answer: *I have no idea. That is a study all on its own. Remember the Septuagint is where all the divisions shifted. I have not done a study on the history of the Septuagint. I cannot even tell you whether the translation*

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was done by Hebrew scholars who also knew the Greek language or Greek scholars who also knew the Hebrew language. The thing that we see, especially when we look at the names of the Pentateuch books are the different concepts that the Hebrews held from the Romans or Greek people. The divisions are not inspired by God, it is the books themselves that are inspired. But where the Hebrew mind looks from the perspective of relationship to God, the Greek mind looks from the perspective of content. This may account for the Hebrews distinction between the prophetic office and prophetic gift. These different perspectives have nothing to do with Scripture's inspiration, but only result in Bible Books being organized distinctively.

Student Question: Why is Daniel in the Historical book division rather than Prophet division where Samuel's writings are?

Prof. Answer: "The Writing" were from the people who gave the Word of God but did not have the official office of prophet, identified by the nation and anointed by the priest. Under 'the writings' we have the poetic books, the 5 scrolls and these historic books. For example, in the Psalms we have many authors. David gave us many Psalms, Moses gave us some, and some men in David's kingdom who were appointed song writers gave wrote some Psalms. All of the Psalms were inspired – given by God through these men. But was David an anointed Prophet? No, he was king. Was Moses an anointed prophet? No, he led Israel even before there was a priesthood to anoint prophets. Was Daniel an appointed prophet? Think about it, when did Daniel come as a writer of Scripture? Remember, he was a part of Israel taken captive, a part of the royal family. He was not an anointed prophet and wrote the book of Daniel while in bondage outside of Israel's lands. Samuel was an anointed prophet. There is a distinction here, but the distinction is in the mind of the Hebrews, not in the Scriptures. At one time Jesus spoke of the prophets, meaning all of them together, and another time, probably because of the attending audience, He made a distinction to help the audience understand He referred to the whole Old Testament.

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Student Question: Why would Israel see the books of Joshua and Judges as prophetic when they were not anointed prophets.

Prof. Answer: I cannot tell you what I do not know, other than Joshua and Judges were probably written by Samuel? The Hebrews kept very accurate accounts of the lines of the families. Their understanding of the authors of Scripture is probably more accurate than any ones.

Please understand that we are looking at the history of the Bible. The little differences of the groupings has nothing to do with the inspired Word of God. I have at home a Bible that puts the books in the chronological order. I enjoy reading this because it puts things in the order of history which is good for my mind. The book is completely legitimate. It has all the 66 inspired books of the Bible. It helps me to read them chronologically.

In studying the history of the Bible, it gives us an understanding of the difference of the way Hebrew people think and the way Greek people think. The study also warns us about our attitude toward the Bible. Many people have read this book for the information. One of these people was Hitler. Did it change him? No, if anything he looked at the Scriptures as supporting his idea of a superior race. He saw Israel chosen as the superior race but because they killed Christ, he despised them and he became a tool of Satan to try to destroy the Jews. Our attitude about this book has much to do with what it means in our life.

That's why I asked you 'who is Jesus Christ?' You all said the same thing—He is God. When I asked why, you said because the Bible says so. You all understood this is the very Word of God. We don't worship the book, but we honour the book and put it in its proper place in our minds. For me, it's just my habit that I respect the Bible itself. I will never use the Bible to level a table, or casually treat it.

F. Chapters and Verses in the Bible

We need to understand a part of the history of the Bible is also the inserting of chapter and the verse divisions. When Jesus was quoting the Bi-

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ble, He did not give the reference, the chapter and the verse. Why? There were none. The next part of your notes we have the history of how we got the chapters and verses.

Prof. Question: What do your notes say regarding the purpose of the chapters and the verses?

Student Answers: To facilitate memorizing and quoting the Bible.

This is good, but the danger is dividing the text where it should not be divided. Because the chapters and verses are not inspired, human errors in division were made. In the OT times, the people memorized whole Bible books. Has anyone memorized a whole book of the Bible? No, shame on you! In a church I pastored in Canada a new teenaged believer was so excited about the Bible that he attended the teen, young couples, parents, and seniors Bible study groups, just to learn the Bible. I was going on a holiday for 2 weeks and he was going to miss the studies. I suggested he memorize the book of James. When I returned, he had the whole book of James memorized. Now he is a deacon and leader in the church. He had a love for the Word of God that many believers do not have.

It is important to memorize the Word of God. One of the disciplines of the Christian life is to memorize the Word of God as David who said: *Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You* (Psm. 119:11). Most of the classes I give, I ask students to memorize Scripture. I encourage you when you are in ministry to continue to memorize Scripture. For me, I have tried to choose chapters that are important, for example John 17, Isaiah 55.

Let's look at how we got the chapters and verses. In 1227, Bible chapters were added by Steven Langdon. He was a professor at the University of Paris and later became the Archbishop of Canterbury. He broke the Bible down into chapters, but unfortunately, some of the divisions are not good. In 1551 and 1555 Robert Stephanus, a Paris printer, divided the chapters into verses. This brings us to another historical fact about the Bible, the

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Bible was the very first book printed by a printing press in Gutenberg, Germany, 1456. Notice that the verses were not added until 100 years after the Bible was printed.

G. Interesting Facts about the Bible

The following unique statistics are also significant. The Bible is the best-selling book in the World. I was challenged by a Muslim that the Koran is the most sold book. He may be right, I don't know. Are there more Muslims in the world than Christians? I don't know. Christianity is still the fastest growing religion. The Bible has been translated into more languages than any other book. The next statement says the Bible has been studied more than any other book, but I don't know if that is still true or not. Here's why I question that statistic, the sad truth is that in America, most Christians do not study the Bible. They used to, but now there is television, internet, toys, and countless distractions. Materialism has taken the priority over the Word of God. This is why I do not pray that Cameroonian believers will prosper. It's not good for your spiritual growth.

Lastly, there are more books written about the Bible than any other book. The Bible has impacted our world. I find it interesting that in the democracies around the world, the roots of modern government came from the Roman Empire. In the Roman Empire there was a time when Christianity was declared the official religion. It was not true Christianity and it led to the Roman Catholic Church. Nevertheless, the root of the Roman government was the Bible. Therefore, God's Law has influenced all the world, the Bible has had great world influence. Rome built its justice system on the truths of the Word of God. What was right and wrong came from the Ten Commandments.

Unfortunately today, with the modern thinking, this kind of justice is diminishing. My own country is an example of this. What was once declared wrong and illegal is now right and proper. For example, homosexuality, common-law marriage, abortion, are now legally recognized in Canada. I am saying this to help you understand that as the church weakens in its commitment to the Word of God, so also does society. The NT calls the

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church ‘the pillar and support of the truth,’ but if believers do not live the truth first, and then teach it to the world, the world will disregard it. I appreciate the fact that Dr. Simon chose piety as the theme for the school this year. While we are studying Bibliology and getting information about the Bible, I encourage you to not just receive facts to pass a course. My goal is to raise awareness of the place of Scripture in our lives.

CLASS 3

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE

II. THE REVELATION OF GOD

The doctrines involved in Bibliology should raise a similar appreciation among believers in general. What are some of these doctrines? I am talking about the doctrines that relate specifically to the nature of the Bible itself: inspiration, revelation, illumination, inerrancy, preservation. The study of Bibliology begins with the doctrine of the revelation.

Student Question: Why are the Jews not interested in the NT?

Prof. Answer: It is because of blinded eyes. The NT is about the Messiah and orthodox people do not accept Jesus as Messiah? Yet there are many Messianic Jews (the name Jewish believers give themselves) today. These Jewish Christians value the New Testament record of Messiah, having a unique appreciation of Scripture as the people responsible for giving the world the Old Testament prophecies of Messiah.

There are some introductory notes in your manual that address the affect of God’s Word in the world. Satan has sought to destroy the Word of God even as he has sought to destroy the people of God. One example is the Emperor of Rome in 3 AD. He was offended by Christians and knew from their life they could not continue without the Word of God. He therefore began a campaign to destroy every Bible in the Roman empire. After 2 years he believed he succeeded. He made a big pillar with a state-

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ment “Christianity is now extinct.” Less than 10 years later, Constantine became the emperor and Christianity was strong enough that he became a believer and made Christianity the state religion.

God has supernaturally preserved the Word of God. The Bible is a special revelation of God. In our theological studies we learn there is ‘general revelation’ of God, through nature, and by the conscientiousness that is in each human. Then there is ‘special revelation’ whereby God has given understanding directly to man. In OT times it was in various ways and various times according to Hebrews. Sometimes it was by visions and dreams, sometimes God sent angels to give the Word. Some, but not all, of these revelations were recorded in Scripture. Finally, there was the ‘special revelation of Jesus Christ’.

A. The Definition of ‘Revelation’

The word ‘revelation’ is of Latin derivation. It means ‘unveiling’. The word itself is a translation from the Greek word ‘*apokalypsis*,’ meaning ‘making known of truth’. The general revelation of God will only go so far. For example, creation teaches there is a Creator, but we will never learn about the Trinity by looking at trees. So revelation is making known to man what he can never know outside revelation. That’s why we see there are levels of revelation- general revelation and specific revelation. There are Scriptures that indicate this:

1 Cor. 2:9-10: *But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him." But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. In this passage it says that God has revealed His wisdom. Again, the word revelation or unveiling,*

Gal 1:11, 12: *But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. Paul received his message directly from God by revelation.*

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Eph. 3: 5,6: *which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel,* Here we see that revelation was given as God by His Spirit.

In your notes there is a diagram representing ‘Revelation’. The triangle represent the trinity. God is a supreme being who has thoughts. Revelation can be pictured as this diagram. God’s thoughts are given by the Holy Spirit to man. We know that sometimes man gave it to other men by just the spoken word. Other times these men gave to other men by the written word. Hebrews explains that in the coming of Christ, He is the point of revelation. This indicates that the many ways God gave revelation in the past (dreams, visions) now focusses on the single way through Jesus Christ.

There is a distinction between God leading man through the Spirit, and God giving revelation to man by His spirit. When I am told that God speaks to individuals, I am not alarmed that some would believe so. But in this day, such “speaking by the Spirit of God” is for guidance, never revelation. I talk to people who say they have dreams in which they are told to go to some individual. This is not revelation, it is direction. When I question these people, they are always directed to a place or people where they can receive or give the Word of God. There is also the prompting of the Spirit of God that does not come in a vision or a dream, but simply the experienced of the Holy Spirit prompting believers within, to witness to someone, or to pray for someone etc.

In our mission there are many stories of missionaries in dangerous situations. They find out later than many people were praying for them in America at the very time of danger. God does in a way, speak to His people today? He is our Father. I do not believe He speaks with a voice we can hear. But as our human father, He has a personal relationship with us. We pray and He gives us guidance. This is not revelation. **Revelation** is giving new information, new propositional truth to live by. I think it is

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significant that at the end of the Book of Revelation we are warned to not add to or take away from the Book. What the Bible teaches is that the Word of God, the Bible, is all the **revelation** we need for this time.

There are some things we would like to know, but God has said it is not for us to know. I would like to know how God created the angels. We know everything was created in the six days but did He speak and bring each one into existence or do it all with one word? I don't know. I would like to know what God revealed to Adam to help him raise his children and know about proper sacrifice, because Cain and Abel were accountable. God has not given us that information. We accept the fact that God has given to us the revelation we need for today. And these 66 books are sufficient to keep us busy for a lifetime.

When we think about this, we realize we are totally dependent on God's wisdom. There are 4 specific things we cannot know apart from revelation. Through revelation alone we have: the knowledge of God, the knowledge of man's origin, the knowledge of personal responsibility, and the knowledge of the destiny of man (future history). When Adam and Eve were created, God had fellowship with them one on one. They were alive to God so they could have fellowship with God. When they sinned they became dead to God in their soul/spirit, (the immaterial aspects of their being). Their fellowship with God was broken, and they also began to die physically. That is the state of all people born in the world; physically alive but spiritually dead to God. Therefore, God must reveal himself to people. The example is given when God sought Adam and Eve in the garden, they hid themselves, having no capacity to fellowship with God.

Student Question: Was Constantine really a Christian?

Prof. Answer: He indicated salvation, but he did some bad things. The fact he made Christianity an official religion may have been a political decision, not a religious conviction.

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CLASS 4

B. The Distinctive of Revelation

1. General Revelation through the Creative Word

We have begun to look at the doctrine of revelation. We stopped to wonder about the great statement, “God has spoken.” How is creation an expression of God’s revelation? Conscience, no. you are right in one way, it is part of creation. I am speaking of the firmament. How is creation a revelation of God’s spoken Word? It started with the spoken word “*Let there be light...*”

In Science it was discovered that energy is not created, but transferred. As much as we do not trust science for truth, that very statement necessitates a Creator. The total energy in the universe would seem to be an inconceivably vast quantity. When scientists speak out, they talk about the energy that exists in the universe. The energy of the sun meets our earth and that energy is transferred into all life, supporting the trees, the plants, all living things. But the scientists do not declare where that energy came from. Taking the first law of thermodynamics; ‘energy is neither created nor destroyed’, along with the argument from first cause (or the cosmological argument); ‘the universe must have a cause, and that this cause is God’, imagine the unfathomable power of God. Scripture indicates that all the energy within the universe came from God, by the effort of His spoken word. When we speak we use very little energy; when God spoke, all the energy of the universe was transferred into our universe. So creation is evidence of the spoken word of God!

But there is also human conscience. God created man, it is true. He formed humanity, giving each person a unique conscience in two parts which are called ‘conscientiousness’ and ‘conscience’. There is a part of what we call our ‘being’ that helps humans know who they are and have an awareness of the things around them. This is far greater than what animals have as a sense of awareness. In this unique human awareness of their own being, there is guilt when they do wrong. This is the conscience

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that holds each person guilty before God. Thus, in the general revelation of creation and conscience, man is condemned.

Student Question: Is the revelation that comes through conscience sufficient to push us to search for God?

Prof. Answer: What do other students think?

Student Replies:

#1 - Yes, the conscience does push man to seek after God.

#2 - Both conscience and creation move men to seek God.

#3 - I say no because the Bible says there is none that seek after God.

Prof. Reply: You are all correct. The reason for this is the misunderstanding of the question. Some students are thinking the question is “Can the conscience be sufficient for someone to find God?” The answer to that is NO! But, Romans 2 tells us that even the Gentiles, who do not have the Law, only a conscience are still guilty. So, does the conscience push people to seek God? Yes! The problem is that man who is spiritually dead, cannot find God. He does not search for the true God.

Conscience pushes people to seek God, yet man cannot find God because in the state of spiritual death he does not search for the true God. Conscience and creation both do the same thing; they provoke man to know there is a God, but man always turns to self-approval as his god. In spiritual blindness, all people seek self-effort to appease their self-appointed deity. Hence, we see the limitation of general revelation in that it only declares ‘there is a God’.

2. Special Revelation through the Incarnate Word

We also see the necessity of the special revelation of God’s personal communication with humanity through various means in past history, ultimately climaxed by the incarnate Word of God, Jesus Christ. The ultimate revelation of God was provided through the second person of the Holy Trinity, God’s Son, being born as a man and living among men: *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glo-*

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ry as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14). In this passage Jesus is named ‘The Word’ (logos), He who is to God what man’s word is to himself, the manifestation or expression of himself to those without him.¹

The Word ‘became flesh’. Christ, the eternal *Logos*, who is God, came to earth as man. Yet in doing so, He did not merely “appear” like a man; He became one (cf. Phil. 2:5–9). In taking on flesh, humanity was added to Christ’s deity.² The crowds that followed Jesus, although blind to His deity, recognized His uniqueness: *Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him."* (Mark 1:27). John described the marvel of experiencing this special revelation of God personally: *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life. the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us* (Jn.1:1-2).

Nevertheless, even this special revelation of the incarnation of the Son of God had limitations. This special revelation was limited by time, Jesus only lived among humanity for about 33 years, and only had a public ministry of less than 4 years. There was also the limitation of space in that Jesus only traveled within a very limited geographical area. All the world did not see the Son of God during His first coming. Finally, there was the human limitation of lack of understanding: *In Him was life, and the life*

¹ Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Jn 1:1). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

² Blum, E. A. (1985). John. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (Jn 1:14). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

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was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it (Jn. 1:4-5). Even among those awaiting the promise of His coming, there was no understanding: He came to His own, and His own (His own people) did not receive Him. (Jn. 1:11).

3. Final Revelation through the spoken/written Word

Now we come to the final revelation that came through the spoken word that became the written Word. Was all of God's spoken word to man written in Scripture? No, we see there are some gaps that mankind has no information about. For example (speculation, of course), we have no information about the way of offering sacrifices at the time of Adam. Cain and Able were accountable; therefore they must have received instruction regarding sacrifices.

There are those who may disagree with me on this point. In the case of speculation, I cannot be certain whether I am right or wrong. There are those who believe the text is there just as it stands, and God saw and judged the hearts of Cain and Able, it did not matter about the sacrifices. Without information, speculation makes this a possibility. Nevertheless, I am of the opinion that there was more information given to Adam and that he taught his children proper sacrifice. As I look at the whole of Scripture I conclude that God would not hold people responsible for something as important as sacrifices that they did not know. Even in this early stage, God required the blood sacrifice.

Student Question: *Is the Bible the whole Word of God? Is the Catholic Bible The Word of God?*

Prof. Answer: *The simple answer is that God teaches He has preserved the Word and the True body of Christ has discerned what that Word is. At the time of the Roman Catholic choosing of their Bible, it was not a true church, a church of born again people. Like all of God's truth, we accept it by faith. We will look at the process canonization later in the class we will see this is not blind faith because much support is given to support the 66 books as the complete Bible.*

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a) The Spoken/Written Word of the Past

i) The Means

God has spoken. This should excite us and encourage us. God the Creator has spoken to humanity! He has spoken to humanity in creation—“Come.” He has spoken to humanity in conscience—‘come’. He has spoken to humanity in Jesus Christ—‘come’. And we are told in Heb. 1:1: *God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets.* God spoke in different ways in the time past. We break these down into different ways God spoke. We have looked at these in other doctrines but we will briefly review them.

In the OT we saw Theophanies, the Lord himself appearing to man. He walked in the garden with Adam and Eve, He visited Abraham, He spoke face to face in the tabernacle with Moses. God Himself walked past Moses and put him in the cleft of the rock so he would not see His face, just His glory. These are Theophanies, the presence of God before man. They include Christophanies the appearing of the Son of God.

In my opinion, when God presented Himself in the OT with great light, and great thunder, that was a Theophany; the evidence of God in the presence of man brought fear to their hearts. But a Christophany was God appearing as a man before man, such as the Lord appearing to Joshua before the battle of Jericho. Joshua did not fall on his face in fear. The Lord had to tell him who He was. But another Christophany seems to be the presence of the Angel of the Lord as the Christ, God the Son, with all His glory.

In the OT God spoke through angel announcements. We see this with Daniel, with Israel in Judges 2, and Noah in Judges 13. Although they were angels that spoke, they brought the message directly from God. They were passing on the Word of God. We see also in the OT, visions and dreams. Jacob and Ezekiel and Nebuchadnezzar each experienced this. Yet, even in the OT, most of these dreams were for direction as was God gave His word. God also spoke through signs and casting lots. The actual

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breastplate of the high priest was a means for determining God's will by casting lots.

It seems strange to us that the use of stones and casting lots would be a way that God directed, but in the context of the OT, God chose to use the priests and prophets in this way. There was the necessity for the people to put faith in God working through these people. God chose this as a way in which He was guiding His people, but through His chosen leaders. And it was important for them to put their trust in God through people. God chose at times not to present Himself in His glory or another means when He led His people.

ii) The Messengers

That is why there were tests to know who was a true prophet. It was a matter of accepting God's plan by faith. There were many ways God spoke in times past, as it says in Hebrews. He spoke to the fathers by the prophets, by which God had to find a special people to bring His message. They are called prophets. There is a clear Bible definition of prophets. The term itself means 'one who sees,' or 'a crier'. The prophet had two functions: To receive the Word of God, and then to pass that Word on. In a sense, he sees or understands, and he cries or passes on the message. The Hebrew definition in the lexicon is given in your notes.

It's important to know, as we look at the messages God gave, that there was never any doubt about God's intention. In these visions or dreams, there was understanding or explanation sufficient for the message to be clear. A good example is the dreams of Nebechanezer; God clearly gave him those dreams, but he had no immediate understanding of them. He was provoked to find out the meanings and God did not leave him in darkness. God brought Daniel, a child of God, to give an absolute clear understanding. J.I. Packer made this observation: "... the Spirit of God so controlled the reflective operations of men's minds as to lead them to right judgement in all things... in every case the disclosures introduced, or con-

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veyed, or confirmed, by these means were propositional in substance and verbal in form.”³

This quote, although it fits here, has more to do with the idea of inspiration. We see in our notes, the description of the prophets. Clearly in each of these situations it was clearly the word of the Lord that came to the prophets. Even in Isaiah 6 where we have the repentance and salvation of Isaiah and he responded to God’s search for a man and Isaiah said, “Here am I, send me.” God said “Go and tell the people this, what I say.”

Prophets received revelation from God directly, they passed that revelation on to the people, verbally and written as led by God. They were not just preaching great messages that they constructed in their minds. Today’s preachers are not the same as OT prophets! Believe me, there are some sermons that I’ve heard that are not the Word of God at all, let alone revelation from God! We smile at this, but you need to be very careful if you hear a preacher say he is giving revelation directly from God. When he tells you that, you are hearing something that is not true. Of course, no preachers do this in Africa, right? It is a major problem in your country, and without trying to be offensive, it is a part of the danger of the strong charismatic movement. I say this acknowledging that every aspect of Christianity today has major problems. The Calvinists have a problem with evangelizing the world, but the Charismatics have a problem with what is the Word of God.

Student Question: When you speak of Charismatic, we do not understand what you mean. Can you explain?

Prof. Answer: The term Charismatic comes from the N.T. Greek word χάρισμα (charisma) which has several Bible uses; unmerited favour, the gift of saving grace, divine gifts of faith, knowledge, virtue, spiritual gifts of various abilities, given at salvation for believers to serve the body of Christ. It is in reference to this last usage that the word Charismatic has

³ Packer, J.I. *God Has Spoken* (Grand Rapids, Mi: Baker Book House, 1988), 81.

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come to identify 'Christians' from a broad scope of denominations, whose beliefs embrace much focus on the expression of the 'spectacular' gifts of the spirit such as speaking in tongues, healing, as well as divine utterances directly from God. They deny the discontinuation of any gifts of the Spirit for today. Their focus of such gifts, that no longer exist, in "worship" services often results in unusual behavior and a high level of noisy chaos, not to mention creating a false sense of salvation and security often replacing true faith. Charismatic expression is as broad in character and method as the denominational involvement it encompasses

Student Question: *Should we avoid saying "God said" when preaching or sharing?*

Prof. Answer: *No, you better say "God said" when preaching His Word. The issue is not saying "God said" but saying "God said to me!" or "God told me this!", each of these statements implies personal revelation from God. We must be sure that our people know "All God said for believers today, is written in Scripture." Daily Bible devotions (how God speaks to us) and personal prayer (how we speak to God) are basic disciplines of true Christian faith.*

You notice in the description of the prophets in the student manual, it states *'the word of the Lord that came to me saying this...'* We have the prophets speaking the very words of God. When we looked at the gift of prophecy in the NT we saw it was the same thing, until the N.T. Word of God was completed.

Student Question: *What about people who preach and say things like 'the Lord put this in my heart'.*

Prof. Answer: *It depends on what they are talking about. There were times when the Lord put in my heart a prompting to act. I was moved to visit a situation immediately. When I followed the Lord immediately, I discovered, there was a death in the family I was 'prompted' to go to. We said the other day, God speaks to His children within, by giving direction or*

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guidance. When God prompted me, He was not giving extra-Biblical revelation; God never said to me “Tell this to the people.” It is legitimate for believers to say “God spoke to my heart to go talk to this individual.” But it is wrong to say God gave me a message directly to give to you, or God told me to ‘take the finances of the church and build a new house!’ You laugh, but remember the pastor who claimed he was the Lord’s anointed and therefor above accountability! The Bible is the only message from God believers have to give to anyone, yet sometimes the way we interpret it we even get wrong.

Student Question: Is it right to say ‘through this text, this is the message God is giving’?

Prof. Answer: Yes! Our job is not to give new messages to God’s people; our job is to teach them the message that God has already given us. We can with authority; “Fathers, don’t provoke your children”; preachers can say “Husbands, love your wives.” But we had better be practicing these before we speak.

Men, preach the word, preach it with authority, shake your people up with the Word of God. But don’t give them the impression that you have a special message from God. A good way to measure the effectiveness of your preaching is to see how drawn your people are to learn the Word of God themselves. Not all have the gift of teaching, a preacher does not have to have this gift. There are other gifts that are also useful for pastoring such as the gift of counselling or the gift of faith.

God has spoken—He did this in many ways through different times, but clearly He did this by the prophets. In the OT it was clear, it was the Word of God that came to Hosea; the Word of God that came to Ezekiel, the Word of God that came to Zechariah. There is a distinction. It is true that some of the things they shared were not entirely put in the Word of God, because their message was specifically for Israel at that particular time. There is one thing clear—the O.T. Scriptures came through the prophets. In 2 Peter 1: 20-21 we have this wonderful explanation: “*know-*

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ing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

Clearly the NT is telling us that the OT came as a result of prophecy being recorded so God’s spoken word was written down. So this passage is telling us that what was written down by the prophets and declared to be the Word of God, was nothing less than the very Words given by God. This is the spoken word of the past, before the N.T. church existed. It was God’s written Word. It’s amazing to me that the only word God personally wrote Himself, He did in stone and Moses broke it. Do you recall the tablets Moses smashed? Even though the Bible says God’s finger put those words on the stones. I’m going to speculate that God allowed this to happen because they would have worshipped the stones. Can you imagine, they were already worshipping a golden calf? Don’t you just love the way Aaron described this—he gathered the gold and melted it and the calf ‘just came out’. If I were Moses I would have said, “Really, Aaron?” Yet, to worship a stone with God’s own writing on it would be an easy step. If they were willing to worship a statue made of gold, imagine what they would have done with the Word of God, written by His own hand!

So God’s personally written words had to be re-written, the second time, and by man’s labour in writing it out. The spoken word became the written word. Today’s claims of revelation do not fit into the pattern of the past in which God qualified visions and dreams. It is very evident that God’s Word was given by God Himself, as audible, verbal communication to man. There is so much in the Word of God today that shouts ‘we have only the written Word’. We are told in Timothy to be diligent, rightly dividing the Word of truth. That passage necessitates having the Word of God written. How can you study and be diligent to rightly divide the Word of God if the preacher is giving it himself. The Bereans were noble because when they heard the apostles preach, they searched the Scriptures to see their message was true. So even in the era of the NT before the Scriptures were written, when the apostles were sharing God’s truth, the noble

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Jewish people would check to see if this was consistent with the written Scriptures of the OT.

b) The Spoken Word for the Present

In Hebrews 1:1 there is a distinction made: “*God who spoke in times past by the prophets*” is distinct from “*hath in these last days has spoken to us by His son.*” There is a unique division between what was past and what is in these last days. There’s much controversy and confusion by what is meant by “these last days.” One of our church members travelled to Israel. When he returned, he said “when I see what’s going on in Jerusalem, I know we are living in the last days.” I wanted to say “yes, we have been living in the last days since Jesus was born because the essence of the ‘last days’ means the days of the seed.

i) The Definition of the Time

I have developed in the student manual, my arguments for the ‘last days’ meaning the days of the seed.. To understand what the last days are, we must first of all understand the term. To understand the term, we must think biblically. When we look at history from a biblical perspective the series of historical events put into order is called eschatology. We define it as the study of future things, but we cannot begin from where we live; because eschatology has been part of Scripture since Adam. The study of eschatology must begin from the perspective of Adam. What was Adam’s eschatology? What did God promise him the future would bring? The answer is evident: *And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.* (Ge 3:15), it was the promise of the Seed. All that Adam had for his eschatology was the promise that ‘the seed of the woman would destroy the seed of the serpent’.

Adam’s eschatology is the unveiling of Jesus Christ. In terms of time, it is a person, Jesus Christ. The essence of all eschatology is Jesus Christ. We need to think historically, eschatology begins with Adam and for him eschatology was the promise of the seed. Adam, the first man in creation, had been put into the garden of Eden, the perfect paradise. He lost para-

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dise when he sinned. He was put out of the garden of Paradise and the consequences of this sin he face every day. He had to leave his home of Paradise, he struggled for his food, he continued to struggle with the sin nature he was left with. Yet, having lost Paradise, God gave him a promise that Paradise would be restored. In Adam's mind, his hope was restored. For him, his hope was the person promised, the Seed. When we look at eschatology as it stretches through Scriptures, it begins with Adam's promise of the Seed.

For today's humanity, the Seed has come. Jesus Christ was the beginning of the days of the Seed. His birth was the fulfillment of the promise to Adam. But are the days of the seed ended? No, Jesus Christ has only come once. He is coming again. Has Eden been restored? No, there's going to be a long procession of significant events before Eden is restored. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself has to reign, the Seed has to establish a kingdom, that kingdom has to have Israel restored to its priestly office. That kingdom has to have the nations bowing to Christ. That kingdom has to have a spiritual people who are supervising the nations and giving them guidance in righteousness.

Who is that people? It is not Israel, for they will be Christ's priests. It will be the raptured believers of all time, who are raised from the dead in a perfect state, and those living believers, instantly glorified. This 1000 year kingdom is close to Eden, but is it fully restored Eden? No it is not, because there is still sin nature within people born in this period, and at the end of the millennium kingdom there is still a world in rebellion against Christ. When the Lord puts an end to human procreation and brings on the eternal state, then the days of the Seed usher in the true Eden, a new world without sin.

Student Question: Will there be a temple in the tribulation period? So we have in this context....

Prof. Answer: The prominent figure in the tribulation is the Anti-Christ. Whether there is temple worship restored, I don't remember. Nevertheless,

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the tribulation ends with all Israel coming to believe in Jesus Christ. That is the key purpose, regarding Israel, or the tribulation.

We want to define “in the last days.” As referred to in Heb. 1:2. What does it mean that God has spoken to us by His Son ‘in the last days’? Many use it as the days before the rapture. What I’m trying to show you as we think biblically is that the ‘last days’ are the days since Jesus’ birth. We need to think developmentally. We use the word ‘the last days’ the wrong way, we think of it in terms of the signs of the times. In the Student Manual I indicate there is a personal unity of all Eschatology. **Thinking biblically, the Bible distinguishes "the last days" as the broad line of the ‘days of the Seed’. These terms appear synonymous in time but different in focus; ‘last days’ indicating time from human perspective, ‘days of the Seed’ from divine perspective.**

There is a personal unity to all of eschatology, focusing on the completion of the promise to Adam, that personal unity is "the days of the seed' who is Jesus Christ. THE LAST DAYS BEGAN WITH HIS BIRTH AND END WITH THE COMPLETION OF HIS MILLENNIAL REIGN USHERING IN THE NEW HEAVEN AND EARTH, the days between the coming of promise and the restored Eden. Heb.1 tells us that the revelation for the entire "last days" or the "days of the seed", span from his birth to the New Heaven & Earth. (Perhaps the "last days" or the "days of the seed" end in the mind of God when present earth history ends and eternity's new heaven and earth begin, although Christ will bear the marks of Calvary for eternity).

ii) The Disclosure of the Message

When I say we have been living in the last days, I speak of the time from the birth of Jesus Christ? From Heb. 1:2, now all revelation we have is from the Son: *has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;*. There is, in the same book, a revelation given that corresponds to the Son: *how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first*

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began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will? (Heb.2:3, 4)

In this text, the context focusses on the source of the great salvation that we have heard from the Son in comparison to the OT Scriptures. It says “how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation.” Is this ‘salvation’ referring only to being born again? No, in vs. 1 and 2 it is broadened to refer to that which was spoken by the angels. He is talking about the salvation found through revelation. And so the message, the ‘great salvation that we have heard’ is not just the message of the gospel. It is the whole message of salvation in Jesus Christ that includes all N.T. truth in Christ; our salvation, our redemption, our adoption, our regeneration, our sanctification, our purpose, our service and all which is a part of new birth.

In this passage we see that it was first spoken by the Lord (vs. 3), and was confirmed by those *who heard Him*, the apostles who sat at His feet and were taught by Him. The apostles passed it on to us. This verse qualifies what it says in Heb. 1:2; for today all revelation is from the Son. In the NT this disclosure of the message is revealed by the ministry of the Spirit of God as giving revelation from the Son. John 14 and 16 clearly teaches that what Jesus taught to the disciples, was brought back to their minds by the Spirit; (vs. 13) the Spirit does not speak of Himself. One of the key ministries of the Spirit of God was to refresh the word Jesus spoke to the apostles.

What about Paul? He gave us many epistles, but he wasn’t one of the original apostles who were with Jesus for 3 years. Did his message come from a different source? Galatians 1 answers this question; (vs 11, 12) Paul received it directly from Jesus Christ. There was a period of time in Paul’s life when he was taught personally by Jesus Christ. Paul clarifies this by saying that he did not confer with people, he only preached what he heard. He had travelled to Arabia and was there (vs 18) 3 years, before returning to Damascus. How long did Jesus spend with his apostles?

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About 3.5 years, approximately the same amount of time, but personally with Jesus . Where did Paul get his message? He received it directly from the Son.

In the divisions of the Bible that we commonly use today, The Revelation is accurately the final book. Clearly the last book of the Bible is a continued unfolding of prophecy. According to John, he received it directly from Jesus Christ: *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants — things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw* (vs.1-2). The uniqueness of the NT era is that in the times of the last days, revelation came from Jesus Christ.

iii) The Distinctive of the Messengers

Furthermore, Heb. 2 states: *how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?* Here ‘Those who heard him’ are also distinct, they were given the word of prophecy, this message of salvation: the fullness of NT truth for us. Yet, it wasn’t enough that they just gave it, God also confirmed these men bearing witness by unique demonstrations. This paralleled O.T. prophets. When the prophets spoke Israel wanted a sign. Moses himself was constantly giving signs to the people to affirm he was the messenger of God.

In the OT, unique demonstrations were given to confirm the message of the prophets, in Acts 2 when Peter is preaching he says the same things about Jesus’ message. He was confirmed with miracles and wonders and signs. Miracles always confirm the message. Now we come to the ministry of the apostles who have the new message for the church in this age. How are they confirmed? They are confirmed by Miracles, wonders, and signs. Notice that there is one additional confirmation given in Hebrews;

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gifts of the Holy Spirit. This is why we distinguish ‘signs’ that confirm the apostle’s message from the service gifts.

Hebrews 2:4 made this same distinction: *God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?* In Hebrews the Lord tells us that in the last days, the days of the Seed, we have a unique revelation, the spoken Word of God from Jesus Christ. God, through Peter, tells us that all Scripture was given by the Holy Spirit: *knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, {Or origin } for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*

Although the writer of Hebrews is not identified, the following is a short bibliography of the known N. T. writers:

Matthew: was also known as Levi, was a publican or tax collector who was chosen by Jesus to be one of the twelve Apostles. As a tax collector Matthew would have been a literate person well suited to author one of the gospel records. Early church tradition credits Matthew with the authorship of the gospel bearing his name.

Mark: This disciple is given credit by the early church as the author of the Gospel bearing his name. Mark was the Latin surname given to this young man who's Jewish name was John. John Mark was cousin to Barnabas a prominent figure in the early church. Mark traveled with his cousin Barnabas in ministry and later in years ministered to the Apostles Peter and Paul. Mark is not identified as one who walked with Jesus yet his association with the Apostles makes him more than qualified to produce a gospel record.

Luke: This man is credited with authoring the third Gospel and the book of Acts. Luke is mentioned three times in the New Testament. (Colossians 4:14; Philemon 24; II Timothy 4:11) and from these passages we learn that Luke was a physician and a fellow worker of Paul who traveled with Paul during his missionary journeys. Luke was an educated man who's attention to historical detail is of great value to us today.

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John: One of the twelve apostles, John was a fisherman and brother to one of the other twelve apostles James. The Apostle John is the author of the fourth gospel, three epistles and the Revelation. John was a close personal associate of Jesus being referred to as the "disciple whom Jesus loved." John's writings are of tremendous value to the Christian church and account for a significant portion of the New Testament.

Peter: Peter was one of the most prominent of the twelve Apostles. He was also a fisherman and brother to another of the twelve who's name was Andrew. Peter was also referred to at times as Simeon (Acts 15:14) along with Cephos and Simon (John 1:43). Peter was a part of Jesus inner circle of disciples and remains an important person throughout the early church history. Peter is credited with authoring the two Epistles which bear his name and as being the likely source for Mark's Gospel.

Paul: The Apostle Paul, although not one of the original twelve Apostles, was chosen by Jesus to be an apostle and to go out to bring the gospel to the non-Jewish people of his day. Paul was a Jew of respectable heritage and a ranking member of the strict Jewish sect of the Pharisees. Paul was also a Roman citizen by birth which he used to his advantage in times of persecution. His name before his conversion was Saul and he was well known because he fiercely persecuted the early Christians. After his miraculous conversion Paul went on to live one of the most fruitful lives of service for the kingdom of God.

James: The author of the epistle of James this man was also a brother of Jesus. (Galatians 1:19). James was not one of the twelve Apostles but was clearly a leader in the early church in Jerusalem. An important council in Jerusalem chaired by James was responsible for deciding that it was no longer a requirement to keep the ceremonial aspects of the law of Moses. Acts 12:17; 15:13,19; Gal 2:9. Along with being a member of Jesus household James also had the privilege of seeing Jesus after He rose from the dead. I Cor. 15:5,7.

Jude: The author of one epistle of only twenty five verses Jude was also a brother of James and of Jesus. Jude 1; Gal 1:19 His name in greek

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would be Judas however this is not the traitor of Jesus but the defender of the faith who's epistle speaks out boldly against the apostasy of his day. (<http://godisforus.com/information/Bible/ntdocs/authors.htm>).

CLASS 5

I have defined the message as the revelation that came from the Son, which is the NT. This is the revelation of the 'last days' or 'the days of the seed'. We concluded that the OT Scriptures were completed by the prophets to the fathers. So in the context of Hebrews 1 where there is the distinction between what was the revelation and what becomes the revelation, there is suggestion that OT is complete is done, it is finished. From the idea suggested in the words "in times past God spoke in various ways." Is the suggestion that O.T. methodology is over, is complete.

Now, for the days of the seed, which is present time, there is the message from the Son. We discovered how that was confirmed in John 16 by the Spirit of God refreshing the apostle's minds, and testified by Paul in Gal. 1 where he was taught by Jesus, and confirmed by John in Revelation when he received the message of the churches and the prophesies to come. I made a point to distinguish between the leading of God through His Spirit to all God's children and the revelation of God which is direct disclosure of the Word of God. The point is **THE REVELATION OF GOD IS COMPLETE IN THE MESSAGE OF THE SON.**

iv) The Discontinuation of the Message

We have looked at the disclosure and the distinctive of the message through Jesus Christ (the final Revelation of God for the present) and now the discontinuation of the message must be made clear. There are six evidences that confirm the completion of God's revelation for today.

First of all, **there is the evidence by association.** Heb. 2:3 tells us that we got the message from the Son from those who heard Him. This salvation experience, which was first announced by the Lord had also received confirmation through the various miracles and manifestations of the Spirit

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which His original auditors, those who heard Him, were empowered to exhibit.⁴ Those who heard Him and were confirmed by Him refers to the Apostles. The people who heard Him are not alive today. Even the additional apostle Paul who was taught by Jesus is not alive today. If, by their death, any association with the living has ceased, no further information or ‘additional message’ is possible. No more revelation from the apostles is forthcoming.

There is **the evidence by declaration** found in the last verses of the NT, declaring that nothing should be added or taken away from the book. Anyone who claims direct revelation from God today is adding to the book. These individuals are under great judgements because God says He’ll deliver the great plagues within Scripture to them. This is a great warning testifies to the severity of looking for, or declaring additional revelation from God.

There is **the evidence by cessation** evident in 1 Corinthians 13:8 which states: *Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.* This text’s grammatical construction literally says prophecy will be made to stop. The Greek word *katargeomai* (fail) has the idea put a stop to, cause to cease to happen.⁵

Student Question: *How does verse 8 relate to verse 10, I see a problem there.*

Prof. Answer. *We have the clear statement in verse 8 that prophecy will fail or be stopped. In the same verse the same thing is said about knowledge; knowledge will ‘vanish away’ (English Bible). This is the same word used with prophecy, meaning made to stop (passive voice).*

⁴ Hodges, Z. C. (1985). Hebrews. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (Heb 2:2–4). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁵ Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

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Then it says; for we know in part and we prophecy in part (v. 9). I understand this as Paul being only given part of the ‘prophecy’ or revelation, being only so many epistles. Those who had the gift of prophecy were only giving the Word of God directly to the church until the gift ended with the Word written. It seems to me that ‘that which is perfect and that which is in part (v. 9) refers to revelation (prophecy) itself, not being complete yet. The word ‘perfect’ means complete. Any person with the gift of prophecy, including Paul, only gave part of the total message. Verse 10 simply states that when the revelation (prophecy) is complete, then the gift is over, no longer active. For me verse 10 supports verse 8 indicating the gift of prophecy will cease by indicating that when N.T. prophecy is completed (finally in written form as the O.T. was) the gift is ended.

Prophecy, knowledge, and tongues were not permanent gifts. (*Knowledge* does not mean “education,” but the immediate imparting of spiritual truth to the mind.) These three gifts went together.⁶ God would impart knowledge to the prophet (the gift of prophecy – the revelation from God), and he would give the message in a tongue (a language of humanity, heard sometimes even though not even the speaker’s language, and therefore a confirmation (wonder) of genuine revelation. Then an interpreter (sometimes the prophet himself) would explain the message (gift of knowledge – direct understanding from God, independent from previous study or commentary by man).

There is **the evidence of cessation by assumption:**

Eph. 2:19-20: *Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.*

Here all the saints and household of God are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. The “prophets” are of the New Testament era, not the Old Testament. “Prophets” follows the word “apostles” here and in

⁶ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (1 Co 13:8–13). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

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3:5 and 4:11. These men received the revelation of the mystery of the church in the present Age, which had been hidden in days past, that is, in Old Testament times (3:5).⁷

The ‘apostles and prophets’ are the foundation. The words could be translated, “the foundation which consists of the apostles and prophets.” This makes the best sense when one sees in 4:11 that the apostles and prophets were gifted men given to the church as its “foundation.” Furthermore, this fits well in the present context, which states that Christ Jesus Himself is the chief Cornerstone, that is, He is part of the foundation. In ancient building practices “the chief cornerstone” was carefully placed. It was crucial because the entire building was lined up with it. The church’s foundation, that is, the apostles and prophets, needed to be correctly aligned with Christ. All other believers are built on that foundation, measuring their lives with Christ.⁸ The foundation for a building is a single entity once completed, where the building sits built on top. By saying the apostles and prophets are the foundation assumes it is completed and the house is being built upon it.

Scripture also gives **the evidence of cessation by expiration**. In 2 John 1, John calls himself the elder (ὁ πρεσβύτερος). The word is used originally of seniority in *age*. So Luke 15:25. Afterward as a term of rank or office.⁹ For John this was not an unlikely appellation to have been given

⁷ Hoehner, H. W. (1985). Ephesians. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (Eph. 2:20). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁸ Hoehner, H. W. (1985). Ephesians. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (Eph. 2:20). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁹ Vincent, M. R. (1887). *Word studies in the New Testament* (2 Jn 1). New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons.

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to the last surviving apostle. Other apostles had been called elders; their successors also were called elders; but St. John was “*the elder*.”¹⁰ The article shows that the person was well known to the readers.¹¹ John was definitely the last apostle. An examination of the two letters, II and III John, discloses the fact that he was exercising authoritative supervision over a wide circle of churches... This indicates that he was also acting in an official capacity as an elder.¹² Therefore, at the time of writing the epistles, John is an old man, as the last apostle his days are numbered. When he is gone, the foundation is complete by cessation.

Finally, Scripture indicates **the evidence of cessation by explanation**. Jude 1:3 states: *Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints*. The context here is Jude’s call (God’s call) for the saints to contend for the Faith. I suggest that the wording ‘faith once delivered’ refers to the embodiment of God’s truth for the church. The word ‘faith’ is used different ways in Scripture. I believe Jude is referring to the truth for the church, which is the NT. The idea of ‘once delivered’ has the idea of singularity of work. What has been transmitted is carefully defined, not, indeed, as a system of doctrine, but at least as a sum or deposit of things necessary to be believed. This is said to have been given once for all, so that there is no repetition or extension of the gift. It is described, further, as committed, not to the Church as an organization, nor to any particular

¹⁰ *2 John*. 1909 (H. D. M. Spence-Jones, Ed.). The Pulpit Commentary (1). London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company.

¹¹ Haas, C., Jonge, M. d., & Swellengrebel, J. L. (1994). *A handbook on the letters of John*. UBS Handbook Series (158). New York: United Bible Societies.

¹² Wuest, K. S. (1997). *Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English reader* (2 Jn 1). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

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office-bearers, but to the saints in general.¹³ In Jude's eyes he is looking at the faith, the deposit of NT truth for the church, a one event delivery.

I admit that any one of these argument of the completion of N.T. and therefore its cessation might be weak, but when you look at all six, it is very conclusive that the canon is over, we have all the revelation from God we need for this 'church' age until the Lord removes the church.

Student Question: I am still not clear about what the meaning of Jude 3 "faith once delivered" means.

Prof Reply: When June writes the 'faith once delivered' it has the idea of a single event in the mind of God. It is outside of time, not referring to a confined moment. For those of you that are taking Greek studies, you will understand that there is a nuance of Greek thinking that sees a future event as a completed picture. Even Jude, who is writing before the New Testament is complete, is making reference to revelation in this mindset: 'Faith once for all delivered' is stating God's revelation for the 'church,' (not a single local assembly but the body of Christ), as though it has already been given.

I know I have stated this before, but again I say you can be a good pastor without having studied the original Bible languages. The key for you students is to refer to commentaries that have been written by good Bible language exegetes. As hammers and saws are the necessary tools of carpenters, so commentaries and quality Bible language reference books are the necessary tool for you. Nevertheless, there are great blessings in taking the time to learn and understand the Bible languages, especially N.T. Greek. Greek is a very precise language, far more so than Hebrew. I believe that the Lord raised up Alexander the Great to force the Greek language upon the world he had conquered for the purpose of N.T. revelation.

¹³ *Jude*. 1909 (H. D. M. Spence-Jones, Ed.). The Pulpit Commentary (4). London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company.

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Student Question: We see that revelation was completed with the book of Revelation, but what would justify the growth of Islam where Mohamed pulled some inspiration from the Bible, including it in the Koran.?

Prof. Reply: There is only one inspired book, the Bible, the Word of God. When we study the doctrine of inspiration, this will be evident. If you remember, when looking at general revelation which called men to seek God, men had the opportunity to move in two directions. Creation and conscience are genuine calls to seek out true God. But because of the sin nature of man and depravity of man, no man seeks after God. The alternative is for man to seek his own God. Hinduism, Islamism, and all false religions are expressions of man's attempt to seek their own god or gods. What does Paul tell us in Romans, man chooses to believe a lie rather than the truth. So why is Ismailism popular? It is because the great majority of humanity prefers to believe a lie. We must be careful that we do not relate religious growth to spiritual prosperity or success. It is wrong to assume that the majority is always correct. This is never true in humanity because it is only the very small minority that will find the true God. Jesus said it this way: There are two roads, the broad road which many follow and leads to destruction, and the narrow road which few take and leads to eternal life. By the grace of God all who are called to salvation are on the narrow road.

Student Question: You say that all on the narrow road are called by God. You also say man has a choice. I do not understand this.

Prof. Answer: Well, all I can say is that both are stated in Scripture. The Bible says; No man seeks after God. The Bible also says: Whosoever will, may come. It is difficult for us to logically reconcile these statements. The truth is that Jesus died for all men, so the invitation is to all men, but no man can come to God unless God calls him. One man has said it this way: There is a broad road where every person begins, headed to eternal damnation. On this broad road is a sign pointing to a narrow road. On the sign visible from the broad road there is the invitation for every person: Whosoever will, may come. For those who enter that narrow path there is

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a message on that side of the sign that says: Called before the foundation of the World.

God has called His people. The doctrine of election is clear in Scripture, a doctrine for God's people who are on this path. We realize after salvation the great privilege of being called from all humanity, entirely by grace.

Does one man deserve salvation more than any other man? No, salvation is by grace alone!

Student Question: We are talking about the God of Abraham, that's who a Muslim prays to as well.

Prof. Reply: No he is not. By relation to Abraham, he says he is, but he is not. Did the Jewish people in the OT have the true God? Yes, in actuality God had them. Were all the Jewish people saved? No, only a very small remnant. I have talked with Muslim's. It is true, the God they believe in created the world, the God of Abraham. But, do they believe this God gave His Son Jesus Christ to be the Saviour. No they do not. Some Muslims even believe that Jesus had a twin brother and when He died, his twin brother took over. Paul warned; don't let any tell you of another Jesus, someone who is not the real Jesus. Unbelievers, rejecting God's provision of salvation through Jesus Christ, cannot be saved, therefor they do not have fellowship with God. The God they worship is not the God of the Bible, the God of Abraham.

We have been side tracked as this discussion does relate to revelation. Let me wrap up these questions with this final comment: With the influence of post-modern thinking, Christians are open to accept the Hindu holy book, the Koran as well as the Bible. Post modernism is the thinking of most of Europe and North America today. One of the foundations of this thinking is that truth is relative. So the Hindu has his truth, we as Christians have our truth, and all that God looks for is faith in whatever truth you have.

This is a lie. Many churches are accepting this. The reality is they are not truly born-again people, their faith is in 'faith,' not Jesus Christ. Beware of Postmodernism, it will slip into your education system, if it has not as yet!

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C. The Dynamics of the revelation.

1. A Divine Activity

God has spoken. We have realized that God has spoken. We see the dynamics of His revelation as we consider the written record of His revelation. It is a divine activity, that prophecy came when God spoke to holy men and they were moved by the Spirit of God (2 Pet. 1:21). Revelation can be compared to an equal work of creation itself. God spoke and all creation came into being, a great work of God. God spoke and His Word became written, another great work of God.

2. A Verbal Activity

We see that revelation was and always has been a verbal activity. It is God with various means speaking to His people. When He spoke to them, He spoke in a language they understood. We have 3 different languages by which the revelation of God was recorded; the OT has mostly Hebrew but some passages of Aramaic, they are closely related languages, but two dialects. In the NT we have 27 books given in Koine Greek.

These are human languages. Do not fall into the mistake that only priests can understand the Bible. It is common language. All men can understand the grammatical part of the Scriptures, but they understand the spiritual aspect only by the work of the Holy Spirit. We have verbal activity of ordinary language in all the books of the Bible as already examined in Hebrews 1.

3. A Progressive Activity

Revelation clearly progressive activity as Paul declares: *how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets* (Eph. 3:3-5). By the use of the idea of Paul receiving the ‘mysteries’ of God, we see the progressive activity of revelation. Mystery does not mean something hidden that cannot be understood, it is simply the re-

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vealing of something that was previously not revealed. We see it must include additional information of the promised Messiah of the OT.

Was there knowledge of the Messiah in the OT? Yes, much information was given. Where he was born, where he was raised, the nature of His birth, were all given in the OT? There are many OT details of the Messiah. But what was the mystery? It was revelation regarding the distinction of Christ's first and second comings, the N.T. church, the rapture, the details of His second coming. It was Jesus making all men one, which was unfathomable for the Jew. These newly revealed mysteries or facts demonstrates progression in revelation. Does that mean in the OT people could not be saved because they didn't have all the information? Not at all, Abraham believed and it was accounted to him for righteousness, Job knew his redeemer lived, David was a man after God's own heart. What did these men believe? They believed what God told them. Salvation has always been dependent of what God said about His provision for salvation, no matter what stage of revelation time allowed. Salvation has always been by grace through faith.

4. An Accumulative Activity

I don't know all the denominations represented in this classroom, but without offending, let me say this to our brothers who embrace the reform theology. In America there are 'reform churches' and there are those that are 'historical reform', actually called 'historical Baptists'. One of the doctrinal positions of these churches is Amillennialism. They do not believe in a literal 1000 year reign of Christ. Most of these reform churches preach the true gospel, but the problem is they deny progressive revelation, making major problems in how they understand the OT, resulting in inconsistency in interpreting Scriptures.

Student Question: What about the Mennonites

Prof. Reply: In Canada there is a strong element of Mennonite Churches, as far as I know, some are dispensational and some are not. It really depends on the history of their particular Mennonite persuasion.

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Mark it down in your mind; revelation is progressive involving a culminated activity. Again I turn to Hebrews 2: *how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?* (v.3, 4). Note the culminated activity by virtue of time; last days, transition; began to be spoken... confirmed by them that heard, and testimony; one for all delivered (Jude 3). As a culminated activity, by definition it must reach a climax or a point of completion, therefore, it has come to an end. By the evidence noted in time, in transition, and in testimony, the message in Christ is complete.

II. INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

A. Biblical Description of Inspiration

We want to talk about the Inspiration of the Bible. The doctrine of inspiration concerns the written word of God. It is a part of the process of getting the Bible. The English Bible words ‘given by inspiration of God’ are the translation of the compound Greek word θεόπνευστος (*theopneustos*), and is used only once in the N.T.: *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness* (2 Tim. 3:16). The compound Greek word theo/pneustos literally means ‘God-breathed’. The idea of inspiration is applied to the writings, not the writers. We have misused the idea of ‘inspired’ in our societies. A painter can be inspired; a popular song writer who grips people with his songs is called inspired.

Because the word inspired is used the in a non-Biblical way in society, many people think the idea of inspiration has to do with the person who is writing the words: ‘Oh, when Paul wrote the book of Timothy he was inspired’ just like the rock singer. No, Paul was not inspired, the apostle John was not inspired, Moses was not inspired, it was their epistles, their

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books that were inspired. The Word itself is ‘God-breathed’, not the person.

What the apostles and prophets did was record the inspired Word. That was their job, to record the words given by God to them. You can see the parallels in “God has spoken.” He spoke and we have creation. What state was creation in when God spoke? It was complete, with mature reproducing vegetation and animal life. Was there death in creation when God initially spoke. No. When God made the trees and animals originally, it was a perfect state, no death, no disease, no animal ate other animals. An ant was never crushed by an elephant. It was a perfect world called ‘paradise’.

How did Paradise get messed up? Scripture explains: *Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin* (Rom. 5:12). Romans indicates that the whole world groans because of the sin of Adam (Rom. 8:19-22). Do we live in a perfect world today? No. How do we know this? We know it because death rules; everything living dies, vegetation dies, animals die, people die. Mankind is not in a perfect world any longer, but originally it was perfect and it will be restored to perfection again.

Student Question: The human authors were not inspired, but were they not pushed by the Spirit of God to write.

Prof. Reply: We are going to cover that question later, but different Bible words were used to explain how this was done. The point I make now is that Inspiration describes the product, the Words given, not the process of man writing. We got the Scriptures as men recorded God-breathed words.

God has spoken. Giving humanity the words to write was another way in which God spoke. Was the Word perfect when God spoke? It had to be because it is the spoken Word of God and God is perfect. When John actually wrote his epistles, these God-breathed words, it was perfect. The words written on O.T. scrolls were God breathed words written by various chosen men. The product, the original written scrolls was perfect, without

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error. It was a creation of God even as original creation of the universe was. From 2 Timothy 3:16 ‘Inspiration’ tells us that the very words of all Scripture were given by God and, as God is perfect, so these original words given were without error.

The question to be asked is, “John was not a perfect man, could he have made an error, spelled one word wrong?” The answer is No, because God superintended the writing of it. The product is inspired. But the human writers, although imperfect men, were guided. We see this in 2 Pet. 1:20-21: *knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*

This says that men were ‘moved’ by the Holy Spirit. The Greek word translated ‘moved’ is φέρομαι (*pheromai*), from φέρω (*pherō*) meaning moved, carried along, guided. The word has the idea of being borne along like a sail ship is moved by the wind. This text explains the process of man receiving the inspired Word of God. The Holy Spirit carried along or guided the men as they wrote. This describes the actual activity of writing the words of Scripture down. God ensured that His Words were accurately written by the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Note the parallel: *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness [was] on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.* (Gen. 1:1,2). The Bible tells us that when God created the world, the Spirit of God moved over the earth. The Spirit of God was involved in the creation of the universe. Throughout the record of God’s creation of the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1:1-31), God declared the results to be ‘good’, and when completed ‘very good’, the result was divine perfection. Being the work of perfect God, it could be nothing less.

Creation was a work of God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. We are told in the NT that ‘*by Him all things are created and are held together*’ (Col. 1:16-17), speaking of Jesus Christ. In the same way all the persons of the Godhead are involved in giving the inspired Word of

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God. The result of the original documents written by the apostles and prophets is perfection; no errors, no omissions, no additions, only God-breathed words.

Student Question: There are many others who have undertaken to write about Jesus. Is this illumination or guidance? What is it?

Prof. Reply: Are you asking why Luke for example would have done his research?

Student Replies: Yes, was Luke led by inspiration or illumination, or was this human effort?

Prof. Reply: Obviously God was working in Luke's life. We will look at this soon. When God gave man His breathed Word, and this was recorded by man. So whether by Moses or Luke, it was God's Word, it was perfectly recorded, but He also chose, in His power, to use the character, the nature, the style and the language of the each writer. So there are different words, different styles in Paul's writings than in John's writings. In the case of Luke, as a medical doctor with his nature to investigate, to pursue, to study, God directed him to do this before He gave him the Word. I see again a parallel in God speaking to bring creation. Look at the varieties of species of animals and vegetation in creation. Does every tree look the same, or is every animal the same? We have such diversity in the original perfection of creation. In giving us the Word, God also used the diversity of human characteristics. Luke was directed by God to study in order to, by his nature, make clarification.

It was in Luke who, by God's design, studied and researched to know more about Jesus Christ. How God use Luke's research, we do not know. God did include Luke's nature, and personality in Luke's Gospel and Acts. But was the result of this God-breathed perfection any different? No, the product was still the perfect Word of God. Perhaps the Lord's intention for making Luke a known thorough researcher, was simply to reassure the Jewish Christians, (who were the first saved, prior to Paul's explanation

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of Inspiration and Guidance), of the perfection of apostle's new revelation being equal to O.T. books.

CLASS 6

We began in our last class looking at the doctrine of inspiration. There is a distinction between inspiration and revelation. What is the difference? Inspiration is about Scriptures; revelation is about the authors. What is the definition of revelation? Revelation is the revealing of things that were hidden. Revelation is the giving of truth; inspiration is the recording of truth.

It is important to note that our view of inspiration will determine our hermeneutics and eventually how we apply the Scriptures. So the major part of our notes on bibliography concern inspiration. We saw in 2 Peter 3:16 the word 'inspiration'. How would you translate that? 'God-breathed', so the product is what we are talking about. Were the people inspired? No. we have another term for that, the idea of 'moved' or 'directed'. The outcome of God moving or superintending is the inspired Word of God.

B. New Testament Claims about Scripture

It is important to see the attitude of some of the authors in terms of OT and NT Scripture. 1 Tim. 5:18 states: *For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer is worthy of his wages."* In this passage Paul quotes Deut. 25:4 where it speaks about not muzzling the ox. In the last part of the verse he quotes Christ from Luke 10:7 "the labourer is not worthy of his wages'. The important thing to note is that both the OT and NT are quoted and Paul calls them both Scripture. Paul saw no difference between the OT giving of God's truth and the NT giving of God's truth.

In 2 Peter 3: 15, 16 we read: *consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation — as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you.* This is Peter's epistle. What

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was the significance of Peter among the 12 apostles of Christ? Peter was the spokesman. They all had individual ministries and no one was appointed as leader to be accountable to. But certainly Peter was the most prominent of the apostles. He was the one who preached the day the church was born. Sometime later Saul got saved, he is renamed Paul and declares himself to be an apostle, taught personally by Jesus as all the apostles were. It is significant that Peter speaks, as the Lord gives him direction, to qualify Paul epistles as Scripture.

There are other passages to look at, indicating an awareness among the writers of God's word, that they wrote Scripture. Even among the early church there seemed to be an awareness of the New Revelation Scripture, and what was just a common letter communication. In Paul's letter to the Corinthians he references a letter he wrote that was not Scripture. There is no record of it. There was a process in which the Spirit of God moved holy men, directing them to record God's truth. Therefore, a Bible based definition of 'inspiration' is important.

C. Developing a Definition of Inspiration

In developing a Bible based definition of Inspiration, **the first point** to be made is that the source and mover in inspiration is God. God revealed or disclosed the words and men of God recorded them. **The second point** is evidenced with the observation in study, that the nature and character of the language and the style of writing is different in each epistle with each author. It is evident that the 40 plus writers of God's Word were not robots, they were not just recording secretaries, they actually wrote God's truth as given to them with their own literary characteristics and style. It appears that the moving or guiding of the Spirit (referred to earlier), was a unique, harmonious union of man and God, producing God-breathed yet writer 'personally' recorded documents, errorless and eternal in nature. This product, the inspired Word of God, is the word of man and the Word of God. This should not be surprising since the same is true of Jesus; He was God and He was man.

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Student Question: I do not understand what 'being the word of man and the word of God' means.

Prof. Reply: This means that it is first God giving His truth, that makes the product (end result) the inspired Word of God. But it is recorded in common human language, making the product the word of man as well. God's Word is understood in human language, He does not give man revelation in a divine language, otherwise man would not understand it. His thoughts are given to man in human language. Would we have the Bible if God did not speak? Would we have the Bible if man did not write? No, therefore, Scripture is God's Word and man's word.

Student Question: To say the Bible is God's word in human language I agree, but to say it is man's word I have a problem.

Prof. Reply: I think you are caught up with semantics. All I am saying is that when God gave us His word, God chose to use man. He did not write it on a stone in divine language and give it to man to figure out. In giving man His revelation, God purposely expressed His truth with the personalities and characteristics of each individual writer. Perhaps the next point will clarify this.

Inspiration must have three factors: 1, the source is God; 2, the instruments are men; 3, the result is the authoritative writings. If in your own mind you do not like to say The Bible is God's Word and man's word, that is your choice, as long as you understand that Inspiration has these three factors. The end result is that humanity has God's Word in human language making Scripture the authority for our life and practice. Therefore, man has no excuse to ignore it or disobey it!

D. The Teachings of Jesus Regarding Inspiration

This authority is affirmed by Jesus' teaching: *Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. "For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.* (Matt. 5:17, 18). First of all, Christ says he did not come to destroy the Law and

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the prophets. What is the significance of that phrase? The words ‘the Law and the prophets’ referred to the whole OT, it was the way the Jewish people defined the complete OT in Jesus day.

When Jesus met with the disciples on the road to Emmaus, He talked with them: *beginning at Moses[the law] and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.* (Lu. 24:27). He was speaking of all the Scripture they had at that time, yet He qualifies it further by distinguishing that even the two small characters in the Hebrew alphabet would not fail. In the Bible Hebrew language a jot is the tenth letter in the Hebrew alphabet and the smallest. It was written above the line and looks to us rather like an apostrophe. A tittle is even smaller than a jot. A tittle is a letter extension, a pen stroke that can differentiate one Hebrew letter from another. It is significant that Jesus said the smallest characters of the Hebrew would never be lost, would never disappear. He was indicating that inspiration involves the very words, its perfection even the very letters of the words when they were recorded. Put that text in your mind; it will be useful when we talk about the new theories of inspiration.

Student Question: Where are these words in the French Bible?

Prof. Reply: I am sorry, I was not aware that the French Bible uses different words to identify these Hebrew language characteristics. The point to understand Jesus identifies the two smallest characters of the Hebrew alphabet; verifying that the actual words and letters were a part and product of inspiration.

Jesus said: *Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.* (Matt. 24:35). The reference of ‘heaven and earth’ is O.T. revelation Genesis. But the point being made is that Jesus places his own words and those of the OT as equal. Is there a red letter Bible in French? What does the red letter parts represent? Red indicates the words

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of Jesus. Are these words more important than the others? No, understand that it is all inspired, all is God's Word.

E. Inspiration Distinguished from Revelation and Illumination

In your notes there is a chart making distinction between inspiration, revelation and illumination. Revelation is the origin and giving of truth. This is the work of God in general by creation, in conscience, in a special way by incarnation in Jesus Christ, and in Scripture. Inspiration is the receiving and recording of truth. Does all revelation become inspiration? No, it was received but not all of it was recorded. Should we look for more? No, the Scripture says we should not look for more.

The text of Revelation warns about adding to or taking away of His completed revelation. Although we have not defined illumination, it is included in the chart. Illumination is the discovery and understanding of truth. Is there a guarantee that man will understand God's inspired Word? No, understanding comes only to the extent man allows the Holy Spirit to control: *But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* (1 Cor. 2:14). David suggests in Psalm 19:10 that man should desire God's truth (His statutes and commandments) greater than desire for pure gold. But we are told it is the Spirit of God that gives understanding. From 1 Cor. 2:14, Scripture states that man does not have a guarantee of understanding the Word of God? Understanding comes only through the Spirit working in man.

Although Scripture has more detail regarding God's revelation, there is no difference between the impact of creation on man and God's special revelation for man. All revelation has the limitation of human understanding. In our earlier look at general revelation with creation, did all men turn to God and worship the living God? No. What was required? Remember the diagram? The Holy Spirit working in man was required. When Jesus Christ came and lived among men and present the glory of God to men, were all men convinced? When Peter made his confession 'thou art the

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Christ', what did Jesus say happened to Peter? The father revealed this to you. Paul is saying the same in 1 Cor. 2:14, this time he's talking about the Word of God. Will people understand it? No, not without the Holy Spirit.

There is a level of understanding with all language, if you understand the language used. I will go back to my illustration of Hitler. We know the evil man he was. He read and studied the Bible. Would he have read that Jesus died for the sins of the world? Yes. Would he have read that hat all men are sinners and need to be saved? Yes. Did he understand and believe it? Not at all, he rejected it. Are all men responsible? Yes, that's what God's manifold revelation accomplishes. God's truth teaches is that all humanity deserves to be damned. This is true justice. But because God is merciful, He chose to call some to Himself even though He invited all.

Student Question: The Spirit helps us to understand the truth, why don't Christians come to the same conclusions when they study the Bible? Why is there such confusion?

Prof. Reply: I am convinced that man in his simplicity and with an open heart toward God will always come to the truth, if the Spirit of God is unhindered. The problem is the glasses or spectacles men use when they read the Bible. For example, the glasses of our definition of inspiration will affect understanding. If I define it as God's revelation as giving His thoughts, not His words, will I have the same understanding of His Truth? Not all. If I believe that Jesus was not the real Son of God, just a good prophet, will I have the same understanding? No. Even among God's people, if I believe there is no literal kingdom coming, will I have the same conclusion of the future? No. If I believe the church will go through the tribulation, will I have the same hope? Certainly not! Our culture and conduct depends on viewing God's truth with correct lenses. Why do God's people, true Christians, have so much disharmony of understanding and resultant confusion – because we carry a lot of baggage.

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F. Inspiration of the Original Text Not the Copies

We said that when God moved the writers and they wrote, the documents they wrote were perfect. Jesus indicated that the product was God's Word written; even the smallest Hebrew characters of the alphabet would be true and would last. What happened with those first documents called the autographs? What did the church do? Did they copy them accurately with a Xerox machine? No. They had to manually copy them. The Israelites did a better job of accuracy than the church. On a particular scroll or piece of cloth parchment made of goat skin, whenever it was, the original manuscripts were copied by other people. When the Jews, the scribes did this, they would count the number of words in each section and count as they recorded to see if they had the same number. They did the best that they could. But, were they perfect people? No.

This is why we say (spaces to be filled in the student notes), that it is the original manuscripts, known as the autographs that were the perfect product, the actual inspired Word of God. Mistakes and changes made in copying and translation cannot claim this original inspiration. Let me give some examples of where this is evident. Compare these texts: *Ahaziah was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem.* (2 Kings 8:26), *Ahaziah was forty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem.* (2 Chron. 22:2). Do you see a difference? Ahaziah is 22 years in Kings and 42 years in Chronicles. This is an example of a copier error. If you study Hebrew you will know how easy it is to make copying mistakes because the Hebrew numbering is easily confused. Changing the Hebrew spelling of 'twenty-two' to 'fourty-two' is done by changing the letter ׀ into ׀, an easy mistake.

Compare these texts: *And Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen* (1 Kings 4:26) with *Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen* (2 Chron. 9:25). Once again the inconsistency is with numbers; forty thousand stalls or four thousand stalls? This is also a similar copying error easily made with Hebrew numbering. Does these inconsistencies

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mean God did not preserve His Word? No. The key is to recognize that the great Doctrinal and Historical content of the Bible has been transmitted without loss or change. Copies have a Derived or Virtual Inspiration as they are faithful copies of the autographs. Technically only the autographs are inspired but practically the present day Properly Translated Bibles are inspired in that they are an accurate transmission of the original.

When you consider how many books of the Bible we have and how long of a period they have been copied over and over, it is a miracle there is such consistency. A way to show this is to have people form a circle, prepare a small story with some detail and tell the person next to you the story with detail so no one else can hear it but that person. Then have each person repeat the story to the next person all the way around the circle. Have the last person say aloud the story he heard. You read the story that you gave to the first person. There will be a great difference in the two stories.

Yes, there is some inconsistency with the copying. Numbers in the OT were very difficult. Some passages in the NT were omitted. But when you consider the size of the document and how accurate it has been in the years it has existed is a miracle in itself. What we say is that the copies have a derived or virtual inspiration. I have in my hand an English copy of the NKJ Bible. There are two problems with this Bible. First, it was translated from Greek and Hebrew manuscripts which were themselves passed down by being copied again and again. Even these Greek and Hebrew copies had minor problems that we discussed.

Second, this Bible is English, not Hebrew, English, not Greek. No two languages are perfectly parallel. When translating from Hebrew into English translators must decide which word reflects the original language best. Some modern languages don't even have words indicating the concepts that are in the Bible language words. There were missionaries who had gone to the mountains of Netherlands New Guinea. Their story demonstrates the challenges of cross cultural concept communication:

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The Richardsons seek for some way to relate the news of the gospel to the Sawi. Richardson tells them stories of the Bible, until he realizes with alarm that the Sawi see Judas as a hero for his friendship and then betrayal of Jesus. In addition, the tree villagers that come to live in the area surrounding the Tuans fail to live at peace. Richardson announces to the village leaders that, until peace comes to the area, he will leave for another Sawi village. Desperate to keep the Tuans and their supply of steel tools nearby, the Sawi perform an emotional peace child ceremony. Each village presents the enemy with an infant as a peace child. As long as the child lives, they explain to Richardson, the village lives at peace. In the case of an offense, someone may plead the peace child and strife will cease.

Richardson seizes upon the concept as a redemptive analogy for his religious doctrines. He calls Jesus Christ as the perfect peace child. He explains that any man who accepts God's peace child never needs to offer a human peace child again. The idea strikes a chord with the Sawi, but none of them accepts the news for themselves.

Then, Richardson returns to the village after traveling with his wife to the missionary outpost for the birth of their second son. On the way, their canoes capsize in the midst of crocodile-infested swamp water. They recover both children and, with the aid of a passing native, make way back to their jungle home. The Sawi threatens to beat the Richardson's native houseboy for the accident, but Richardson steps in to the boy's defense, crediting him with the rescue of the missionary's two sons. That day, several young Sawi men, including the Richardson's servant, personally accept the gospel of Jesus. Soon after, Hato, an elder in the village, also accepts Richardson's teachings.¹⁴

You understand when going from one language to another language, there is no perfect translation. Having said all that, I can say that the Bible translated properly in any language is a virtually inspired Bible. The accuracy of translating from the original languages will as good as possible. When I study the Hebrew and Greek language, and make my translations, sometimes I disagree with their translation. Therefore, it is wise to talk about the many translations of the Bible available today, and to discuss

¹⁴ <http://www.bookrags.com/studyguide-peace-child/#gsc.tab=0>

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what to look for in a translation to determine a good translation that can be deemed virtually inspired.

Student Question: When we read here in 2 Kings/ 2 Chron. in my Louis Segond Revised French Bible it says the same number.

Prof. Reply: That is an example of a philosophy of translation. The Hebrew manuscripts do make a distinction; one says 22, the other 42. So the translators decided themselves one of those numbers is correct and used that number for both. I don't know how they arrived at that conclusion, maybe they had scholars explain why one might be more accurate than the other. There is suppositional support for the forty-two, based upon the probable age of Ahaziah's father when Ahaziah was born. Nevertheless, these translators were undoubtedly trying to eliminate the discrepancies in the copies. Knowing that the original manuscripts, the autographs, would not have differences. They would have been completely accurate, word for word, not just ideas.

Student Question: 1 Kings 4 in my Bible stops at verse 20.

Prof. Reply: These are the things you will discover from version to version, depending on which Bible language manuscripts were used as the source for translations. It becomes a big problem as you have more translations and versions. In your culture and language, you have to make a determination for what translations are accurate to the original texts and best to use.

Student Question: Can we find the original manuscripts?

Prof. Reply: This is our next topic to cover, yet it is a good question: How can we claim inspiration when the autographs were never been seen by any living person when any present copies or translations were made. We have no empirical knowledge, no hands-on knowledge? We have only the Bible testimony of inspiration. Yet, this is altogether sufficient.

Continuing with the class notes; what are the Bible arguments for virtual inspiration of well copied or translated Scriptures, despite the absence

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of the autographs? First, God's works are always consistent. What God creates is always perfect, because God is perfect. If we confidently say creation was perfect, then we can confidently say God's creation of inspiration was also perfect.

Second, there is the argument of Paul and Jesus giving honour and credit to the O.T. manuals they used, even though these were copies produced many, many years after the O.T. writers. Paul was used by God to say all Scripture is given by inspiration of God. In his epistles he quoted the OT much. Paul, with authority said "this is what God said." Did Paul ever see the O.T. autographs? No, he had copies. Jesus is the author of the Word of God, He knew every word, but when He preached, He used the common Bible of the day. Jesus and the Apostles studied, memorized, used, quoted, and read most often from the Bible of their day, the Septuagint.

The Septuagint [LXX] was the first translation of the Hebrew Bible and was made in the third century B.C. by Jewish scribes, who were direct descendants of those trained in Ezra's Great Synagogue of Jerusalem. They were complete experts in the text, being very well versed in Hebrew and Greek. This translation became very popular among Jews in the first two centuries before Christ because many Jews in those days did not understand Hebrew. Their ancestors had left Israel centuries before, and generation after generation gradually lost the ability to read the Scriptures in Hebrew.¹⁵ Jesus didn't reach into his wardrobe and pull out Moses' original autographs. Yet, He still said 'not one jot or tittle would fail,' probably referring to the Septuagint.

There is also a third argument, the argument of silence. It is a weaker argument and could bring controversy; therefore it must be used wisely among the proper audience. I say the original manuscripts were perfect, someone comes and says no they are not. I say 'prove they are not!' He

¹⁵ <https://www.christianity.com/jesus/birth-of-jesus/genealogy-and-jewish-heritage/what-Bible-did-jesus-use.html>

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says “Prove they are!” My argument is as legitimate as theirs, because neither of us have the originals to prove our point. Nevertheless, the unique accuracy of scientific, geographic, and historic information in the Bible is evidence of its absolute uniqueness, and shouts “the universe must have begun by intelligence,” which could be nothing less than a first cause, non-created, all powerful being which many acknowledge to be God. However, despite this overwhelming evidence, most of humanity denies its validity, thus proving the axiom: A person convinced against his will, is of the same opinion still!

G. Inspiration of Truth versus Recorded Facts

In our study examination of Inspiration, there must be an acknowledgement that there is a significant difference between what truth is and what truth is recorded. For example; the Bible says God is Light. Is this truth? Yes, it is truth. Man would never know or understand this without God revealing it. The Bible also says “God is dead.” Is this true? Your answers are from some no, from others yes. The Bible says: “The fool has said that God is dead.” The Bible accurately recorded what the fool says, even though it is a lie. There is a difference between God’s revealed truth, and God’s recording of human ideas, assumptions and perceived facts, even though these are not true. So the Bible does record many evil thoughts, evil decisions, evil goals and aspirations. We have in Genesis 3 an accurate record of Satan’s lie “you shall not die.” Ecclesiastes records the bad ideas of Solomon in his vane pursue of pleasure and wealth. What the Bible teaches is inspired, therefor without error, but not everything the Bible contains is errorless.

When we talk of inspiration the doctrine unfolds more than we first would expect. It is a deep study. Let me ask some questions to get a sense of your understanding:

Prof. Question: *Does inspiration demand perfection?*

Student Replies: *No.*

Prof. Question: *What is inspiration? Give me the definition.*

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Student Replies: *The gift of truth.*

Prof. Reply: *Wrong definition! Go back to the chart and give me the definition.*

Student Replies: *Receiving and writing the truth.*

Prof. Reply: *Yes, 'receiving and recording the truth' is the definition of inspiration. What is the process of inspiration? How was it done? How did God do it?- According to the Bible term from Peter?*

Student Replies: *The writers were moved by the Spirit.*

Prof. Reply: *'moved by the Spirit'- Is inspiration the process or the product?*

Student Replies: *The product.*

Prof. Reply: *Yes, is the product applied to the original manuscripts or to all the manuscripts and their copies?*

Student Replies: *Only the original.*

Prof. Reply: *O.K. Let's pretend I have Paul's original writing of the book of Ephesians. This is the original. The very parchment that he wrote on as the Spirit of God moved him. This is the inspired Word of God, moved by the Spirit of God. Not one word will fail given directly by God. But God was using Paul's own personality and own vocabulary. So again I ask you, is this perfect?*

Student Replies: *Yes.*

Prof. Reply: *O.K. So I ask again—does inspiration demand perfection? Is it necessary for the original document to be perfect?*

Student Replies: *Yes.*

Inspiration demands perfection because this is a creation of God. Did he use the agency of man? Yes, but can God use man and come up with perfection? Yes, God can do all things. I have in my hand Paul's actual written manuscript, because it is the original, it is inerrant. That is part of perfection. Does inspiration demand infallibility? Yes, What is the difference? Inerrancy means there are no errors in the document, no errors whatsoever. Infallibility means that what this teaches will never be wrong.

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I have the original manuscript that says that God is light. It is completely accurate, there is no error in the copy of the word, but the truth “God is Light” will also always be true. It was true when it was written and now even though we no longer have the original document, but I have a correctly produced copy that says “God is light.” Is that true today? Yes it is. That is infallibility.

Inspiration is perfect. The original manuscripts had no errors in the recording of the words of human language given. What this teaches us is the truth is eternal. We will look at some theories of inspiration tomorrow.

Student Questions: How can inspiration demand perfection if man is always imperfect. from today?

Prof. Reply: Our answer was the Spirit of God was superintending while man was writing to ensure perfection. The Spirit of God was superintending everything they were writing, actually moving them along as they wrote in their own language and writing style as they responded. Does the Spirit of God have the power to complete this task without even one error? Yes.

Student Questions: Does that mean the writer’s spirit was kind of in neutral, or did he have all his faculties?

Prof. Reply: All we can conclude is what the Scripture says. Did the product, the original manuscripts indicate the writer’s personality, writing style and vocabulary characteristics. Yes, but at the same time the Bible tells us they were moved by the Spirit of God so that Jesus could say every ‘part’ of each word would never fail. that is why the product was another miraculous work of God’s creative power.

CLASS 7

We are looking at the theories of inspiration today. Let us review the definitions: Revelation—the giving of truth, Inspiration—the recording of truth, Illumination—understanding/discovering the truth. I mentioned

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many times that your view of inspiration will determine your position in theology in many ways. We suggest it is like putting on glasses of culture bias which will affect our understanding. Even if we all believe the Bible is the Word of God, everyone has a bias when we put the cultural biases glasses on. That's why keeping a personal relationship with God is vitally important. 1 John 2:27 tell us the Spirit of God is our teacher. It's a discipline of study to keep an open mind so the Spirit of God can reveal His truth. Sometimes it's hard to have a perfectly open mind because we are influenced by our environment. Think about what impact this will have on a study of the Bible.

H. Theories of Inspiration

Bibliology's curriculum examines the various theories of inspiration to enable students to understand where people's positions could be.

1. The Naturalistic View of Inspiration

Naturalistic inspiration is an extreme view of unbelief. Simply stated it declares there is no such thing as inspiration. The Bible is just another book. This view suggests inspiration is a product of human invention just like Shakespeare's writing. As Shakespeare took liberty with history and made up stories, the Bible takes history and makes stories. If this is my view regarding the Bible, how will it affect my reading of the Bible? Do you think it possible for a person to come to the Bible thinking like this and God bring him to Christ? In the hymnal there are songs by a man named Cowper. He was a young man from a troubled home. He was very depressed and even tried to take his life. A doctor took him in to help him get over this depression. The doctor gave him a Bible just for something to read, to keep his mind from his troubles. As he was reading, without any belief that he was reading God's Word, the Spirit of God opened his eyes and he believed in Jesus Christ. Even those who believe it the Bible is an ordinary book can be saved because of the power of the God's Word to convict and convince (Heb. 4:12).

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Prof. Question: Have you met people in Cameroon who have this idea of the Bible?

Student Replies: Many

2. The Neo-orthodox View of Inspiration

The Neo-orthodox view of inspiration is also called ‘New Orthodoxy’. In the European orthodox churches, the focus is on tradition. Everything has been spelled out years ago, and they hold to their positions as a practice rather than belief. We could say orthodoxy is a holding to a fundamental position and not wavering from it. So the idea of new orthodoxy is almost a contradiction. The two key men who introduced this began an upheaval and great confusion.

However, their positions became popular and this became the position of many denominations. The first key man was Karl Barth. If you read commentaries you will come across this name. He believed there are errors in the Bible. Because there are errors, the Bible cannot be taken as literal truth. Because of this position he taught that God speaks through the Scriptures and uses Scriptures to communicate truth. Do you understand the difference? He would say the Bible is not the truth, but when you read it and God speaks to men so the Bible *becomes* the truth.

To Barth, reading the Bible required the comprehension of someone to find the truth and Therefore, the words become the truth to that person. Do you understand this position? Remember, inspiration is recorded truth, so whether I understand it or not, it remains absolute truth. God can judge mankind by the Bible as the measure of truth by which man will be judged (Rom. 5). Because the words are truth, this book is authoritative in every area of life. But, according to Barth, if I believe this book has many errors, then I could say this is not the authority. The Bible becomes the truth as I understand it rather than being the truth whether I understand it or not!

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Prof. Question: *If this is your belief, how would it change your understanding of the importance of the Bible? How would it change your interpretation of the Bible?*

Student Replies:

-I could ignore the parts I am uncomfortable with.

-The prohibitions of the Bible would mean nothing.

-It is all subjective. It is just information like a newspaper.

-When it becomes truth for me, everything I cannot understand by natural intelligence, that I cannot accept things by faith, just goes out the window.

-I could come to the conclusion that if the Bible cannot be interpreted literally, I have to have some sort of initiation, or something to set me on the right road to understanding.

Prof. Reply: *Yes, and the problem is Who decides what that initiation is. Now we begin to see why there are so many different opinions about what is truth! These are excellent comments. If I believe this is the Word of God, who is the authority of life? According to Barth? My own understanding, therefore ME! This is a major problem today. Man's position on interpretation has great implications in our life and in those we teach.*

A second key man who influenced neo-orthodoxy is Rudolph Bultmann. Rudolph perceived that the Bible was stories similar to those of Greek mythology. Stories such as Hercules; how he became half god and half man? Father a god/mother a woman. Sound familiar? In America there are first nations people who have their myths; one is about a great flood and a god who had compassion who saved people from this flood. Sound familiar? There are those who think religion is based on human imagination from myths, so Rudolph proposed the Bible is a bunch of myth stories. His view of inspiration is to de-mythologize Scriptures. This De-mythological View has at its core Existentialism with the task to strip the Bible of its legends. Butlmann believed if you get rid of the myths of the Bible, you will find the main message.

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An example is the story of Jesus feeding 5000, a mythological story for one purpose; Jesus cares for His people. That's the bottom line. It's not the fact that the story is Jesus feeding 5000 people as a miracle. No, it's a story to show God cares for people. This view of inspiration became popular in evangelistic circles regarding the Bible account of creation in Genesis because science seemingly 'proved' evolution. That was evidence the story was myth just to show that God started all. As a pastor I had a mother come and say a SS teacher told her child the story of Jonah was not true, but just shows that God cares for His people. The SS teacher wanted to do a good job and she read much about the text she was teaching, unfortunately she read neo-orthodox authors. She thought she was teaching the right thing. She apologized and told her students the truth. The Neo-orthodox position influences God's today people all around the world.

The idea of existentialism is to discover the core by experience rather than discover the truth. You can see the result of the two men is the same—the Bible has mistakes, so we have to find the truth and the Bible becomes the truth/ the Bible is stories that are mythological, just as all religions have myth, we have to get past the stories to find the truth. Although their belief was different the results are the same—the Bible is not the authority, man is the authority.

Notice there is a comparison between neo- orthodoxy and orthodoxy. Traditions held firmly. Orthodox would accept that the Bible is objective truth. Because it is objective, it does not change, it is consistent. The Word of God is the truth, therefore, it is absolute. What is meant by 'absolute'? It means there is no higher truth, the Bible is the final authority. It was the final authority in Moses' day, and is the final authority today. This also means it's Truth never changes. This truth is the same for me as it was for Moses. Our culture, our opinions, our geographical position do not change the truth. Truth is inerrant and infallible through all history. It is going to say the same to the Cameroonians and Canadians.

Neo-orthodoxy makes the Bible subjective because it is in the hands of man. If man is the authority then one person arrives at one truth and the

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other will arrive at his truth and the two truths may not be the same. This reduces God's Word to Subjective Truth, subject to different things. Therefore, the Scriptures are not absolute, but relative, bending with time, circumstance, science, personal positions, etc.

Now even though these two men lived many years ago and their theories were presented many years ago, neo-orthodoxy has gripped man's thinking today. In most countries of the world, the faculties of education have embraced post-modernism. This has happened within my lifetime. When I was in school, I was under modernist philosophy. The modernist says 'Well, if it exists, it can be weighed, measured, viewed to understand. So when I went to school, truth was found by science. Every discipline had its own axioms, its own principles of truth, arrived at by scientific experimentation and observation. These became the foundation of all the sciences and all areas of study. Therefore, the idea of the evolutionary development became very popular.

There was still enough influence among Christian teachers that said evolution was a theory. But it did not take long before education said evolution was claimed as fact. Under modernism, truth was arrived at by science. Can God be seen? No. can angels be seen? No. can we weigh the spiritual world? No. Can we use scientific experiments to arrive at the physical characteristics of the world? Yes. So, the teaching was because it cannot be scientifically proven, there is no spiritual world. Therefore, there is no God. That's the world of education I grew up. When I was witnessing to unsaved, I had to convince them first that there is a God. Of course, that was not difficult because creation and conscience say there is a God.

However, when my children were in school it was a different story. The educational world began to suspect science. One scientist would say one thing, another would say another thing. Even the theory of origins was suspect. Skepticism crept into the minds of teachers and scientists. This began to produce a new kind of thinking called post-modernism. Looking at all the sciences and the scientists all coming up with different answers,

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following scientific experiments but coming to different conclusions, ‘mankind supposedly discovered something: truth is relative. This scientist discovers his truth, my son-in-law discovers his truth. Ah! Modernism thinking is wrong, truth must be relative. With such ‘new’ thinking, educators look at the man who is a Buddhist. He says “Buddha is important.” The Buddhist has his truth. The Hindu religion has 33 million gods. Can science prove this is wrong? No, so Hindus have their truth. Is there a spirit world? One man has the Koran, his book of truth. To him Jesus was a good prophet but not the son of God. Can science prove him wrong? No. So that must be his truth.

If Buddhists knows there is a spirit world and the Hindu knows there is a spirit world, there must be a spirit world. If this group says God created the world and this group says God created the world, so maybe God created the world. Christians have a Holy book, just like Muslims. For Christians Jesus is God. Can science prove them wrong? No. They also believe God created the world. Maybe there is a god. What do all religions have in common? Faith in what their truth is. The Muslim has faith in his truth, the Hindu has faith in his truth, Christians have faith in their truth. Therefore, faith is the key ingredient to all religious life. Even atheists have faith in their truth that there is no God.

Therefore, faith is foundational, no matter who’s truth it is! This is the thinking of most graduates of universities today. Maybe some professors are Christians and still hold to the Word of God, I don’t know. But post-modernism has infiltrated neo-orthodoxy. They arrived there by the end conclusion of Barth’s and Bultmann’s thinking, Scripture is subjective, just another ‘holy’ book, truth, no matter who’s, is completely relative. Every men can find the truth good for him and if he has faith in his truth, that’s all counts. The Canadian can find his truth; it may seem different from the Cameroonians’ truth, but that does not matter because truth is relative and all that ‘God’ will see is faith. The job the church has now, is not to convince people that there is a God, but that there is only one God

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and He has given us one Book and one way to salvation. Your job now is much more difficult than former pastors.

Student Question: What is meant by Objective Truth?

Prof. Reply: Someone explain what is meant by Objective truth.

Student Replies:

-It is Bible based.

-It is general truth, not dependent upon people's understanding.

Prof. Reply: Objective Truth is stated in language that can be measured and tested and understood as a single thing. This is called propositional truth. For example; "God is Light." The language states exactly what the truth is. Grammatically we can examine it and measure it and say 'God equals light,' just like a mathematical formula, if $a=b$ then $b=a$. If God is Light, then Light is God. What light does in the physical world, God does in the spiritual world – reveal, produce life, sustain life. Because God created light, in essence He is the light of both the physical and spiritual worlds. This does not change. That's why it is absolute, it never changes.

Our understanding of inspiration will influence our commitment to objective truth. If we come to the process of translating God's truth, then we have great challenges. We are working in different language and have to come up with the same statements that do not always fit with different language. For example: "Your sins which are scarlet shall be as white as snow." Have you seen snow? Only one of you has seen snow. If you had no media access you'd have no concept of snow. So as a translator, how will I convey to you that your sins are as white as 'snow'? I have choices; use the word 'snow' and leave it to the teacher to explain snow, or use a word in your culture that conveys the same idea. Would 'a sheet of new white paper, or a clean, white cotton ball be legitimate? Some say yes, some no. That will be your challenge. You will come across translations in French that use that kind of approach. It is hard to accept when Jesus said not one jot would fail. For me, inn teaching around the world, I have a

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problem with that, but when you come to a culture that does not have an equivalent word, I use the original word then try my best to explain the meaning by illustration or comparison. Our understanding of interpretation does make a difference in translation.

Early in our preparation to be a teacher we must have a good foundation of what the Bible is. How did we get the Bible? What was the result of our receiving the Word? What is our responsibility in holding and preserving the Bible? How should we teach it? Lets' review the various interpretation views we have covered; Naturalistic inspiration—the Bible is just another book on religion, Neo-orthodoxy—the truth is relative, the Bible has errors, its stories must be de-mythicized and therefore the Bible only becomes truth as it is discovered, which makes the Bible subjective and Truth relative.

3. The Partial View of Inspiration

A third view of inspiration is the partial inspiration view. This view claims that that the doctrinal portions of the Bible are accurate but we cannot accept historical, geographical or scientific statements. Also some portions of Scripture are more inspired than others. All this leaves the reader to be the final judge. God is light, this is doctrine, it's truth. Jonah, after coming out of the fish went to Nineveh. However, “before the great archaeological excavations in the 19th century, there was almost no historical knowledge of the great Assyrian empire and of its magnificent capital. Other cities that had perished, such as Palmyra, Persepolis, and Thebes, had left ruins to mark their sites and tell of their former greatness; but of this city, imperial Nineveh, no vestige seemed to remain, and the very place on which it had stood became only a matter of conjecture.”¹⁶ The Partial Inspiration view therefore concludes, if there is no historical record of Nineveh outside of Scripture, Jonah must have gone someplace else. This is proof that some of the history of the OT of the nations which Israel fought against, there's no evidence there ever was those nations. There-

¹⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nineveh#Excavation_history

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fore, say the Partial Inspirationists, we cannot rely on the Bible for the accuracy of these nations. The Bible is not a historical textbook! Is the purpose of the Bible is not to give us details of history! It is not a geography textbook! Its purpose is not to give us the geography of our planet. Therefore, partial inspiration must be true. If it is not a scientific textbook why should I believe it when it talks of something scientific? The Bible says man is made from dirt, science has proven man evolved.

Prof. Question: This partial inspiration view sounds very logical. Do you agree with this view?

Student Replies:

-I believe that all the facts of the Bible, science, geography and all, are true for God's purpose to show the Bible is God's Truth, even about the need for salvation.

-The proof of man's true origin from dirt is that when he dies he goes back to being dirt.

-Science does not have an answer for what began creation.

Prof. Reply: Oh it does. It was the big bang. This has been proven by the modern telescope discoveries of these explosions continuing, stars going nova, all over the universe.

Student Replies: If these explosions are as 'the big bang' was supposed to be, where are the spontaneous new planets and galaxies? –If the partialists say God did inspire the Bible, then they must accept everything He said.

Prof. Reply: Why? When they believe God's intended purpose was general – God cares, God loves. The Bible illustrates this by statements that need not be scientific, geographic and historical facts. If what we call fiction does give the intended purpose, why demand that it is all true facts. Many books are written this way. Why could God not do the same?

Does inspiration demand perfection? Yes! Don't try to argue against science, it is unprofitable because some facts (creation by God's spoken

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word, eternal damnation for sinners, eternal life for the saved, etc.) are unprovable, and even many events in human historical records are unprovable, including Bible recorded events. Yet, we have concluded: Inspiration demands perfection. Although it is not a geographical textbook, it must be right that Jonah went to Nineveh. The archeologist says there is no evidence; I say the Bible is the authority. For many years that was an argument against the Bible. Nineveh has been found within the last 200 years.

Is the Bible a science textbook? No. But when it speaks scientifically, it must be right. Can I prove the statements of creation are correct? No. There many other scientific statements that are true, for example it speaks of the sphere of the planets. When Columbus sailed in 1492 the general consensus of people was that the world was flat, even though early Greek philosophers alluded to a spherical Earth, though with some ambiguity. Pythagoras (6th century BC) was among those said to have originated the idea.¹⁷ The Bible says “life is in the blood.” Science, as recently as 200 years ago, thought man’s great headaches were because of pressure in the brain. The procedure for cure was to blood-let, or drain blood from the sufferer to relieve the pressure. George Washington was the first president of the USA and he died because he was bled to death for that erroneous treatment. They literally bled his life away. Who was right? The Bible, or scientific opinion?

Is the Bible a historical book? No. but when it speaks of history, it has to be perfect. The OT prophet Ezekiel said the town of Tyre would be judged by God: *And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea:* (Ez. 26:4-5). This great city would be reduced to bare rock where fishermen would lay their nets to dry in the sun. Tyre is presently a city out on a causeway in the Mediterranean Sea. What does that have to do with being a bare rock and fishermen laying their nets out? It was discov-

¹⁷ <https://www.google.ca/search?source=hp&ei=3rl3XYvwMtKw0PEPo76-2AY&q=who+first+discovered+the+earth+was+a+sphere>

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ered that Alexander the Great conquered a city on the mainland of the Mediterranean Sea. He brought his armies to siege the city. The people of the city knew he was coming so they escaped to a near island. They knew Alexander couldn't make boats big enough to carry his army over the island while having to feed them. So they thought they were safe. But Alexander did not try to make boats, instead he dismantled the stone buildings of the city and made a path out to the island. The city was thus levelled to bare rock where fishermen used to dry their nets.

The resulting pathway to the island is now the causeway where Tyre has been rebuilt. This shows Scripture to be prophetically accurate in that Ezekiel was written around 593/592 B. C., Alexander the Great's conquests were 336 to 323 B.C. Ezekiel prophesied 237 years before Alexander the Great was born. This also shows Scripture to be historically accurate as the record of Alexander the Great's conquests as well as Tyre's history are well documented, leaving no doubt of the unfolding of these events. The Bible, to claim inspiration, must be historically, geographically and scientifically completely accurate. Inspiration demands perfection, inerrant in every way. We cannot prove all the statements of the Scriptures, but there are many that can be proven correct, verifying Biblical inspiration.

The Partial Inspiration view also suggests that some portions of Scripture are more inspired than others. For example, Jesus' words are more important than other portions of Scripture. That's why some Bibles have the words of Jesus in red to distinguish what is most important. Who has memorized the genealogy lists in the gospels? No one here has. I have difficulty even reading them. Partial view adherents would say such lists cannot be as inspired as John 3:16, which has been instrumental in saving many people. The only people interested in the genealogy are the Jewish people. But, a Jew believer spoke at a conference I attended. He said, by the power of the Word of God, he realized Jesus was the Christ and he accepted Him. Which Word of God convinced him? It was the genealogies of Christ. This Jewish man saw the direct connection from Adam to Jesus.

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God used that genealogy to convince him Jesus was the Saviour of the world.

It's true, there are passages of Scripture that we think are less important, even a trial to read due to much repetition etc. If we accept that some passages are more inspired than others, then who becomes the judge of what is important and not important? The reader will be the judge.

This undermines the perfect integrity and powerful influence of the Inspired Word.

Prof. Question: Think about the partial inspiration theory. Imagine that this is your belief - the doctrine part of the Bible is true, we can trust it, but science, geography, history parts cannot be trusted. If this is your position, how will it influence your interpretation of the Bible?

Student Replies:

-If all some cannot be trusted, I think I would read the Bible with a bias, seeing it say what I want it to say.

-I would conclude that the Bible is not the whole counsel of God.

-I would consider the context with rationalization, to help me understand what the doctrine is, so when teaching the Bible, the historical context would take precedence over the simple meaning of the words.

-I will misinterpret the Bible because I will seek only doctrine and miss truth by always holding to the wrong presupposition about inspiration.

Prof. Reply: Is truth revealed even in the aspects of geography, science, history? Yes! The problem will become defining the line between what is science, and what is doctrine, what is geography, and what is doctrine. There is so much integration between what is seen as science, history, geography and what is made understandable by doctrine. There is confusion! What you do with miracles like Jesus walking on water? This is scientifically impossible, so is this a myth or something that happened? Dismissing scientific, geographic and historical references in Scripture as untrustworthy creates much confusion like a dense fog. Jesus fed 5000 with a small loaf of bread and related that experience to the truth that He

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is the Bread of Life; He called Peter to walk on the water, demonstrating He has power over nature.

How do you put these into perspective if you don't think the Bible has accuracy regarding such scientific impossibility, reducing these instances to myth? Someone might say, 'I believe the miracles, I just don't believe the science'. Jesus can walk on water but the story of creation is proven to be wrong. Are both not demonstrations of God's power. How can those holding a Partial Inspiration view justify choosing one as 'miracle' and one as 'unscientific,' without themselves drawing a limit on what God can and cannot do, and on what God did and did not do? Are there more comments on how this would affect you if it were your position?

Student Replies: -The Bible would be very difficult to understand.

Prof. Reply: Yes, and the impact on your life would be evident in not giving confidence in the Word of God. There is a growing belief among evangelistic churches regarding theistic evolution. I heard a man preach regarding the days of creation not being 24-hour days. This man appears to be a born-again man and preaches the gospel. He may be able to figure how to put the two together, one being inconsistent, the other consistent. But, the impact of his preaching will be very weak spiritually. This preacher is very popular, and quite entertaining, therefore more and more people attend his church, but that is not necessarily spiritual growth. With that kind of preaching, who is the authority? It is man, not God and regardless of attendance, the power of the Word to transform lives will be limited.

CLASS 8

Our study has examined various views of inspiration, trying to determine the consequences of each view when understanding and interpreting the Scriptures. We talked about the Naturalistic view in which there is a complete denial of inspiration. The Bible is just another religious book, the product of human effort without any divine guidance.

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We have examined the Neo-orthodoxy view with the foundation people responsible for its development. Karl Bart's perspective involved denying a literal translation due to errors in the Bible and recognizing that only as God speaks through the Bible can truth be communicated. Rudolph Boltmann purposed to remove all the myths of Scripture to find inspired parts. His de-mythological approach allowed for determining the essential core truths, once again believing that truth was discovered as the words became the Word of God. The problem of Neo-orthodoxy is that final authority became man viewing the Word of God no longer absolute, but relative; no longer objective, but subjective. The key error in Neo-Orthodoxy is believing the words of Scripture are errant and unreliable (fallible), and **become** God's Inspired Truth, rather than being inerrant and completely reliable (infallible) and **are** God's Inspired Truth.

The Partial-inspiration view determined that only the doctrinal portions of Scripture were accurate, reducing the Bible in the same manner as neo-orthodoxy. Because the scientific, geographic, and historical portions of Scripture are not inspired, the reader must distinguish where Truth is found. This too makes Scripture subjective and relative, leaving man the final authority rather than God.

4. The Concept View of Inspiration

Now consider the Concept View of Inspiration. Here God inspired only the concepts of Scripture, or the ideas but not the precise words. Do you understand the difference between the concept and the words that express the concept? This suggests that God instilled in man an idea and used man to convey the idea the best way man can, with their own language. Imagine you believe this: it's not the words, it's the concepts that come from the words.

Prof. Question: How will that affect your interpretation of the Word of God?

Student Replies: -It's not verbal inspiration.

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Prof. Rely: Certainly it is nit. But how does that affect you in reading and understanding? It still says that the words convey the idea. How does it change the way you interpret Scripture?

Student Replies: -This is not verbal inspiration. –With this understanding, I can believe whatever I want. –It means there could be errors in the Bible I cannot trust the words. -When I see something that doesn't line up with what I think, I will say that was not God's idea. If man is conveying the idea the best he can, it's not interpreted in context. –If man conveys God's ideas in his own way, the result will be man's own interpretation, not God's literal truth.

Prof. Reply: Yes, we will be reduced to coming to the Words of Scripture and with analytical minds, presume God's intent. Therefore, with any verse of Scripture we could look it as a rebuke, or the purpose behind the text is a rhetorical question. God is light— it means God sees everything. Or, God's asking me a question, "Is God light? Can you really see God?"

Without propositional truth, the authority wrongly ends up in the mind of man. Even with geographical, cultural, grammatical context there is still a guess on the intent of the word. If it's up to man to determine the idea behind the words, we are missing a valuable part of communication in human language. In every culture, body language helps interpret the words. Inflection of voice helps define the meaning. When these are necessary to define intent, we have subjective understanding. We have to believe that punctuation is part of the understanding, the context helps us understand if it is a different or hidden agenda. For example when Satan said to Eve, "Did God really say....." we know from the expressions of Hebrew, he was not asking if Eve remembered, he was seeking to cast doubt on what he said.

So we have then this Concept View idea where the focus is understanding the ideas or concepts and the words are not inspired. It puts the authority in the mind of the person himself who is doing the interpreting. This concept becomes a major problem when translating into other lan-

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guages. When we try to restate these truths with the ideas being the concept, it can change matters completely.

To reinforce this there are verses in your manual to give evidence the Bible says the very words of Scripture are inspired:

John 6:63: *It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.* → ‘the words I give you’

John 17:8: *For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.* → Christ’s prayer for the church. NT revelation is from Jesus, the Son. Here he says “I gave them the words”, not the ideas.

1 Cor. 2:13: *These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.* → The focus is the fact the words are what the Holy Ghost teaches, not man.

In the NT we have the concepts that speak about the OT being the very words:

John 10:34-35: *Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, "You are gods"'? "If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken),*

→ ‘the Scriptures cannot be broken.’ The very words given are what John defined as the Scripture.

Gal. 3:16: *Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ.* → Paul is writing to the church at Galatia, remember Paul was the apostle taught under Gamaliel and he knew the OT better than anyone. When he writes to the Galatians he makes a point of showing the difference between ‘seeds’ and ‘seed’. He emphasizes the significance between plural and singular.

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In these passages it is clear that it is the very words of God that he has given us. The emphasis has been that they received the words, the very words God led them to use.

Prof. Question: Are there any questions regarding the concept theory?

Student Question: Can you make clarification of what Paul was saying regarding the text in the OT being singular 'seed', not 'seeds' plural?

Prof. Reply: The O.T. prophet did not say seeds of Abraham, as many (the nation Israel), but seed of Abraham, which is one, referring to the Christ. Paul is emphasizing that the text was about the promised Messiah, not the nation Israel. For our purposes the text points to the significance of single letters emphasizing words not concepts that were given by God. It wasn't a concept, but the very word that was uniquely important to be understood. In the mind of those who are Jewish, 'seeds' could be interpreted as the nation Israel, but Paul said you need to know Paul said 'seed' and that meant the Messiah. That is a problem today in the nation Israel today. In Isaiah 53 where it speaks of the servant who is killed, many of the Israelites believe the servant there is the nation Israel. In the context of Isaiah 53, the whole section is talking about the Messiah.

5. The Mechanical or Dictation View of Inspiration

Please note, because the OT and the NT always focused on the very words of God that were the Inspired Word, we have some who say it must have been given by dictation. So this is an approach that says God actually dictated the words and secretaries wrote it down. When I was a pastor, God blessed me with a great secretary who had worked for a police department. Understand, I'm a county boy; yes, I worked for the big corporation of Xerox; fixing their copiers and training people how to use them. But I was never in an office environment as a professional with a secretary. So I really did not know how to make use of a secretary. Also, when I was in school, boys rarely took typing because it was girls' stuff. There were no personal computers, so I never learned how to use a keyboard.

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Therefore, even at the graduate level, I needed help because there were a lot of papers to write.

The first day my secretary was on the job, I had to write a letter to another church and handed my written letter to the secretary so she could type it. She looked at it and asked: “What is this?” (probably because she could not read my terrible handwriting).

“It’s a letter.” I said. Her reply was: “This is a letter and you want me to type this and send it?”

Then she said: “Pastor, when you need a letter call me in to the office and dictate it to me. It will be much faster.”

So, I dictated and while I was speaking, she was writing. I had no idea of shorthand so I started out very slowly.

She said: “What are you doing?”

I replied: “I’m dictating a letter.”

Then she said: “Well then, tell me what you want to say. Why are you taking so long? I know shorthand so I will be able to keep up to you when you just say what you want with normal speech.”

She said: “Trust me, you speak and I’ll write it down.”

She showed me what she had written, funny signs and funny symbols. So I started to talk fast, to see if she could keep up. I continued until the letter was finished and said thank you. She said nothing, went to her office and came back 5 min. later with the letter typed exactly as I wanted! What a skilled secretary she was!

Some people think that’s how God gave us Scripture. Some people acted like secretaries and the superintending of 2 Peter was to keep them from making a dictation error. With that belief, would it change the way you understand Scripture? Would it give us God’s Inspired Word? Yes, it would be the very words of God. Would it be verbal inspiration? Yes, every word would be from God? Would it be plenary inspiration? Yes, all words equally inspired. But there would be a problem. We would not serve God’s purpose of distinguishing the personality and the vocabulary

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of the various writers, which is exactly what God's Inspired Word does accomplish.

For example, Romans 9:1-3 states: *I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh.* Paul is expressing his burden, his passion, his sorrow for them. To the point he said, I would be willing to die and be cursed, separated from Christ. If God were dictating this for Paul to write it would almost be hypocrisy. It would be like me saying to a student, here is what I want you to write to your own church, "I love you so much I will die for you." It would be so meaningless! So it would be when you read the prayers in the Bible; Mary's song of praise and worship to Christ, Moses' song of deliverance after passing through the Red Sea. If simply dictated, these words would be meaningless, God praising Himself.

Many if not all of the songs expressing the heart of man in repentance or praise to God, were truly the expressions of man heart yet delivered by the Inspiration of God to become the very Word of God. So, Inspiration does not rule out personality, literary style or personal vocabulary. The text in Rom 9:1-3 Scripture was not dictated, Paul's personality and conscience are felt and expressed. There are many such examples in Scripture: Mary's song, Moses' song, the Psalms themselves. As earlier stated, the creation of the Inspired Word of God was a divine/human miraculous work of God's power and perfection.

Student Question: *There are certain passages that are dictated in the Bible ex.- the ten commandments. It seemed God dictated to Moses/prophets were told "Say to Israel" and Moses would not change whatever God says.*

Prof. Reply: *I can understand someone seeing those passages and having the perception that all Scripture came this way. The danger in viewing Scripture this way is there are some who would like to 'red-letter' those*

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parts. These words are more important if it is dictated. Whereas the emphasis of Inspiration is that it is all equally God's Word. There are obviously some aspects to God's Word where you can't distinguish between human personality and divine directive. There's only certain ways to say things like "thou shall not steal." Whether I say it or Pastor Dan says it, it is all the same thing. There is really no distinction between our vocabulary or personality. I understand what you say and I'm inclined to think the same thing, but I have to accept that God first rote out His commands in stone, then, after Moses destroyed those stones, He moved Moses to chip out the stone, the same as God moved Paul to write on the scroll. In reality the entire book is the Word of God, is by one Author. But as we said before, God expressed this in variety because He is a God of variety. And when we think about it, who gave Moses his personality? Who gave Peter his personality? It's all the creative work of God, uniquely designed for God's own purposes.

Student Questions: Previously you said it as the Word of God that was inspired, but not the authors, now you saying it does not exclude the authors personality etc., I do not understand how this could be.

Prof. Reply: What Inspiration is, is the product; that does not change, it is the God-breathed Word. But those words have variety in style, variety in vocabulary and variety in personality expressed. These aspects of the finished product reflect the author's own personality. It does not make them less inspired, any more than one tree of creation is more evident of creation power than another. Remember, Peter tell us that the writers were moved along by God's Spirit. The Spirit of God is not limited in power. Therefore, the product of the Inspired Word being God's very Word, expressed with multiple human personalities, personal human passions and individual vocabularies, was not beyond the Spirit's capability.

If you are like me, you find a hard time putting together in your mind how God could give us this inspired product using human personality, yet not dictating His Word. It is easier for us when we say "this is all the

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Word of God given by dictation.” It is easier to understand. But the evidence cries out it was not just dictation, it couldn’t be. The reality of it, it is another miracle. It’s another expression of the power of God which is unlimited. If God in his creation can make a micro-world and macro world, God can complete his task of giving His Word by using the personality of the writers. It is an amazing creative work that we have the very Word of God expressed in human personality with human language and grammar. Though we do not worship the Word of God, we should be amazed at it, just as we should be amazed when we stand out and look at creation and contemplate our salvation, and are amazed.

We have looked at every method of inspiration—as a matter of fact, I have been out of school for a long time and you need to read the newer books on inspiration and find out what is going on now. I’ve said in many classes, the issue today is hermeneutics and much of that issue is because of the redefining of inspiration. So I have given you basic views that have been historic. I asked you to think through what impact this has on your own interpretation. It would give you a taste of what to look for when you read commentaries or listen to sermons. You should be able to detect some problems with the way people talk about how they teach the Word of God.

As time passes and Satan gets more information about how to deceive, these things become more subtle. Satan is doing the same thing as he did in the garden ‘did God really say?’ This is also true with battle of inspiration; “did God really say this?” And Satan has had 6000 years of getting better at his deception. I know you will read or hear individuals and conclude what they say sounds very logical. There is a popular doctrine growing in America; a new doctrine that changes the perspective of God’s sovereignty. It sounds good, but it is again based on a faulty interpretation. There is also a new doctrine that is very popular, the prosperity gospel. Truly, it sounds very good. It is not good hermeneutics, just bad interpretation. So learn to be discerning in this area of inspiration regarding what the Scriptures are.

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6. The Verbal, Plenary View of Inspiration

The last approach in your notes is the correct, consistent view of inspiration taught in Scripture. It is called the verbal plenary theory. I used the word 'theory' because that is what scholars say, but I say it is the Truth. These words are used because it characterizes the Truth. By 'verbal' we mean the Spirit of God guided in the choice of words, he did not violate the writers' personal characteristics. Their style, vocabulary, personalities, thoughts, opinions, prayers and fears are expressed.

The end result, the very words are the inspired Word of God. We can again see in Scripture these conclusions are accurate. We have 6 passages: **Isaiah 30:8**: *Now go, write it before them on a tablet, And note it on a scroll, That it may be for time to come, Forever and ever.* This is a fantastic verse. The context will tell us it is a message from God and it is to be written in a book and it will last forever. Moses wrote all the words of the Lord. When you think about it, it was a real task because he chipped it out of stone. I'm glad we have pen and paper! So we have the doctrine of inspiration; the teaching of the process, and the doctrine of preservation; 'forever'. What do you do with the passage in the OT where the prophet came with the Word and the king burned it? Was the word preserved? He re-wrote it!

2 Sam. 23:2: *The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, And His word was on my tongue.* Once again, the Lord spoke by the Spirit and the end result was the written Word.

Matt. 4: 4, 7, 10: *But He answered and said, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."* Here again, we see the concept of every Word of God was given, not just the ideas of God.

1 Cor. 2:13: *These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.* Here we see Paul is distinguishing what he receives from God as 'God's wisdom,' not man's wisdom. From the point of view of context and interpretation, he is speaking about the message he brought to them, the Word he is writing to them, so 'speaking' he is referring to the

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message he is sending them by the Epistle he is writing. Paul is not talking about his sermons.

Rev. 22:19: *And if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.* Here the warning is regarding the very Words that are in the book. So the idea of verbal inspiration refers to the very words that were given by God. It doesn't talk about the process where they heard verbally God say the words, it speaks of the product that the very words recorded are the verbal words of God. The miracle is that we have it recorded perfect, we have it preserved in various forms as God used man's personalities and grammar styles.

Student Questions: *When we look at all the versions of the Bible, can we say with all the copying down, copying down, that we have the inspired Word of God without error.*

Prof. Reply: *I asked the students to answer this question.*

Student Replies:

- No, because Inspiration only applies to the original text.

-Yes, because it continues to be the Word of God.

Prof. Reply: *There are differing opinions! This question gets us thinking in various directions. Are the many translations representative of verbal inspiration? The answer is both yes and no. First of all do we have to have the original manuscripts to say we have the verbally Inspired Bible?*

The answer has to be no, because Paul did not have the originals and he said the Scriptures he was using were inspired. Christ preached to people who used Hebrew manuscripts which were not the originals, some used the Septuagint because Christ quoted from it, so obviously these were acceptable to Jesus preaching the Word of God. When you look at these translations, you see that the labour of the translators was to hold to the original words as much as a different language would allow. So even though the Greek could not exactly express Hebrew word for word, Christ

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used it because it was as good a translation as you could get without having the original words. So my opinion is that in the translations we have today, if it is a work from the Greek and the Hebrew, to try to be as accurate as possible, it is verbal inspiration. But if the translations are basically not determined to try to keep the original words, then it is not a good translation and it would be hard to say it is the inspired Word.

I could give you many examples in the English Bible but it is meaningless here. We already saw in the Louis Segond version, this revised version has changed the words. So that's why as leaders of the church, you must be discerning. If you choose to use a French Bible that is an easy reader, that is your choice. There is a successful business that takes large stories and reduces the stories into smaller readings, it's called the Readers Digest. They came out with their version of the Bible. They left out much of the Bible because they were doing a condensed version. Many of the churches rebuked Readers Digest for doing this. They were approached this book as any other book.

There was a father in America whose children were having difficulty reading the Bible because it is Old English. He started writing out his own sentences to make the words simpler for his children. From the Old English Bible he was paraphrasing the sentences. When other people started to read this, they wanted it. Eventually he did the entire Bible and it was published as the Living Bible by Ken Taylor. Churches in America use this as the pulpit Bible. They chose it because many people in America are not good readers. It is a paraphrase, nothing to do with the original words God chose. I do not have any idea of the many French translations of the Bible there are. I do not have French language expertise to make decisions. I have not read or studied the process or philosophy of the translators who give you the French versions. It is your job. Do not dismiss this as unimportant.

There is a French language 'easy reading Bible called The Segond 21. It is for the 21st century, and it is a much more simpler French. I do not know if it went back to the original language manuscripts for translation.

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CLASS 9

Student Question: I did not really get the definition of Verbal Inspiration.

Prof. Reply: Verbal Inspiration means every word we have in Scripture, is the very Word of God because the Spirit of God guided the writers in in the choice of words, without violating their own personalities, character, or writing style and vocabulary.

Student Question: How do we understand the prayers that are in Scripture if all words are from God?

Prof. Reply: We examined earlier the difference between inspiration being the ideas of God and being the actual words. We concluded that the Bible teaches Inspiration is the product we call Scripture, being the actual Words that God gave through the personalities of people. Nevertheless, there are Bible passages that are confusing for us reconcile with the conclusion: Turn to Psalm 90. This is a prayer of Moses, a man of God. Someone read the first two verses.

Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, Or ever You had formed the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.

Moses is saying you have been our dwelling place in all generations. It's Moses' prayer. Are these Moses' thoughts or God's thoughts?

Student Replies: - God's thoughts. – God's thoughts

Prof. Reply: So Moses did not believe this? It seems that Moses is talking directly to God. This is a prayer. See verse 7: 'we have been consumed by your anger'. Is that a thought of Moses, or a thought of God?

Student Replies: -It is Moses. –The Holy Spirit allowed man to express his own ideas.

Prof. Reply: I think we are misunderstanding the implications of inspiration. It's true that inspiration is the product, but for this to be a genuine prayer, it must be Moses' thoughts as well as God's leading the choice of words. The product was inspired Scripture, but as God moved people, there was a union in thinking. As the Spirit of God moved these individuals

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to give the product, there was a union of minds so that the thought were both God's and man's. That's the difference between being just a secretary taking dictation, and being moved by the Spirit of God. Man and God were together giving us the Word.

Student Question: How does this relate to what Paul says in 1 Cor. 7: 10 and 12: Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband(10) , But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her. (12).

Prof. Reply: The context in Corinthians refers to instructions for marriage. When Paul says I'm speaking not regarding the Lord, but myself and I think the Lord agrees, what he is referring to is what the OT says regarding marriage and what he now is adding in his letter regarding marriage. When he says, 'this is not of the Lord', he is referring to the OT writings. If anything, that passage tells us the thoughts he was writing, were given to him by God. Paul is not denying God's leading his writing, rather, he equates his letter to O.T. Scripture, affirming its equal authority. In the same context, dealing with virgins, Paul states: Now concerning virgins: I have no commandment from the Lord; yet I give judgment as one whom the Lord in His mercy has made trustworthy (25). But she is happier if she remains as she is, according to my judgment — and I think I also have the Spirit of God (40). Think does not imply doubt, but often a matter of well-grounded assurance (Jn 5:39).¹⁸ Paul affirms his judgement throughout the context is from God. If you go back to your Corinthians course notes you will get the details of that passage.

I think we have to come to the place where understanding the whole concept of inspiration is really beyond our thinking. Can we really comprehend the virgin birth? God is Spirit and He conceives with Mary who is

¹⁸ Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (1 Co 7:40). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

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flesh. There's no explanation for this. Do we believe it? Yes you do! It's the same with the depth of inspiration. God's mind and man's mind united bringing us the perfect product of the Word of God. How can this be accomplished when mankind is imperfect? Just the same way Jesus, born of a woman was perfect, it was a work of God and we accept it by faith.

Student Question: The conception, people say that's the first example of artificial insemination.

Prof. Reply: That's beyond our class topic. It proves man tries to give an answer when we must accept things by faith. We need to pursue understanding but the limitations of that pursuit must be guided by the Word of God, especially in reference to doctrines such as Jesus' conception, and inspiration. Science has no answer!

We looked at the first term defining: 'verbal' which refers to the very words given. Verbal is not the process where God is talking to the writer, it is the product that the words given by God are clearly put down to the very letters. Christ spoke of the two smallest characters in the Hebrew alphabet, and Paul distinguished between the singular and the plural of the word "seed." These references alone, declare verbal inspiration (although there is much more Bible evidence. Now we want to look at the idea of 'plenary'.

By verbal we mean the spirit of God guided in the choice of words, by plenary we mean full inspiration. Every book, every sentence, every word is equally inspired. It is equally the Word of God. If we had the original manuscripts before us, we could count the number of words that were inspired by God.

2 Tim. 3:16: *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,* Here Paul says 'all Scripture is given by inspiration.

Can you think of some passages that might be a problem regarding the validity of calling it the Word of God, passages seem questionable being called the Word of God? Some Bibliology books on would help you. I

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was privileged to grow in a home where both parents believed the Bible was the Word of God. My father was a believer from a young age, but my mother did not accept Christ until after I was married. Nevertheless, being Roman Catholic, she believed the Bible was the Word of God. Consequently, I never doubted in all my life that this is the Word of God. Yet, there are many people who have had to come to accept this. Try to think about what would be some reasons people might have difficulty accepting this as the Word of God.

Prof. Question: What are your thoughts?

Student Comments:

-People say it's a person speaking, not God

-The problem of different translations weakens some people's acceptance.

-School history books influence negative acceptance because they contradict the Bible.

-Many argue that man who is imperfect cannot write a perfect book.

Prof. Reply: I find your comments interesting. They truly reflect the difference between African and North American culture. Your answers questioned whether God would communicate with man which means that in all your comments, it is evident that people still believed there is a God.

Where people in a society are born and raised to believe there is a god, usually they believe he is existential or outside their existence.

When I ask this question in America, the answers are different. Why would people in America not believe the Bible is the Word of God? How can we believe Jonah was swallowed by a fish and spat out later? How can we believe Jesus could walk on the water or feed 5000 families with one small lunch? In America most people do not believe there is a god, so miracles are impossible. The super-natural is a figment of man's imagination. I think that one way to convince American people of the supernatural should be to send them to Africa. Even the unbeliever here sees and understands the influence of spiritual forces. It is important to understand that in any culture, wherever in the world it stands, acceptance of the Bi-

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ble as the Word of God is by faith, and that faith itself is a gift from God for, as Paul says: “the natural man receives not the things of God, neither can he know them because they are Spiritually discerned” and mankind is spiritually dead!

Student Comments: -One of my professors in Cameroon did not believe the accuracy of the Bible because Paul and John were just spiritual theorists.

Prof. Reply: We see that world denies God and rejects the Word of God whether by believing God cannot talk to man, being he is transcendent, beyond man’s existence, or by believing there is no God. Yet, I have known two men who became convinced the Scriptures were the Word of God, because of scientific investigation. I am sharing this because the church needs to properly argue and use apologetics to express legitimacy of Scriptures.

There was a women attending my home church. Her husband was a science teacher and not believer. She wanted him to go to church to be part of their family unity. He began to come and heard the preacher preach from the Bible every Sunday. As a scientist he determined to prove to his wife that the Bible was not God’s word. To show her the Bible was inaccurate regarding science and the history and geography comments were inaccurate. So he began his examination of the Bible, promising his wife to have an open mind and look without bias. When he looked with an open mind, he realized everything he investigated was true. He then realized; if the book was accurate over a great period of time in every area of examination, it must be accurate regarding his soul. As a result he studied the gospel of John and accepted Christ.

Tim Brodie was a computer programmer, who began to attend the church was pastoring. He was a logical thinker and very sceptical about Christianity and Scriptures. I gave him Josh McDowell’s book “Evidence that Demands a Verdict.” In this book, McDowell, who had turned from his career as a lawyer, to serve God, argues with logic that Jesus could not be a liar, could not have been crazy, therefore, with only one alternative left,

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He is the Lord, the Son of God. Tim Brodie read the book and accepted Christ as Saviour. He too left his computer career to serve God. Understanding of the Bible is a work of the Spirit of God and a gift of faith. God uses different ways to convince people of the truth of the Word, even as the Jewish man was convinced by the genealogies.

Student Question: Why do some books divide inspiration into four categories? Is that correct?

Prof. Reply: I would have to know exactly what they say. We have divided it into verbal and plenary for explanation, each of these could be divided again. When people start putting together the order of Bible Doctrine, and then naming the categories, it becomes very subjective and creative. Having said this, we also need to be aware that with new scholarship, the original terminology used is often redefined, thus changing the meaning. This often results in removing or changing some areas we firmly hold to. So, to divide the character of Inspiration into four or ten categories could be the author's determination to illuminate some aspects he or she disagrees with. People, even believers, can be weak in any area of Bible Truth. Many good scholars and writers, who sought to teach others God's Truth, have actually turned from truth by pursuing a belief in a false premise, or by stating the popular instead of Truth, in order to sell their books. We ourselves have admitted that there are some things hard to understand even regarding the basic Doctrine of Inspiration. But if I could imagine that I have discovered a means to explain away these difficulties, I would believe I found a path to popularity. This has sometimes becomes the purpose of books, not teaching truth, but delivering acceptable explanation, despite the cost to Truth. In all our reading on doctrine and in commentaries, we need to wear the spectacles (lenses) of the Word of God.

I. Testimony of John Wesley

John Wesley gives one of the shortest arguments for the inspiration of the Scriptures, and a good one withal. His statement is original and strong and terse, like its great author. We give it here for the benefit of all. He

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says: "I beg leave to propose a short, clear and strong argument to prove the Divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.

The Bible must be the invention either of good men or angels, bad men or devils, or of God.

1. It could not be the invention of good men or angels, for they neither would nor could make a book and tell lies all the time they were writing it, saying, 'Thus says the Lord,' when it was their own invention.
2. It could not be the invention of bad men or devils, for they could not make a book which commands all duty, forbids all sins, and condemns their own souls to hell for all eternity.¹⁹

J. Support for Verbal, Plenary Inspiration

We have examined several views or theories of Inspiration and concluded that the Bible itself teaches what we have defined as the Verbal, Plenary Inspiration view. I assume that each of you accept this the truth. The simple fact you chose to come to a conservative school suggests that Bible Truth is what you want to learn. Nevertheless, there is a world of people that say 'prove it'. We know we cannot 'prove it,' only God can convince them. Yet, the Bible calls God's people to contend for the faith (Jude 3). *Contend* implies a strenuous effort. The word is used of participants in athletic contests. Mental effort is needed to understand and teach the word of God aright and moral effort is needed to apply that understanding to everyday behaviour²⁰ So we take up now the apologetics that deal with inspiration.

God never intended for His people to look foolish to the world in the sense of intelligence. We are foolish to the world because we believe Jesus is the Christ and Saviour and that salvation is free. We must stand with intelligence and say 'this is why this is true'. We come to a methodology that Bible believers use for apologetics. For example when I talked about

¹⁹ I apologize for misplacing the source of this quote.

²⁰ *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition*. 1994 (D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer & G. J. Wenham, Ed.) (4th ed.) (1417). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press.

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the book of Romans, we say Paul is the author. To give the apologetics, or the proof, we look internally to see what the book says about Paul being the author. For us, if the Bible states this clearly, as it does: “*Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ...*,” it is enough. However to be thorough, we also look for evidence outside the epistle itself. In our notes we come to the apologetics for the doctrine of Inspiration. Therefore, we look at internal evidence. Some of this we already discussed, but not from the view of evidence.

1. The Internal Evidence for Inspiration

First, the Bible claims inspiration. 2 Tim. 3:16, clearly states this. The Bible is the authority, it defends itself, it is sufficient but at the same time, we are called to defend the faith. The phrase ‘*thus saith the Lord*’ is used over and over and over again in the Scripture. Second, the Spirit not only bears witness to the believer that he is a child of God (Romans 8:16), but that the Bible is the Word of God (II Peter 1:20-21). It’s interesting how many people would accept the truth of the Bible that we are the children of God, some that are not even believers, but they don’t understand the principle of salvation to become a child of God, but they would be happy to say ‘the Bible says we are the children of God’. Yet, when you say the Bible says it is the Word of God, they will not believe it. The Holy Spirit gives us the truth that the Bible is the Word of God with the same authority. Third, the transforming power of the Bible evidences it is the Inspired Word. Heb. 4:12 gives an objective statement that the Bible lives and has power to transform lives: We know this is true because we see the transformed lives. My life has been transformed! We see the evidence in society of this change in countless lives, which the Bible calls ‘new birth’. Multitudes have experienced this power. The only sure cure known for drug addiction is CHRIST. The Word possesses the dynamic transforming power of God. Heb. 4:12 states: *the Word of God is ‘quick’*, this word in the Bible language of Greek means ‘to bring to life’. The text goes on to say the Word searches out the soul and transforms a life.

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We are told in Rom. 12:1, 2 of the responsibility to be *transformed by the renewing of your mind*. We are told in Phil. 4:8 we should think *on whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure* etc. We are told in Col 3:16: *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly*. The Word of God transforms us. There should be verses coming into your mind as we contemplate this.

Prof. Question: *What are the verses that come to your mind?*

Student Replies: *None!*

Prof. Comments: *It concerns me that quotes from Scripture do not come quickly to you. Let me take a moment for a detour. It may be a cultural situation in which you have not accustomed to quoting Scripture. But you need to understand that one of the basic disciplines of the Christian faith is memorizing Scripture: Ps 1:2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. Ps 37:31 The law of his God is in his heart; None of his steps shall slide. Ps 40:8 I delight to do Your will, O my God, And Your law is within my heart. Ps 119:11: Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. Ps 119:97 Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day. For this reason I assign memory verses with virtually every class I teach. As Bible College students you will always have “Memory verse responsibilities” in my class. This is not for ‘graduation’ from Bible College, it is for life’s graduation when you stand before Christ and give account of obedience. You cannot meditate on the word in your heart unless the Word is first in your mind! My pastor taught me to study and memorize the Word of God. When I was young, I was in a youth ministry where children memorize the word of God. I was in the program from 12 years to 18 years, during this time I memorized hundreds of Bible verses.²¹*

The key to keeping the Word of God in your heart is review. I know that as Bible College students, you have memorized many verses of Scripture. But

²¹ H. E. Cooper, *Spiritual Health Check* (A Word in Season, 2019), 39
(https://www.amazon.ca/s?k=Earl+Cooper%2C+Ph.D&i=stripbooks&ref=nb_sb_noss)

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if you fail to review these verses throughout your life, you are not a good steward of that labour. The method I use is to write each memorized verse on small cards (business card size), with the text on one side and the reference on the other side. Review these by keeping 7 cards with you and review them every day, add 1 new verse and store 1 reviewed verse each week. Plan your own way of reviewing all each year. Do not lose what you learned as a student. When you get old, some things slip, like the references but the Spirit of God will bring back the verses when you need them.

The forth internal evidence of Inspiration is the Unity of the Bible. There is no other book with such enduring unity as the Bible. It consists of 66 individual books written over a 1600 year period by 40 different authors. Yet, the Bible has one single unifying theme throughout: REDEMPTION THROUGH JESUS CHRIST. This one unifying theme, evident long before Jesus was born, prophetically detailing his birth, life, death, and resurrection, then continuing after Jesus death by prophetically announcing His continued ministry in heaven after resurrection, as well as His yet future (but imminent) returned reign to usher in eternity, is a miraculous work. Humanity could not conceive such an enduring, detailed, unified record!

We have looked at the internal evidence briefly, identifying 4 points that internally indicate the Bible says it is inspired. There are more internal evidences to be sought out which I leave for your personal study. To help us appreciate the impact of inspiration on the world we will now look at the external evidence.

2. The External Evidence for Inspiration

There are six points to consider regarding this external evidence of inspiration:

First there is *The Historicity of the Bible*. We see that when the Bible speaks in terms of history, there is no error. This is not an argument from silence. We see first of all no archeological find has ever invalidated Bib-

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lical teaching. When I talk about archeological find, I talk about the evidence, not the interpretation of the evidence. Some archeologist who finds a skull may say it is a cave man to prove evolution. They will say they have proven the Bible to be wrong, but their conclusions are based on their pre-suppositions. They have no evidence to say this is a pre-man, in the process of evolution. It could have been another species of ape that has become extinct, or an ape that has a deformity from disease. (I can think of some people I have met that look more like apes than men! A friend of mine has so much hair on his chest he looks like an ape! But this is not proof of evolution!) So you see there is no proof in the archeological statement, it is how they interpret them. I use the evidence of the Dead Sea scrolls. You know the story of the scrolls.

In a small valley there are caves and a shepherd boy threw a stone into a cave and hearing a clunk, discovered jars with scrolls inside. This was in the Dead Sea area and these jars contained a library of ancient writing. Many of the manuscripts were copies of the OT and others were history of nations, they were among the oldest manuscripts ever discovered. None of the manuscripts contradicted the Bible, but supported what the Bible says about ancient nations. These scrolls supported some of the civilizations that we did not have evidence of before, but the Bible mentioned them. We see the historical facts in Scripture have been verified by ancient scrolls to be truth. The truth of the statements, although denied by scholars, proves the Scriptures. They have proven the Bible manuscripts are without error.

Second, there is *The Testimony of Jesus Christ*. Christ practiced and taught the Scriptures to be God's Word; Matthew 5:17, John 10:35, Luke 24:44ff, Mark 10:20... and many other O.T. quotes. If we accept His authority then we must accept what He said about God's Word. Jesus was a man of integrity and truth. Someone would say, isn't the statements of Jesus, internal evidence? Yes, His statements are internal evidence but when we step back from the Scriptures and accept either the perfection or excellence of Christ historically, His reputation become external evidence. This

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perfection, based upon Christian belief that He is the Son of God, or this excellence, based upon Jewish appraisal (such as by the man in the plane with me), that Jesus was ‘the greatest Jew who ever lived,’ results in the merit of the reputation Jesus in society. If this Jewish man says ‘Jesus was the greatest man who ever lived’, then for him it would be significant for Jesus to say the Bible is the Word of God. He would accept Jesus credibility because of his reputation. Whereas Christians accept His credibility because of his deity. This is why the Testimony of Jesus is an external argument?

Third, there is The Evidence from Prophecy. According to Deut. 18:22 a prophet was false if he made predictions which were never fulfilled. Hundreds of predictions, many given hundreds of years in advance, have been literally fulfilled. There are other books which claim divine inspiration, such as the Koran and the Veda. But none of these contain predictive prophecy. In Eschatology we talked about how much of the Bible is prophecy; 25%, or ¼ of the Bible speaks of prophecy, not all of that is prophecy for today. The OT prophets had many things already fulfilled.

Remember when we studied the gift of prophecy the way prophecy was presented? When a prophet would speak of a future promise that is way in the future still, he would also prophecy something in the lifetime of the people, the fulfillment of that in their lifetime would prove the fulfillment of future. Jesus did the same thing in the Olivet discourse. Which began with the apostles admiring the temple. Jesus shocked them by saying ‘this temple will be destroyed’. They were amazed at His statement, then He went on to talk to them about the tribulation and the millennial kingdom. So with this in mind, we see that we can look back at the OT and realize that all the predictions that the prophets made to be fulfilled for the people in their lifetime have come true.

I have given you one illustration, the story of the city of Tyre, and there are so many more that have been fulfilled in the OT. One of the greatest evidence of this is all the prophecy regarding the birth of Christ. These texts are another way of convincing Jewish people that Jesus is the

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Son of God. The genealogies are convincing truth, but when we see all the prophecies from the OT. It is this fulfillment of prophecy, 100%, that distinguishes in the minds of people of the fulfillment of the Bible from other holy books. What is the holy book of the Muslims? Hindus? They both claim their holy books are inspired. When it comes to fulfilled prophecy there is a big problem with these books, whereas in the Scriptures, yes, there are still prophecies that are unfilled, but so many from the OT that came true.

In your assigned reading for the class you will find the argument against prophecy is the date of the text. People who are viewed as scholars, academic people, will argue that what is claimed to be the predictions written by Moses, weren't really written by Moses, they were written later. So the prophecies were written after the events but written in a way to make them look like they were written before the events. That's why, when you come to study the books of the Bible, often the dates of writing stated by liberals are much later than those claimed in Jesus Christ's day by the Jewish scholars.

Student Question: I cannot believe these scholars would say the prophecies happened after the events. How can this be if the prophecies of Jesus were after he came?

Prof. Reply: By your question, you have focused on the big arguments this approach takes. These liberal scholars do not talk about the predictions of Jesus, but refer only to the prophecies of the OT fulfilled in O.T. time. This is why I said the most powerful indications of Scripture's inspiration is the life of Jesus Christ predicted in the OT.

Student Question: Who is trying to debunk the prophecies in the Bible? The Liberals?

Prof. Reply: Yes, the liberal theologians who deny miracles, deny the necessity for Christ to be the substitute for sins. They have their presuppositions. We will talk a bit in a day or two of the liberal influence vs. the evangelical influence in Christianity. In America, liberalism has taken

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over more denominations than conservatives have. When I was young, growing up in Canada, most people who called themselves Christians were from Liberal churches. Historically, in Canada these churches are losing people the most to Atheism. Canada is now listed in international circles as an Atheistic country. In this year of 2019 it is estimated that less than 6% of our population are born again people, and the reason it is this high is due to many believers from other countries immigrating to Canada. For example, I believe the Korean Evangelical Church is one of the fastest growing churches in Canada.

CLASS 10

We have been examining the external evidence of inspiration. This is only supportive evidence for the truth of inspiration, but it is not from Scripture so it does not have the same authority. The external evidence proves the internal evidence which is the best support. We talked about the historicity of the Bible in which history which is discovered supports the Bible. The testimony of Jesus Christ and we looked at his reputation in the world, so it's seen as external evidence. We mentioned the evidence of prophecy being fulfilled which is clear in Scripture, but not in so other so called holy books.

Fourth, there is *The Influence of the Bible*. The Bible has been translated into many languages from the biblical languages of Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. As of October 2018 the full Bible has been translated into 683 languages, the New Testament has been translated into an additional 1,534 languages and Bible portions or stories into 1,133 other languages.²² The point is not to quote the statistics but to know the world has been greatly influenced by the Word of God. The evidence of history indicates that the Bible is never an outdated book. People who do not have the Bible are still pursuing it, and seeking it in their own lan-

²² <http://www.wycliffe.net/statistics>

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guage. Even if we looked only at one aspect of society, namely government, we would see the world's governments have been greatly influenced by the principles of justice in Scriptures. The Bible presents the highest ideals to man.

Fifth, there is *The Indestructibility of the Bible*. From the time of Trajan (reigned 98-117) until Constantine (c. 300), virtually every one of the Roman emperors was opposed to Christianity. It is true that not all of them actively tried to suppress it, but few of them encouraged Christianity in any way. Many of their efforts were directed toward destroying the Bible. Of Diocletian (284-316), the ruler immediately preceding Constantine, Eusebius, the historian said, "royal edicts were published everywhere, commanding that the churches be leveled to the ground and the Scriptures destroyed by fire" (Church History, Book VIII, Ch. 1). Diocletian went on to say that if one had a copy of the Scriptures and did not surrender it to be burned, if it were discovered, he would be killed.²³

We know from modern history that many enemies of the Bible exist. The modern method of Bible destruction is to attempt to undermine the Bible's credibility by 'scholastic criticism:'

Criticism of the Bible is an interdisciplinary field of study concerning the factual accuracy of the claims and the moral tenability of the commandments made in the Bible, the holy book of Christianity. Long considered to be the perfect word of God by devout Christians (and the Jewish parts by devout Jews), scholars and scientists have endeavored for centuries to scrutinise the texts to establish their origins (a related field of study known as biblical criticism) and validity. In addition to concerns about ethics in the Bible, biblical inerrancy, or the historicity of the Bible there remain some questions of authorship and what material should be included in the biblical canon.²⁴

²³ <http://www.truthmagazine.com/archives/volume19/TM019211.html>

²⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Criticism_of_the_Bible

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Although efforts to destroy the Scripture have persisted throughout history, the clear declaration of Scripture stands: "*All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, But the word of the LORD endures forever.*" (1 Pet. 1:24-25).

Sixth, there is *The Integrity of the Human Authors*. Although not all of the deaths of the Apostles are documented in the Bible. Many of the deaths of the Apostles can, however, be found in extra-biblical records. The deaths of the original Apostles of Christ are as follows: In A.D. 34, a repentant Judas Iscariot crucified himself in Palestine by hanging (Matthew 27:3–4). In A.D. 44, James the Greater was beheaded by a sharpened sword in Judea by the orders of Herod Agrippa. In the year A.D. 54, Philip was scourged and crucified in Heliopolis, Egypt. In the year A.D. 67, Paul was beheaded by Emperor Nero in Rome, Italia; Simon Peter was crucified upside down (at his request) by Emperor Nero in Rome, Italia also in the year A.D. 67 (John 21:19). In the year A.D. 69, Andrew was crucified in Western Greece on an “X” shaped cross and lived for two days thereon; also in the year A.D. 69, James the Just was thrown off of the pinnacle of the temple of Jerusalem and beaten to death with a club. Bartholomew was skinned alive and beheaded. Thomas was run through by a sharpened spear. Matthew was stabbed in the back with a sharpened sword by the orders of King Hertacus of Ethiopia. Thaddeus was crucified in Edessa, Asia Minor in A.D. 72. Simon the Canaanite was crucified in England in A.D. 74. James the Less was beaten in the head with a large club during a riot circa A.D. 90. John the Revelator was exiled to Patmos and died in his old age as a prisoner in A.D. 100. All of the Apostles of Jesus Christ met violent ends, and it is a true testament to the conditions that existed for the early Christians of the first century Roman Empire.²⁵ Could so many have been deluded? The honesty of the Biblical writers attest to the divine authority of their writings.

²⁵ <https://www.quora.com/How-many-of-Jesus-original-Apostles-were-martyred>

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Many people have died for beliefs that are not true, but when you view the historical era Biblical revelation, no single book or cause has stirred people to die over such a long period of time. In A.D. 108, Ignatius, Peter's successor as the bishop of Antioch, organized some of these New Testament writings, quoting them in letters and sermons. Ignatius was ripped apart by wild beasts at the hands of the Roman authorities. Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna, quoted 19 New Testament books in a single letter. Roman guards seized him; officials told him to recant faith in Christ. They stabbed him to death.

The Center for the Study of Global Christianity of Gordon–Conwell Theological Seminary, an evangelical seminary based in Hamilton, Massachusetts, has estimated that 100,000 Christians die annually for their faith. The report did not take into consideration political or ethnic differences. Professor Thomas Schirrmacher from the International Society for Human Rights, considers the figure to be closer to 10,000. The truth is two thirds of the 2.3 billion Christians in the world today live... in dangerous neighbourhoods. They are often poor. They often belong to ethnic, linguistic and cultural minorities. And they are often at risk." ²⁶

K. Problems with Verbal Inspiration

The newer books on inspiration may have more apologetic arguments to support inspiration. I encourage you to look for books that give arguments for and against that will make you think. In the books that you read, I found some authors discussing apparent problems with inspiration. I have in your notes given some examples of these proposed problems that we will quickly go through.

1. The Problem of Transmission.

There are claims of Bible difficulties with the assumed problems of transmission including comments on the autographs or the original manuscript. In this class we claimed the original writings were perfect. But, as some would say: How did they reproduce these for others to read? They

²⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_martyrs

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were copied by hand which suggests the possibility of error. Until the invention of printing all copying had to be done by hand. The scribes were very careful; however, some copyist errors did creep in. Nevertheless, when all available manuscripts, located in numerous and wide spread locations, copied over and over by hand, are examined, the errors are so minimal by the unique care on the part of copyists, this itself constitutes a divine superintending.

2. Did Paul Disclaim Inspiration?

One presumed problem is the text of 1 Cor. 7 in which it seems Paul was writing on his own initiative: vs. 6- "*I speak this by permission, but not by command.*" In vs. 10 Paul says "*I command, not I, but the Lord.*" We have him affirming he is talking about a command of the Lord, then in vs. 10 there is a presumed contradiction. In vs. 25- *I have no commandment of the Lord:*, and vs. 40- *I think I also have the Spirit of God*, it also appears there is contradict. We have looked at this in another class, vs. 6 talks about the permission of the Spirit of God. What is the evidence here is that Paul was referring to OT writings regarding marriage, but the Spirit of God directs him to add to this issue other instructions. In vs. 40 he clearly declares his source of knowledge is the Spirit of God. When Paul was writing to Corinthians, there was not the completion of the NT to all the churches. So the text in 1 Cor. 7 does not say that Paul is disclaiming inspiration, it actually reinforces the reality of his own moving by the Spirit of God. He made a distinction of what was Scripture and what now is becoming Scripture by the leading of the Holy Spirit through himself.

3. The Problems of Inexact Quotations

Another problem involved how the OT was quoted in the NT. For example, Psalm 40:6 (v. 7 in French Bible) reads: *Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; My ears You have opened.* But quoted in Heb. 10:5 it reads: "*Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me.* There are other examples in the way Christ quoted OT as well. The answer is evident, these were not word for word quotes. Our answer to people who say these are errors. Who is the author in the OT and

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the NT? God is the author, the Spirit of God directed both. When you look at these verses, you see that there is unique purpose in each context. The phrase ‘my ears hast thou opened’ has the same idea as Heb. 10 “a body you have prepared.” The significance in the OT of ‘ears opened’ point to a slave committing himself to his master for life.

This is explained in Ex. 21 where the servant allowed the master to bore a hole in his ear against the doorpost, to symbolize his devotion to his master. In Psalm 40 it is clearly a reference to Ex. 21. The prepared body in Hebrews is equivalent to the bored ear of Psm. 40. It is Christ giving over his body to God. Hebrews speaks of the willing submission of the body of Christ to the Father. Therefore, the literal meaning of the passage is not contradicted. Does God have the privilege of making the application of His own Word? Yes! We maintain that the Holy Spirit, as author of Scripture, has the liberty to make legitimate application or interpretation.

When we are teaching the exegetical meaning of OT texts, we understand the primary meaning and the derived devotional thoughts. Each passage has a primary meaning. When preparing sermons, we study the text to understand the primary meaning in its own context. Then when we preach, delivering appropriate application of the Truth. In essence that is what the Holy Spirit did in Hebrews quoting Psalm 40. So the final two statements in your notes are – the key should never contradict the primary meaning and, the Spirit of God in the NT, the Holy Spirit is free to make choices. There are a number of OT passages quoted a little differently in the NT. The original meaning is never violated.

4. Problems of Variant Reports of the Same Events

We also have an argument of Bible difficulties relating to the same events given in different order or different ways. For example, in Matt. 5 we have the sermon on the mount and nine beatitudes listed, in Luke 6 it appears to be the same event but with only four beatitudes. The wording is significantly different as well. The answer is very clear in the text. They are not the same event because in Matt. 5 it says Christ went up on the

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mountain, the disciples came up to him when they saw the crowds. In Luke they are on the mountain and come down to the plain.

There are those who say in Matt. 5 Jesus is preaching only to His disciples. It does say Jesus went up on the mountain and the disciples came to Him. I think Jesus went up on the mountain so he could address the multitudes from a higher point. He is clearly preaching to the multitudes that came from everywhere. The important thing for me is these are two separate occasions with two different audiences. I think that the difference in the beatitudes reflects the audiences, which harmonizes with the unique purpose of Matthew and Luke. Matthew focuses on Jesus as King; the beatitudes here reflect the character of the kingdom to come. Whereas in Luke the emphasis is on Jesus the man, therefore the beatitudes are shared in a different way. He doesn't say 'blessed are the poor,' He says 'blessed are you' the poor, making it a personal thing. So that's why there is a significant difference.

Student Question: In Matt. 5:2 the text states he taught 'them'. Who is this?

Prof. Reply: Opinions vary on this point. Some commentaries say Jesus left the crowd for others say rest the crowds followed Jesus. The problem is you cannot make a distinction in this one verse text, the plural masculine pronoun could modify the multitudes of verse 1 or the disciples of verse 2. Verse 2 states "seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain, and when seated his disciples came to him." This could suggest that Jesus separated himself from the people (up a mountain) to rest (seated himself) and the disciples took the liberty to be alone with Him. Apparently during this discourse others found them, joined the crowd (cf. 7:28) and listened in. You must determine your own opinion.

Another instance of Bible difficulties involves the accounts of the temptation of Christ. Matt. 4 and Luke 4 have the same temptations but put in different order. So the argument for those who hold to inspiration's

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inerrancy suggests that none of the apostles were present. So this record was either related to them personally by Jesus or by direct revelation to Matthew or Luke through the Holy Spirit. None of the disciples were present. Once again the difference lies in the unique purpose of Matthew and Luke. Matthew's order is probably more chronological (cf. τότε—["then"] in v. 5) and Luke's more thematic (Luke 4:1–13), in which the temple episode appears last as a climax in keeping with Luke's distinctive emphasis on Jesus' relationship with the temple.²⁷ The primary meaning of course is that Christ had victory over temptations that paralleled the nature of those presented to Adam & Eve in the garden of Eden. Satan tempted both Eve and Christ with "The lust of the flesh, and lust of the eyes, and the pride of life."

We need to remember that in the Hebrew thinking order is not as important as priority. The difference in the order could be the significant in the difference of the purpose of Matthew and the purpose of Luke. Or if the Spirit of God prompted them to record this on the basis of what Jesus told them about the temptation, there is another possibility.

It is very likely that when Christ spent time with the disciples, his language was Aramaic, but when the spirit of God led the writing of the NT, it was Greek. Moving from Aramaic which was spoken by Jesus, to writing it in Greek could account for a difference in order. The significance is that there is no difference in the meaning and significance of Christ overcoming the three temptations. The temptations in Genesis in the Garden of Eden were summarized by John as the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16). And in the same way Satan tempted Christ.

5. Problem of Inclusion of Personal and Trivial Information

We have examined what some people say about Bible difficulties; inconsistencies, in quoting the OT in the NT, and in the order in which

²⁷ Blomberg, C. (1992). *Vol. 22: Matthew*. The New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

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things are recorded. Another claimed Bible difficulty relates to the personal and trivial information recorded in the Scriptures. I did not make a list of these in your notes but they include such things as the genealogies and other things that are personal like Paul talking about his eyes not good and he has to write in big letters. As well, he gives some medical advice to Timothy to take some wine for his stomach. We have already looked at the problem of inconsistencies with numbers which, even without difference, seem to be trivial in nature.

What is the problem of man saying ‘this is too trivial, too insignificant to be inspired by God’? Where does it put the authority? So our first answer is, man’s ignorance of purpose does not mean the Holy Spirit had no purpose. There are parts of the Scriptures that have historical, genealogical, chronological, geographical significance, even if men cannot see it. I personally think the great detail God uses in certain situations which may seem trivial to some, only emphasizes that that God is the Author and He knows all! the information.

I love the Scripture’s list of David’s great men who fought for valiantly for him (2 Sam. 23). It amazes me that the text also points out that Benaiah killed two heroes of Moab, and a lion in a pit on a snowy day. If you who have never travelled by foot on snow you would not realize the significance of this; when you walk on snow, the footing is very slippery. To say that a Benaiah defeated a lion in the snow shows he had great courage with the grave danger of slipping and sliding in a confined pit. I can imagine this because we live where there is snow five months of the year. We ‘snow bound folks’ would say ‘anyone who in a pit with a lion against the odds of slipping on the snow, is crazy!

With such ‘trivial things,’ recorded in Scripture, we have no idea how the Spirit of God would speak to people. Although such things mean nothing to us, it might mean salvation itself for another. Remember the Jewish man was saved through the impact of ‘trivial’ genealogies. Remember the list of people in Romans 16 where about thirty-three individu-

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als are named. This not trivial, rather, it shouts “God is interested in people.”

Any verse if studied closely enough with prayer and meditation will yield blessing and instruction for *All Scripture is given by inspiration and is profitable*, (2Tim. 3:16). I suggest that any verse if studied closely enough, especially in historical context, and with prayer and meditation, will yield a blessing. When you come to a verse that seems out of place, the key to understanding is that there is more to search out, more to discover.

6. The Problem of Duplicate Passages

Another argument against inspiration is the duplicate passages. The four gospels are all about the life of Christ, why do we need four gospels to give us the life of Christ?

Prof. Question: You tell me why?

Student Replies: -Each gospel presents a certain aspect.

Prof. Response: In the same way each book of the Bible is unique with a distinct purpose. We could add that the style of the writers contributes to the distinctions.

We argue the variety has purpose but then the argument comes back that 2 Kings 18-20 almost identical to Is. 36-39? There is a passage in Micah almost identical to a passage in Isaiah. The answer is; if it is the choice of God to repeat this, it is His choice. From a practical prospective it could be the same author, or one author copied from the other. Most feel that the unknown compiler of II Kings copied from Isaiah. Micah and Isaiah were contemporaries and both were prophets so they may have cooperated together in these things. It’s possible that Micah who wrote after Isaiah may have quoted him because he had the same purpose in mind. Although some liberal theologians reject inspiration because trivial things that don’t seem to belong, or the duplication of passages that are identical is redundant, yet, overriding all this is, Scripture record it is God’s choice,

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He is the author.

7. Problem of Alleged Contradictions in the Scriptures

The last point of Bible difficulties is alleged contradictions in the Scriptures. For example 1 Sam 15 says God cannot lie or repent, yet Gen 6:6 states that God repented that He made man. The answer is that God will not change His eternal purposes but He changes His dealings with man as man's actions change. To repent means to turn, or have a change of mind. When God determined, before the foundation before the world, his purposes for Creation, His mind never changes. His purposes for Israel, never changes. But in the context of the way man responds to God, God will change His mind. When Moses was on the mountain receiving the law, Israel was down making a golden calf. God threatened to change His mind, "I will kill them." Moses cried out and prayed that this would not be the case. Therefore, God changed His mind and spared Israel because Moses interceded. I see this as the purpose of God, to call Moses to intercede for his people.

There is another example of presumed contradiction with Ex. 24 in comparison to John 1. Ex. 24:9 states *Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel... saw the God of Israel.* John 1:18 *No one has seen God at any time.* Does the Bible contradict itself? No! A careful examination of the texts clarifies this. It is important to note that the events of Exodus 19 through 39 take place during the giving of the law to Moses at Mt. Sinai. What Moses and the leaders saw in Exodus 24 is described in vs. 10: *they saw the God of Israel: under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it was like the very heavens in its clarity.* Their experience was similar to when Moses later met with God at the tent of meeting and *the LORD spoke unto Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.* (Ex. 33:11).

Here the 'pillar of cloud,' which led Israel through the wilderness to Mt. Sinai, descended upon the tent. Yet, when Moses asked to see God's Glory, the Lord said: *I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to*

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whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. (Ex. 33:19-20). The Pulpit Commentary answers the presumed contradiction well:

No one hath ever yet seen God. Many visions, theophanies, appearances, angelic splendours, in the desert, on the mountain, in the temple, by the river of Chebar, had been granted to the prophets of the Lord; but they have all fallen short of the direct intuition of God as God. Abraham, Israel, Moses, Manoah, David, Isaiah, Ezekiel, saw visions, local manifestations, anticipations of the Incarnation; but the apostle here takes the Lord's own word for it (ch.5:37), and he elsewhere repeats it (1 John 4:12). These were but forerunners of the ultimate manifestation of the Logos. "The Glory of the Lord," "the Angel of the Lord," "the Word of the Lord," were not so revealed to patriarchs that they saw God *as God*. They saw him in the form of light, or of spiritual agency, or of human ministries; but in the deepest sense we must still wait for the purity of heart which will reveal to our weakened faculties the beatific vision.²⁸

Student Question: *How can you see someone 'face to face' and not see him?*

Prof. Reply: *We must remember that the language used is explaining the circumstances, seeking to convey something we cannot fully understand. For example, God is spirit, Does spirit have physical substance, a front or a back? No.*

Note this: In Ex. 33, The pillar of cloud descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the LORD talked with Moses (vs.9). Yet Moses asked God, while talking 'face to face' (vs.11) to see God Glory (vs.18). In essence, Moses was saying "Show me who you really are." The Lord re-

²⁸ *St. John Vol. I.* 1909 (H. D. M. Spence-Jones, Ed.). The Pulpit Commentary (23). London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company.

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plied that no one could view God in that way and live.(vs.19-20). The text seems to indicate that Moses' first view of God was 'the cloud,' of God's Glory, and Moses' 'protected' view a partial glimpse of God's true self. Yet these manifestations did not reveal all that God really is. The request of Moses to see God's Glory suggests Moses knew 'the cloud' was not truly seeing God in all His fullness. Did people see the Glory of God? Yes, according to Ex. 40:34, that is what 'the cloud' was. Did Moses have a unique glimpse of God? Yes, but even this was not all God Is, otherwise, Moses would have died!

For me, there is a very practical way of seeing this. When we look at one another, where do we look to really understand a person? Where do we look deeply into a person's being, even though it is often brings a feeling of discomfort.

Student Replies: You look into their eyes.

Prof. Reply: Yes. Have you ever tried o keep eye contact with someone? I just did this with you (student) while asking this question and you turned away. The truth is, there is something about looking a person straight in the eye that is too personal, too revealing for most to bear. This is just a very small illustration to help us understand why no man can look into the eyes of God and live! One day we will, because we will be made perfect as Him, Praise God! Moses was given a privilege that no one else in Scripture had, save Adam before sin separated all mankind from God. Why was Moses given that privilege?

Student Replies: -Because of God's grace. -By the sovereign decision of God.

Prof. Reply: This is certainly true, but there is another reason clearly mentioned in Scripture: "As and you shall receive." Moses asked! In all of Scripture did anyone ask this of God?

Student Replies: -No, no one. -What if we ask?

Prof. Reply: The Lord has also answered: When he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.(1 JN. 3:2).

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Another alleged contradiction involves the inscription on the cross recorded in the Gospels. These inscriptions are as follows: In Matt. 27:37 - This is Jesus the King of the Jews, Mark 15:26 - The King of the Jews, Luke 23:38 - This is the King of the Jews, John 19:19 - Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews. Combining all four Gospels, we can conclude that the full superscription of the accusation under which mankind crucified Jesus was: THIS IS JESUS THE NAZARENE, THE KING OF THE JEWS.²⁹ The varying accounts may reflect the different languages: Latin, Greek, Hebrew, which were used in the inscription. Nevertheless, these do not contradict each other, they simply express different elements of the inscription emphasizing what was suited to each gospels purpose.

The duplicate genealogies of Christ in Matt. 1 and Luke 3 have also been an alleged contradiction. There is no contradiction; the distinction in the genealogies lies in God's purpose to show both legal royal ancestry and human lineage. Matthew gave Jesus' lineage through His legal father, Joseph (v. 16). Thus this genealogy traced Jesus' right to the throne of David, which must come through Solomon and his descendants (v. 6). Luke's genealogy made it clear that Jesus was a physical descendant of David,³⁰ through His biological mother Mary. It is important to note an important aspect of the theology Luke expressed in his genealogy. He related Jesus not only to Abraham but all the way back to Adam and to God.

This is an indication of the universal offer of salvation, which is common to his Gospel—that Jesus came to save all people—Gentiles as well as the nation of Israel³¹

²⁹ Mills, M. S. (1999). *The Life of Christ: A Study Guide to the Gospel Record* (Mt 27:37–Jn 19:22). Dallas, TX: 3E Ministries.

³⁰ Barbieri, L. A., & Jr. (1985). Matthew. In *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (Mt 1:2–17). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

³¹ Martin, J. A. (1985). Luke. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (Lk 3:24–38). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

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Our class notes refer to one last alleged contradiction in the healing of blind Bartimaeus, In Matthew, the healing of blind Bartimaeus is stated to be while leaving the city, and in Luke while entering the city. Matthew tells us that there were *two* blind beggars who met Jesus as He *left* Jericho (Matt. 20:29–30), but Luke introduces us to one blind beggar, Bartimaeus, who called out as Jesus *approached* Jericho. There were two Jerichos, the old ruined city and the new one built by Herod the Great, and they stood about a mile apart. The two men, one of whom was more outspoken, were sitting at the entrance to the new city, so there is no contradiction.³²

The fact that we do not understand the differences between some of these texts does not mean that there are contradictions and therefore inerrant inspiration is a fallacy. In all of these alleged difficulties we can make one single argument, the Bible teaches that all Scripture is the inspired inerrant word of God, given by God through human authors. It should not be surprising that in our finite human minds some things are difficult to understand, or the Apostle Peter made the same observation regarding Paul's Epistles. Human understanding of the word of God is the product of the illuminating work of the Spirit of God.

We are to be diligent to study the word of God by rightly dividing Scripture. Perfect understanding will be a lifelong pursuit. I have known the Lord for over 55 years and I am still amazed at how little I know and how much I continue to learn. When I read such books as the greatness of the kingdom by Alvin McLean, I again am amazed that this was the labour of a lifetime by the author. We, who are to defend the faith, must study to develop apologetics to be able to defend the Scriptures. Yet, realizing that all are logical arguments will never convince anyone to believe, for this remains in The sovereign hands of God. We cannot get past what Paul said

³² Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Lk 18:35–43). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

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in Corinthians, the natural man does not receive the things of the spirit of God because they are spiritually discerned.

We completed a section regarding the arguments and the apologetics of inspiration. The next section of your notes repeats much of what we have done, but with a different purpose demonstrating an outline of a confession statement with the exception that they don't begin with "I believe that..." These are for your benefit when creating your own 'ordination, confession. Please do not write a class required confession more than a 1 page.

CLASS 11

III. INSPIRATION - GOD'S WORD WRITTEN

All Scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: (2 Timothy 3:16)

A. Interpretation of Scripture

For class discussion purposes I wish to begin with section III. Interpretation – God's Word Written, at Point C. Interpretation of Scripture.

1. The Demand

One of the things omitted in many Bibliology books is instructions for interpreting Scripture. I believe that Bibliology is one of the earlier doctrines whereby this should be studied. In 2 Tim. 2:15 God says: *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* We have Inspiration's union the Word of God being by man and God. We could say it is the union of the mind of man and the mind of God delivering the Holy Word. The same two dynamic relationships are necessary in interpretation.

This text speaks of man's responsibilities to be diligent to study. You notice it speaks of a *workman*, therefore, the work of interpretation is a labour; Aa labour of grammar, a labour of context, a labour of discovering meaning. So by referring to labourer it shows the work of interpretation is

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similar to physical work. In our call to teach the Word of God, we need to understand it is an intensive labour. In Psalm 19:10, David calls the search for God's truth the same as searching for gold. Such labour, if called to by God as a church leader, will not be an easy life. An easier way of doing it is to just use someone else's work.

I met a pastor who told me he prepares his Sunday sermon on Saturday night. I was surprised. I asked how he found the time to do it on Saturday night. He answered, "I go to the internet and find a sermon." So the potential for being lazy is great when you are a pastor. But God will never bless the lazy person in ministry. There is a divine demand to work. And by experience, I confess it doesn't get easier. However, with practice you do get faster. When I first began pastoral ministry it was a challenge to have two sermons prepared for Sunday services. But by the grace of God, after a few years of practice, I was able to prepare weekly studies for three services, Sunday School, a newspaper column and a radio broadcast. The elders of our church committed to the major visitation needs which greatly increased my study time. Nevertheless, committing to personal study and teaching preparation rather than using material prepared by others, although laborious, reaped great spiritual benefits for myself and our church body. I believe this is one reason that our church had a very high percentage of members involved in the local ministries and many families were called to career Christian labours.

2. The Discipline

In the demand of approaching interpretation like a worker, there is also discipline. This is where many will be tempted to take shortcuts. The discipline is to 'rightly divide the word of truth' (2 Tim. 2:15). The analogy here comes from Paul's experience as a tent maker where cutting the material to make tents had to be precise to ensure quality and economy. As a skilled tentmaker he knew the best use of materials to cut properly to avoid waste. So the study labours that are called for in church ministry, by the same demand, involves a discipline of proper exegesis and synthesis.

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We have to work wisely with the Word of God. Teachers need to become masters of the language. I don't say you must know the Bible languages, although this is of great value, but even if you use a good translation in your own language, it is still a labour of disciplined study procedures. *Interpretation is a matter of exegesis*, where you relate the words to the times it was written, the culture of that day, and the grammatical structure in order to understand the intended meaning and appropriate application. This involves research.

We all know by experience the dynamics of language. Even a single language changes over many years. That's why in America, the King James Bible is not popular. Much of the language is 400 years old and Americans do not speak English that way now. The same will happen in French as well as your national language. That's the advantage of Biblical Theology, the theology of each Bible book. Even between Moses and David there are many years where the meaning of words changed in their nuances. As such, the exegesis involves the study of the language itself according to the scripts and the language of the day it was written. Exegesis, to be done completed properly, requires some tools. No matter what language you use, it will be necessary to use some language tools to do proper exegesis.

Prof. Question: What books can you think of? What tools of exegesis come to mind?

Student Replies: -Dictionaries, -Bible language based commentaries, -Exhaustive concordances,

Prof. Reply: We are living in a day where so much is available in software to use on your computer. So if you have a computer, there is good software. I gave the new Online Bible program to Dr. Simon to be available to students. We should have an afternoon class to learn how to use the Online Bible software.

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There is much Bible software available that can be used in study, as well as tools of exegesis that are excellent. When you study with Bible language you begin with vocabulary and proceed with exegesis. *Interpretation is a matter of synthesis*. This involves taking any given text with proper exegesis and measuring our understanding with all Scripture. The guiding principle is that God is the author of all Scripture and His truth is consistent. So we cannot take a teaching from one text that seems contrary to the teaching of other texts. Synthesis involves relating the text to the **WHOLE BODY OF TRUTH**, holding to the guiding principle of Scripture's self-consistency, in which God cannot contradict Himself. We must see the harmony of all the texts. Good commentaries are very helpful here.

When I was a pastor, I followed this process and tried to use the original language as much as possible. After I did my own study, I compared my results with other men who I respected, to see if I agreed with them. We do have a greater advantage than the servants of God 100 years ago. We can evaluate our labours with great men of the Word, whose studies are available. However, there are two dangers to avoid; first, not all available studies represent good exegesis and interpretation. That's why we begin with the Word of God as we do our own exegesis and synthesis. The second danger lies in the temptation of recognizing the high quality of available studies and reverting to using this rather than labouring to accomplish our own studies.

There is another caution to be aware of. There is a difference between inductive and deductive study. Many books and many sermons are based on deductive study. Deductive study is beginning study with a position and then seeking to prove that position from the Bible. For example, say I believe in baptismal regeneration where people are saved by baptism. There are verses in the Bible, when viewed independently from the whole Bible, that could indicate this, words and phrases like *He who believes and is baptized will be saved*; (Mark 16:16). If I use only this verse to support baptismal regeneration, I am using deductive reasoning.

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When we do our studies we must begin with an open mind and start with the Word of God. Inductive study begins with the Word and allows the whole Word of God teach us. In 1 Cor. 2:13 Paul declares that understand the Scriptures it is the ministry of the spirit of God. Paul goes on to say understanding by the Spirit comes by ‘comparing spiritual to spiritual’. This means comparing God’s truth with other passages of God’s truth. The demand for proper procedure and personal labour is evident.

We are addressing the doctrine of Inspiration. We have studied how we received the Word of God whereby Inspiration is the final product. The process of this accomplishment was God’s Spirit moving men to bring forth His Words by using their own personality in style and language. The Inspiration is the product, the very Word of God. Bible Inspiration refers to the original manuscripts or autographs as being perfect. Yet, as those autographs were copied with consistency and accurately translated to other languages, we have **Virtual Inspired** Bibles. Now we must examine the principles of interpretation. For your own study I encourage you examine the life of Christ and see how He interpreted Scripture. In the town I served God as a pastor, there were always challenges from other pastors, that I did not interpret the Bible properly. They knew I took the Bible literally and once in a while I would get a call challenging my position. I responded with the same answer—if you can show me where Jesus interpreted Scripture differently, I will consider changing my position. No one ever got back to me with an answer.

B. Application of Scripture

When we study the life of Christ we find the Principles of Interpretations and the applications. We have a text that helps understand the significance of applications; Heb. 4:12: *For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

1. The Nature of Scripture

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Application can be defined as what the Bible means to us. It is the impact of the Scripture on our life. In this passage we see the impact begins with the nature of God Himself; as God is living, so His Word is living, as God brings life, so His Word brings life. Believers are born again by the Word (1Pet. 1:23). Whose words are the Scriptures? God's- Jesus Himself demonstrated the power of His own word when He spoke and Lazarus came forth. It is the intrinsic nature of Scripture to bring life simply because it is the intrinsic nature of God Himself to bring life. This passage says the Word of God is dividing and discerning. The idea is to bring understanding by piercing the darkness of our minds.

What does Paul tell us in Ephesians about where we were before salvation: *in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air*, (Eph. 2:2), *For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord*, (Eph. 5:8). The point is that not only is it the intrinsic nature of Scripture to bring life, but to bring light. The idea is of removing the darkness and bringing understanding of the plans and purposes of to the mind. Therefore by virtue of the nature of the Word of God it does pierce together our understanding and bring discernment. This is supported by the remainder of the text of Heb. 4.

2. The Accomplishments of Scripture

Paul also declares that the Scriptures accomplish transformation: *be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God*. (Rom. 12:2). Peter stated that believers mature through the Word: *desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby* (1 Pet. 2:2). We are called to let the word dwell in us richly (Col. 3:16). There are many other passages that talk about the transforming power of God's Word in terms of guidance, care, comfort, changing our thinking.

3. The Limitation of Scripture

So in terms of application, we again begin with the Word of God. We see the nature of Scripture to bring life and light. We see the accomplishment of Scripture to bring transformation and regeneration. Yet, we also

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see the limitation of Scripture in 1 Cor. 2:14: *the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* The natural man in this text is referring to the unsaved man, although some French-language Bibles translate this ‘animal man’.

Prof. Question: *Remember when we talked about revelation, how did God give it in a general sense?*

Student Replies: *-Creation, -Conscience*

Prof. Reply: *The declaration is that general revelation declares is ‘God exists,’ ‘there is a God.’ They speak to man shouting “find me, seek me.” By their revelation mankind will be held accountable. But there are limitations. Because no one can be saved by seeing the trees and just seeking a god. God must bring more revelation. We saw from experience that God honours a true quest of man to find Him, by bringing more revelation.*

When we talk about special revelation, what do we see?

Student Replies: *-His Word, -The incarnation of His Son.*

Prof. Reply: *He is called the Word. Is there limitation in this manifestation?*

Student Replies: *Yes, -space, -Time, -Comprehension.*

Prof. Reply: *Yes, there was a limitation of time – Jesus ministered among man in a very limited geographical area, and for only 3.5 years. Some did not accept His Word. Just as there are people who hear the voice of creation and do not listen. Jesus said, ‘come to me’ but they did not.*

Special revelation is God’s Word. We see a distinction between the way God delivered this in OT times and the time of the life of Jesus Christ. From Hebrews we see that God spoke in visions and signs, He gave his message in different ways. Some of that was recorded as God’s written Word. Now in the NT era, we see He has spoken to us in His Son. Again in 2 different ways, in his presence as the incarnate Son, and by the written word of the NT. In the Scriptures, we also have limitations. We see in 1 Cor. 2:14 ‘no man can fully understand the things of the Spirit, or spiritu-

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al truth. We see from Scriptures various ways the natural man resists God in His Word. First of all simply by the hardness of hearts. Have you witnessed to individuals who refuse to believe? Imagine the ministry of Jeremiah who preached for 50 years with few conversions.

Do you think it possible for God to use pastors as He used Jeremiah to bring a people the Word of God so there is greater judgment?

Student Replies: -Of course, -Yes, -Yes

Prof. Reply: Yes, we see in the book of Revelation some churches that were condemned. Of the seven churches, most were rebuked by Christ. I think the same type of churches have been seen in the N.T. church throughout the world. If you took the Revelation class, I do not hold to the thought that the churches represent church eras in time. I think all seven of the churches exist in this church age somewhere. Is the persecuted church somewhere in the world today? I am not an authority, but some say there are more martyrs for Christ in the past ten years than ever before. Is there a Laodicea church today that is cold to God? I call it 'the American church'. That is how I see it. Clearly there is a weakened heart-beat toward God across the Americas.

There are limitations to God's Inspired Word. Unsaved man does not comprehend spiritual truth due to Natural Blindness. We see the limitation of God's Word by a resistance to the obvious ministry of the Spirit of God in God's accomplishments. Here, the parable of the talents which speaks of using what is given or God will remove it, is evident. Even though God has clearly guided and disciplined Israel since its conception, and been working mightily through the church for 2000 plus years, humanity refuses to acknowledge or respond to what has been obvious.

We have in history the evidence of the blessing of God promised in His Word, and we have the evidence in history, of God's predicted judgment upon wickedness. But the world generally speaking will not be spiritually discerning and will not see this evidence as clear truth and respond to it. For example, in Romans Paul clearly says sin continues to degenerate

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humanity. Paul speaks specifically of those practicing homosexuality and says God gave them up to receive in their bodies what such deviant behaviour would deliver. Societies, past and present, evidence the consequences of what homosexuality delivers; an epidemic of sexual diseases. Specifically, history has evidence AIDS epidemics in many cultures, which has been directly related to homosexual activity.

You cannot miss the statements of Scripture and the judgement of God on sexual immorality. Does the world accept this and turn away from homosexuality? No! Rather, it invents ways to be immoral 'safely'. As a result, even once 'Christian nations,' who have turned their backs on the working of His Spirit to fulfill prophecy and transform lives and nations, are descending into moral and ethical decay, anarchy, and ruin.

Another limitation of God's Word involves the way man resists God. We see the resistance of men who are unwilling to follow God. Jesus said: *No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.* (Lu. 9:62). History has revealed nations, formerly moved by God uniquely and used by God to bring the gospel to the world, who later abandoned God, forsook the true church, and now need to receive God's missionaries to reawaken them. What happened? When you look at the church history of these nations, you see they began with their hand on the plow of the gospel, but as time passed, the persistence in spreading the gospel diminished and the church become a social agency. Individually, people wandered from God.

All of these realities add up to the limitations of Scripture, self-imposed by mankind who resist God. Scripture teaches those who come to God are the 'called'. This is clear in God's Word. Nevertheless, it is incorrect to then assume that the rest of humanity not called, have been chosen by God for hell. No, that choice was made by Adam, and confirmed by humanity's continued resistance God in every aspect of His works. In every way God has sought to reveal himself; by general revelation, by written revelation, by incarnation, by prophetic fulfillment, by gospel

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transformation, humanity has resisted. Therefore, in Adam humanity is justifiably condemned.

God has accomplished things He said He would accomplish, both in a positive and negative way. For example, He said He would build His church and the gates of hell would not prevail against it. Has this been seen in history? Yes! Nations have attempted eliminate it, but the church prevails. God said that His Word would prevail. Evil leaders have attempted to destroy it. Have they prevailed? No!

Researcher James Chapman has compiled this look at the top 10 most-read books in the world. Chapman created the list by examining how many individual copies of the books had been printed and sold over the last 50 years...The Bible leads the countdown by a large margin, with nearly 4 billion copies printed and sold globally in the last five decades. God declared that He establishes government and the principle you see in Scripture is that people get the government they deserve.

Has there been in history a relationship between nations of bad government, dictatorships etc. and the ungodliness of those same nations? Yes. Over and over in history Godly nations have been blessed and ungodly nations have disappeared. Is there a relationship in history between the immorality of people and their demise? Yes. The story of Sodom and Gomorrah did not end in the O.T. History reveals that catastrophes have come upon very wicked societies in far greater proportion than on morally restrained cultures. This does not suggest that storms never come upon God's people, but it does indicate a general principle of history which complies with Scriptural teachings.

What I sought to accomplish in showing these limitations is to help us realize that man is perpetually resistant to God. Through all the various means of God's revelation, man does not respond because he is not neutral before God. Humanity is not in a state of innocence, rather he is dead in trespasses and sin. He is constantly resisting God, just as he is constantly sinning, all of which is an expression of the sin nature within man. The

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result is that if any would be saved from eternal condemnation, there is a necessity for Illumination.

C. The Illumination of Scripture

We have already stated that, without inspiration, no Scripture ever would have been written. We may now claim that without illumination, no sinner ever would have been saved! Illumination, then, is that method used by the Holy Spirit to shed divine light upon all seeking men, as they look into the Word of God. Illumination is transferring truth from God's Word to the human heart.

1. Reasons for Illumination.

Sinful man cannot simply read and heed the biblical message without divine aid:

i) It is necessary because of natural blindness.

In this we want to remind ourselves for the reason for illumination. The question is asked 'Why cannot man read the divine message without divine aid?' The answer is, it is necessary because of natural blindness, the natural man is blind to truth.

There are 2 texts of Scripture to support this:

1 Cor. 2:14: *But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

Matt. 16:16-17: *Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.*

The testimony of Christ regarding Simon Peters' confession is clear. Jesus shared that the single reason Peter realized that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God was because God had revealed it to Peter. It was not a matter of Peter's study to come to this conclusion. God The Father revealed it to him. We see both the negative statement of human inability to comprehend in 1 Corinthians and the positive statement of God's enabling in Matthew 16. The same was true of young Samuel in 1 Samuel 3. He

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heard the voice of God, but had no discernment because *Samuel did not yet know the LORD, nor was the word of the LORD yet revealed to him* (vs. 7). God spoke directly to Samuel and gave understanding.

ii) It is necessary because of Satanic blindness

2 Cor. 4:3,4; *But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not...*

The gospel was rejected by people who were unable and unwilling to accept it (cf. 1 Cor. 1:18; 2:14). They disbelieved and were abetted in their unbelief by Satan, the god of this Age (cf. Eph. 2:2) who, though defeated by Christ (Heb. 2:14), continues his hold over the present world (1 Peter 5:8; 1 John 5:19). His blinding of peoples' minds makes it impossible for them to see the light of the gospel.³³

iii) It is necessary because of carnal blindness

There is a blindness from Satan, but there is also a carnal blindness. That is the carnal or fleshly minded man who resists God and does not find truth:

Heb. 5:12-14: *For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.* In this context the issue of their lack of understanding was because they did not continue pursuit in the deeper things of God.

1 Cor. 3:1-3: *And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife,*

³³ Lowery, D. K. (1985). 2 Corinthians. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (2 Co 4:3–4). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

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and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? (vs. 1-3).

Here Paul called these believers carnal-minded because they continued operating in the flesh.

Student Question: *Can we say that a spiritually immature person carnal-minded?*

Prof. Reply: *We must be careful because there is the reality of people growing spiritually. At every stage of spiritual growth there is room for greater understanding, therefore the need for more illumination. I resist using such terminology to define people because we do not see the heart and do not know the reasons. Paul's use of 'carnal' is different than how we use 'carnal'. The Bible language term is 'sarkinos' which pertains to behavior which is typical of human nature, but with special focus upon more base physical desires, it could be best translated 'worldly'.³⁴ We all know believers who are so worldly minded they are no spiritual good. That is different from being spiritually immature. The truth is; if people do not continue in the Word, but settle at any spiritual level, they will not continue to mature.*

2. The Results of illumination

i) Sinners are saved.

By God's grace, sinners are saved as a result of illumination.

Ps 146:8: *the Lord opens the eyes of the blind,*

Ps 119:130: *The entrance of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple,*

2 Cor. 4:6: *For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the*

³⁴ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (508). New York: United Bible Societies.

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glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. God opens the mind to spiritual understanding which brings salvation. We also see that illumination also results in new believers growing in maturity:

1 Pet. 2:2 *As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.* We could look at many passages of Scripture that tell how God's Word matures, guides, comforts, and strengthens God's people.

In Matthew 7 Jesus revealed the mark of the true believer: *every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.* A believer, like the fruit tree, will bare what the tree truly is. Following this analogy, Jesus said: *Not every one that says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven.* Jesus then explained that many would come to him saying, we did this and that, but Jesus reply will be *'I never knew you: depart from me'*. Later Jesus qualified this by the story of the wise man and the foolish man who built their houses on the rock and the sand respectively. Jesus qualified the wise man as *whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them,*(Mat.7:22). This expresses the necessity of *hearing* and doing what God says, again indicating the result of illumination.

ii) Christians are strengthened.

When we refer to illumination for Christian maturing and strengthening so many, many areas of life are involved. The point being that the continued leading and directing of our lives by the Word of God is the nature of Christian life. It comes from a continued illumination of the Word of God as we study the Bible ourselves. You will always find in Scripture the dual responsibility of the work of God and human responsibility.

3. Implications of illumination.

i) Illumination depends upon a receptive response

When God calls to man, there has to be a response. The response is of course faith, provoked by the ministry of the Spirit of God: *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* (Ro 10:17). It is God's purpose that He would bring understanding through illumination to those He has chosen. It also seems clear that the person with the resistant

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heart cannot be saved. Heb. 11:6 states: “*without faith it is impossible to please God.*” John 4:23-24 indicates the necessity to worship God in spirit and in truth. This implies, from Scripture, that although salvation and illumination begins with God, a human response is called for. God calls man; man answers. God illuminates; man responds. We cannot take away the human responsibility, even though illumination always begins with God.

ii) Illumination progresses through personal responsibility

The second Biblical implication of illumination is that Christians should not look on illumination as something automatically transpires. Progress in God’s ministry of illumination requires the work of man as well. Believers cannot casually approach the Word of God and expect to have an understanding of it. God calls all his people, not just the preachers, to be diligent to search out the Scriptures (2 Tim. 2:15). Jesus said “*man shall not live alone but by the Word of that proceeds out of the mouth of God.*” (Mat. 4:4). We are given an example in Acts 17 where we are told the Bereans were more noble than the Thessalonians because they searched the Scriptures daily.

Let me pass on to you a caution to explain to your church family. In America there is an abundance of daily devotionals for people to read Scripture daily. I myself have published four devotion books for people to use daily for an entire year. Nevertheless, I remind people that reading a devotional is not studying the Word of God. Simply reading another’s thoughts on a passage is not the labour of rightly dividing God’s truth. I say if you read a devotional to begin your day, it is a good thing. God uses little sermons to guide us and encourage us. But if you desire to grow deeper in the Word of God you must do the study yourself. There’s a difference between receiving instruction from a manual and God’s own guiding and illuminating. I believe only the second will lead people to live God’s truth in His power.

As well as have these devotionals, I would write study books for people to get into the Word themselves. These were books that asked ques-

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tions regarding passages of Scripture. The questions were there to lead people to study the text by proper exegesis. They still had to do the work. But the questions gave them direction and insight in appropriate study procedures. Most did not go to Bible College and therefore needed assistance. Provide your people with devotionals that lead them to properly study the Bible. Have special classes to teach your people how to study the Word of God. I don't know how you'll do this in your culture.

In the church I pastored, we provided choices for people based on 4 fundamentals things we asked them to commit to: corporate worship as a body, corporate prayer, be involved in ministry to others (children's ministry, meal preparation, nutrition guidance), and to study the Word of God privately and corporately. The 'studying together' was carefully planned for Sunday School classes and small groups each with specific purposes for new believers, teens, parents and seniors. The focus was not to study Christian books, but to study the Bible itself.

CLASS 12

Prof. Question: Share with me anything that was significant to you regarding our study of application or illumination.

Student Replies: -Man's natural blindness. -Even as believers we cannot understand the Scriptures on our own, we still depend upon the Holy Spirit's illumination. -Although it is God who illuminates, He will only do so with those who are really seeking for it. -Illumination does not depend on the level of maturity of a Christian, it depends only on salvation and seeking in a relationship with God, which the natural man does not have. - Illumination is not dependent upon personal intellect or education of an individual.

Prof. Reply: These are good observations. Can someone quote the verse used to characterize the application of Scripture? Repeat Heb. 4:12 together: For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of

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joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

What is the passage used to characterize human responsibility in the area of illumination?

2 Tim.2:15 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Illumination comes by the Spirit, but we are responsible for the labour of proper study and exegesis. We come now to the section dealing with the doctrine of preservation.

Student Question: When we look at the old testament in comparison to the new testament, is it the same kind of inspiration, for example in the New testament you got Jesus who comes and shares for 3 years, then you have the Holy Spirit that comes after whereas in the testament things are quite a bit different.

Prof. Reply: 2nd Timothy 3:16 does say: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." It is important for us to understand that Hebrews tells us that in this time the source and character of Revelation is in Jesus Christ. However, although the source is in Jesus Christ, the process of humans receiving revelation is the same. If you were in the class that I taught on Pneumatology, you will remember that I characterized the 'days of the seed' not in terms of difference in type from Old Testament but in terms of difference in fullness.

I see the repeated term 'new or newness' as characterizing the New testament time of fullness as an expression of the deeper fullness of all aspects of the relationship between God and man.

Were people saved differently in the old testament than in the new?

No, salvation has always been by faith in the provision that God made at the time. But of the sacrifices of the old testament only made for covering of sin, whereas, the fullness of salvation's Redemption came through the sacrifice of Christ.

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Many people disagree with me, but I believe that every time a person was born again, from Adam until the present, that person was indwelt by the Spirit of God. I see the uniting of man's spirit with God's Spirit as the essence of salvation. But before Jesus Christ believers did not have the fullness of the Spirit of God that we enjoy since Christ completed His work and sent the Holy Spirit to apply the work of Christ within the heart of every believer. I see the same parallel in terms of Revelation. We saw in the New testament an explosion of Revelation where man received 27 books in the space of one lifetime, in contrast to the receiving of the old testament which took 1400 years to receive 39 books. This was a new thing!

Also in the New testament we have a deeper explanation of things that were hidden in the old testament. To me this also demonstrates a new fullness now available to testament believers. Does this explanation help?

Student Replies: my question came from my personal struggle when Jesus sent the 70 he gave them power to heal, but now the concept of fullness clarifies the distinction.

We have looked already at texts that declare the preservation of the Word of God. we want to go back and take a look at these again. The Bible clearly teaches that God preserves the Scriptures through His providence.

IV. THE DOCTRINE OF PRESERVATION

A. The Bible has been preserved through God's Providence

Providence is normally defined in Christian theology as the unceasing activity of the Creator whereby, in overflowing bounty and goodwill (Ps. 145:9 *cf.* Mt. 5:45–48), he upholds his creatures in ordered existence (Acts 17:28; Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3), guides and governs all events, circumstances and free acts of angels and men (*cf.* Ps. 107; Jb. 1:12; 2:6; Gn. 45:5–8),

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and directs everything to its appointed goal, for his own glory (*cf.* Eph. 1:9–12).³⁵

1. Bible evidence of God's Promise to Preserve His Word

We have texts that affirm the work of God in preserving the Word of God through what we call providence; being God's activity throughout history in providing for the needs of human beings, especially those who believe in him.³⁶ There is no greater need for man than to know God. To know God can only come through His revelation of Himself. The following verses give Biblical evidence of God's promise to preserve His Word: **Psalm 119:89-91**: *Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven. Your faithfulness endures to all generations; You established the earth, and it abides. They continue this day according to Your ordinances, For all are Your servants.*

Four truths are evident in this text: 1. God's word is eternal because 2. God is faithful to all generations, 3. The earth is enduring. 4. God's Word and the earth are assurance of God's faithfulness. Will God's faithfulness ever fail? No. God's Word states that the earth will be renewed and abide forever. As God's Word will abide forever. I am amazed at the parallels in Scripture. The earth is like humanity, death is the principle on earth as on humanity. Christ purged us through the work of the cross; the earth will also be purged by fire to be renewed. God has declared these truths, they are as certain as His Word, which will never fail in time or in fulfilment.

Student Question: How will the earth last forever if the Bible says it will be destroyed. Is it the same earth?

³⁵ Packer, J. I. (1996). Providence. In D. R. W. Wood, I. H. Marshall, A. R. Millard & D. J. Wiseman (Eds.), *New Bible dictionary* (D. R. W. Wood, I. H. Marshall, A. R. Millard & D. J. Wiseman, Ed.) (3rd ed.) (979). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

³⁶ Elwell, W. A., & Comfort, P. W. (2001). *Tyndale Bible dictionary*. Tyndale reference library (1092). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

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Prof. Reply: If you read Peter's account of God's judgment on the earth, you will realize that the earth will be destroyed by fire Earth:

2 Peter 3:7 But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

2 Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

2 Peter 3:12 Waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn!

Yet Revelation tells us that earth, man's home will be renewed:

Revelation 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

Earth, although purged by fire, is established forever for man. If you view the New Heaven and New Earth as a replacement of the Old, you could argue that these are not eternal. But thinking Biblically, God Himself views the earth as man's abode and declares its deliverance along with the heavens: because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. (Ro 8:21). Creation will be delivered, like a mother delivering her child: For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. (Ro 8:22). This includes man's eternal residence of a new earth as well as a new heaven.

When you accepted Christ as your saviour, did you become a new person? According to God's view in Scripture you did. In the same way God will establish a new heaven and a new earth. For me, it does not matter if they are the same molecules or not, earth is established forever for man.

Matt. 5:18: *For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Here the jot and tittle, being the smallest characters of the Hebrew alphabet which will never fail, conveys the principle of preservation. If even the smallest parts of the Hebrew words of Scripture will not cease, then certainly the whole body of Scripture will be preserved. In this text we see again the permanence of heaven and earth as the measure of the perma-*

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nence of God's Word. The focus is that God's Word will be preserved. (This also points to God's view of the new heaven and new earth as man's home, it being renewed as opposed to destroyed and replaced.)

Is. 40:8: *The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever.* Here we see the natural cycle of plant life on earth (see 1 Cor. 15:36-37) which dies to reproduce, but God's Word will never pass away. Its source is not a part of creation but the creator Himself, eternal God, the source of all life. Is there a contradiction with what we already said? Look at the context and the terminology. The conclusion of the chapter is: *Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, The Creator of the ends of the earth, Neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable.* Is. 40 is a declaration that God's word will never pass away because God will never pass away. God's word has not suffered the curse of death as the world has suffered. It is incorruptible. The world is corrupted and will pass away through the fire.

One of the points of interpretation is to look at how the culture of the day referred to the terminology. Proper interpretation has to do with how each book uses the terminology in that particular culture and time. For example, the Bible statement: "your sins shall be as white as snow." New fallen snow in the geographical area of Bible writers is strikingly white and spectacular, but soon melts away. But if you live in snow country, where snow accumulates for months, you know it does not stay white, it gets very dirty. Context must be understood in its culture.

One of the possible reasons there appears to be a contradiction between the statements 'the earth will be forever' and 'the earth will pass away,' is the significance of the earth to the people of that day. In that cultural context the most steadfast, lasting thing was earth itself. For example, when I was a little boy I grew up in the flat and fertile Southern Ontario Farm County. Occasionally my family would visit my aunt, who lived where in Ontario's rugged bedrock and forest country. As a child I used to

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enjoy playing among the rocks and trees, imagining I was a cowboy, fighting wild natives behind ever rock.

Many years later, I became a pastor living in this ruggedly beautiful area. One day I went to visit the home where my aunt lived. The home was abandoned and reduced to rubble. The forest had grown up around it in such a way that the homestead was barely recognisable. However, when I began to walk around the property, I recognized the rocks, the ravines and the caves I had played among as a boy. I could pick the spots where I hidden when playing with my brother and sisters. Although the forest had expanded, the earth itself had never changed.

The people of Palestine would have this same experience. The only thing steadfast and unmovable was the earth. For them, comparing the Word of God to the permanency of earth, and in contrast to the fleeting grass, conveyed exactly what God intended: His Word Stands Forever, Therefore His Promises Stand Forever!

Student Question: Can you go back and explain the reason the Word of God is incorruptible, the reason why it does not need to be purged. I do not understand this.

Prof. Reply: The original manuscripts had to be perfect; paralleling creation itself which was perfect by God's spoken word. When Adam sinned the death principle passed on to the whole world, not just Adam's race. Scripture states: "As by one man's sin entered into the world, and death by sin." Sin has corrupted all creation. Therefore, the whole creation waits for redemption (as in Romans), when God will purge creation and restore it to its original state of perfection. The death principle will be eradicated. The Word of God is not flesh and blood, it is written documents. The death principle does not apply to the written Word of God, there is no corruptibility there. As physical creation by God's spoken word was originally perfect, so God's own perfection guarantees His original Written Word's perfection. Hence, God's Written Word needs no purging.

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Student Question: When you say the earth is enduring, I discussed with JW that say the earth will never be destroyed. Are they right?

Prof. Reply: You must determine from Scripture your own opinion. I have suggested that God's view of the fire which will encompass heaven and earth is a 'deliverance' not a 'destruction,' a purging not a replacing. Sometimes this is referred to as a passing away, other times a purging. In my opinion, the promise of a new heaven and a new earth is the extension of God's creation for man for eternity. To me the passing away will be the removal of death and restoring of original perfection, just as we have died in Christ and will be raised to perfection to be with Him forever.

Matt. 24:35: *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.* Here we have a simple statement, even though creation will pass away (all affected by sin's resulting death will be delivered through fire) God's word lasts forever. We have the Bible evidence that the Word of God lasts forever. We can look at the history of keeping the Word of God by Israel and the church and realize it is an ongoing fulfillment of His promise. Let me go through the terminology used in talking about the Word of God.

2. Historical evidence for ongoing fulfillment

i) Terms

When studying Bibliology you come across some unique terms. First there is the term '*autographs*,' which refers to one of the original handwritten documents of a book that eventually became part of the Bible. None of the original manuscripts remain but copies called '*apographs*,' made by scribes whose occupation was the careful copying of manuscripts, are available. '*Apograph*' exist in numbers sufficient to give us confidence that our present Bible accurately preserves the words of the autographs.³⁷

³⁷ Elwell, W. A., & Comfort, P. W. (2001). *Tyndale Bible dictionary*. Tyndale reference library (131). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

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‘*Manuscripts*’ (from Lat. *manus* “hand” and *scriptus* “written”) are handwritten documents, in a particular sense early copies of biblical books in scroll or codex form. Biblical texts are represented by thousands of manuscripts in a number of languages and by numerous quotations in ancient authors. Before the development of practical typographic printing in the fifteenth century A.D., the method for duplicating books was copying by hand, generally by professional scribes. Since books were produced one-by-one, unconscious errors and conscious changes regarded by copyists as improvements easily crept in.³⁸ We also have the term ‘printed text,’ copies produced by printing presses. These terms are evident when reading about the preservation of Scriptures.

ii) Copyist’s Care

When we look at the history of making copies of the originals over many years, there is an amazing consistency. For the O.T., there was a sect of Jewish scholars, called Masoretes. They were Jewish editors of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament from about 600 to 1000 A.D., devised vowel signs, punctuation, accent marks, and other textual helps; their comments on the textual problems are known as the *Masorah*, or “oral tradition”; their work forms the basis of Hebrew texts used today.³⁹ The Masoretes records and writings give great understanding about their copying processes which resulted in great accuracy. For example, they copied nothing from memory and even counted the number of words in each document to ensure accuracy.

The task if copying was considered so sacred, they continued the practice of washing their hands every time they wrote the name of God. They

³⁸ Myers, A. C. (1987). *The Eerdmans Bible dictionary* (688). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

³⁹ Karleen, P. S. (1987). *The handbook to Bible study: With a guide to the Scofield study system* (344). New York: Oxford University Press.

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took the responsibility very seriously. The evidence of their work can be seen in the Dead Sea scrolls, which were discovered in the last century. These scrolls demonstrate a unique accuracy not evident in other O.T. manuscripts found.

We see for the OT there was very great care by the Jewish people regarding the texts that they had. Were there some errors? Yes, very minor. We looked at some of them involving numbers which were difficult to write out accurately. Nevertheless, we have the promise of God's preservation of Scripture and the evidence in history of 400 years of copying where the errors of copying are incredibly minimal. We see the evidence of how God was preserving His Word.

In examining N.T. text, *manuscript agreement* is the basis of acknowledging preservation. Remember we are talking about the NT, which is just 2000 years old, young compared to the OT. We are talking about 27 books received within a 35 year period, as opposed to 39 books received over 1400 years. Do we have the original copies that Paul or Matthew wrote? No. But we do have 2000 years of evidence of the accuracy of copying done within the church. Are there some errors? Yes, but they are minor and the overwhelming evidence indicates a 92-98% accuracy in copying. The advantage we have regarding the NT is that there are over 5000 manuscripts regarding available. As well, there is also much ancient secular writing with N.T. quotes adding to the history of the N.T. texts. This allows extra points of comparison to help verify accuracy. I don't know how scholars got this information, but between the 2nd century and 3rd century A.D. the Bible is quoted over 186000 times. From a historical perspective there is no other document more testified in its accuracy than the Scriptures. Again this demonstrates God's promise to preserve His Word.

Some may argue and say we have so many translations that are not good, therefore the Bible is corrupted. We maintain that the original manuscripts, the autographs, were perfect, were incorruptible. We also maintain that the Scripture declares God's Word to stand forever, requiring a further ministry of preservation. In what form that preservation is achieved

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there is differences of opinion. Some would say that God has the original autographs preserved and protected in heaven, some say that somewhere on earth God has preserved and protected those original documents, still others say that somewhere on earth there are copies of the autographs that have maintained original perfection. These opinions are only speculation because, even if one opinion is correct, the documents are not available to man for verification. We will study this later in our class, it is sufficient to repeat the point in our notes that “the great Doctrinal and Historical content of the Bible has been transmitted without loss or change. Copies have a Derived or Virtual Inspiration as they are faithful copies of the autographs (pg. 52).

When the printing press was invented in 1456, the accuracy of copying was greatly enhanced. Gutenberg, the inventor of the printing press, had a Godly purpose of his invention, he wanted everyone to have a copy of the Bible. Why would a printing press ensure more accuracy than hand-writing? There is one plate that can be carefully examined and corrected which is used over and over, resulting in a copy of the exact text on the plate. This made examining the accuracy very simple because you had to only work with one copy plate. By God’s providential timing, humanity had the printing press, a means available to make copies of the Bible with consistent accuracy. It is no coincidence that the printing press was invented just prior to the explosion of church mission labours around the world. When you study missions, you discover it was after the 1400s, when sea travel became safe and reasonably convenient, that the church determined to reach the world.

Did missions happen before the 1400’s? Of course it did. It began with the apostles. However, I am talking about local churches catching the vision and moving out into the world with its own supported missionaries. Just prior to this becoming a great movement of the church, the printing press was there, making possible God’s Word in every language. Is that coincidence? No. the printing press was there when Europe began to move

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to America. I'm talking about the Bible available in print to the great masses starting new civilizations.

B. Preserved through God's People, (Canonicity)

1. Two critical assumptions.

Your student notes on canonicity are self-explanatory so, for the sake of time, I am only going to present summary explanations in class. God used His people to preserve the Scriptures. The Masorites continued keeping the O.T. manuscripts copied and accurate. The church since its conception recorded in Acts 2, has preserved the N.T. writings as accurately as she could. When we start to talk about the preservation of Scriptures in the context of the broad spectrum of Theology, conservative Christianity (the true church) holds to two critical 'assumptions' ('assumptions as viewed by liberal theologians, Truths as held by true believers): The first assumption is: **God determines what Scripture is, not man.** This is a logical assumption based upon God's statement: *All Scripture is given by inspiration*, and His promise to preserve His Word: *my words shall not pass away*. It is therefore logical that He, the author and preserver of His own Word, is the One who determines what Scripture is.

In addition, because God uses His people to write and preserve the Scripture, the second assumption is: **man recognizes what Scripture is.** This too is a logical assumption based upon the repeated testimony of God's people in Scripture: *God said...*, and His repeated truth: *, the Lord opens the eyes of the blind, The entrance of Your words gives light, it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness.* These assumptions, derived from God's Word, resulted in man's acceptance of what is termed 'the canon' of Scriptures. This term refers to the writings or manuscripts that were accepted as authoritative and determined to be the Word of God.

2. Recognition of the Canon

Perhaps the most frequent term is '*canon*'. The history of the word *canon* indicates a development from a literal rod or ruler to the concept of a standard for something. Subsequently the word was applied to the *rule of*

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faith, that is, the normative writings or authoritative Scriptures, which were the standard of faith and practice.⁴⁰ This general meaning of the term canon took on a specific doctrinal significance indicating; ‘the sacred writings accepted by the church as the authoritative rule of faith and practice’. The Bible contains no record of the canon and does not describe the process of canonization. Yet, the Bible acknowledges many books that became a part of the Canon. God’s people were dependent upon the Holy Spirit to demonstrate what was Scripture.

3. Historical Formation

Historical record traces the development of the canon. If this is an area of study you are interested in, there are many good books that give much more information than your notes. It’s significant to know there were certain councils established in the early church to determine what the Scriptures were. When it came to preserving the Scripture, Israel preserved the O.T., the preservation of the N.T. was completed by the church. Even though there were many more N.T. manuscript, the historical process of N.T. canonization was much more complicated. Israel was one nation; the church consisted of many independent bodies. For the most part Israel had one language, the churches were scattered abroad with many languages. Therefore, you can imagine, the process of canonization for the NT being cumbersome and difficult (humanly speaking) and significantly different than for the OT. For these reasons the process of determining canonization involved church councils meeting over periods of years.

Student Questions: The French Bible speaks of cults, what were they?

Prof. Reply: The English Bible translates this word ‘sect’ not ‘cult’. Compare it to the NT Zealots, such as the two disciples James and John who were a part of the sect of Zealots. These were Jewish radicals, not having a different religion, but faithfully followed Jewish customs. The Pharisees

⁴⁰ Geisler, N. L., & Nix, W. E. (1986). *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Rev. and expanded.) (218). Chicago: Moody Press.

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and Scribes had religious functions, but the Zealots were individuals who took the political independence of the Jews to extremes. They would literally carry on guerilla warfare against the Roman. Within this sect there were people who were very extreme and others were moderate. We could define a sect as a religious group with beliefs and practices at variance with those of the more established main groups.

We mentioned that the process of determining canonization involved church councils. If you know anything about the RC church, you are aware they have a different Bible than the protestant churches. They have added some books that the Protestant church have not added. There are many different Protestant and Orthodox churches in which I do not know their choice of Bible. As well, there are cults such as Jehovah Witness and Mormons with their own versions of Scripture. So the question is asked, which are the true ‘Word of God’ books? Don’t the Protestants claim they have the right books? Don’t the Catholics as well? The church is called to contend for the faith. This includes giving Biblical proof of the inspiration and preservation of Scripture. In our apologetics class we consistently show Biblical and historical evidence to support these doctrines as part of apologetics. I now want to briefly summarize the Historical Formation of the Canon.

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We have looked at the doctrine of preservation. We examined texts of Scripture that declare that the Word of God will last forever. After looking at biblical evidence, we looked at historical support for the promises. The Masorettes were responsible for keeping the Scriptures for Israel. We saw from their records the manner in which they did this to keep the text copies accurate. From a human perspective, their task extended over many years. The Old Testament was recognized in its entirety by the time of

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Ezra the scribe. Some Jews dissented as late as A.D. 200 but the majority accepted all 39 books.

The NT was given between 44 AD and 100 AD. That means at the most it was a 50-60 year period of time. But because the Scriptures came in the NT from many people and many different areas, the local church had a great task to maintain the integrity of the writings. The first books was written well after the ascension. The early church, for the first three hundred years had councils to determine canonicity.

Imagine for a moment you are a pastor in a meeting together with many others, to determine canonization. On the table there are many letters and manuscripts that have been gathered. You have to decide which of these are the inspired Word of God. Understand I am simplifying this greatly. In actuality, many of the churches immediately accepted the manuscripts as the inspired Word of God, clearly by a moving of the Spirit of God. This divine guidance, prior to any council meetings, help the early church accept the gospel of Matthew, epistle of James, and other early epistles. Undoubtedly, these accepted texts helped guide the councils in determining the canon rules. But the councils were there to make final agreement of canon for the churches.

The Discussion of canon begins in the 2nd Century. The councils recognized three distinct needs; first, the need for a recognized authority, second, the need to combat heresy, especially since the church included Gentiles who had a pagan religious background. Thirdly, the councils recognized the need of God's guidance because of growing persecution from the Lapsii (the people who recanted their testimony to escape persecution, and the Traditores). This was the name given in Africa in early times to Christians who surrendered the Scriptures when their possession was forbidden in the persecution of Diocletian.⁴¹

⁴¹ *The Oxford dictionary of the Christian Church*. 2005 (F. L. Cross & E. A. Livingstone, Ed.) (3rd ed. rev.) (1647). Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

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The entire N.T. was recognized by the time of church council in the 4th Century: A.D. 140 – First collection of all 27 books, A.D. 363 – The council of Laodicea – first council to discuss the Canon, A.D. 397 – The Carthage Council – Last council to discuss the Canon. Discussion was about what was not part of the canon. Some churches dissented over the 27 books as late as the Reformation, but majority accepted all 27 books.

4. The Development of the Canon

i) The Early Christian Usage of Canon

Deciding what was ‘canon’ was the focus of these councils. The term canon was chosen for its definition: a rod or ruler of measure. Our notes address how the early church used this term. In the active sense, the church used the word ‘canon’ to say *the Bible is the measure of all things*. By the Word of God we should measure all things? In the passive sense ‘canon’ meant *the rules that would determine what was Scripture*. You can see how, when used in the passive sense, there was a possibility of error, because the rules to determine ‘what was canon’ (actual Scripture) came from man. For this reason the practice of fervent prayerful prior to council’s decision making was consistently practiced. Even the process at arriving at the rules took much discussion.

ii) Some Inadequate Views on What Determines Canonicity

The record of these councils indicates that some inadequate rules were suggested, for example the mistaken idea that *Age determines Canonicity*; if a manuscript was old, it must be from God. Nevertheless, many older books were not accepted into the canon. For example, the book of Jasher and the book of the War of the Lords were not accepted. The temptation to accept the book of Jasher was because Joshua spoke of the sun standing still as recorded in the book of Jasher. So the attitude was, if Joshua mentions the book, it must be Scripture. The same with the book War of the Lords mentioned in Numbers 21:14.

The business of accepting what was Scripture was previously a challenge for the nation Israel. As our notes state, there are books that were immediately accepted which were put in to the Ark of the Covenant. We

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see in the Daniel that he immediately accepted Jeremiah's writing as a prophet of God even though they were contemporaries. The same thing was evident in the NT when Peter speaks of Paul's letters as Scripture. Therefore age was dismissed as a determining factor for canonization regarding both the OT and NT.

There were other proposed wrong ideas. One suggested *the Hebrew language determined canonicity*. But again we see this is not accurate because some of the OT texts such as Daniel, written in Hebrew and Aramaic. Another suggested *religious value determined canonicity*. Yet it was concluded that every book with spiritual value was not canon, not Scripture. Many books of spiritual value have been written throughout history. Have you ever read a book from the library that was spiritually beneficial to you? God's people have always written books that are a spiritual help, this is not a NT phenomenon. With the printing press it is much easier to have a book published. The writings of the church fathers are very interesting reading and sometimes spiritually nourishing. God's people can write about what the Bible teaches. Therefore, even though it can be about Scripture and be a blessing, clearly it is not Scripture. The councils recognized this error.

iii) Principles for Discovering Canonicity

When you examine the determining factors when the councils of God's people were determining canonicity 5 criteria or tests for canonicity were arrived at. They are as follows:

Criteria #1 was: *Is the book authoritative?* This asks: Does the book claim to be of God? Does the book contain a pronouncement of God's authority? (The phrase 'God said' occurs 589 times in the English Bible.) Does the book make reference to God leading individuals like Paul in Corinthians? He indicated God's leading in adding to what the O.T. said regarding marriage etc. With this criteria, there was a problem with the book of Esther. The name 'God' is not in the book. But again as God led the councils to understanding authoritative statement, Esther was a clear

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judgment from God on His people. You can't read Esther without seeing the providential protection God brings in those circumstances.

Criteria #2 was: *Is the book prophetic?* By this we don't mean 'does it tell the future', but is it written by a prophet of God? Of course Israel had appointed prophets, but also had called prophets such as Daniel. There is a unique parallel to this in the NT because in the Epistle to the Galatians, Paul spent considerable time, as the Lord led him, to validate his apostleship. Why would people question his apostleship? He was not one of the 12 who walked with Christ for 3 years. We see this when he defended his apostleship he revealed that God taught him when he was set apart for 3 years. We know that Paul was called when Christ appeared as a bright light before him. We are not told the details of how did Christ appear to him and taught him for those three years but the result was a deep understanding of Christ's future plans, some of which Paul shared in his epistles.

Criteria #3 was: *Is the book authentic?* By authentic we mean was it consistent with all other Scripture. Does it tell state truth about God without contradicting or changing other Bible books. This criteria clearly involved comparing the manuals for canon consideration with manuscripts that were already accepted. What does it tell you about the level of understanding of these people in terms of the Scripture already given? They had to know the existing Scriptures well. Because they had to measure documents in terms of all the Scriptures, they would have to have been men who had great knowledge of the Scriptures. There have always been people who have given their lives to study and understand the Word of God. I suggest that the early church people had far more understanding of the Word of God than God's people today. When we view the early church in Acts, we see believers sitting under the apostles' teaching every day. This evidenced a true thirst for the Word of God.

The church in America is Biblically illiterate due to the habitual pursuit of life, liberty and the desire for prosperity and entertainment. It amazes me just how ignorant of Bible teaching many believers are. One

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day a Christian lady spoke to me about a child that was very sick and close to death. Her comfort was that if the child died he would become an angel of God. I asked her where she had learned this. Her response was that she had seen this on a television show. This isn't example of biblical illiteracy.

I remind you again of the example of the Bereans in Acts 17. Listened to Paul's teaching and searched the Scriptures to see if he was teaching accurately. Paul was sharing what the O.T. taught about Christ. He had been a student of the great teacher Gamaliel. Yet they are examined the apostle's words, not because they questioned his apostleship, but because they were noble. He used the word 'eugenesteros', which originally meant *high born* but came to have a more general connotation of being open, tolerant, generous, having the qualities that go with "good breeding."⁶² Nowhere was this more evident than in their willingness to take Paul's Scriptural exposition seriously. They did not accept his word uncritically but did their own examination of the Scriptures to see if they really did point to the death and resurrection of the Messiah as Paul claimed (cf. 17:3).⁴² They examined what the OT taught.

Prof. Question: There was a book in the NT that posed a problem with the criteria of authenticity; it seemed to present a contradiction with justification by faith. What book would that be?

Student Replies: James

Prof. Reply: Yes, James. It seems to say that salvation is by works. Does it?

Student Replies: No, it does not.

Prof. Reply: If it doesn't say we are saved by works, what does it teach? It says that works are the evidence of salvation.

⁶² See F. W. Danker, "Menander and the New Testament," *NTS* 10 (1963–64): 368.

⁴² Polhill, J. B. (1992). *Vol. 26: Acts*. The New American Commentary (363). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

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Student Replies: *Without works, there is no salvation.*

Criteria #4 was: *Is the book dynamic?* The term dynamic has the idea of inherent power. By this we mean does the manuscript evidence the power of God to change lives? We have already examined the Biblical statements of God's Word. In Hebrews 4, the word is 'quick' or living and able to bring life. In 2 Timothy 3, all Scripture is profitable for instruction. In 2 Timothy 3:15, the Scripture makes us wise to salvation.

The text of Hebrews 4:12 alone, distinguishes God's written Word above all other books. This verse contains four statements about God's Word. First, it is **living**. God is a **living** God (Heb. 3:12). His message is dynamic and productive. It causes things to happen. It drives home warnings to the disobedient and promises to the believer. Second, God's Word is **active**, an emphasis virtually identical in meaning with the term **living**. God's Word is not something you passively hear and then ignore. It actively works in our lives, changes us, and sends us into action for God. Third, God's Word penetrates the **soul and spirit**. To the Hebrew people, the body was a unity. We should not think of dividing the soul from the spirit. God's message is capable of penetrating the impenetrable. It can divide what is indivisible. Fourth, God's message is discerning. **It judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart**. It passes judgment on our feelings and our thoughts. What we regard as secret and hidden, God brought out for inspection by the discerning power of his Word.⁴³

Student Question: *What about a quote of a non-Bible book in a Bible manuscript, such as Jude's quote of the Book of Enoch, does that have the same power.*

Prof. Reply: *We will cover this later in our notes. I remind you of the point we made when discussing God's work of Revelation, that although it is the*

⁴³ Lea, T. D. (1999). *Vol. 10: Hebrews, James*. Holman New Testament Commentary (71–72). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

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word of God and therefore always accurately recording other books, it is not always recording God's truth. For example the Bible is accurate in stating the deception of Satan. Satan doubted the word of God, and denied the word of God when he said: "You will not die." Was that a true statement? No because they died. But did Satan really say it? Yet the Bible accurately recorded what Satan said.

So is it legitimate for the spirit of God to use words from men or books or even Satan to support a point or reflect a reality or even record an error or a lie?

Student Replies: *Yes.*

Prof. Reply: *Give me an example.*

Student Replies: *Paul, in the book of Acts repeated other people.*

Prof. Reply: *Yes, even when Paul was defending the Resurrection he mentioned the proof of the pagans believing this because they are being baptized for the dead. Yet, we know that God does not teach being baptized for the dead simply because Paul mentioned it.*

In regard to the criteria of the dynamics of the Word of God focussing on a manuscripts to change life, there were 2 books that were challenged; the Song of Solomon being a text on marriage intimacy and Ecclesiastes being a book of Solomon's pursuit of life 'under the sun' or life without thought toward eternity. You can see that from a human perspective these books seem to be carnal, limited to the flesh. But when you think about it, proper marriage relationship is a spiritual matter as well as a physical matter? People are able to read Song of Solomon and get their marriage right according to God's intention for marriage intimacy. This book is a guide for changing ungodly attitudes toward sex?

Ecclesiastes repeatedly summarizes the carnal pursuits as: all is empty, all is vanity. This is valuable lesson for all to learn and much better learned by the influence of God's Word than by experience. One of the keys for understanding Ecclesiastes is the analogy of the goads and the nails. As Solomon wrote, he included "goads" to prod us in our thinking

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and “nails” on which to hang some practical conclusions. Keep this in mind as you study. His work was inspired by God because he was guided by the “One Shepherd.”

Can this book change lives? Yes, in my own pastoral ministry people who were struggling, to get money, education, or pleasure would come to me for advice. The cultural expectations of Canadian prosperity weigh heavily on people. I would first share with these the gospel so they could find the true meaning of life, then I would counsel them to read Ecclesiastes because it would show where wrong pursuits lead. That book was used by God to change the direction of many people. The true author of the book, our ‘Good Shepherd’ leads through All Scripture.

Criteria #5 was: *Is the book received and accepted by the people of God.* This sounds like a contradiction, how can it be a standard? But because many manuscripts were immediately received by the people of God prior to council consensus, the councils ‘on hand’ examples for guidance and an assurance of God’s leading. Jesus qualified this in John 10 when he said “My sheep hear my voice.” Part of the ministry of the Spirit of God is to lead people into truth.

5. Three Basic Steps in the Process of Canonization

In the doctrine of Biblioply we talk about how humanity got the Bible. We examine the Bible teaching regarding revelation, interpretation, illumination, preservation. Within the context of preservation we observe the Biblical promises and historical evidence of the fulfillment of those promises, which leads to the historic process of canonicity or the final consensus of what manuscripts were the written Word of God. There are 3 steps historically that brought about the consensus canonization.

The first step was ‘*The inspiration of God*’, when God’s chosen men received and recorded the Word of God. This was the writing of the autographs. The second step in the process was the *Recognition of these autographs by the people of God.* We see in Exodus 24 the writings of Moses were accepted as God’s Word immediately. It seems that Joshua, Jeremiah and Samuel also had that same privilege. So the process involved not only

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the fact of inspiration, but the fact of men recognizing what is inspired. Even though historically the ‘canonization process’ appears complex, and perhaps confusing, it does not change my opinion about the Bible. The arguments of men, the logic of men, the historical proof of men will never convince anyone. The third step was *the collection and preservation by the people of God*. The NT believers possessed the whole of the OT. In 2 Timothy Paul talks about ‘all Scripture given by Inspiration’. The canon of the OT was completed 400 years before Jesus Christ and the divisions of the OT are clearly talked about in the NT, the law, the prophets. There are terms that we have to recognize in this process of collecting and preserving Scripture. They apply to both OT and NT.

6. The OT Canon

i) The Homologoumena (lit., to speak as one)

The Homologoumena are those books that have been universally acclaimed as canonical from their beginning. They have appeared in virtually every ancient version and orthodox canonical list, as well as having been widely quoted as Scripture. None of these books was deliberately deleted from the circulating canon in orthodox circles or brought into question by any prominent Father. Of course, the exact number of these books will vary depending on one’s definition of “orthodox” and “prominent”; but for the most part, there is little disagreement on this point.⁴⁴ In the OT there were 34 of the 39 clearly seen to be in harmony and accepted.

ii) The Antilegomena

The exceptions were the Song of Solomon, Esther, Ecclesiastics, Eze-kiel and Proverbs. These 5 books raised questions. They did not seem to have the harmony of the other books. In the process of collection and preservation, there was debate regarding these 5 books. That’s why they are called the *Antilegomena* (Lit., to speak against). This has the idea of

⁴⁴ Geisler, N. L., & Nix, W. E. (1986). *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Rev. and expanded.) (296–298). Chicago: Moody Press.

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speaking without the harmony. From the point of view of God's Inspiration, there is no difference in these categories. It was only as man was trying to recognize the canon that there was mixed opinion.

In your notes you have the reasons why these books were questioned. We talked about the Song of Solomon, some felt the book was too sensual. Can you see how that would be seen this way? It is about the intimacy between a husband and a wife, pointing to the purity of marriage which is essential. God wants marriage to be harmonious and be all it can be. The text implies admiration, the wife for the husband, the husband for the wife, within the deep love between them. There is, through human self-interest, the potential of not having intimacy which offends the husband or wife. The necessity to realize this and be restored in fellowship and the meaning of the marriage is evident in the text. In terms of the husband and wife relationship, the Song of Solomon really has all the components and the struggles of marriage exposed and dealt with.

Student Question: Is this book useful for preaching?

Prof. Reply: I never preached through this book from the pulpit, the broad spectrum of people in our church services, including many visitors, made that impractical. However, I did use this in marriage counselling. You must determine the sensitivity and needs of your own congregation as God leads. When I preach a book I preach a whole book, and while preaching through any given Bible book, I would encourage the people to read it regularly. As for me, I would not be comfortable asking 400 people, many young, many unmarried, and many very old, to read the Song of Solomon, and I was uncomfortable about reading in public God's details of marriage sex. For me this was not appropriate for worship. However, if I were conducting a seminar for married couples, this text would be a priority. God tells married folks to enjoy the bodies of each other in meaningful intimacy. Some aspects of American society which have developed ungodly practices of what they call purity, need to be taught this. But there are places where the teaching is appropriate and places where it is not.

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Student Question: Is it appropriate to encourage people to read it.

Prof. Reply: I notice this question comes from a single man! (Much laughter). I know pastors who have never been married. I have never been bold enough to ask them if they teach the Song of Solomon. My only answer to the question is be sensitive to the Lord's leading. All Scripture is profitable for instruction, but be wise to know what, where and when any part of Scripture is appropriate to preach and teach.

You can see why the Song of Solomon was in the antilegomena category. As for Ecclesiastics, this book seems very sceptical, it evaluates life under the sun. We defined that earlier as focussing within the context of human life where people give no thought to eternity. However, within the context there is a series of statements that bring men back to sober thinking and the truth. Clearly the last verse is a great summary spiritual impact. It states: *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.* (Eccl. 12:13, 14).

What a good testimony this is, for a man who has wasted so much of his life pursuing earthly pleasures. He finally realized the whole purpose of man: fear God and keep His commandments. Solomon acknowledged there is something beyond 'under the sun thinking'. For those interested, I did preach through Ecclesiastes in my church because it has real applications today, when so many of God's people in the Americas are materialistically minded.

In the antilegomena we also have the book of Esther. The absence of the name of God seemed to be very, very strange. It also seemed to be a secular story within the history of man, but, as we stated earlier, you cannot dismiss the presence of God in preserving His people through the history revealed in the book. For me, the book proves the Abrahamic Covenant was unconditional. The Jewish people of that day were an ungodly

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people. Yet God in his providence protected them by the fact He controls nations and the decisions of men.

Another antilegomena book was Ezekiel. The rabbinical school thought it was anti-mosaic yet did accept it. The real issues were a matter of interpretation. You can understand that Ezekiel's visions seem outside of the context of fulfilling Mosaic Law, or the purposes of God. It is a very interesting and unusual book. Ezekiel's vision of God, with the wheels and the eyes is unique. I wish I were an artist with ability to draw the vision. You can see how that vision is so contrary to Moses 'standing before God' in the tent of meeting. The vision that Ezekiel saw was God's way of showing His attributes. God is not a wheel in the sky; God is not a machine that has eyes in every direction. But it demonstrated the power of God, the fact that God sees all things, and the sovereign control of God. So it is clearly the God Inspired Scripture, no man could have imagined God in this way.

The book of Proverbs was the last of the O.T. books designated as antilegomena. It seems often to contradict itself. For example Proverbs 26:4 and 5; 'don't answer a fool', 'answer a fool'. How does that fit? Of course the key is to interpret it properly. The first statement is qualified by: 'lest you be like him', so the danger is interacting with a fool or having conversation in friendship whereby he could influence you and you would become like him.

On the other hand, a fool is wrapped up in himself and he needs to be rebuked. So when an individual, in his own foolishness, is wrapped up in himself, then answer him, point out his foolishness to warn and teach him. We saw in our OT poetry class that often contrary statements are used. We saw that Hebrew poetry often uses parallel statements to declare truth, with contrasting second couplet statements following for emphasis. The wonder of it is that God used this form or Hebrew poetry speech to bring forth truth.

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Student Question: *In what circumstances do we answer and in what circumstances do we not?*

Prof. Reply: *We answer as the Spirit leads. The best way of knowing how to deal with 'the fool' is to find all the Proverbs references to 'fool'. Copy or write out each text to have them all before you. Group the texts into categories, summarize the categories by appropriate headings, organize a study on what Proverbs says about fools. How to conduct yourself toward a fool will become apparent to you. You will know the danger of the fool influences you, and you will learn how to recognize when a fool is in danger of destroying himself. This will be an excellent lesson in homiletics.*

Student Question: *Can you give us a personal example?*

Prof. Reply: *Yes, For example, learning how to raise children Biblically is learned the same way. By studying Scripture believers learn the principles of child rearing by specific instruction, and by how God works in His children's (believers) lives. Sometimes my children acted foolishly. There were times when they did so and I corrected and directed them. Other times I said nothing because I knew they would learn by the experience. That is a weak example; nevertheless it serves as an illustration of how to learn from Scripture.*

CLASS 14

By way of review, we are examining the Doctrine of Preservation. We have looked at the promises of Scripture that declare this, which is clearly the most important part of our notes. We have also looked at the historical formation of how we arrived at the Canon of Scripture, which supports the truth regarding the promises. We examined development of the canon as to its meaning and use, the term Canon, meaning a measuring rod, a tool of measurement, a standard. We recognized that the early church used this word in two ways; as *the total body of the Inspired Word which are the absolute authority for all of life*, and as *the criteria for determining the*

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Inspired Word. We also looked at some of the insufficient criteria to be used for canonization. We reviewed the final 5 criteria that accurately determined the Canon, clearly led of God.

The resulting selection of books determined to be Canon were accepted even though some were difficult to accept. I want to remind you that these ‘difficulties’ were in the minds of people, not God. We saw that canonization involved 3 steps. First, *God’s chosen men received and recorded the Word of God* whereby ‘Inspiration’ is the product, not the process. After God gave the product, the second step became *Recognition of these autographs by the people of God*. That’s where the criteria of the canon of the OT and NT Scriptures was applied. The third step was *The collection and preservation by the people of God*.

Student Question: *How did they recognize this, know this?*

Prof. Reply: *The only way for us to reconcile this in our minds is by faith; to believe the Spirit of God led the people to the proper criteria. There is no record in Scripture stating this, but it is the way God works. Probably everyone has an idea of how these events unfolded historically. For me, the way I imagine this is that most of these books were received by people as the Word of God immediately. Because God did give the responsibility to Israel and the church, there had to be a point where there was an official recognition made. So the councils had arrived at the criteria of recognizing canonization, in order to make it official. The NT church with its councils had its official time of recognizing. By faith, I believe the Spirit of God was working as they came up with these 5 clear criteria. It was also a step of faith by the men on the councils. Faith is the operating formula of all Christian life, so we should not be surprised by its necessity in the matter of determining the Canon.*

Student Question: *Based on 2 Tim. 3:16, “All Scripture is given by inspiration”, why do evangelicals say there are certain books in the Bible and Catholics use the same verse to say their Bible is correct?*

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Prof. Reply: Later in this class we will examine these discrepancies and hopefully satisfy the legitimacy of the protestant rejection of the R.C. accepted books. The simple answer is the R.C. church broke the rules of the established criteria.

We also discovered that in the process of recognizing Scripture, some books were accepted immediately; others were accepted with reservation but ultimately, through the criteria process were recognized. The word used when they were all in agreement and spoke the same was *HOMOLOGOUMENA*. The word itself means to speak in agreement. The word used for those books that didn't seem to be in agreement was *ANTILEGOMENA*, meaning to speak against. Remember, this was only in the minds of people.

iii) The Pseudepigrapha

There is a third term to recognize: *PSEUDEPIGRAPHA*. These were the books that were non-biblical and rejected by everyone. These books rose from basically religious fantasy and tradition and did not have its source in God. There are two of these suggested as examples and still available to evaluate today. One is the book of Enoch. This book is a speculative story of what happened to him. Jude 14:15 is a quote from the book of Enoch. Should Enoch be included in Scripture? Does Jude's citing the book indicate that the book of Enoch is inspired? No, I remind you that God can choose to cite any book or quote any person. He knows all, and can use any for His own purposes.

If Satan had written a book explaining how he tempted Eve by the words: "You shall not die." would that be the Inspired Word? No! But if God quoted those words in Scripture, it would be the Inspired Word, an accurate record of what Satan said. So the words quoted are true that Satan said them. If a man had written a poem describing some working of God that he has seen and what he said was absolutely true about God, could God have used the words of the poem in Scripture? Yes. Does it mean the poem was inspired when first written by man? No. But when God used

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those words in Scripture, they were inspired. Remember, inspiration is not the process but the product. This was the situation with the book of Enoch. The fact God used them in his Holy Scripture is not a problem.

Student Question: When we read about this, where did the prophecy come from? Was this the same vein?

Prof. Reply: Go back and read the Scripture's story of Enoch. Nowhere in the O.T. does it say Enoch prophesied, or even wrote a book. Jude simply quoted the known book of Enoch which stated: "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints." These quoted words are used by Jude in for a particular purpose to make the point. Jude was led by God to do this. The words in Jude were the Inspired Word of God, therefore a perfectly accurate quote, and a true fact according to the book of Revelation. But this does not mean the Book of Enoch is God's Inspired Word.

There are more illustrations of this, but I am seeking to help you understand the challenges that these councils had as they decided which books were inspired. The fact that the writings of any book made one true statement does not justify canonicity if all the criteria were not met. Paul himself used non-Christian sources to make a point:

Acts 17:28: *we live and move and have our being as some of your poets have said.* Remember, Luke is the human author of Acts. So here we have God's Inspired Word given to Luke, accurately recording Paul's sermon as he quotes a poet the Jews and God-fearing Gentiles in Athens were familiar with because. Paul quotes a true statement from a poem to make a point in his sermon. God's led Luke to record Paul's sermon in the Acts of the Apostles, creating the Inspired Word, *which included the words of the poem.*

1 Cor. 15:32: *let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die.* Paul is defending the reality of the resurrection. To emphasize the point he says if we don't die, we may as well accept the Epicurean way of life which his quote expressed. Remember, Paul is talking to an educated group of people. Cor-

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inth is a key trade city and many people from different cultures are exposed to different philosophies. So the Epicurean sect was well-known, just as the Jehovah Witness are known by many for their false beliefs.

Titus 1: 12: *One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons."* This was common prejudice in the day; in other words 'Never trust a Cretean'. In Canada we would say the same thing about lawyers. Paul was using the quote to support his call for overseers *to hold fast to the faithful word* (v. 9) because *there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision*, (v. 10). Overseers or elders had a higher calling of conduct.

There are some observations we need to make. Truth is truth no matter where it is found. Another way of saying is 'all truth is God's truth'. So we see there are in the Scriptures statements from other sources that are either accurate in their record of the statement or are repeating something that is true. For example Numbers 24:17, a pagan prophet is quoted, Numbers 22:2, a dumb animal is quoted, Acts 16:17, a demon-possessed woman is quoted. Some may be having problems with these sources that God uses. Certainly in the days that the councils were determining canonicity it entered into the discussions.

iv) The Apocrypha

There was another group of books we referred to, they are called the *APOCRYPHA*. This is The Protestant designation for the fourteen or fifteen books of doubtful authenticity and authority that are not found in the Hebrew Old Testament but are in manuscripts of the LXX. Most of these books were declared canonical by the Roman Catholic church at the Council of Trent in 1546⁴⁵ They are called that because the apocrypha means 'hidden' or 'doubtful'. From our position, these books are not the Inspired Word of God. The term refers to non-liturgical Jewish literature

LXX Septuagint

⁴⁵ Geisler, N. L., & Nix, W. E. (1986). *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Rev. and expanded.) (604). Chicago: Moody Press.

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from the time between the receiving of Malachi and Matthew. So they were in the period O.T. time period. Who did God make responsible for O.T. Scriptures? Israel. The Jewish nation was given the privilege of receiving and preserving the Word of God, and Israel rejected them. The fact that the Roman Catholic community accepted these in the 4th century A.D. even though Jewish scholars rejected them centuries earlier should be proof enough to reject them.

Additional arguments for the rejection of the Apocrypha books includes the facts: When you look at all the Scriptures that Jesus quoted, you realize these books are conspicuous by their absence. Most the writings of the early church fathers never refer to them, and no council in the early church accepted them. Jerome, who translated the vulgate, rejected them. Many Roman Catholic scholars reject them, in the past and present. None of these books claim to be prophetic. They simply do not claim to be of God or of from prophets. Also, they contain theological heresies such as praying for the dead and belief of purgatory. It is by these books that the Roman Catholic church introduced the teachings of purgatory. In these books there is a conspicuous absence of any prophecy predicting future events. That was one key way that Israel determined who was a true prophet. The last point I think is very important; by the time the Roman Catholic Church accepted the apocrypha, it was truly a heretical church. So the true people of God, the OT remnant and the true NT church, did not receive these books

I would like to read the notes of the secretary the Council of Trent to know the reason for accepting the Apocrypha books. Nevertheless, I can conclude that a denomination, which had wandered from the truth to embrace heresy, had no discernment, nor was it led by the Spirit of God. Is it possible for a RC person to be saved? Yes, all that is needed is the gospel and the Spirit of God grant them saving faith. Yet, most Roman Catholics I know, who become believers, leave the RC church as the Holy Spirit directs them. My own mother is one of them. However, I heard of a R.C. priest who was saved but would not leave the RC church. He was very

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miserable man. He apparently had discovered the same truth as Paul who, in experiencing the battle between the flesh pulling and the Spirit leading cried: *O wretched man that I am!*

Student Question: We think the RC is so apostate that any believer would leave. Can it be possible to remain in the R.C. church and be saved?

Prof. Reply: It is hard to imagine a priest who knows the doctrine would stay, but I have met R.C. people who are as ignorant about their doctrine as Baptists are about true doctrine. Is it possible for a pastor to not grow in the truth? Our conference yesterday has many implications. Walking in the Spirit means being in the Word. Can a believer walk in the flesh and not in the Spirit? Yes. The Lord will invoke guilt and possible discipline to restore, but it is possible. We all know this by our own experience in the flesh.

7. The N. T. Canon

When we talked about the OT canon, there were 34 books of the final 39 that were the *homologoumena*, when we come to the NT canon, there are 20 books that are *homologoumena*. These books were accepted immediately. But there were 7 N.T. books called antilegomena. Here are the reasons for their delayed acceptance:

The book of the *Hebrews* was one because of the anonymity of the author. We do not know the author of this book, many speak of the epistle of Paul to the Hebrews, but this is indicated in Scripture. There are many who accept it was Paul, I am not one of them. I personally do not think it was Paul. Was it the Word of God? Yes, anonymity does not disqualify the criteria.

James was another book. It seemed to contradict Paul's teaching of salvation by faith alone. Does the book of James teach salvation by works? No, it teaches that the proof of true faith is works.

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2 Peter was another one of these because *2 Peter* is much different in style from *1 Peter*. There was no problem with the content, the theme of the theology, but the style of *2 Peter* is so different that ‘it couldn’t be Peter’. Some have answered the reason for the different style is Peter was dictating to a scribe who used his own style, and the other reason is Peter wrote by his own hand. It wasn’t that reasoning that had *2 Peter* it accepted. The letter just fulfilled all the criteria. Consistent style is not one of the criteria.

2 and 3 John were a part of the antilegomena because John did not identify himself but just called himself ‘the elder’. One of the answers to that is that *1 John* identifies himself as John and an elder. Really it is almost the same as the book of Hebrews because ‘elder’ does not say who you are. But that is not part of the criteria.

Jude also was among the antilegomena because it quoted from the book of Enoch. When it speaks of the hiding of the body of Moses, it could have been a reference to the assumption of Moses, but we do not know. Does quoting sources that are not inspired make the words not the Bible? No. If it did we would have to cast out the book Acts, the book of Numbers etc. So every criteria necessary was fulfilled by Jude.

Student Question: If we do not know the author of the book of Hebrews, doesn’t it create a problem when it does not meet the second criteria of ‘being prophetic’ or declaring it written by a prophet of God.

Prof. Reply: When it was originally circulated, perhaps the author was known. In the early centuries of the church, the proposal was that either Barnabas or Paul who wrote the book of Hebrews. All I can say is in the councils, although the name of the author was not evident, the nature of the book clearly indicated a prophetic source. The biggest argument for Paul was that he wrote so much of the other Scripture and he was an apostle.

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The same with the book of the Revelation. It was among the antilegomena, and the reason for was because of the very clear and literal presentation of the 1000 year reign of Christ. Of all the books in the NT it was the book of Revelation that took the longest to define as Scripture. This one was not officially recognised until the 4th century although it was read and studied by the church. In the NT we have what are called ‘mysteries’. For example, the coming of Christ in two stages, first in humility and then in exaltation, was hidden from the OT. Also the teaching of the church as a distinct from Israel was unique.

For the first people of the church being Jewish, those who had the OT truth, to be given these mysteries from Paul and the other apostles, there had to be a transition in thinking. Of all the OT teaching regarding the promised kingdom, there was no concept of it being 1000 years. When the book of Revelation clearly stated the term of the reign of Christ, it was very difficult to accept. Remember one of the criteria is continuity with all the other Scriptures. Is there any other Scripture than Revelation that names the Messianic kingdom as being 1000 years? No. Therefore, that was something difficult to accept? But did they accept it? Is Revelation part of the Word of God, did God have a problem with 1000 years? Initially it was questioned, but eventually accepted by faith? Additional information about the kingdom is not a contradiction of O.T. teaching, the criteria were not violated.

Student Question: When we talk about these 5 criteria applied to both OT and NT. Was this something developed for the O.T. then adopted for the NT or the reverse, determined for N.T. then adopted for O.T.

Prof. Reply: I cannot answer that question because, as I stated earlier, I have not done a thorough historical study of these multiple council procedures. Because of God’s promise to preserve the word, He was working in the lives of those on the councils. I can imagine 2 or 3 of the counselees saying “here is what the Nazarites did.” Nevertheless, I am ignorant of the actual historic events. There are a good number of books where schol-

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ars have done the historical research. I will tell you this; if you use computer Bible software, you will be surprised at how much of the apocrypha is included. Don't be confused or persuaded by this. Why would these software programmes include the apocrypha? They are concerned about keeping the Roman Catholics using it. The real reason is money. Be careful and wise when using commentaries or software, they are not necessarily fundamental in faith. The two best software programmes are very expensive. If you buy the full package it is more than \$1000 US. They include not only the apocrypha but every source used for higher criticism to make the software more marketable.

Student Question: *When we look at the reasons some books were questioned. Based on 2 Tim. 3: "All Scripture ...is profitable", if these books have something to teach that is profitable, should we see that the style is also inspired? How do we understand that?*

Prof. Reply: *The answer is go back to the definition of 'inspiration'. First of all, what is the definition of Revelation?*

Student Replies: *-It is 'receiving and writing the truth'. -Truth revealed by God.*

Prof. Reply: *Yes. What is the definition of inspiration, is it the process or the product?*

Student Replies: *- The product. The product is perfect in its first document.*

Prof. Reply: *Yes. The product is perfect in its first document. So the product, does it include the doctrine that is perfect? Does it include the very words that are perfect? Does the perfection involve the way the words are arranged for us?*

Student Replies: *Yes. Yes. Yes.*

Prof. Reply: *If some of the words are arranged in poetry, is that perfect inspiration? If some of the words are given by John, in his style and vocabulary, or Peter in his, is it still inspired and therefore perfect?*

Student Replies: *Yes. Yes. Yes.*

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You have just answered your own question. The fact the early church struggled with style while going through the process of weighing each book with the criteria confirms their integrity and God's leading. Maybe one of the men in the council said 'you guys got a problem with the style of 2 Peter? Let's define inspiration again. I speculate they had an overwhelming appreciation of the Doctrine of Inspiration after the council was concluded. I see how even the process of taking the councils through this whole process would have confirmed in their hearts the promise of God to preserve Scripture as well as the unique care of God in giving humanity the Word. What joy would have been their experience! This same joy is the experience all God's people in any call to complete His purpose, through His power, by His leading through the Spirit and the Word. When I finished the conference yesterday I sensed the wonder of God using His Word to meet the needs of people. Many came to say "we appreciated this." For me it was, 'God, used me, wow, I am amazed, and I rejoice!' This was the power of your Spirit working through the Word is so amazing, and I praise you for it.

How do I know this is the Word of God? How do you know the Bible is the Inspired Word of God? This is only known by faith. That faith is not blind faith, it is the same faith that initially restores us to God through His gift of Salvation, and then the continuing experience as that faith speaks to us by the Spirit through the Word. The world does not understand the intimacy of the relationship that God's people have with the living God. They can never understand this because all are dead in sin. If the unsaved ask me, 'How do you know God lives?' My answer is, "I spoke to Him this morning." He spoke to me this morning. Their response is wrapped in doubt: "O.K., fine, I'm glad you spoke to God! (I think you must be insane!). They have no comprehension of this.

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CLASS 15

Prof. Question: *What were the three steps to canonization?*

Student Replies: *-Inspiration, Recognizing, Collecting/preservation.*

V. LANGUAGES AND TRANSLATIONS

I included in your notes a brief section regarding languages and translations. I put this in for students as people who are called to be a part of church leadership. You are called by God to lead the church, which is *the pillar and ground of the truth* (1 Tim. 3:15). I believe that this not just defending the faith, but preserve the faith as well. Unfortunately in the last 50-80 years the church has no longer been consistent at the preservation of the source of the faith, the Word of God. That responsibility has been taken over by publishing companies. What's the problem with that? Publishing companies must make profits to sustain business. Therefore, they, by virtue of that purpose, are not necessarily committed to sound doctrine. This has resulted in a proliferation of translations that are very poor in regard to the original text and intent.

Unfortunately, Churches are accepting these new translations and encouraging their people to use them. In the Americas this is partly due to the decreased reading level of society. A 1992 survey revealed that the literacy competency of about 40 million adults was limited to the lowest level: Level 1: adults could only understand the simplest written instructions.⁴⁶ This reality has encouraged churches to promote easy reading Bibles such as the English language Living Bible, written by Ken Taylor for his children to read, but published so adults in America could also read it.

I challenge you students to acknowledge that it's time for church leaders to stand up and say this is wrong. Rather than encouraging our people to read weak translations of Scripture because they are poor readers, teach

⁴⁶ Kirsch, Irwin S.; Jungeblut, Ann; Jenkins, Lynn; Kolstad, Andrew (September 1993). *Adult Literacy in America (Report)*. National Center for Educational Statistics. National Center for Education Studies

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them to read, and encourage reading of good translations. The only influence that we have to change minds of publishers is to encourage people to not buy them. I apologize that I have no knowledge of the source, styles, and principles of the French translations. So that's going to fall on your shoulders.

A. Old Testament Languages

What I want to do is go back to understanding the languages that were used in the originals and then review some of the early translations that are significant in history. The OT language is primarily Hebrew. We need to know a bit about this as a language. The Hebrew language is a pictorial language. It is very suited for the task of relating the biography of God's people. The Hebrew language is different from Greek in that it is a more personal language. Because of that it is an excellent language for relating to the heart and the emotions rather than the mind and reasons.

We also the OT had portions in Aramaic which was the language of the Syrians and in the 6th century it became the language for the entire Middle East. Ezra and Daniel give God's word to us in Aramaic. My son is completing a Ph.D. in Bible languages. He has to be an expert in Hebrew and Greek and he has to know Aramaic. My Ph.D. was an educational degree in Biblical Studies. I never studied Aramaic, but I understand there is a similarity between Hebrew and Aramaic, both being pictorial languages.

B. New Testament Languages

The NT was written in 'Koine' Greek. It was the common language of commerce in the Greek culture, forced upon the people by Alexander the Great. Here's an interesting fact, until the late 18 hundreds, it was thought to be a unique 'Holy Ghost' language because it is not the same as the Greek language of today, nor of most Greek writing found in ancient archaeological sites. It was discovered that the Greek language changed. If you learn modern Greek so you can converse with people in Greece, you will see it is considerably different than Koine Greek.

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It was only discovered in 1800s that the language in the time of Alexander was Koine Greek. It was an ideal language for the revelation of theological thought. Your notes say it was an intellectual language, embracing unique 'logical' thought. Because of its logical character it is very suited for technical precision. The many nuances of words and phrases in Greek is easier to determine than in those of Hebrew. Amazing as it is, it became clear through historical research that this was the universal language in the time of Alexander the Great. It was suited very uniquely to the ministry of the church in carrying the message to the whole world.

In the OT salvation is the same as in the NT, right? In the OT to find salvation, you became a Jew. You adapted their law with its sacrifices which called for faith to believe in the living God. Israel was supposed to take that message of the law to the world. Two things to consider: the world in the OT times was smaller by population than in Christ's time; #2, Israel did not do the job. They were more concerned about political success and finances than carrying the message. It is significant that God superintended history to make Koine Greek the world language for the Inspiration of the N.T. Right from the beginning of the church in Acts 2, the commission was to go to the world, and it did so with a precise, logical language. The feet of the apostles went where no Jew had gone before.

If you study both Bible languages you will discover that your personality will influence which language comes easier for you. God made me with a mind that is very logical, so mathematics was easy for me in school. Algebra and calculus that were difficult for others, I did not even need to study for. That's why for me Greek was so enjoyable, it is far more logical than even English. For me Hebrew was not very easy. When you look at Hebrew, the message seems felt rather than thought. Some people are programmed that way. Generally speaking women are more that way than men. I have been married for over 45 years and there are still times when my wife and I look at each other and say "I have no idea of what you are talking about." Our minds work differently. We need to appreciate that even the choice of the languages was uniquely a work of God. The Koine

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Greek word definitions and distinctions lend itself with great clarity to translation in other languages.

C. Definitions and Distinctions in Translations

A translation is the rendering of a literal composition of one language to another. This is a broad definition that will also allow for translating one idiom to another. There are those who argue a translation can be translating an idea from one language to another. So there are translations of the Bible that promote the fact that this is translated from the original manuscripts, even though the ‘translation’ involved only the ideas rather than the words. They mean we used the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek to get our translation. It does not mean it was a word for word translation. Because of this diversity of the meaning of translation, there are those who say “We hold to a literal translation.”

Therefore the term ‘*literal translation*’ was coined to define the attempt to translate the exact meaning of the words. A word for word rendering is obviously somewhat rigid. One of the reasons many people do not like the King James Version, a literal translation, is because it does not flow like reading a newspaper. Unfortunately because of poor education, the influence of media, and weakened reading skills as mentioned, such literal translations are less popular. If you have the privilege of reading Spurgeon’s sermons, you will note the level of his language was very high. His vocabulary was large and his sermons deep in thought. That’s the way he preached in the churches and people were amazed and moved. His sermons were put in the London England public newspaper. Yet if you gave those sermons to the average person in Canada, they would be incapable of following Spurgeon’s thoughts. This again is evidence of poorer reading skills which jeopardize the use of literal translations of Scripture.

There are also *transliterations* involved in Bible translating. This is actually using the letters in the original language when it is translated into another language. ‘Baptize’ is one of these words. The Greek word is ‘baptizo’. When King James ordered the Bible to be written for the people, the church practiced sprinkling for baptism. The word ‘baptizo’ literally

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means immerse. But when chosen the scholars realized this, knowing the Church of England was not practising immersion baptism, they knew literal translation would bring trouble with the king. So instead of translating ‘baptizo’ properly as ‘immerse’, they translated it as ‘baptize’ to avoid conflict. The word ‘baptize’ is used so often, even literal translations are reluctant to go back to ‘immerse’ because the church knows ‘baptism’. That’s an example of transliteration.

We also have, when copying Scripture into another language, the term ‘*version*’. It has the same basic meaning of specifying a form or variety of something that is different from others or from the original variety. For example, the New King James Version of the Bible purposely used the same language sources as the Standard King James Version, but replaced the Old English with modern English.

Another term used in translating the Bible is ‘*paraphrase*’. This is described as a free or loose translation, focusing on translating idea for idea. Because it is taking one idea and expressing it in another language in reality it is an interpretation. Unfortunately, with this process of ‘translating’, it is the translator who determines what the idea is. This means Biblical authority, applied through proper understanding of God’s Word, is on man’s shoulders rather than on the actual Word of God. There are very many popular paraphrases of the Scriptures in America.

For our own understanding I included in your notes the term ‘*commentary*’, which is an explanation of Scriptures. In English there is a Bible Version called ‘The Amplified Bible’. (In French, as well). The sentences or phrases are amplified by the author’s commentary. This is done by adding more synonyms and explanatory phrases. Good Amplified Bible Versions (I have no idea how many there are) can be helpful, especially for those who have had no Bible language studies. But I suggest one condition; the choice of words and expanded explanations is from man, so caution must be kept. With such versions the Biblical authority applied through proper understanding of God’s Word, could be compromised if the author was mistaken in his own understanding. The explanations could

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be incorrect! Therefore, I suggest personal, independent study of the Bible text in question be completed before using such amplified versions. This should ensure your proper understanding (provided you do proper study), and the amplified, if on track, may broaden you sermon or teaching choices of terminology. Good synonyms are very helpful in communication.

In recent times the ‘*Study Bible*’ has become very popular. These are designed with notes in margins and inserted pages of topical explanations similar to Bible Dictionaries. An example of this is the Scofield Bible, a popular study Bible translated into other languages I think. Yet, it made major errors such as promoting the gap theory of creation. This teaching suggested a gap between Genesis 1, verses 1 and 2. For a long time it was a popular teaching which attempted to harmonize the secular theory of evolution’s ‘scientific’ claims for earth’s age of millions of years, with Biblical record. It is interesting that the evolutionist speculation of creation’s spontaneous beginning has now been dismissed even by atheistic scientists who now accept an that original intelligence began the evolutionary process.

D. Significant Translations

In considering past significant translation works, two major historical translations are significant to know about: The *Septuagint or LXX* (70 in Roman numerals because 70 scholars translated it). This translation work was done in the 3rd and 2nd century before Christ, in the time when Alexander the Great was conquered much of the world and made Koine Greek the universal language. This LXX was a book by book, chapter by chapter reproduction of the O.T. into the Greek language. It is significant because it was the Bible of Christ and the apostles and most of the NT quotes are taken from this version. For many years the Roman government had influenced the culture of Israel, so most of the Israeli people in the time of Jesus Christ would have been speaking Greek. Hebrew was the language of the Jewish scholars in order to understand their original language Scriptures. When you see OT quotes in the NT, it is not usually from the Hebrew manuscripts but from the Septuagint. This can account for some of

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the small discrepancies that we see regarding quotes in the NT being different from the OT.

One other significant translation is the *Latin Vulgate*. This was the authorized Latin version of the Bible. In the late fourth century, Pope Damasus commissioned Jerome to bring order to the existing Latin versions. The resulting translation was called the Vulgate ('common text').⁴⁷ In the short period of 300 years, there was already such a proliferation of Latin translations it was confusing men. (Doesn't that sound familiar? That's exactly where we are today.) In the Council of Trent it was made the official Bible of the R.C. church. Latin became the language of the scholars. Your notes also include significant English Language Bibles which I leave for your own reference. This concludes our brief review of very important translations in the early preservation of Scriptures. This also brings to an end our course study of Bibliology.

⁴⁷ Achtemeier, P. J., Harper & Row, & Society of Biblical Literature. (1985). *Harper's Bible dictionary* (1st ed.) (1115). San Francisco: Harper & Row.

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APPENDIX

WHAT IT MEANS TO POSSESS PERSONAL SALVATION

The terms saved and salvation occur 268 times in Scripture. The Hebrew word *yaw-shah'* translated "saved" in the Old Testament, and its New Testament Greek synonym '*sode'-zo*' can best be defined by the word deliverance. It cannot be ignored nor cast aside that man stands separated from Holy God because of sin, that sin holds man in bondage in this life, and that all mankind stands condemned as a result. Although it may go against the grain of man's pride and self-sufficiency, Scripture presents a clear and logical answer for our helplessness. God's answer is personal salvation and is foundational upon several truths of Scripture.

The *first* of these truths is that "*all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*" (Rom. 3:23 NIV). Adam's fallen state of spiritual death earlier examined is the inheritance of all mankind and results in the bondage of every person to sin - wrong thinking, wrong decisions, wrong actions, and to emotional disorder. Sin is falling short of God's perfection. Every person is on need of deliverance.

The *second* of these truths is that "*the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" (Rom. 6:23 NIV) Whereas every person earns the penalty of sin (spiritual separation from God in the present life and eternal separation from God after this life), *salvation is a gift*. A gift is something unearned, granted out of love, and received out of gratitude.

The *third* of these truths is that "*God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*" (John 3:16 NIV) The gift of salvation was provided out of the unconditional love of God for every person. This gift of love was provided by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, God's own Son on the cross of Calvary, proved sufficient to transform man from the state of death to spiritual life in Christ by the resurrection of Jesus.

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The *fourth* of these truths is that *"it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no-one can boast."* (Ephesians 2:8-9 NIV) *Salvation is by grace.* Grace is something that is undeserved. When a person is caught wilfully breaking the law that person knows some penalty or punishment is due. If the prosecuting authority in some way states that he or she will be *gracious* in judgment, the guilty person immediately recognizes the hope of escaping the deserved punishment. Nevertheless, no true justice will excuse severe and wilful wrongdoing no matter what efforts are made by the guilty party to compensate. For example; saving a child from drowning can never compensate for premeditatedly taking the life of an adult. However, if the debt (penalty or punishment) has been paid then grace can rule and the undeserved can be acquitted. Salvation is the graciousness of God accepting the paid debt of sin by the sacrifice of God's Son and justly pardoning the guilty.

After hearing the gospel explained, people often say, "You mean there's nothing I can do to deserve it? That's too easy." It seems natural for people to object to the idea that God's unmerited favour can be given so freely to unworthy sinners. Many find it difficult to trust a God who offers salvation as a free gift.

Salvation is free to man but cost God much. His own Son actually became man's substitute. Where man is unable to change his standing before God through any self-effort, Christ died in his place: *"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."* (Rom. 5:6) It is man's responsibility to believe and receive the free gift of life. *"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God has raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."* (Rom. 10:9-10)

The language of Scriptures knows nothing about a 'cross of example,' or a 'cross of martyrdom for the cause.' Although Calvary was a cross of grace, a cross of goodness, a cross of courage, a cross of suffering and a

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cross of perseverance, it was foremost a cross of substitution. "*For he (God) has made him (Jesus) to be sin for (in the place of) us, who (Jesus) knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*" (2 Corinthians 5:21)

Salvation is free but not cheap, and it is anyone's for the asking 'in faith.' "*For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*" (Rom. 10:13) Charles Spurgeon, known as 'the prince of preachers,' once wrote, "It will not save me to know that Christ is a Saviour; but it will save me to trust him to be my Saviour. I shall not be delivered from the wrath to come, by believing that his atonement is sufficient; but I shall be saved by making that atonement my trust, my refuge and my all."

Believers must be reminded of these Bible verses. "*If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believes unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*"(Rom. 10:9-10) It has been said of this verse that people can miss heaven by eighteen inches, the distance between the mind which hears that safety lies in Christ, and the heart which refuses to reach in faith and accept Him.

The Bible clearly states that faith in Christ alone secures salvation. "*For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*" (Rom. 10:13) This is a faith that turns the heart in sorrow from sin (repentance) to acceptance of Christ's substitutional death (belief). Therefore, the securing of salvation is not dependent upon any works of man such as being baptized or joining a church but upon a point of decision. The epistle of John emphasises this point of decision. "*He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the children of God, [even] to them that believe on his name.*" (John 1:11-12) This decision to 'receive' Christ as personal saviour restores the relationship of each individual (in the fallen state of spiritual death) to spiritual life in Christ. At the moment of this

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decision by faith the Spirit of God enters into the individual, quickening (or making alive) the spirit of man (Ephesians 2:5). This new state or 'new birth' (John 3:3) allows the believing individual to be spiritually led by God and empowered by God and to be delivered not only from eternal punishment (John 3:16) but also from present bondage (Galatians 5).

For each individual who has heard (or read) of God's free offer of salvation by faith through the sacrificial death and glorious resurrection of Jesus, there is a window of opportunity. This is not an opportunity to prove oneself before God. Sin prevents this (Romans 3), but this is an opportunity to accept the gift of life from God. God has secured the means of spiritual rescue from present bondage and eternal loss by dealing with the penalty and the power of sin on the Cross of Calvary. It is now up to each individual to reach out by faith and receive that gift. It is this gift of life that is the foundation for deliverance, not only from the eternal penalty of sin but also from the present bondage of sin and weakness. The beauty of that expression of faith is that no one will ever be disappointed; Jesus' promise is always kept. "*For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*" (Rom. 5:6, 10:13).



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