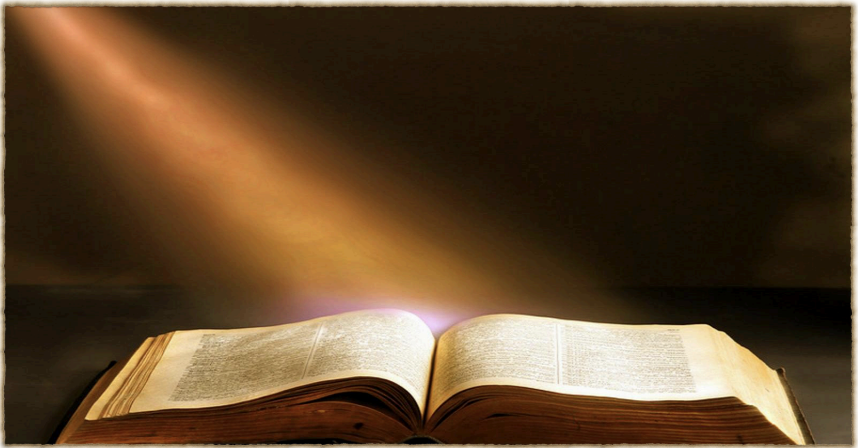




How Firm a Foundation (Bibliology Booklet)



By Pastor Jeff South

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Introduction: The Perfect Revelation of God:

Psalm 19

- Psalm 19 is one of the classic places in the Bible that describes both general & specific revelation from God.
- God wants to be known, so He has revealed Himself. He is invisible, immortal, yet has pulled back the curtain on himself through his mighty works and perfect word.
- Psalm 19:1-6 notes general revelation, i.e. the **Works of Elohim**.
- Psalm 19:7-14 notes specific revelation, i.e. the **Words of YHWH**.
- Note how God will often reveal Himself in two primary stages... first He will work powerfully and conspicuously by invading human history in a supernatural way... second, He will raise up a prophet that will both record the event as well as interpret the event for us in writing. (Bookman)
- God must take the initiative in revealing himself because mankind is twice crippled. We are finite, so we *could* never know God on our own, but we are also fallen, so we *would* never know God on our own. (Bookman)

Verses 1-6, the Work of Elohim

- The heavens are glorious! They were believed to be divine in the ancient world, Deuteronomy 4:19; 17:3. They were also believed to control man's destiny, Isaiah 47:13; Daniel 4:7; Jeremiah 10:2. However, their glory speaks of the glory and righteousness of their Creator, Psalm 50:6; 89:5-8; 97:6; 143:8; Romans 1:19–20.
- The heavens function as a billboard, Genesis 1:14 uses the Hebrew word for “signs,” which describe an outward demonstration for the purpose of instruction, Genesis 4:15; 9:12; Exodus 4:8-9.
- “Seasons” (cf. Gen. 1:14) refer to God's appointed times, Genesis 17:21; 18:14; 21:2; Exodus 9:5; 13:10.

- God has even named the stars, Isaiah 40:26; Psalm 147:4, which then can be used by God for signals, Joel 2:30-31; Matthew 24:36; Luke 21:25, 28; 1 Thessalonians 5.
- David focused on the heavens above him, especially the circuit of the sun; but there are many worlds in God's creation. They include the earth beneath our feet, the plant and animal worlds on earth, in the skies and in the waters, the human world, the world of rocks and crystals, worlds visible to the human eye, and worlds so small we need special equipment to see them. World famous biologist Edward O. Wilson claims there may be as many as 1.6 million species of fungi in the world today, 10,000 species of ants, 300,000 species of flowering plants, between 4,000 and 5,000 species of mammals, and approximately 10,000 species of birds. But these large numbers pale into insignificance when you start examining the heavens, as David did, and begin to calculate distances in light years. David knew none of this modern scientific data, and yet when he pondered the heavens, he was overwhelmed by the glory of the Lord. (Wiersbe)

Verse 1

- The heavens "declare" ("tell a story," cf. Gen. 15:5; 24:66; 37:9-10) of the glory of God. Compare Job 38:32 note on the Mazzaroth.
- Both the heavens and the Torah were spoken into existence by God. Note how the word "Elohim" is the title for God used in verses 1-6.

Verse 2-3

- Might reference how the heavens speak with silence... Or how the heavens speak universally and are not limited by human language.

Verse 4

- I like Nelson's comment, "A line, is a musical Cantor, which is a musical line of song and meant to be repeated by the audience. Creation is sending forth a display of God's glory, and we as humankind or to answer back, we are to respond to God's glory revealed in creation." (Tommy Nelson)

- Note how Paul quotes verse four in Romans 10:18 to describe the universal sounding forth of the gospel message... The Jewish people could never say that they had not heard God's message, because Psalm 19:4 says that the whole world has heard.
- Phillips Brooks gave the first instructions about God to Helen Keller, who was blind and deaf, and she replied that she had always known there was a God but didn't know what His name was.

Verse 5

- David pictures the sun as an eager bridegroom coming (toward the marriage tent to claim his bride, or out from beneath the huppah and ready to consummate the marriage?), Isaiah 4:5; Joel 2:16.
- David also pictured the sun as a tireless champion ready to run his race, the circuit that spans the skies!
- *Like a strong man.* The metaphorical language reflects the brilliance of the sunrise, which attests to the sun's vigor. (NET)
- The first image speaks of glory (the groom was richly attired), love and anticipation, while the second speaks of power and determination. (Wiersbe)

Verse 6

- David insists that viewing the sun ought to cause us to worship Yahweh yet contrast this with the prevailing worship of the sun in antiquity, 2 Kings 23:5, 11, specifically the "path of the sun," i.e., the zodiac (Is. 47:13; Dan. 4:7).
- Many ancients viewed the sun gods as also the giver of justice, cf. Shamash and the code of Hammurabi. Yet Israel attributed this to YHWH. This thought may well tie together the first and second halves of the Psalm.
- This concept of "path" beautifully segues to the latter half of the Psalm, which described the Torah of YHWH, which is what lays out the "path" in which we ought to walk. The ancients often

looked to the skies to guide their life, but David says we ought to look to the Torah!

Verses 7-14 the Word of YHWH

- David recorded six different names for God’s Word, six attributes of the Word, and six ministries of the Word in the lives of those who receive it and obey it.
- Note when David wrote about creation, he uses the term *Elohim*. Now as David writes of God’s Word, he goes from using *Elohim*, to using the proper name *YHWH*.

Verse 7

- The Instruction of the LORD is without spot (Ex. 12:5), convincing or restoring life to the soul (Psalm 23:3; Prov. 13:9).
- “Law” is the Hebrew word *torah*, which means “instruction, direction, teaching.” Jewish people call the scrolls of the Law “The Torah,” but the word refers to all of God’s revelation. It comes from a word that means “to shoot an arrow,” for a teacher aims to hit the target and achieve specific goals in the lives of the students. (Wiersbe)
- **tn** *Heb* “[it] restores life.” Elsewhere the Hiphil of שׁוּב (*shuv*, “return”) when used with נֶפֶשׁ (*nefesh*, “life”) as object, means to “rescue or preserve one’s life” ([Job 33:30](#); [Ps 35:17](#)) or to “revive one’s strength” (emotionally or physically; cf. [Ruth 4:15](#); [Lam 1:11](#), [16](#), [19](#)). Here the point seems to be that the law preserves the life of the one who studies it by making known God’s will. Those who know God’s will know how to please him and can avoid offending him. See v. [11a](#). (NET note)
- The Testimonies (i.e., the Ten Commandments were known by this name, Ex. 25:21, yet it can also be translated “warnings,” 2 Kings 17:15; Neh. 9:34) of the LORD are clear, reliable, or verifiable (Gen. 42:20, 26), giving wisdom to the simple (Prov. 21:11).

Verse 8

- The Statues/Procedures of the LORD are consistent with Him and with one another, which cheers the heart (Neh. 8:12). These are the detailed instructions concerning the practical matters of everyday life.
- **tn** Heb “[they] make happy [the] heart.” Perhaps the point is that they bring a sense of joyful satisfaction to the one who knows and keeps them, for those who obey God’s law are richly rewarded. See v. 11b. (NET)
- Some of the statutes that legislators have passed are not right and have brought grief, but the statutes of the Lord bring joy. (Wiersbe)
- The Commandments (“orders”) of the LORD are clear (i.e., clearly understood, cf. Song 6:10), illuminating the eyes (Prov. 6:23; Ps. 119:98-100) granting insight and discernment between good and evil (Heb. 5:14).

Verse 9

- Fearing the LORD results in an (Prov. 16:6, 17) uncontaminated life, causing one to endure (Ps. 112).
- This is an unusual name for the Scriptures, but it reminds us that we cannot learn the Word of God unless we show reverence and respect for the God of the Word. To teach the Bible is to teach the fear of the Lord (34:11; Deut. 4:9–10), and the mark of a true Bible student is a burning heart, not a big head (Luke 24:32; 1 Cor. 8:1). (Wiersbe)
- The Verdicts of the LORD always right, He never makes a wrong decision (Deut. 32:4).

Verse 10

- More Valuable than Gold: Long been used for a medium of exchange... More Pleasurable than Honey: especially valued in the ancient world (enough to serve as a gift to a king) as one of the few natural sweeteners (Gen. 43:11 & 1 Kings 14:3).

- The way we treat the Bible is the way we treat the Lord, so it isn't difficult to determine if we are rightly related to God. Do we *desire His Word* because it's precious to us ([12](#)), even more than wealth (v. [10](#); [119:14](#), [72](#), [127](#), [162](#)) or tasty food ([119:103](#); [1 Peter 2:2](#))? Do we find satisfaction in “feeding on” God's Word? (See [Matt. 4:4](#); [Job 23:12](#); [Jer. 15:16](#).) Would we skip a meal to spend time meditating on the Scriptures? (Wiersbe)

Verse 11

- The commands of YHWH simultaneously serve to *warn of evil* and *promise good*. God wisely provides both a deterrent to evil and an incentive to good. Fear of consequences, desire for reward, and loyal love are all biblical motives for obedience...

Verses 12-14, Application

- David personally applies these truths to himself! *He needs the law of God for self-discovery*... we all have “secret faults,” which we would deny or never discover were it not for the law of God, Psalm 40:12; Leviticus 4:2; Psalm 90:8; Jeremiah 17:9.
- Yet on the other hand we also sin presumptuously (Num. 15:30-31; 1 Sam. 25:32ff). Secret faults and presumptuous sins or two opposite extremes of sins and transgressions. Not only does the law expose my secret faults, but it also helps restrain my inward rebellion!
- David craves “uprightness,” which is the same root for “pure” or spotless in v. 7 and is used to describe the spotless lamb for sacrifice. Contrast Saul (1 Chron. 10:13-14) who was indeed guilty of the great transgression. David wants to avoid that!
- So, David ends with a prayer of introspection... he wants his life, thoughts, and words to be a living sacrifice “acceptable” to God. The term “acceptable” refers to the priest's examination of the sacrifices to make sure they were without blemish. David realizes actions follow thoughts and attitudes... a powerful observation! cf. Matt. 12:33-37.
- Apparently, God answered this prayer because this Psalm itself evidences that David had right meditations!

How will we Study Bibliology?

1. Revelation: From the mind of God to the Mind of the Author (1 Cor. 2:9 note). cf. Ps. 19:1-9.
2. Inspiration: From the Mind of the Author to the Document (2 Tim. 3:16 note). cf. Ps. 19:7-9.
3. Canonicity: Which Documents are, or are not from God? Is the Bible Complete? (Dan. 9:2 note)
4. Preservation: From the original Documents down through the centuries to the present (Is. 40:8 note). cf. Ps. 19:9.
5. Translation: From the languages of the original Documents to the language of the reader.
6. Interpretation & Illumination: From the Document to the mind of the reader. cf. Ps. 19:8, “enlightening” & Ps. 19:10-14.
7. Application / Animation: From the mind of the reader to the life of the reader. cf. Ps. 19:10-14.
8. Communication: via teaching, preaching, or disseminating its truth to the world. cf. Ps. 19:1-4, 7, “converting the soul & making wise the simple.”

Revelation: From the Mind of God to the Mind of a Man

The Necessity for Revelation

Man is Finite

- In other words, I am not eternal, I had an origin, I wasn't there to observe it. At some point we will have the universal questions, "where did I come from? why am I here? where am I going?"
- In order to live a meaningful life, I must know my origin, identity, and destiny, yet I cannot know these things on my own.

Man is Fallen

- Where did evil come from? Why is there Death? Can we overcome sin? Is there hope? Where is history headed?
- Without a word from God, we are men groping in the dark (Acts 17:27).
- If I have no answer to the dilemmas of humanity and history, then I will lose my mind!
- See fabulous discussion in Augustus Strong's Systematic Theology, which includes many quotes from Socrates, Plato, and Thomas Paine as to man's darkness and search for truth.

Historic Observation:

- History attests to the fact that nations or people groups without the Bible become exceedingly dark and depraved.
- Yet nations or cultures tempered by the Bible rise to the highest of all human achievement.

The Nature of Revelation

Divine Gift

- A Divine gift is not humanly attained: Revelation is initiated by God, and He can unveil Himself to any passive party...
- e.g., God revealed Himself through pagan Balaam (Num. 24:1-4). Brilliant men did not "figure God out..." rather God came to meager mankind and spoke.

- Rationalism & Empiricism do not ultimately attain to spiritual truth (1 Cor. 2:9). On his own, mankind cannot figure out spiritual or eternal things.

Gracious

- Gracious in that He did not have to reveal Himself (John 15:15).

Anthropic & Personal

- Anthropic & Personal in that God uniquely reveals Himself to mankind, no other creatures He made. This revelation is intimate and ought to attract us toward a personal relationship with Him.
- *Genesis 1:28*. God “speaks” 11 times in the creative week. The first 9 times God speaks, and creation comes into existence. But the final 2 times God speaks He speaks “to” a particular part of His creation, mankind.
- *Illustration*: Like a visitor at church who feels welcome because someone walks up and takes interest in them...

Clear

- **Clear** in that God only reveals Himself in ways that mankind can understand like a known language, and helpful analogies. He makes Himself knowable by the common person.

The Means of Revelation

Natural a.k.a. General Revelation

Creation (*Psalm 19:1-4; Romans 1-2*)

- 1) *Cosmological Argument*: No cause is greater than its effect. We exist, therefore there must be a cause greater than the effect (Acts 14:15; 17:24).
- 2) *Teleological Argument*: We have a Cosmos, not Chaos... The orderliness of the universe argues for intelligence in design of the universe (Acts 14:17).
- 3) *Anthropological Argument*: Mankind is the most unique among the creatures... We have personality, intelligence & morality (Acts 17:28-29)

Conscience, i.e., Moral Argument:

- The universal acknowledgment of right vs. wrong is in and of itself evidence of a higher Being (Rom. 2:14-15).
- The conscience is a God-given awareness of morality.
- Conscience is a glimmer of light, but not an infallible compass (1 Tim. 4:1-2).

History, i.e., Historical Argument.

- The Flood & Resurrection (2 Peter 3:2-6; Acts 26:26)
- The Origin & Preservation of Israel (Deut. 4:32-40)
 - Exodus
 - Holocaust & Rebirth of Israel
 - War of Independence & 6 Day War
 - Yom Kippur War
 - The Rise and Fall of Nations (Acts 17:26).
- Other Possible Examples
 - Battle of Marathon & Thermopylae?
 - Evacuation of Dunkirk?
 - Destruction of Spanish Armada?

Extent of Natural Revelation

- What we learn of God
 - He Exists (Acts 17:28)
 - He is Powerful (Rom. 1:20)
 - He is Intelligent (Acts 17:29)
 - He is Good (Matt. 5:45; Acts 14:17)
- Natural Revelation *is not* enough to save.
 - Salvation only comes through the name of Jesus (Acts 4:11; Rom. 10:9-10).
- Yet Natural Revelation *is* enough to condemn.
 - Every man has a basic knowledge of right and wrong, to which he must respond. Hell is not for ignorant people, but rebellious people who rebelled against what they knew to be true... Yet responding to light brings more

light (cf. Cornelius in Acts 10 as one who gropes after God in the darkness cf. Acts 17:27; Heb. 11:6).

Special or Specific Revelation

1) Appearance

- a. Direct Appearance
 - i. Theophany
 - ii. Incarnation (Heb. 1:1-3; Phil. 2)
- b. Indirect Appearance through marvelous acts i.e., Miracles (Exodus 9:14; Deut. 4:32; Acts 26:26)

2) Speech

- a. Direct Speech (Gen. 2:16-17; 3:16-19; Ex. 3 & 20:1; 1 Sam. 3; 9:15; Matt. 3:17). The ability of God to “speak” is a primary element that separates Him from false gods (Ps. 115; 135; 1 Kings 18:24-46)
- b. Indirect Speech
 - i. Dreams & Visions (Num. 12:3-5)
 - ii. Lots, Urim & Thummim (Exodus 28)
 - iii. Messengers
 - 1. Prophets (Deut. 18:18-20; Jer. 1:9; Ex. 4:12; 1 Sam. 3; 15:3, 18, 23 et al.)
 - 2. Angels (Luke 1-2).

3) Scripture: God’s words in written form (Ex. 31:18; 34:1, 28; Deut. 31:9-13; Josh. 24:26; Jer. 30:2; 36:2-4, 27-31; 51:60; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21; 3:2).

- a. 2 Tim. 3:15 “Holy Scriptures” is a profound term. “Hieros” is the adjective form of the noun “Temple,” the place made sacred because God’s presence is there.
- b. Don’t miss the point... The Shekinah glory of God, which dwelt in the temple, was the source of its sacredness. But now, God has taken up residence within His Word. The Glory of God is revealed in and through the Bible! Cp. 2 Cor. 3:18.
- c. Accurate Teaching of the Scripture reveals the glory of God (2 Tim. 3:15-4:2).

Inspiration & Inerrancy: From the Mind of a Man to the Document

Definition:

- The Spirit of God controlled the human authors of the Bible so that what they recorded in the original documents was the inerrant word of God to mankind.

Necessity:

- The recording of spiritual truth in a document is what allows that spiritual truth to last and speak to later generations (Ex. 31:18; 34:1, 28; Deut. 31:9-13; Josh. 24:26; Jer. 30:2; 36:2-4, 27-31; 51:60).
- “Alphabets, writing, books, are our chief dependence for the history of the past; all the great religions of the world are book-religions; the Karens expected their teachers in the new religion to bring to them a book. But notice that false religions have scriptures, but not Scripture; their sacred books lack the principle of unity which is furnished by divine inspiration. H. P. Smith, *Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration*, 68—“Mohammed discovered that the Scriptures of the Jews were the source of their religion. He called them a ‘book-people,’ and endeavored to construct a similar code for his disciples.” [Strong, A. H. (1907). *Systematic theology* (p. 116). Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society.]

Examination:

David on Inspiration (2 Sam. 23:2).

- Note the Spirit is speaking, David is a conduit.
- This passage implies that men knew when they were being inspired by God...

Jesus on Inspiration (Matt. 5:18; 24:15; Luke 16:17; 24:25, 27; John 5:46-47; 10:35;).

- Noting statements Jesus made about the O.T. gives us insight into His views on “inspiration.” Jesus believed the O.T. was essentially the product of the Spirit of God (Matt. 22:43). Jesus believed the O.T. was true in the smallest detail & timeless (Matt. 5:18; Luke 16:17; John 10:35). Jesus believed the O.T. should be read and could be understood (Matt 24:15). Jesus believed that the individual words, even the verb tenses were inspired and accurate (Matt. 22:32). Jesus believed the O.T. was essentially about Himself (Luke 24:25-27; John 5:46-47).
- By quoting and alluding to the O.T. Jesus revealed His belief that the characters of the O.T. were historic: Adam & Eve (Matt. 19:4-5), Abel (Matt. 23:35), Noah & Lot (Luke 17:26-28), Abraham (John 8:56-58), Creation (Mark 10:6-9), the Flood (Matt. 24:37-39), Sodom & Gomorrah (Luke 17:29), Manna from heaven (John 6:32), the serpent bites in the wilderness (John 3:14), Elijah & Elisha (Luke 4:25-27), and Jonah’s Great fish (Matt. 12:39-40).

Paul on Inspiration (Romans 3:2; 2 Timothy 3:16)

- Note the context of 2 Timothy. This is Paul’s final epistle, and he knows it (2 Tim. 4:6-8). The Apostles are passing off the scene. But when they are gone, the church still has a voice of authority, namely, the Bible!
- All Scripture is “inspired” by God... Literally, God-breathed, or blown out...
- The term inspiration is primarily an allusion to speech, pronouncing sound by passing breath over the lips.
- Additionally, an allusion to creation, by the breath of His mouth the heavens were made (Ps. 33:6; Gen. 1:3, 2:7). Though creation is said to be made by the breath of God, mankind in particular (Gen. 2:7), is the special creation of God into which He breathed...
- Having the “breath of God,” Scripture both lives (Heb. 4:12), and gives life (2 Tim. 3:15; 1 Peter 1:23).

Peter on Inspiration (Acts 1:16; 2 Peter 1:16-21)

- v. 19 the word of prophecy is sure, steadfast, standing firmly on both feet. The Bible is more certain than any vision or experience that I might have.
- The Bible is like a light in a dark place. The truth of the Bible guides us through life and helps us discern between true and false teaching.
- v. 20-21 The Bible guides us because it does not originate with men, but from God.
- The word “interpretation” can mean either “origin” or “explanation” (Mark 4:34; Gen. 40:8; 41:8,12 LXX). Verse 21 clearly speaks to the origin of the Bible, so verse 20 probably speaks to its interpretation.
- In other words, the Bible does not just say whatever you want it to say. Rather, it is a decisive record of truth, which interprets itself. Compare 2 Peter 3:16, some wrest and pervert the Scriptures. Yet the authoritative interpretation of the Apostles (2 Peter 3:1-2) is on par with the authority of the O.T. prophets.
- Verse 21 then tells us why the Bible is meant to mean what it says, namely, because it comes from God. The Bible does not come “by the will of men.” Rather, it God spoke the Bible as He “moved” them. “Moved” is the same verb used in Acts 27:15 to refer to wind driving a ship along. God controls men so that they speak His words.

Implications (2 Tim. 3:16)

Authority:

- If the Bible is from God our Creator, then it supplies the absolute, and unchangeable standard for truth & righteousness. It must be believed & obeyed.

Inerrancy:

- If the Bible is from the God “who cannot lie,” then it cannot contain error. The Bible must be completely accurate & consistent.

- The Bible claims accuracy. Contrast Herodotus who says, “My business is to record what people say. But I am by no means bound to believe it- and that may be taken to apply to this book as a whole.”

Sufficiency:

- If the Bible is the Word of God to humanity, then it is logical to assume that God will give us all the knowledge we need to live in a way that honors Him.
- 2 Peter 1:3 “all things” that we need.
- 2 Timothy 3:16 “Profitable” i.e. helpful by providing a service (1 Tim. 4:8; Tit. 3:8).
 - Doctrine = Teaching or instruction in what to believe (1 Tim 1:10), i.e. operating manual.
 - Reproof = Producing evidence for a conviction, i.e. exposing evil. This Greek word appears 15 times in the book of Proverbs (LXX). The Bible tells us both what is wrong, and what is right.
 - Correction = straighten up again. This Greek word was used to describe resetting a broken bone so that it heals straight, and comes back stronger... The Bible tells us how to get right.
 - Instruction = child training. This is the Greek word where we get our English word Pedagogy, i.e. to train someone up from scratch. Hebrews 12 uses this word to refer both to parents training up their children, or a coach training an athlete. The Bible raises us up to be “mature adults” (2 Tim. 3:17), that are capable of responsible obedience. The Bible teaches how to get right, and then stay right.
- 2 Timothy 3:17 “that the man of God may be complete...” Greek word “complete” means *“fully outfitted for a voyage.”* We do not need another book...

False Theories of Inspiration

Dictation Inspiration:

- *Human penman transcribed whatever God dictated.* Though parts of the Bible were clearly dictated (e.g., Moses on the Mount), yet dictation exclusively does not account for the variety in writing styles between the human authors of the Bible.

Partial Inspiration or Degrees of Inspiration:

- The Bible's purpose is inspired, but the Bible can be errant in details. Therefore, certain parts are inspired, but not all of it. Common examples cited include how the theory of Evolution corrects the Bible, or that secular sources from history correct the Bible.

Conceptual Inspiration:

- *Ideas or concepts in the Bible are inspired, but not the actual words.* Biblical refutation of that idea can be found in Matt. 5:18; or Matt. 22:29-33; or Gal. 3:15-16.

Natural Inspiration:

- The Bible is "inspired" like any other great piece of literature. In other words, the Bible is a classic because it was written by brilliant men, but God is not involved in the process.
- The greatest refutation of this idea is the ignorance of the disciples themselves, throughout Jesus' ministry. Christianity is not the creation of brilliant men, but the plan of God revealed to men.

Mystical or Dynamic Inspiration:

- The Bible is only inspired when it impacts me. As it "speaks" to me, then those passages or truths are inspired. This "inspiration" of God to me can occur through other books outside the Bible. Thus, inspiration is whenever God speaks to me personally.
- This view of inspiration does not guarantee inerrancy.

Barthian Inspiration:

- Since the central message of the Bible is “Christ,” then only those parts, which point to Christ are inspired... Hence the Bible does not have authority because it comes from God, but because it speaks about Christ...

Defense of Inspiration & Inerrancy

Definition:

- The classic, orthodox definition of “inspiration” includes the words “verbal” & “plenary.”
- “Verbal” means all the words, not merely the ideas are inspired.
- “Plenary” means all parts, that is, the Bible is true not only when it speaks of God or spiritual things, but it is also true when it speaks of science, history, or geography.

Defense via Historic Reliability:

Date of the N.T. documents

- Luke 1:1-4; 1 Cor. 15:6; Acts 26:24-27 note that much of the N.T. was written while eyewitnesses of the original events in the life of Christ were still alive, and those events could be discredited or verified.
- Though the dating of the N.T. has been largely attacked by Bible critics, Dr. John A.T. Robinson a lecturer at Trinity College Cambridge, changed his mind. At one time Dr. Robinson denied that Paul and the disciples of Jesus wrote the N.T. and held to the belief that the N.T. was written some 100 years after Christ. Yet to the amazement of his colleagues, Robinson concluded that the apostles must have been the genuine writers of the N.T. in the years prior to AD 64. He challenged other scholars to complete the original research necessary to fully examine the question without introducing bias and faulty assumptions. Robinson wrote a book “Redating the New Testament,” and suggested that the book of Matthew may have been first written within 8 years of Christ’s death & resurrection.

Evidence from History & Archeology

- Biblical accuracy in the recording of history stands in stark contrast to other historians. For example, though Herodotus is widely recognized as “the father of history,” some historians call him “the father of lies...” It is widely recognized that Herodotus loved to exaggerate. Many known fallacies exist in his writings.
- Note the statement of Nelson Glueck, the famed Israeli archeologist, “It may be stated categorically that no archeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference. Scores of archaeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or in exact detail historical statements in the Bible. And by the same token, proper evaluation of Biblical descriptions has often led to amazing discoveries.”

Belshazzar (Daniel 5)

- It was long believed by liberals that King Belshazzar of Daniel 5 was a myth because no historic record of him existed, while the Babylonian chronicles named Nabonidus as the ruling king when Babylon fell to Persia.
- Almost all of the tablets were identified as chronicles once in the collection of the British Museum, having been acquired via antiquities dealers from unknown excavations in the 19th century. The chronicles are thought to have been written in Babylon during the Achaemenid period, c. 550–400 BCE. They are thought to have been transferred to the British Museum after 19th century excavations in Babylon, and subsequently left undeciphered in the archives for decades. The first chronicle to be published was BM 92502 (ABC1) in 1887 by Theophilus Pinches under the title "The Babylonian Chronicle". This was followed in 1923 by the publication of the Fall of Nineveh Chronicle (ABC 3), in 1924 by Sidney Smith's publication of the Esarhaddon Chronicle (ABC 14), the Akitu Chronicle (ABC 16) and the Nabonidus Chronicle (ABC 7), and in 1956 by Donald Wiseman's publication of four further tablets including the Nebuchadnezzar Chronicle (ABC 5).

- From these chronicles we learned that although Nabonidus was king of Babylon when the city fell, he had been away from the city for some time, down in the southern part of his empire. In his absence, he had appointed his son, Belshazzar, to rule in his stead. This explains why Daniel was awarded the *third* highest position in the kingdom; it was the highest position Belshazzar could give.
- Apparently, the person who wrote the book of Daniel had a firsthand account of the court life in Babylon, since accounts written in antiquity seem unaware of Belshazzar.

Existence of the Hittites...

- The Bible mentions the “Hittites” several times and indicates that they were a powerful people. The Hittites are mentioned 48 times in the O.T. between the Torah, the Historical books, and once in Ezekiel, ranging from the life of Abraham to Uriah the Hittite.
- Until the last hundred years or so, however, historians could not find one scrap of evidence outside of the Bible that this empire existed.
- Yet writings from Egypt and Assyria began to be uncovered about the “people from the land of Hatti.” Then in 1906 the dig in Bogazkoy Turkey was discovered to be the Hittite capitol of Hattusa when the royal archive containing 10,000 tablets was uncovered there.

Joseph and the Seven Year Famine

- An inscription discovered in southern Saudi Arabia during the around 1850 intrigued Bible students. The English explorer Mr. Cruttenden was shown a tomb of a wealthy Yemenite woman who died around 1800 BC, yet the tomb was exposed by a flood that uncovered the grave site. The tomb contained the body of a noble woman who was covered in jewels. Seven collars of pearls surrounded her neck; her hands and feet were covered with seven bracelets, armlets, rings, and ankle rings replying costly jewels. The greatest treasure however, was an inscription stone bearing

the woman's final words. The engraving describes how she "*sent my steward to Joseph,*" with costly gifts, but was unable to procure food. Some scholars suspect this may be the Joseph of the Bible.

- "Joseph Coins:" In 2009, archeological authorities from the Egyptian National Museum in Cairo announced their "rediscovery" of coins that had been in storage for decades. They discovered that these coins bore both an inscription and an image of the Biblical Joseph. One coin have an image of a cow on it, possibly referring to Pharaoh's dream with the seven cows and seven stalks of grain. Joseph's name appears twice on this coin along with an image of him.

Exodus

- *Herodotus*, the Greek Historian born circa 484 BC, wrote, "This people [the Israelites], by their own account, inhabited the coasts of the Red Sea, but migrated thence to the maritime parts of Syria, all which district, as far as Egypt, is denominated Palestine."
- *Strabo*, who was a Greek historian born in 64 BC, wrote, "Among many things believed respecting the temple and inhabitants of Jerusalem, the report most credited is that the Egyptians were the ancestors of the present Jews. An Egyptian priest named Moses, who possessed a portion of the country call lower Egypt, being dissatisfied with the institutions there, left it and came to Judea with a large body of people who worshipped the Divinity."

Josephus the Jewish Historian.

- Manetho an Egyptian priest-scholar wrote that the Jews "went out of that country afterward, and settled in that country which is now called Judea, and there built Jerusalem and its temple."
- Diodorus Siculus was a Greek traveler and historian from Sicily. He traveled extensively in the Middle East compiling records and accounts from various peoples. He states, "*In ancient times there happened a great plague upon Egypt, and many ascribed*

the cause of it to God, who was offended with them because there were many strangers in the land, by whom foreign rites and ceremonies were employed in their worship of the deity. The Egyptians concluded, therefore, that unless all strangers were driven out of the country, they should never be freed from their miseries. Upon this, as some writers tell us, the most eminent and enterprising of those foreigners who were in Egypt and obliged to leave the country... who retired into the province now called Judea, which was not far from Egypt, and in those times uninhabited. These emigrants were let by Moses, who was superior to all in wisdom and prowess. He gave them laws and ordained that they should have no images of the gods, because there was only one deity, the heaven, which surrounds all things, and is Lord of the whole."

Tower of Babel

- King Nebuchadnezzar Inscription discovered on the base of ruins of a great tower in Babylon. The inscription reads, "The Tower, the eternal house, which I founded and built. I have completed its magnificence with silver, gold, other metals, stone, enameled bricks, fir and pine. The first which is the house of the earth's base, the most ancient monument of Babylon; I build and finished it. I have highly exalted its head with bricks covered with copper. We say for the other, that is, this edifice, the house of the seven lights of the earth, the most ancient monument of Borsippa. *A former kings build it but he did not complete its head. Since a remote time, people had abandoned it, without order expressing their words.* Since that time the earthquake and the thunder had dispersed the sun-dried clay. The bricks of the casing had been split, and the earth of the interior had been scattered in heaps. Merodoch, the great god, excited my mind to repair this building. I did not change the site, nor did I take away the foundation..."

The Releasing of the Jews from Babylon

- The Cyrus Cylinder: was discovered in 1879 within the ruins of the city of Babylon and is currently housed in the British Museum.
- The text on the Cylinder praises Cyrus, sets out his genealogy and portrays him as a king from a line of kings. The Babylonian king Nabonidus, who was defeated and deposed by Cyrus, is denounced as an impious oppressor of the people of Babylonia and his low-born origins are implicitly contrasted to Cyrus' kingly heritage. The victorious Cyrus is portrayed as having been chosen by the chief Babylonian god Marduk to restore peace and order to the Babylonians. The text states that Cyrus was welcomed by the people of Babylon as their new ruler and entered the city in peace. It appeals to Marduk to protect and help Cyrus and his son Cambyses. It extols Cyrus as a benefactor of the citizens of Babylonia who improved their lives, repatriated displaced people, and restored temples and cult sanctuaries across Mesopotamia and elsewhere in the region. It concludes with a description of how Cyrus repaired the city wall of Babylon and found a similar inscription placed there by an earlier king. Confirming Ezra 1:1-4.

Story of Sir William Ramsay...

- English scholar William Ramsay was an unbeliever, who decided to travel Asia Minor with the sole purpose of disproving the Bible's history as described in Luke and Acts. Ramsay and his professors believed that Luke could not be correct in his history of Christ or in his account the growth of the Church during the first decades following Christ. Ramsay began to dig in the ruins of sites throughout Greece and Asia Minor, searching for ancient names, boundary markers, and other archeological finds that would prove that Luke had invented his history of Christ and the Church. To his amazement, however, Ramsay discovered that the statements of the N.T. scriptures were accurate in the smallest detail. As a result, Dr. Ramsay accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior. He became both a Christian and a great biblical scholar.

As a result of his conversion, William Ramsay's books became classics in the study of the history of the N.T.

King David inscription: Tel Dan Stele

- In 1993, archeologists digging at Tel Dan in northern Israel found a fragment of a stone inscription that clearly refers to the "house of David" and identifies David as the "king of Israel." This is the first inscription outside the Bible that confirms that David was the king of Israel in the ninth century BC. Some critics suggested that the fragment was a fake. But the following summer two additional fragments of the original were found.

Merneptah Stele

- In 1896 Sir W. M. Flinders Petrie, an English Egyptologist, discovered the stele while excavating the funerary temple of Pharaoh Merneptah at Thebes (Robinson, *Bearing of Archaeology*, 49). The stele is now on display at the Cairo Museum. A fragmentary copy is at the Karnak Temple.
- The stele is 10 feet, 3 inches tall; 5 feet, 3 inches wide; and 14 inches thick, with inscriptions on both sides. One side describes the campaign of Pharaoh Merneptah in 28 lines that contain around 3,000 hieroglyphics (Robinson, *Bearing of Archaeology*, 50).
- The text is largely an account of Merneptah's victory over the Libyans and their allies, but the last 3 of the 28 lines deal with a separate campaign in Canaan, then part of Egypt's imperial possessions. The stele is sometimes referred to as the "Israel Stela" because a majority of scholars translate a set of hieroglyphs in line 27 as "Israel." The stela represents the earliest textual reference to Israel and the only reference from ancient Egypt.
- Since Merneptah's inscription dates to around 1209 bc, it suggests that Israel had emerged as a distinct people-group in the land of Canaan before that time. Archaeological evidence from Canaan shows new settlement patterns from about 1200 bc that are often identified as distinctively Israelite (Mazar,

Archaeology, 334). [Locatell, C. S. (2016). Merneptah Stele. In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, ... W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.]

Temple of Ashtaroth or Dagon at Bet She'an?

- Upon Saul's death, 1 Samuel records that his armor was put in the temple of Ashtaroth in the city of Bet She'an. Yet the book of Chronicles states that his head was put in the temple of Dagon. So, which was it? This was thought to be an error because it seemed unlikely that a Canaanite and Philistine temple would be in proximity. However, excavations have revealed that there are two temples at this site that are separated by a hallway: one for Dagon, the other for Ashtaroth.

Moabite Stone a.k.a. Mesha Stele

- The Mesha Stele (also known as the "Moabite Stone") is a stele (inscribed stone) set up around 840 BCE by King Mesha of Moab (a kingdom located in modern Jordan). Mesha tells how Chemosh, the god of Moab, had been angry with his people and had allowed them to be subjugated to Israel, but at length Chemosh returned and assisted Mesha to throw off the yoke of Israel and restore the lands of Moab. Mesha describes his many building projects. It is written in the Phoenician alphabet.
- It is the most extensive inscription ever recovered that refers to the kingdom of Israel (the "House of Omri"); it bears the earliest certain extra-biblical reference to the Israelite god Yahweh, and—if French scholar André Lemaire's reconstruction of a portion of line 31 is correct—the earliest mention of the "House of David" (i.e., the kingdom of Judah). It is also one of four known contemporary inscriptions containing the name of Israel.

Jericho

- In 1930-1936 Dr. Garstang led a team that excavated the ruins of Jericho. They discovered something so startling that he and two other members of the team signed a statement describing what they found.

- “As to the main fact, then, there remains no doubt: the walls fell outwards so completely that the attackers would be able to clamber up and over their ruins into the city. Why so unusual? Because the walls of the cities do not fall outwards, they fall inwards. And yet in Joshua 6:20 we read, ‘The wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.’ The walls were made to fall outward.”
- Other scholars list 7 elements from the archeological record that collaborate with the Biblical statements (Evidence pg. 95).

Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser

- The obelisk was created from black limestone in Calah (the modern city of Nimrud) and erected in 825 bc. It was discovered there in 1846 and is now housed in the British Museum.
- A bas-relief sculpture that commemorates the military exploits of Assyrian King Shalmaneser III (r. 858–824 bc) during the first 31 years of his reign. The obelisk features five rows of reliefs that depict five subdued kings bringing tribute to Shalmaneser, one of whom is widely believed to be Jehu of Israel (reigned 841–814 bc)
- Ritzema, E. (2016). Black Obelisk. In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, ... W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

Pontius Pilate Inscription

- The Pilate stone is a damaged block (82 cm x 65 cm) of carved limestone with a partially intact inscription attributed to, and mentioning, Pontius Pilate, a prefect of the Roman province of Judaea from AD 26–36. It was discovered at the archaeological site of Caesarea Maritima in 1961. The artifact is particularly significant because it is an archaeological find of an authentic 1st-century Roman inscription mentioning the name "Pontius Pilatus". It is contemporary to Pilate's lifetime and accords with what is known of his reported career. In effect, the writing

constitutes the earliest surviving record and contemporaneous evidence for the historical existence of this person; otherwise known from the New Testament, Jewish Literature, and brief mentions in retrospective Roman histories, which have themselves survived in still-later copies.

- It is likely that Pontius Pilate made his base at Caesarea Maritima, a city that had replaced Jerusalem since AD 6 as the administrative capital and military headquarters of the province, and the site where the stone was discovered. Pilate probably travelled to Jerusalem, the central city of the province's Jewish population, only as often as necessary.
- The Pilate stone is currently located at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. Replica castings can be found at the Archaeological Museum in Milan, Italy, and on display in Caesarea Maritima itself.
- The limestone block was discovered in June 1961 by Italian archaeologists led by Dr. Antonio Frova while excavating in the area of an ancient theatre built by decree of Herod the Great around 22–10 BC, along with the entire city of Caesarea.
- The artifact is a fragment of the dedicatory inscription of a later building, probably a temple, that was constructed, possibly in honor of the emperor Tiberius, dating to 26–36 AD.
- The stone was then reused in the 4th century as a building block for a set of stairs belonging to a structure erected behind the stage house of the Herodian theatre, and it was discovered there, still attached to the ancient staircase, by the archaeologists. The theatre is located in a town that was called Caesarea Maritima in the present-day city of Caesarea-on-the-Sea (also called Maritima).

Hezekiah's Wall

- After the 6-day war in 1967, when the Jews had total control over Jerusalem, extensive digs in and around Jerusalem took place. Scholars under the leadership of Nahman Avigad of Hebrew University found the remains of King Hezekiah's wall, which he built in preparation for the Assyrian invasion (2 Chron.

32:2-5). They discovered that portions of the wall actually cut through wall of houses that were standing at the time, indicating the urgency of the defensive actions, and the authority of the king. This confirmed the Bible's account in Isaiah 22:10.

Defense for Supernatural Inspiration:

Advanced Biblical Understanding of Science

Physics: Dimensions of Noah's Ark

- Genesis 6:15 "And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits."
- In 1609 at the port of Horn in Holland, biblically minded Christian shipbuilders created a ship after the same pattern Noah followed in constructing the ark. The inspired dimensions of Noah's ark more than 4,500 years ago were 300:50:30. It was discovered that the length of a perfectly stable oceangoing vessel should be six times the width. Most large oceangoing vessels today are made to these dimensions.

Biology

- Lev. 17:11 "For the life of the flesh is in the blood." Written about 1445 B.C.
- Though thousands of years later people practiced 'bleeding' (letting "bad" blood out). George Washington was a victim of the practice of bleeding sick patients. On December 12, 1799, he traveled by horseback for several hours through cold and snow. Doctors treated the resulting severe case of laryngitis by bleeding him. After four heavy bleedings, Washington died on December 14.
- Later, doctors discovered the vital nature of blood, so now there are blood drives to get MORE blood!

Medicine

- James Simpson was a surgeon in the nineteenth century, yet he was troubled over the trauma endured by patients undergoing surgery. Often the pain was so great that the patient died on the

operating table. Simpson wanted to find a way for his patients to be unconscious during the ordeal. He and his colleagues discovered chloroform, yet the use of chloroform was greatly resisted especially during childbirth upon the Biblical basis that pain was part of a woman's curse. Yet Simpson pointed to Gen. 2:21 "and the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam."

- This argument convinced Victoria the Queen of England who actually used it in 1847, after which Simpson was knighted for his discovery.

Sanitation (taken from "None of These Diseases")

- The Biblical understanding of sanitation as seen in the Law of Moses is profound in contrast to the then prevailing practices of Egypt, and even more profound when one realizes the modern understanding of sanitation arose in 15-1600s in Europe.

Quarantine

- The famous Ebers Papyrus, an Egyptian medical book from 1500 BC, prescribes some very strange cures for various ailments.
- To Cure baldness doctors applied "a mixture of six farts... the horse, the hippo, the crocodile, the cat, the snake, and the wild goat."
- To Cure pink eye, apply the urine of a faithful wife.
- A splinter must be treated with a salve made from worm blood & donkey dung.
- Yet even until the late 1800s, most doctors though pus promoted healing. Thus, doctors infected wounds to get them to produce pus. They agreed with Ebers Papyrus, which said, "it is good for a wound to rot a little... therefore put something in the wound that will make it produce pus."
- Note that Moses was raised in Egypt while they were practicing these "medical procedures." Acts 7:22 says that "he was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." Yet the medical understanding of the Torah not only starkly contradicts ancient standards, but also was millennia before any other known source.

- Example: Lev. 13:46, “as long as he has leprosy... he must live alone outside the camp,” i.e., the principle of Quarantine...
- According to another Egyptian source, the Smith Papyrus, which also dates to around the time of Moses, an epidemic was to be overcome by waving two vulture feathers over a person, and chanting... *“O Flame in His Face! O Nekhbet, lifting the earth to the sky for her father, come thou, bind the two feathers around me, around me, that I may live and flourish...”*
- In the ignorance of the late 1700s and early 1800s Norway experienced a crippling leprosy epidemic. The people were so desperate that they finally listened to their pastors and carefully followed the biblical rules of quarantine. The epidemic subsided. So the populace believed the epidemic had run its course and they relaxed the biblical precautions. They did not know that leprosy could be passed from person to person. As fear of the epidemic faded, Lepers were now longer isolated, and they even specialized in door-to-door sales! Once again, the epidemic flared out of control.
- In 1873, however, Dr Armauer Hansen looked through a microscope at a slide from a leprosy patient. The tiny red dots that he saw were leprosy bacteria. Finally, people realized leprosy was a bacteria and could be transferred from person to person. Finally, after 3,500 years, science discovered what Moses wrote to be the best treatment to the epidemic.
- Norway enacted the Norwegian Leprosy Act, requiring strict enforcement of biblical precautions. Norway eventually wiped-out leprosy.

Hand Washing

- You and I take for granted basic cleanliness habits that actually are relatively recent in history. Hand washing is one such habit.
- In 1847 an Austrian physician in Vienna came to a startling discovery when he began to study why 1 out of 6 women that came into the hospital to deliver a baby ended up on the autopsy table. The reason... the doctors and medical students were

inspecting the corpses of women, then going to tend to the pregnant women without washing their hands.

- Doctor Semmelweis theorized the spreading sickness had to do with unwashed hands. He began requiring his students to was in chlorinated water.
- In just 3 months the death rate dropped from 18% to 1%. Dr. Semmelweis had found the cause! You would think that Vienna would rejoice! But no... His colleagues mocked Dr. Semmelweis as an eccentric hand washer! He was demoted within his hospital, and finally fired. His successor threw out the washbasins and the death rate immediately shot back up.
- Dr. Semmelweis relocated to Budapest and took a job in a local hospital. The same thing happened! He instituted a rigid hand-washing regiment, the death rates dropped, the regiment was resisted, and he was fired again! Dr. Semmelweis wrote a 543-page book that no one would read. He finally had a nervous breakdown and died in an insane asylum.
- The practices proposed by Dr. Semmelweis took nearly 100 years to be adopted. Yet today it is standard practice!

Sewage

- In 1847 London England, the English were facing a high death rate, and low life expectancy. The rich were living to 43 on average, while the poor would make it to 22. The Parliament turned to Edwin Chadwick, who had been studying disease for over a decade, and asked for answers.
- Chadwick explained the filth in London. Underneath the streets ran massive sewer tunnels that were never flushed by water, and they were opened only every 5-10 years, and mucked out. This waste would then be taken to fertilize crops, which were then brought back into the city to eat.
- The poor in London would drink from contaminated water sources, and soon die. This brought on a huge orphan population, and the cycle continued (see *Oliver Twist*).
- Chadwick proposed a major upgrade in the sewage system of London, but this was resisted as too expensive, and the poor not

worth it. One newspaper reported the public outrage with the words, “The English people would prefer to take the chance of cholera rather than be bullied into health!”

- These same conditions are experienced today in places like Siera Leon Africa...
- Read Deut. 23:10-12. Moses was 3500 years before his time!

Earth Science

Orbit of the Earth...

- Job, who lived probably in the time of the patriarchs, declared that God “hangs the earth upon nothing” (Job 26:7). How did he know this? Obviously, he did not have telescopes, satellites, or space shuttles.
- The theory commonly accepted by the ancients was that the earth was a circular plain supported by four elephants standing on a big sea turtle.
- Galileo & Kepler with telescopes were able to discover the Bible to be true, yet his discovery did not take place till 1600’s.
- The Bible uniquely stood out against the beliefs of its day and turns out it was right!

Yet the Earth has “Four Corners”

- Revelation 7:1 “And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.”
- Revelation 20:8 “And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.”
- “This verse has long been derided as reflecting a naive “prescientific” concept of the earth structure, one that supposedly viewed the earth as flat with four corners... In terms of modern technology, it is essentially equivalent to what a mariner or geologist would call the four quadrants of the compass, or the four directions... Parenthetically, accurate modern geodetic

measurements in recent years have proved that the earth actually does have four “corners.” These are protuberances standing out from the basic geoid, that is, the basic spherical shape of the earth. The earth is not really a perfect sphere, but is slightly flattened at the poles. Its equatorial bulge is presumably caused by the earth’s axial rotation, and its four “corners” protrude from that.” - Henry M. Morris.

Circuit of the Sun

- Psalm 19:4-6 “Their line is gone out through all the earth, And their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, ⁵ Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, And rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. ⁶ His going forth is from the end of the heaven, And his circuit unto the ends of it: And there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.”
- Recent discoveries by astronomers working with the Hubble telescope have confirmed the accuracy of the Scriptural account as they proved that the Sun is actually moving through space in a circuit covering an enormous orbit that will take over 260,000,000 years to complete.

Springs in the Sea

- Job 38:16 “Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? Or hast thou walked in the search of the depth?”
- Only within the last few decades has underwater exploration of the ocean depths revealed the remarkable phenomenon of numerous springs of fresh water pouring out of the ocean floor.

Paths in the Sea...

- In 1786, Benjamin Franklin published the information he gleaned from conversations with ocean-going captains - namely that huge currents, such as the Gulf Stream, ran like deep rivers far beneath the surface of the Atlantic Ocean. This massive Gulf Stream carries more than five thousand times as much water as the great Mississippi.
- In the mid 1800s Matthew Fontaine Maury, who was fascinated by Psalm 8:8, became the head of the U.S. Navy’s Department of

Charts and Instruments. He later became the official “discoverer” of ocean currents.

- Psalm 8:6-8 “Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet: All sheep and oxen, Yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, And whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.”

Treasures in the Snow...

- Job 38:22 “Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? Or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail?”
- Scientists have discovered that snowflakes have an extreme intricacy of design. Elaborate & complex patterns always appear in a hex structure, yet no two are alike. They are as distinct as a fingerprint.
- Manmade snow has never been able to reproduce these unique features.
- Wilson A. Bentley became fascinated with the crystalline structure of individual snowflakes on his parent’s Vermont farm. By adapting a microscope to a bellows camera, and after years of trial and error, he became the first person to photograph a single snowflake in 1885.
- In 1903, he sent 500 prints of his snowflakes to the Smithsonian, hoping they might be of interest to Secretary Samuel P. Langley. These images are now part of the Smithsonian Institution Archives.
- Bentley’s book of Snow Crystals, with more than 2,400 snowflake images, was published in 1931. This photomicrograph and more than 5,000 others supported the belief that no two snowflakes are alike, leading scientists to study his work and publish it in numerous scientific articles and magazines.

A Way for the Lightning

- Job 28:26 “When he made a decree for the rain, And a way for the lightning of the thunder.”

- Discovered recently, because of the use of highly quality slow motion cameras, lightening actually sends out a “leader” that “plans” its path, before striking from the ground up.

Complex Weather Patterns

- Ecclesiastes 1:6 “The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits.”
- Job 38:24 “By what way is the light parted, Which scattereth the east wind upon the earth?”
- Come to find out, light actually causes the wind. Sunlight heats the ground and expands the air, which creates wind.

Advanced Biblical Declaration of Prophecy

Definition:

- The term prophecy comes from two Greek words meaning “to speak for or before.” Thus, prophecy is the speaking and writing of events before they occurred (Zuck, p. 227).
- Prophecy is an authoritative, and accurate declaration of events that have not yet occurred at the time of the announcement, history written in advance.

Extent of Biblical Prophecy:

- It has been calculated by Barton Payne that nearly 1/3 of the Bible is prophetic in nature, that is, 8,352 verses out of 31,124 total verses. Only 4 books in the Bible do not contain any predictive material.
- He notes that 1,817 total prophesies are contained in the scripture, detailing 737 separate events. Several hundred of these predictions have already been fulfilled.
- Fulfilled prophecy is perhaps the greatest evidence attesting to the supernatural nature of the Bible.
- Contrast the ambiguous Delphi Oracle: “Delphic oracle to Croesus: “Crossing the river, thou destroyest a great nation”—whether his own or his enemy’s the oracle left

undetermined.” [Strong, A. H. (1907). *Systematic theology* (p. 135). Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society.]

- The prophecies of the coming of Jesus that have already been fulfilled were written down hundreds of years before they occurred, yet they were literally, and perfectly fulfilled. Many examples of Biblical prophecy exist, which we will examine further in our study. “Other books claim divine inspiration, such as the Koran, the Book of Mormon, and parts of the [Hindu] Veda. But none of those books contain predictive prophecy.” - Norman Geisler & William Nix

Purpose of Biblical Prophecy:

1. To Demonstrate the God of the Bible as all-knowing & all-powerful.
2. To Authenticate a God given message, or a God sent messenger (Deuteronomy 18).
3. To Broadcast to the world that the God of the Bible is the only God to worship (Isaiah 45:20-23).

Test for Genuine Prophecy:

1. 100% Accuracy for every uttered prophecy (Deuteronomy 18:22).
2. 100% Agreement with every genuine prophet that came before (1 Corinthians 14:32).

Illustrations:

- 1) Snapshot of the history of Israel in advance (Dt. 32).
- 2) Isaiah’s prophecy of Cyrus the Great and the fall of Babylon (Isaiah 45).
- 3) Jeremiah’s Declaration of the Babylonian Empire (Jeremiah 27).
- 4) Daniel’s Sequence of world powers from Babylon to Persia to Greece to Rome (Dan. 2)
- 5) History Outlined in Daniel 11.
- 6) Ezekiel’s prophecy of the fall of Tyre (Ezek 26).
- 7) Nahum’s prophecy of the destruction of Nineveh (Nahum 1-2).
- 8) Coming of Alexander (Zech 8).

- 9) The 1st Coming of Christ fulfilled an estimated dozens of separate prophecies.

Advanced Intricacy of Design

Unique Composition & Continuity

- The Bible has 40 different human authors, from various walks of life including kings, peasants, philosophers, prophets, military leaders, and shepherds.
- The Bible was written over a span of about 1,600 years.
- The Bible was written across a multitude of different geographical locations including 3 continents.
- The Bible was originally written in three distinct languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, & Greek.
- The Bible includes writing from every literary genre such as Prophecy, Poetry, Law, Song, Satire, Biography, Epistle, Apocalyptic etc.
- Yet the Bible completely agrees with itself in spite of these seemingly insurmountable barriers. No other book in all of history can claim this level of uniqueness.

Phenomenon of ELS Bible Codes

- Rabbi Weissmandl was a brilliant Czechoslovakian Jewish scholar in astronomy, mathematics, and Judaic studies. In the years just before WWI, he found an obscure but intriguing reference to the “skipping of letters” in a rare book written by a 14th century Rabbi known as Rabbenu Bachya. The book described a curious pattern of letters encoded within the Torah by skipping an equal number of letters.
- This strange reference gave Weissmandl an incredible curiosity and led to the discovery of a strange phenomenon now called ELS (equidistant letter sequences). Many fascination examples of ELS exist within the Hebrew O.T. leading many to the conclusion that the Hebrew Scriptures are far from manmade but must be supernatural in origin.
- One of the earliest examples of ELS discovered is the word “Torah” spelled out every 49 letters in Genesis 1:1-5.

- This sequence of letters may be mere coincidence. However, the same thing was discovered in Exodus 1:1-6.
- The chances of this happening by accident are about 1 in 3 million, but we aren't done yet.
- It was also discovered that though this pattern did not appear in Leviticus, a similar pattern appeared in reverse in Numbers 1 & Deuteronomy 1.
- That is, the word "Torah" appears, but spelled backwards. Deuteronomy also spells "Torah" at the interval of 48 letters.
- With these discoveries, another look at Leviticus was in order. Upon further examination the word "Torah" did not appear, but the sacred name "YHWH" appears at an interval of 7 letters.
- Dr Weissmandl shared this discovery, and others, to his students in Israel. These students began to search for themselves, and upon the advent of high-speed computers, this research was investigated by Hebrew University & Jerusalem College of Technology. Their findings were published in a paper called "Equidistant Letter Sequences in the Book of Genesis" August 1994, in the scholarly journal "Statistical Science."
- "Statistical Science" reviewed the article for 6 years before admitting they were unable to refute the evidence, and so published it.
- Any large literary piece will statistically have some level of ELS occurring randomly within it. Some such codes have been found in "Moby Dick," merely because of its length. However, the Bible is unique in both the frequency of ELS, as well as the appearance of ELS within a pertinent surface text.
- Searches of Hebrew documents other than the Bible have not had the same results. Hebrew apocryphal books, as well as Tolstoy's "War & Peace" have been searched without finding any significant ELS codes. Again, the Bible stands unique...
- "This scientific discovery of the ELS code phenomenon is earthshaking in its potential consequences because it reveals a staggering level of mathematical design and intelligence that could only have been produced by a supernatural mind. This

discovery provides compelling mathematical proof that the Bible was inspired by God.” –Grant Jeffrey

- In Genesis 38 the names “Boaz, Ruth, Obed, Jesse, & David” were discovered in that order at an interval of 49 letters between.
- The appearance of the ancestors of Israel’s greatest king discovered in order, several centuries before they were born is stunning enough. Yet in addition to this, these names are encoded in Genesis 38, which records the history of David’s progenitor Judah, and his son Pharez, who turns out to be the ancestor of Boaz.
- Another fascinating discovery of ELS involves the name “Yeshua,” which is merely the Hebrew spelling for “Jesus.”
- Many major Messianic prophecies in the O.T. contain the name “Yeshua” encoded within the Hebrew text. Examples include Zechariah 9:9 (riding upon a donkey), Psalm 22:15-17 (sufferings of Messiah), Daniel 9:25-26 (70 weeks prophecy), Isaiah 7:14-15 (virgin birth), Isaiah 53:10 (the trial of Messiah), Psalm 41:7-10 (betrayal by a friend), Psalm 72:13-15 (the kingship of Messiah).
- The fourth “Servant Song” in the book of Isaiah (52:13-53:12) has long been recognized as one of the most significant prophecies in the O.T. concerning the climactic event of the crucifixion of Messiah. Yet the discovery of the Bible Codes has launched an exciting search for ELS codes in this fabulous passage. The discoveries are astounding.
- Many fascinating details concerning the disciples of Christ and the crucifixion of Christ appear encoded within this section of Isaiah.
- Some of these include “Nazarene” (47), “Messiah” (-42), “Passover” (-62), “Herod” (-29), “Caesar” (-194), “Caiaphas-High Priest” (41), “Annas-High Priest” (-45), the names of eleven disciples appear in this passage, while the only one missing is “Judas.” “Mary” appears 3 times, perhaps because 3 different “Marys” were at the foot of the cross.
- Phrases also appear; “Let Him be crucified” (15), “Jesus is my name” (-20), & “from the atonement Lamb” (-19).

- Several of the codes discovered have been predictive of events that have occurred outside the pages of the Bible yet have had significant impact of Jewish history.
- The so called “Hitler codes,” are over a dozen ELS key words that appear throughout Deuteronomy with key words such as “Hitler,” “Auschwitz,” “Holocaust,” “Genocide,” & “Mein Kampf.”
- Many other significant codes have been discovered relating to either world history in general, or Jewish history in particular.
- Some of these events include the assassinations of Anwar Sadat (1981), or the discovery of the names of every major Jewish sage throughout history including the dates of their deaths... This final discovery prompted intense investigation by former NSA analyst Harold Gans, who afterward became convinced and began teaching the Torah in synagogues across the globe.
- Some enthusiasts have gone too far with the Bible codes, in that they have attempted to tell the future by finding codes. Not only is this impractical, in that you need a key word to search before you make a discovery, but this practice also borders on the occult, which is specifically commanded against within the Bible (Deut. 18). These codes ought to be viewed as a means of authentication, not a means of divination.

Phenomenon of Heptatic Structure of Bible

Obvious Sevens

- 7 Days of Creation
- 7 Days until rain when Noah enters Ark
- 7 Days between the doves Noah sends out
- 7 years Jacob serves for his two wives
- 7 Days of pursuit of Jacob by Laban
- Jacob bows down 7 times before Esau
- 7 years of plenty & 7 years of famine
- 7 lamps of Menorah
- 7 Days the waters of Egypt were blood
- 7 elements of furniture in the Tabernacle
- 7 feasts of Israel, which span 7 months of the year

- 7 Days of feast of unleavened bread
- 7 days for the feast of Tabernacles
- 7 weeks for the feast of weeks
- 7 years for every sabbatical year
- 7 x 7 for a Jubilee year
- Multiple 7's in Jericho narrative...

Subtle Sevens

- 7 “better” things in Hebrews
- 7 Titles for Christ in Hebrews
- 7 “once for all”s in Hebrews
- 7 “Let us” exhortations in Hebrews
- 7 “eternal” things in Hebrews
- 7 Letters to 7 Churches in Revelation
- 7 Lampstands in Revelation
- 7 Spirits before the throne in Revelation
- 7 promises to the Overcomer in Revelation
- 7 seals of Revelation
- 7 trumpets of Revelation.
- 7 bowls of Revelation.
- 7 “new things” in Revelation.
- 7 Beatitudes in Revelation.
- 7 Praises in Revelation Chap. 4-5
- 7 utterances of Christ from the Cross
- 7 Steps of Christ’s Humility in Phil. 2
- 7 Steps of Christ’s assent in Phil. 2
- Enoch was the 7th from Adam
- 7 “I Am” Statements of Christ
- 7 blessings for obedience (Dt. 7:13)
- 7 punishments for disobedience (Dt. 28:22)
- 7 things that defile a man (Matt. 15:19)
- 7 “walks” of the believer in Ephesians
- 7 statements of Christ’s “coming” in 1-2 Thessalonians
- 7 “Precious” things in 1-2 Peter
- 7 Promises to Abraham in Genesis 12
- 7 Promises to Isaac Genesis 26

- 7 Promises to Jacob in Genesis 28
- 7 false gods in Judges
- 7 utterances of God in Eden after the fall
- Joseph weeps 7 times
- 7 cycles of judgment and deliverance in the book of Judges
- 7 miracles performed by Elijah (14 by Elisha)
- 7 trials of Job
- 7 descriptions of wisdom in James 3
- 7 prayers of Jesus in the book of Luke
- 7 miracles of Christ performed on Sabbath
- 7 “mysteries” revealed in the N.T.

Hidden Sevens

- Hebrew & Greek are both Alfa-Numeric languages, where the letters of the alphabet double as numbers in their numeric system.
- Therefore, every word, sentence, and paragraph can be changed into numbers.
- Ivan Panin, often called the ‘father of Bible numerics’ was born in Russia, December 12, 1855. He had an incredible appetite for knowledge, especially in the areas of literature and linguistics. At 22 he emigrated to the United States and entered Harvard University, where he picked up Greek and Hebrew, and graduated in 1882 with a Master of Literary Criticism. He converted to Christianity based upon His study of John 1:1.
- He applied his brilliance to the painstaking analysis of the Biblical text in both Hebrew & Greek. In 1891 he published “The Structure of the Bible: A Proof of the Verbal Inspiration of Scripture.” He then dedicated the next 50 years of his life compiling 43,000 hand-written pages of discoveries of 7’s in the numeric structure of the Bible.
- While the discoveries of Ivan Panin are indeed incredible, other competent scholars such as Henry Morris, urge caution and exhort further study be done in the area of Bible numerics.
Therefore, be informed, but not infatuated.

Complexity of Genesis 1:1

- 7 total words in Hebrew
- 28 total letters in Hebrew
- The subject & predicate of the sentence equally divides into 14 letters each.
- Three nouns in the verse are a total of 14 letters.
- Two objects of the verse are also a total of 14 letters.
- Many other features...

Genealogy of Matthew 1

- The Following elements in the Passage are all divisible by 7...
- Number of words
- Number of letters
- Number of vowels
- Number of consonants
- Number of words beginning with a vowel
- Number of words beginning with a consonant
- Words that occur more than once
- Words that occur in more than one form
- Words that occur in only one form
- Number of nouns
- Number of names
- Number of Male names

Probability?

- To have 1 element of a verse be divisible by 7, there exists a 1 in 7 chance of it accidentally occurring.
- Meeting 2 of these criteria is a 1 in 49 chance.
- Meeting 3 criteria is a 1 in a 343 chance.
- Meeting 24 criteria is a 1 in 191 (quintillion), 581 (quadrillion), 231 (trillion), 380 (billion), 560 (million), 414 (thousand), 401.
- Yet most of the passages in the Bible contain this complexity, some passages having between 70 & 100 numeric features.

Perspective:

- Let's assume that you wanted to devote your life to the attempt of creating a genealogy that follows only 9 of these criteria.

- If you could devote 8 hours a day, 50 weeks a year, (a.k.a. 2,000 hours of labor), and assuming you could attempt a genealogy every 10 minutes, it would still take you over 3,300 years to write one.

Implications:

- 1) Evidence of Supernatural Design.
- 2) Inspiration of even Jots & Tittles.
- 3) Incredible Accuracy of Transmission of Original Texts.

Evidence from Personal Testimony (Viability of the Bible)

- These truths give us another powerful testimony to the supernatural nature of the Bible, namely, its power to change the lives of people. This test for truthfulness is called “viability.”
- “Viability” derives from the Latin word “vita,” which means “life.” To be “viable,” means that it works, or it is “livable.” Viability can serve as a test for any philosophy or religion. Test its claims, can they be lived out successfully?
- Jeremiah 23:28-29 “The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord. Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?”
- The Proof is in the Pudding! So, let’s look at some examples...

John Newton

- On the tombstone of John Newton in England are written the words, “John Newton, clerk, once an infidel and Libertine, a servant of slavers in Africa, was, by the rich mercy of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, preserved, restored, and pardoned, and appointed to preach the Faith he had long labored to destroy.”
- John Newton’s godly mother died when he was only 7 years old. After a few years of education away from home, John joined his father’s ship, at the age of 11, and began life as a seaman. His early years were one continuous round of rebellion and debauchery. At 18 years old he was captured and forced into the

Royal Navy. He attempted desertion, and eventually ended up on a slave ship.

- After not being able to get along with the crew, he was left in West Africa to become a slave himself. He was rescued out of slavery by a sea captain sent by his father to search for him. After working for years in the slave trade, Newton eventually became a captain of his own slave ship. Newton was renowned for his vulgarity, and scorn of the Christian faith.
- In 1748, while amid a stormy voyage that threatened his life, he called out to God. The ship survived, and he began to read his Bible. By the end of the voyage back to England, Newton was converted. Though he did not change overnight, his growth in Christ was steady.
- He eventually left the slave trade, became an ordained minister in the Anglican church, and later became a mentor for William Wilberforce, to whom is credited the abolition of slavery in England. John Newton is perhaps most famous for his authorship of the Hymn “Amazing Grace.”

Pitcairn Island:

- The true story of the Mutiny on the “HMS Bounty” has often been retold. One part that deserves retelling was the transformation wrought by one book. Nine mutineers with six native men and twelve native (Tahitian) women put ashore on Pitcairn Island in 1790. They then burned the ship (the wreckage is still visible today). One sailor soon began distilling alcohol, and the little colony was plunged into debauchery and vice.
- Ten years later, only one white man survived the murderous debauchery, and was surrounded by native women and half-breed children. In an old chest from the HMS Bounty, this sailor one day found a Bible. He began to read it and then to teach it to the others. The result was that his own life and ultimately the lives of all those in the colony were changed. Discovered in 1808 by the USS Topas, Pitcairn had become a prosperous community with no jail, no whisky, no crime, and no laziness. [Tan, P. L. (1996). *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations:*

Signs of the Times (p. 275). Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc.]

Robert Moffat & Africaner

- Africaner was a Hottentot desperado of Mاماqualand. He was such a hardened character that the governor at Cape Town had offered five hundred dollars for him dead or alive. He and his men were the terror of South Africa. When Robert Moffat (1795-1883) went as missionary to Africaner's tribe, the people at Cape Town never expected to see him again. They told him that Africaner would use his skull for a drinking cup.
- Trusting in God, the brave missionary preached the Gospel to these savages. His first convert was Africaner. Later Moffat took him to Cape Town with him. When the colonial ruler saw the savage changed into a humble Christian man, he said, "What a miracle! This is the eighth wonder of the world!" [Tan, P. L. (1996). Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times (p. 275). Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc.]

General Lew Wallace

- Two infidels once sat on a railroad train, discussing the life of Christ. One of them said, "I think an interesting romance could be written about him." The other replied, "And you are just the man to write it. Tear down the prevailing sentiment about His divinity and paint Him as a man—a man among men."
- The suggestion was acted upon, and the romance written. The man who made the suggestion was Colonel Ingersoll, the noted agnostic. The writer was General Lew Wallace, and the book was called Ben Hur. In the process of constructing the life of Christ, Gen. Wallace found himself facing the greatest life ever lived on earth. The more he studied, the more he was convinced Christ was more than man. Until one day, he finally came to confess not only the existence of God, but also the Divinity of Christ. [Taken from "christianheritagefellowship.com"]

George Mensik

- George Mensik was a right-hand man of Chicago gangster Al Capone. From 1925-31, Capone controlled the underworld of Chicago crime. As wicked as George Mensik was, God began to work in his heart. Mensik's wife and five-year-old daughter trusted Jesus Christ as Savior and started praying for Mensik's salvation.
- Burdened with guilt over their pleas, he came home drunk one day, determined to shoot them both. He picked up a loaded pistol and walked into his daughter's room. As he pointed the gun at the kneeling figure of the girl beside her bed, he heard her small voice crying up to God to save her daddy. Mensik broke down and shortly thereafter received Christ.
- George Mensik's life changed dramatically, and as a result he was in great danger for a few years. Thugs would jump from black limousines and shoot at his house. The man who at one time was known to eat ice-cream and laugh while his henchmen tortured someone, now wept over lost souls. He started a prison ministry and was able to lead many souls to Christ. The state of Illinois eventually completely cleared his criminal record.

Henry Ironside's Debate:

- Henry Ironside (1876-1951) was a famous pastor of Moody Church in Chicago. A famous story is told when he was invited to San Francisco and was asked to preach. While on the platform, Dr. Ironside was handed a card on which a well-known agnostic had written a challenge for a debate the following Sunday afternoon. The topic would be "Agnosticism versus Christianity."
- After Ironside read the challenge out loud to the crowd, he agreed to the debate on one condition. The agnostic must bring with him one man who had been saved from a life of alcohol and one lady rescued from a life of prostitution due to their belief in agnosticism. For his part, Ironside would bring one hundred such converts to Christ from San Francisco alone.

- With a smirk on his face and a wave of his hand, the agnostic quietly slipped his way out of the cheering crowd. The Bible is powerful, able to transform the most wicked sinner!

Canonicity: Which Documents are Inspired?

Definition:

- The word “Canon” comes from a Greek word that means “measure, or test.”
- Canonicity is the right of a piece of literature to be recognized as inspired & accepted as the Word of God.

History of Canonicity:

Revised History:

- Circa AD 332 Emperor Constantine ordered 50 copies of the Scriptures made in order to promote and organize Christian worship in Constantinople.
- Despite popular claims, canons were not determined unilaterally by a particular council or government. Rather, the evidence suggests this edict was prompted by Eusebius (a.k.a. the father of church history).

Who or what Determines the Canon?

- The Church does NOT decide what is Bible.

- The Church merely recognizes what God had inspired.
- The Church is NOT the mother of the Bible, but the children of the Bible.
- The Church is not the regulator of the Bible, but the recognizer of the Bible.
- The Church is not the Judge of the Bible, but a witness to the Bible.
- The Church is not the Master of the Bible, but the servant to the Bible.

True History

- The Authority of Christ & the Apostles was the foundation of all truth (Acts 2:42).
- This Apostolic body of truth was recognized as complete even by the end of the N.T. era
 - Titus 1:4 “Common faith”
 - 2 Thess. 2:15; 3:6, 14 “the tradition received of us”
 - 2 Thess. 2:2 apocryphal works done in the name of Paul were already occurring within the 1st century.
 - Jude 3 “Once delivered to the saints.”

The Rise of Persecution

- For decades, Roman emperors had become increasingly concerned with the ragged edges of the Empire and the invading barbarian tribes that harassed them. Decius, from a village near the Danube, at the northern frontier of the Empire, recognized the military dimensions of the problem but perceived some spiritual ones as well.
- He was concerned that traditional polytheism was weakening and thought a resurrection of devotion to the deified Roman rulers of the past would help restore Roman strength. Naturally, monotheistic Christians stood in the way. [Galli, M. (1990). The Gallery—The Persecuting Emperors. Christian History Magazine-Issue 27: Persecution in the Early Church.]

- Emperor Decius (AD 249-251) was the first Roman Emperor to persecute Christians on an Empire wide scale. This persecution of Decius targeted Christian writings. He felt that if he could eradicate the Christian Bible, then he could eradicate Christians.
- Therefore, Christians had to decide what books of the Bible were worth dying for.
 - Gospel of Thomas?
 - Shepherd of Hermas?
 - Matthew?
 - Romans?

The Rise of Heretics

Marcion (c. 100-165 AD)

- Taught that there was an OT God of wrath and justice, but the NT God was loving.
- Therefore, Marcion held that the God of Paul was different than the God of the Hebrews. So, Marcion wrote his own gospel, which replaced Matthew, Mark, & John, and held that the writings of Paul and the gospel of Luke were authoritative, but nothing else. He rejected the OT.
- In response to Marcion, early church fathers canonized the OT.

Montanus (active from 150s-170s AD)

- Taught that Jesus and the Apostles were intermediary people, which led to him. He proclaimed himself as the fulfillment of Jesus' claims to send a "helper." He declared himself as the presence of God on earth.
- He tossed the gospels and the writings of the apostles and proclaimed his own words as authoritative. To authenticate himself, he spoke in tongues, which had not occurred since the mid first century.
- The church answered Montanus by interpreting the Paraclete passages in John 14-16 as the Holy Spirit, and the "leading into

truth” as referring to the original apostles. Our current N.T. came to be recognized as a result of this.

Tests of Canonicity

What are the Tests?

- 1) *Inspiration*: Does the book claim to be inspired, or claim to carry the authority of God?
- 2) *Authorship*: Was it written, edited, or endorsed by an accredited agent of God?
- 3) *Genuineness*: Can the book be evidenced to have been written when, and by whom it professes to be? Is the evidence credible? e.g., it cannot have an anachronism (like bombers in the American Revolution).
- 4) *Authenticity*: Is it true? Is it Historically accurate and verifiable?
- 5) *Testimony*: Has it been recognized by Jesus and/or the early church? (e.g., Jesus quotes from many O.T. books, but never from Apocrypha).
- 6) *Authority*: Does the book expect faith & obedience? (“I charge you by God...”)
- 7) *Agreement*: Is the book in doctrinal harmony with the rest of the canon? Inspired writings will not contradict. Genuine revelation may be progressive, but never contradictory.
- 8) *Fulfillment*: Is there evidence of fulfillment of the promises or predictions of the book?
- 9) *Endurance*: Did the value of the book diminish, or did it speak to later generations?
- 10) *Spirituality*: Do the contents of the book promote the high morality of godliness?

Identifying the Old Testament Canon

History of the O.T. Canon

- The catalyst for recognizing the O.T. canon is believed to be the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC. Jews located in Babylon, and cut off from temple worship, began to recognize the need for Scriptures.

- Jewish tradition recognized Ezra as the last authorized writer of the O.T. when he wrote 1-2 Chronicles in 424 B.C. The Babylonian Talmud states that after the prophets Haggai, Zechariah, & Malachi, the Holy Spirit departed from Israel.
- Josephus (AD 37-100) confirms the Jewish view of the O.T. canon when he stated the belief that no more books were added to the O.T. after the death of Artaxerxes in 424 B.C.
- The Septuagint, completed about 246 BC, translated the O.T. from Hebrew into Greek, recognizing the present O.T. canon. Books written in Greek after the original translation later became associated with the Septuagint (OT Apocrypha), but both the Jerusalem & Babylonian Talmud acknowledge the view that these books were helpful, but not authoritative.
- Qumran Community, which was active during the life of Christ and from which the DSS were found, confirmed this view of the O.T. canon. Every book from the O.T. was found among the DSS except Esther.

Authentication of the O.T. Canon

O.T. Recognizes itself.

- Moses claimed the Torah was from God, and that it ought be read publicly Deut. 31:10-11.
- Moses commanded the future king to recognize the authority of the Torah (Dt. 17:18-20).
- Joshua was told to meditate and obey the Torah (Joshua 1:8-9).
- Josiah recognized the authority of the books of Moses (Prob. Deuteronomy) in 2 Kings 22-23.
- Ezra recognized the authority of the books of Moses as he taught it in Neh. 8:1-3.
- The prophets considered their own writings to be authoritative (Ezek. 22:1; 23:1; Jer. 7:3-7; 21:1).

The N.T. recognized the O.T. canon.

- Jesus endorsed the O.T. canon by quoting from many O.T. books, as well as alluding to the then accepted structure of the O.T. (Matt. 22:29; Luke 24:44).

- Later N.T. writers endorsed the O.T. as authoritative (Rom. 1:2; 1 Cor. 10:1-11; 15:3-8; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21).

Identifying the New Testament Canon

- Jesus promised the Spirit of Truth would lead the Apostles into truth, and thus delegated authority to the Apostles (John 14:26; 16:12-13).
- These writings declared themselves as authoritative (Col. 1:1-2; Rom. 1:1-7; 1 Cor. 1:1-2; Gal. 1:1-4; 2 Thess. 2:13; 2 Peter 3:1-2).
- The writings of Paul were recognized and endorsed by Peter (2 Peter 3:15-16).
- The writings of Luke were recognized and endorsed by Paul (1 Tim. 5:18).
- John was the last living Apostle, who died around 100 A.D., and his writings were the last recognized writings for the N.T. canon.
- What About Jude? The writings bearing Apostolic authority or endorsement were recognized by the early church.
 - Persecutions of Decius (AD 249-251) prompted the recognition of the canon. In other words, which writings are we willing to die for?
 - Athanasius said our current N.T. canon was recognized as early as 367 A.D.
 - Jerome & Augustine added to the testimony.
 - Council of Hippo in 392 & Carthage in 397 continued to affirm belief in the current canon.

Apocrypha

OT Apocrypha & Pseudepigrapha

Identity of Apocrypha (means “hidden” or “secret”)

- A group of writings included in some Greek or Latin versions of the O.T., but not in the Hebrew Masoretic text.
- 1-2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, Additions to Esther, The Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, The Epistle of Jeremiah, The Song

of the Three Holy Children, The History of Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, The Prayer of Manasseh, Prayer of Azariah, 1-4 Maccabees, Psalm 151, Book of Odes, Sirach.

Identity of Pseudepigrapha (“falsely ascribed writings”)

- These are a group of writings set in the O.T. and claimed to be authored by O.T. characters yet were written much later (200 BC - AD 200), mostly by Jews, and perhaps some Christians.
- These writings are not recognized by Catholic, Orthodox, or Protestants and authoritative.

History

- All of these writings originate after the acknowledged end of the O.T. cannon (424 BC), and before the life of Christ in the NT.
- These writings became associated with the Greek Septuagint down in Egypt, though these books were rejected by Jews in Palestine.
- Jesus and the Apostles never quoted from these books, though they were included in the Septuagint by this time.
- Jude alludes to two apocryphal books, the Book of 1 Enoch & Assumption of Moses. These quotations are sometimes viewed as difficult for Protestants to swallow, but they merely illustrate how the O.T. apocrypha could be a valuable source of encouragement & insight, even though they are not inspired.
- Most of the Early Church Fathers did not view these books as inspired.
- These writings are clearly of lesser quality than the canonized OT.
- Jerome included these books in his translation into Latin known as the Vulgate. The council of Trent in AD 1546 declared these writings to be canonical and therefore they appear in the Catholic Bible.

NT Apocrypha

History

- All these writings date from between the 2-4th centuries AD, well after the death of John the last living apostle.
- The writings classified as the New Testament Apocrypha usually claim authorship by apostles or other notable figures of the New

Testament, but were rejected as false in origin or unorthodox in doctrine, or simply never gained wide authority. III, J. K., & Barry, J. D. (2016). Apocrypha, New Testament. In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, ... W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

- Most apocryphal books simply make no claim of divine origin, and at least one book specifically disclaims inspiration. Second Maccabees 15:38 reads, “If it has been well and pointedly written, that is what I wanted; but if it is poor, mediocre work, that was all I could do.” Also note the prologue to Ecclesiasticus.

Identity

- Gospel of the Hebrews, Gospel of the Nazarenes, Gospel of the Ebionites, Protevangelium of James, Gospel of the Infancy of the Savior in Arabic, Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, Gospel of the Birth of Mary, History of Joseph the Carpenter, Infancy Gospel of Thomas, Acts of Pilate, Book of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, Christ’s Descent into Hell, Gospel of Bartholomew, Gospel of Gamaliel, Gospel of Nicodemus, Questions of Bartholomew, Dialogue of the Savior, First Apocalypse of James, Second Apocalypse of James, Letter of the Apostles (Epistula Apostolorum), Book of Thomas the Contender, Gnostic Gospel of the Egyptians, Gospel of the Four Heavenly Realms, Gospel of Perfection, Gospel of Truth, Apocryphon of James, Letters of Christ and Abgar, Third Letter to the Corinthians, Discourse of John the Divine, Letter to the Laodiceans, Letter of Paul to the Alexandrians, Letter of Pseudo-Titus, Preaching of Peter, Letters of Paul and Seneca, Letter of Peter to James, Traditions of Matthias... Death of Pilate, Letter of Pontius Pilate to Tiberius Caesar, Giving Up of Pilate, Report of Pilate, Narrative by Joseph of Arimathea, Avenging of the Savior

Benefits of the Apocrypha

Historic Information

- The O.T. Apocrypha in particular, grants to us a great deal of historic information that occurs between the testaments.

- The primary example of this would be the books of Maccabees, which greatly enrich our understanding of the fascinating history between the Testaments, and helps give us an historic setting for the N.T.
- The main sects of Judaism, which are prevalent in the N.T. all originated & developed during this intertestamental time. The Apocrypha is a primary source of material to understand the Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, and Zealots.
- (Διδαχή, Didachē). Also known as the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles and known more fully as “The Teaching of the Lord to the Gentiles through the Twelve Apostles.” An early Christian text dating to the first or second century ad that contains instructions about moral conduct and liturgy. Although viewed as noncanonical, the Didache did have some level of authority in the early church and is part of a collection known as the Apostolic Fathers. [Wilhite, S. J. (2016). *Didache*. In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, ... W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.]

Cultural Information

- Though the Apocrypha should not be a source for theology or ultimate truth, it nonetheless is a fascinating firsthand source for Jewish tradition & culture.
- Causes for Jew & Gentile Relations in the 1st century.
- Inspirational stories of Jewish Martyrdom, which greatly aided the early church.
- Insightful glimpse into 2nd Temple Judaism & early Christian church practices.
- Both Jews and Gentiles looked down their noses at the other for various historic reasons, which are elaborated on by the O.T. Apocrypha (e.g., Hellenization).
- The enmity, mentioned by Paul in Ephesians 2, can be illustrated with this inscription stone that once stood between the court of the gentiles and the court of women in the 2nd temple time period.
- This original inscription, written in Greek, is currently housed in the National Archeological Museum in Istanbul, Turkey.

- The inscription says “No outsider shall enter the protective enclosure around the sanctuary. And whoever is caught will only have himself to blame for the ensuing death.”

Devotional or Inspirational Value

- The martyrdom of Isaiah under the reign of Manasseh is not recorded in the Bible, but rather 1st appears in an apocryphal work known as “The Martyrdom & Ascension of Isaiah.”
- Many stories of courage and martyrdom also emerge from the time of the Maccabean revolt, which served as a source of great encouragement for persecuted Jews & Christians in the 1st century.
- The early church father Origen & others, frequently appealed to the Apocryphal accounts of martyrdom in order to encourage early believers to be faithful to Christ.
- The use of these stories to encourage and challenge Christians is similar to the way Hebrews eleven is used as the so called, “hall of faith.”
- The Apocryphal books of Sirach, or the Wisdom of Solomon, are essentially commentary and expansion on the canonical book of Proverbs.
- These books can be greatly valuable in putting forth Biblically consistent ethics & morals.
- Most of the O.T. Pseudepigrapha are clearly fictional in nature. The original intention behind these writings was not to record scripture, but to be a loose form of historical fiction, which serve to encourage the audience.
- Many of these writings have obvious exaggeration and historic inaccuracies, but the point was merely to encourage the readers.

Noting Problems with the Apocrypha

Historic Inaccuracies

- The O.T. Apocryphal book of Judith is a good example of how the Apocrypha may serve a devotional purpose but ought not be held on par with Scripture. Judith recounts how a savvy Jewish woman saves her town from the invading Babylonian army. The text is so full of

historic inaccuracies that is clearly fictional. Yet the point of the story is to teach how God can use anyone to accomplish His will.

Internal Inconsistencies

- Second Esdras, for example, claims to have been written by Ezra and frequently uses the language of the prophets (“Thus says the Lord” and “The word of the Lord came to me”). Yet the book dates itself to the period just after the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. So clearly the book is Pseudepigrapha.

No Authoritative Witnesses

- The N.T. writers quote or allude to every book of the canonical O.T., but not from the Apocrypha.
- Considering how the Apocrypha was readily available to Christ and the Apostles in the Septuagint, this is significant evidence against the authority of the Apocrypha in the mind of Christ & the Apostles.

Late Dates of Origin

- Nearly all O.T. Apocrypha originated within the 400 “silent years” before the coming of John the Baptist. These dates are well after the acknowledged close of the O.T. canon as we noted earlier.
- Hebrew Literature experienced a revival during those years because of two main events: first, the process of Hellenization after the Conquests of Alexander, and secondly, the Maccabean Revolt and the subsequent rise of a Jewish state.
- These events spawned much of the Apocrypha, because of the nationalistic desire for a distinct culture. These O.T. Apocryphal writings were a sort of revival of Jewish pride and a desire to return to the traditions of old.
- Yet recall the Rabbinic writings of the Talmud & Mishnah record the belief that the “Spirit had departed” from Israel after the days of Ezra (i.e., no more inspired writings were being produced).

Danger of N.T. Apocrypha in Particular

- Most of the N.T. Apocrypha originated from the 2-4 centuries A.D., while claiming Apostolic authorship. Because they were written well after the death of the Apostles, they have no way of claiming

Apostolic authority or endorsement. The late dates of these writings condemn them.

- Most of these N.T. apocryphal works are also known as “Gnostic writings,” which were rejected by orthodox Christianity.

Gnostic Writings

- “Gnosticism” (built off the Greek word for “knowledge”) was one of the first Heresies in the early church.
- Gnosticism denied the humanity of Christ, the sufficiency of His death, and Apostolic authority. Orthodox Christians did not consider Gnostics to be Christians.
- Colossians & 1 John seem to be written against early forms of this heresy.
- The gnostic writings were not just rejected in overarching claims that would capture many writings but were also rejected directly by name by church fathers of the second and third centuries. Nearly all of these Gnostic writings were known forgeries or known to have originated from heretical sects of Christianity in the early centuries of the church.
- Most of the N.T. Apocryphal books originate from the Gnostics, whose writings originate long after the N.T. time period, and are so full of historic errors that they are not reliable.
- Church father Irenaeus (ca. ad 130–200) speaks of “apocryphal and spurious writings, which they themselves [the heretical Marcionites] have forged” (Adversus Haereses 1.20.1).
- Although there have been collections of so-called New Testament Apocrypha published since the 16th century, these writings were never grouped as a collection in antiquity, with the exception of the primarily gnostic Nag Hammadi texts that were discovered together in 1945 in Egypt. In addition, even among the Nag Hammadi collection, these writings are not grouped with canonical New Testament writings, but instead with other noncanonical works.
- [III, J. K., & Barry, J. D. (2016). Apocrypha, New Testament. In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, ... W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.]

False Ideas from the Apocrypha

- Though much of value can be found in certain writings from the Apocrypha (especially the O.T. Apocrypha), there is a danger of strange ideas or even false doctrine if one views these writings as authoritative.
- One day Christopher Columbus picked up a book written by a Catholic scholar named Pierre d' Ailly. The author proposed that the earth was a sphere and that the distance from the western coast of Europe to the eastern coast of Asia could be sailed in only a few days. He based this estimate on a verse found in 2 Esdras 6:42 of the Vulgate. The verse states that God created the earth six parts land and on part water. This appeal to "the Bible" convinced Columbus. Although this misinformation led to the discovery of the Americas, it nearly cost Columbus his life.
- The non-biblical idea of Purgatory originates from a passage in 2 Maccabees 12:38-45. Here, Judas Maccabeus, upon finding fallen Jewish soldiers bearing tokens of idolatry, offers intercessions for the remission of their sins, and commissions an expiatory offering to be made in Jerusalem on their behalf.
- Abuses associated with this doctrine ultimately led to the Protestant Reformation.
- The non-biblical idea of a treasury of merits largely leans on the passage in Tobith 4:7-11.
- This doctrine, central to Roman Catholic theology, teaches that godly men and women build up an excess of good works, which can be used to help others get out of purgatory early.
- This doctrine led to the veneration of, and prayer toward saints.

Da Vinci Code?

- Dan Brown's book, and later movie, known as the Da Vinci Code has caused a large stir.
- The premise of the book & movie is based upon the belief that the Gnostic Gospels are the true Gospels, and the four Gospels of Matthew-John are the forgeries. So, it literally reverses the truth.
- This premise denies true history. The Gnostic Gospels themselves are full of historic inaccuracies, while the canonical gospels (esp. Luke)

have undergone strenuous scrutiny and have been vindicated as accurate history.

- Yet the erroneous “history” proposed by the Da Vinci Code has sowed many seeds of doubt against the Bible.

Summary:

- The O.T. Apocrypha & Pseudepigrapha were never viewed as Scripture, yet have a long history of value historically, culturally, and devotionally.
- Nearly all of the N.T. Apocryphal writings were rejected by the early church due to their gnostic origins, and heretical content.
- N.T. exceptions would be Didache, Acts of Paul, Apocalypse of Peter, & possibly Shepherd of Hermas.

Preservation: From the Original Document down through the centuries.

Issue: Manuscript Copies & Survival...

- God inspired every word of the original *autographs*, but these were written on papyrus, which was made out of a papyrus reed that grows on the Nile.
- They were glued together and laid out in scrolls (inconvenient).
- Would rot when exposed to moisture (necessitated copies).
- Parchment (made of animal skins) did not become the widespread writing material until the 4th century A.D.
- Yet these original autographs have disappeared.

- But copies were made.
- All hand-copied.
- Therefore, ALL contain scribal errors.
- No two existing manuscripts agree in every detail, and all contain some scribal error.
- This fact, however, ensures that real copying was going on, rather than “controlled copying,” which would cast more doubt on their veracity.
- When all existing copies are examined, the original wording can be discerned, because though all copyists make mistakes, they do not make the same mistakes.
- Plus, your Bible is a translation from these manuscripts. The manuscripts were all copied in Greek & Hebrew (the original language). Your Bible is a *translation* from the original language.

Arguments against Preservation:

- The Bible CANNOT be trusted!
- It is too old, & it doesn’t agree with itself!
- No translation is perfect, and they do not agree!

Defense for Preservation

- 1) Preservation was Promised by God (Psalm 12).
- 2) Preservation is Supported by History

Preservation of the O.T.

Cynicism

- Because of the age of the OT, it is heavily criticized.
- The most used, and at one time oldest copies we had, were produced probably 1300 after the originals (Masoretic Text circa 916 AD).

Confidence

Method of the Scribes

- Jewish Tradition regarding Ezra and his school of scribes (the guardians of the text).
- Elaborate system of tests to ensure accuracy.
- Noting in margin words that only occur once.

- Kept track of numbers of letters and words in each book.
- Knew the middle word and letter for each book, and even how many times each letter occurred.
- If a copy did not pass, and they could not find the mistake, they would destroy the copy and start over!
- The copying was left ONLY to a trained scribe, thus an elite group!
- They had such incredible respect for the Word of God they even developed a shortened version of God's name so as to not misuse it!

Testimony of Christ

- Christ Himself had confidence in the O.T. scriptures, for He Himself quoted from them.

Other O.T. sources

Samaritan Pentateuch

- Valuable in that it authenticates the books of Moses from a non-Jewish source. Thus, it is a non-biased testimony to the historicity of the Torah.

Septuagint

- The Septuagint is a Greek translation of the O.T. that dates to approximately 250 B.C. during the reign of the Greek king Ptolemy over Egypt.
- Ptolemy was known for his love of learning, and his desire to make Alexandria Egypt a center of learning for the Ancient Near East. Alexandria, therefore, housed the largest library in the ancient world.
- Though this translation is largely recognized as not entirely reliable, what makes the Septuagint so valuable is that it is 1,000 years older than the Hebrew Masoretic text.
- Thus, the antiquity of the O.T. is authenticated.
- The prophecies of Christ are in print long before His birth.

Hexapla

- Authored by the early Church Father Origin circa 240-250 AD.

- The first interlinear Bible with six different translations side by side in 6 columns.

Dead Sea Scrolls

- In Nov.-Dec. 1946 the discovery was made. Three Bedouin shepherds exploring caves discovered several large earthen jars, one of which contained three leather scrolls. One was the Isaiah Scroll, which dated back to 100 B.C.
- Later, these were sold and discovered for their worth. Since then, tens of thousands of fragments from hundreds of manuscripts have been discovered in various caves around the Dead Sea.
- Part or all of every book of the O.T. except Esther has been found.
- The greatest thing is that these texts are *almost identical* to the traditional text we have, agreeing 95%. The other 5% is misspellings and have no bearing on the meaning.
- Now we have physical proof demonstrating that the Hebrew text used in Jesus' day agrees with the text we use today!

Preservation of the N.T.

Manuscript sources for the N.T.

History

- Originals written.
- Spreading of copies
- Persecution & copies threatened.
- Heroic preservation
- European Rediscovery of Greek manuscripts after the Crusades, which brought on the Renaissance.
- The study of these manuscripts, and the emergence of two major manuscript "families."

Characteristics of the Byzantine family of Texts

- Many in number
- Incredible agreement between them
- Not as old as the Alexandrian

Characteristics of the Alexandrian family of Texts

- Fewer in number
- Less agreement between themselves
- Older than the Byzantine

Number of Manuscripts:

- In comparison with other popular ancient books in the Greek-speaking world, the N.T. dwarfs its competition.
 - Aristotle: 5 manuscripts.
 - Plato: 7 manuscripts.
 - Herodotus' History: 8 manuscripts.
 - Julius Caesar's Gallic Wars: 10 manuscripts.
 - Livy's History of Rome: 1 partial & 19 copies.
 - Tacitus: History of Rome 20 copies.
 - Homer's Iliad 647 manuscripts.
- New Testament manuscripts
 - 5,656 Greek manuscripts.
 - 10,000 Latin manuscripts (Vulgate)
 - 9,300 manuscripts of other early versions whether Ethiopian, Slavic, Armenian, Arabic, etc.
 - Total of almost 25,000 manuscripts.
- No one questions whether we have the original words of these other historic authors, why then should we question whether we have the original words of the Greek N.T.?

Date of Manuscripts:

- Much closer to the date of the original writings than the O.T.
- The oldest manuscript, containing a small portion of John 18, was copied perhaps as soon as 25 years after John's death.

Agreement of Manuscripts:

- Out of all the existing manuscripts for the Greek N.T., including both "textual families," there is a 95% perfect agreement! This still causes the Bible to stand out as a completely unique document from the ancient world.

- The manuscripts are in 5% disagreement. The Greek N.T. written out, would fit on about 250 pages. All of these “variants,” if compiled together, would consist of one half of one page.
- In word-order (Jesus Christ, or Christ Jesus?)
- In the addition or lack of the *article*.
- In *spelling*, which only occasionally changes the word.
- However, NONE of the variants impact ANY area of theology.
- We can have TOTAL confidence that we have the Word of God today.

Other sources for the N.T.

- Early Church Lectionaries that give scheduled readings of the N.T. 2,396 lectionaries are currently catalogued.
- Quotations of the N.T. by the Early Church Fathers
- “These quotations are so extensive that the New Testament could virtually be reconstructed from them without the use of the New Testament Manuscripts.” - Harold Greenlee.

Translation: From the Language of the Original Document to the Language of the Reader

Issue

- Every translation is subject to error.
- B/c of the nature of different languages.
- B/c of human mistake and/or bias.
- Can we still say that we have God’s Word in our own language?

Evidence:

- Christ and the Apostles confident use of the *Septuagint*, which was a Greek *translation* of the Hebrew Old Testament, gives us great confidence that YES, a *translation* can still be the authoritative Word of God.
- They had confidence in it. They quoted from it. Out of the 250 citations of the O.T. that are contained in the N.T. the vast majority of them come from the LXX. They exhorted others to use it (Col. 3:16; 1 Tim. 3:14-16).

- This demonstrates what Christ and the Apostles thought about this translation---that minor mistakes in translation do not harm the character of God's Word.
- "The Word of God is a message and a body of truth that so thoroughly saturates the stories, poetry, preaching, and personal correspondence of Scripture that it simply cannot be destroyed by any faithful attempt to copy or translate it." (How Firm a Foundation, pg. 60)

History of the English Bible

Background in the Renaissance & Reformation

- The English Bible has a long, and fascinating history. Yet that history begins with a rising discontentment in Europe throughout the Middle Ages.
- We will quickly list seven things that led to this growing discontentment.

The Renaissance:

- Largely the result of the Crusades, the "Renaissance" (Latin for "rebirth") began with a rediscovery of Greek & Roman philosophers, artists, and historians, which led to a new fascination with knowledge & a dissatisfaction with Middle Age thought.

The Rise of the University:

- This new knowledge from the East came to the unlearned European masses, which then began to crave education.
- Peter Abalard was one of the first clergyman who was paid to teach students, and they met at a ford in the river near London, known as "Oxford."
- As one historian put it, "at this point, Europe began to think!" From here forward the Universities became the laboratory for new ideas.

The Corruption of the Catholic Church:

- The Catholic church began to exhibit extreme immorality & overindulgence throughout the Middle Ages.

- In fact, from 1378-1417, two Popes ruled simultaneously, one in Rome and one in France. Both Popes excommunicated the other one.
- Satire began to emerge written against the Catholic church like Dante's "Inferno."

The Poverty Movement:

- This corruption of the Church led many dissatisfied men to come out from the church claiming that the love of money was the root of this corruption.
- These men made vows of poverty and dedicated their lives to holiness.
- One such group was called the "fratrum," (Latin for "brothers"), later shortened to friars.

The Greek N.T.

- The crusaders brought back Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, and there was a renewed study of Greek.
- Discrepancies between the Greek & the Latin Vulgate began to be noticed.

The Rise of Nationalism:

- National entities led by strong personalities began to form distinct identities, like France, Germany, England, & Bohemia. These countries did not like to take orders from an "Italian" Pope.
- This growing sense of patriotism led to a dissatisfaction with their Italian roots.

The Rise of the Middle Class:

- As Vikings & Turks began to raid Europe throughout the Middle Ages, we saw the rise of castles, in order for a lord to protect his land. Farmers began look to receive protection from powerful lords, and work for them in return. Feudalism was born.
- On the fief we begin to see tradesmen develop, and farming was no longer the sole means of sustaining one's family.

- So now you have educated, nationalistic tradesmen, who have some measure of wealth to carry out new ideas to which they had been exposed.
- These men did not like hearing a fat monk tell them they needed to be taxed by the Roman Church.

The Beginning of Reform:

- This attitude of discontentment continued to entrench itself in Europe. Revolt or reform was inevitable.
- It is into this pile of kindling that great names such as Wycliff, Huss, Tyndale, Luther, Zwingli, & Calvin add a spark, which ignites into the raging blaze of the reformation.
- Recommended resource that is a easy reads would be “Christian History Magazine,” & “Church History in Plain Language.”

First Attempts at Translation

John Wycliff

- John Wycliff was an Oxford professor (1330-1384).
- He held that there are inalterable divine laws that even kings are judged by (e.g., Lex Rex, vs. Rex Lex). His ideas form the basis of the U.S. Constitution.
- He was one of the first to lift up the Bible as the judging element for all truth, not the papacy, and spoke against issues like transubstantiation.
- The Pope excommunicated Wycliff, but England was nationalistic enough, that they let him live, & allowed him to keep teaching.
- Before his death he translated the N.T. into English from the Vulgate, and He took a group of college students, taught them, and sent them out to teach, (a.k.a. Lollards, “mumblers”).
- Wycliff died before the Catholics could kill him. The Church dug up his body decades after his death & burned it at the stake because he was deemed a heretic.

William Tyndale

- William Tyndale was born somewhere around 1493-95. He became a brilliant man who mastered seven languages ranging from English to Latin, to Greek and Hebrew.
- Around 1512, Tyndale went as a student to Magdalen College at Oxford. At some point after gaining his M.A. in 1515, he moved to Cambridge University for a time, where he most likely became Protestant.
- At a later date he expressed his dissatisfaction with the teaching of theology at the universities: “In the universities they have ordained that no man shall look on the Scripture until he be nozzled in heathen learning eight or nine years, and armed with false principles with which he is clean shut out of the understanding of the Scripture.”
- Tyndale began to clearly feel the call to translate the Bible into English and distribute it. At this time the only English translation available was the hand-copied Wycliffe Bible, which was distributed by the Lollards. But this had never been printed. Furthermore, it was inaccurate in many ways, having been translated only from the Latin Vulgate, rather than from the original Greek and Hebrew. Additionally, because of the perceived threat of the Lollards, the Church had in 1408 banned translation of the Bible into English.
- So, in 1524 he sailed for Germany, never to see England again. In Hamburg he worked on the New Testament, which was ready for the press by the following year. A suitable printer was found in Cologne, and the pages began to roll off the press. But one of Tyndale’s assistants spoke too freely over his wine, and news of the project came to the ears of Johann Dobneck, a leading opponent of the Reformation. He arranged for a raid on the press, but Tyndale had been warned—just in time, and fled with the pages thus far printed. Only one copy of this incomplete edition survives.
- Tyndale moved to Worms, a more reform-minded city, where the first complete New Testament printed in English was published the following year. Of the 6,000 copies printed, only two have

survived. Yet this scarcity is easily explained. As more and more of the small testaments trickled into England, the bishops there did all they could to eradicate them.

- The following year William Warham, the archbishop of Canterbury, had the ingenious idea of himself buying up copies of the New Testament in order to get them off the market and then destroy them. Unbeknownst to him, the substantial monies he paid simply provided Tyndale with funding to produce a better, more-numerous second edition!
- Tyndale translated directly from the Greek and Hebrew, with occasional reference to the Latin Vulgate and Luther's German translation. His style is homely and intended for the ordinary man, in keeping with his original aim to make the Bible widely accessible. In this extract from the 1526 edition (Romans 12:1–2), the original spelling has been retained. The foretaste of English translations for centuries to come is obvious:
- "I beseeche you therefore brethren by the mercifulness of God, that ye make youre bodies a quicke sacrificise, holy and acceptable unto God which is youre resonable servynge off God. And fassion note youre selves lyke unto this worlde. But be ye chaunged [in youre shape] by the renuyng of youre wittes that ye may fele what thyng that good, that acceptable and perfaicte will of God is."
- Tyndale planned to complete the translation of the Old Testament. In 1534 he attained a position of greater apparent security. He took up residence with the English merchants of Antwerp. But his newfound security proved to be an illusion. In May of 1535 he was betrayed by a fellow Englishman named Henry Phillips.
- This man gradually befriended Tyndale, then induced Tyndale to venture onto the streets of Antwerp with him. There, Phillips signaled soldiers who ambushed Tyndale and seized him while he was walking down a narrow passage. After a year-and-a-half of confinement, Tyndale was strangled, then burnt at the stake in Brussels on October 6, 1536. His last words, reportedly, were "Lord, open the king of England's eyes!"

- Many of the translational choices of Tyndale not only reflected his protestant theology, but also set a precedent for future translations.
- Where the Vulgate translated “priest,” Tyndale translated “elder.” Where the Vulgate translated “church,” Tyndale said, “congregation.” Where the Vulgate said, “do penance,” Tyndale translates “repent.”
- Tyndale can justly be called “the father of the English Bible.” It would not be much of an exaggeration to say that almost every English New Testament until recently was merely a revision of Tyndale’s. Some 90 percent of his words passed into the King James Version, and about 75 percent of them into the Revised Standard Version.

String of Editions & Translations

- First, the strong English nationalism under Henry 8th, then the subsequent rise of Protestantism in England led to a flurry of new English editions & translations for the next 80 years after Tyndale.
- Henry the 8th was originally resistant to Tyndale’s translation, but later approved the Coverdale Bible, and even authorized other versions.
- Coverdale Bible (1535) was actually published while Tyndale was still in prison and was largely based on Tyndale’s work. Miles Coverdale finished the translation of the O.T. largely leaning on Luther’s German O.T.
- Matthews Bible (Rogers Bible) (1537) was a pseudonym for John Rogers. This translation was approved by Henry the 8th because he had already broken with the Catholic church at this time and wanted a new Bible for Anglicanism.
- Great Bible (1539) was actually the first “authorized” Bible because Henry the 8th actually commissioned its translation and made it England’s official translation. Henry ultimately ordered other versions destroyed.
- Geneva Bible (1560) was produced in Geneva Switzerland underneath the supervision of John Calvin and became probably

the best translation to this point. These translators added expositional & applicational notes, thus becoming essentially the 1st study Bible. This was the Bible of the Pilgrims.

- Bishops Bible (1568) was authorized under Queen Elizabeth I. She commissioned this Bible to update the Great Bible, and compete with the Geneva Bible, but to remove the notes, which they believed to be too highly Calvinistic, and anti-Monarchical. This is the first translation that used a committee to translate.
- King James Bible (1611) was authorized by King James I, who originally intended it to be a revision of the Bishop's Bible, but the translators decided to start over and create a new translation. This translation became the standard for several centuries.

Translation Debate

Number of English Translations

- The number of translations is difficult to determine. Yet if one includes every translation, paraphrase, and incomplete Bible (meaning only N.T. editions) the number is somewhere around 900 according to the American Bible Society website.
- We will not examine all of these! We will only focus on the top selling, most popular Bible translations, the ones you are most likely to encounter.
- Why so many? Because the English Language Changes:
 - “Let” (from “hinder” to “allow”)
 - “Prevent” (from “come in front, or meet” to “hinder”)
 - “Conversation” (from “lifestyle including words and actions” to modernly only referring to “speech, or words”)
 - “Quick” (from “being alive” to “being fast sudden or immediate”)
 - “Leasing” (from “lying” to now “a contract between two parties”)
 - Meat (from “any sort of food,” to only “animal flesh”)
 - Meet (from “useful” to “coming into someone’s presence”)
- Also, our understanding of Greek Changes & Grows

- Through the discovery of more and more Greek writings from the ancient world, modern scholarship has increased in our understanding of Koine Greek. At one time scholars believed the N.T. coined over 500 words. Yet now we understand that the N.T. probably only coined around 50 words, the rest being a normal part of Koine Greek.
- Example: we now know from the study of Koine Greek, that the phrase “only begotten” does not mean “only one born.” Rather, it was used to describe something or someone as “unique.”
- Bible Printing is BIG Money
 - The Bible is ALWAYS the best-selling book in the world. Many modern translations are the result of printing houses not wanting to pay royalties to print a copyrighted translation. So, several publishing houses sponsored new translations (e.g., Zondervan, Tyndale House, Thomas Nelson).
 - Yet a new translation must be 10% different than former translations in order to not violate copyright laws.

Modern Translation Debate

- What translation of the English Bible to use, and why, has always been a debate. Even decades before the creation of the King James Bible, this question was a controversy.
- But note first the privilege that we have as English speakers. We have such a wealth of English translations, that we argue over which one is best. Many countries & languages do not have that luxury.
- Our missionary friend from India, brother Telien, informed me that N.E. India has over 200 separate language dialects. Brother Telien’s native Indian dialect, Cum, has only one translation available in it.
- This translation of the Bible into Cum never consulted the Greek or Hebrew. Rather, this translation is actually translated from the English version “Good News Bible.” Yet for Cum speaking people, this is the only option.

- The debate about what English translation is best centers around two primary issues.
 - Textual Basis
 - Translation Philosophy

Translation Debate (Textual Basis)

- Though some arguments pertain to the O.T., the vast majority of the translation textual controversy surrounds which Greek texts are used in the translation of the N.T.
- The two “text families” most often compared and debated are the Byzantine & Alexandrian text types.

Byzantine Text

- All the early English translations of the Bible that consulted the Greek, beginning with Tyndale to the King James Version, were translated from the Greek text first compiled by Erasmus in A.D. 1516 (with many editions to follow). Martin Luther also used this Greek text in his German translation. This Greek N.T., became known as “the Received Text” or (Textus Receptus).
- Erasmus compiled the manuscripts at his disposal, (most sources say 5-7). In fact, Erasmus did not even have a full Greek manuscript of Revelation, so he translated the Latin back into Greek for some portions.
- Later, when multiple Greek texts surfaced throughout the centuries the majority of these texts came from the old Byzantine empire. Therefore, these texts go by the name “Byzantine texts,” or “majority text.”
- When these later manuscripts were discovered, they had incredible agreement with the earlier compiled text of Erasmus (i.e., Received Text).

Alexandrian Text

- The Alexandria text type is called this because of its origin in Alexandria Egypt. These texts were largely lost to history after the Muslim conquest of Egypt. Yet some of these texts resurfaced in the 1800’s.

- In 1859 a largely complete copy of the N.T. was discovered at St. Catherine's monastery in the Sinai Peninsula and has come to be known as Codex Sinaiticus. The Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus & Vaticanus Codices sparked renewed interest in the Alexandrian text type.
- In 1881, a new edition of the Greek N.T. was published by Westcott and Hort. This edition was known as "The New Testament in the Original Greek" (a.k.a. The Critical Text).
- This new edition heavily favored the Alexandrian texts over the Byzantine texts and became the basis for most later Greek N.T. editions and translations. Largely due to this new edition of the Greek text, a flurry of new translations occurred.

Debate Between Them

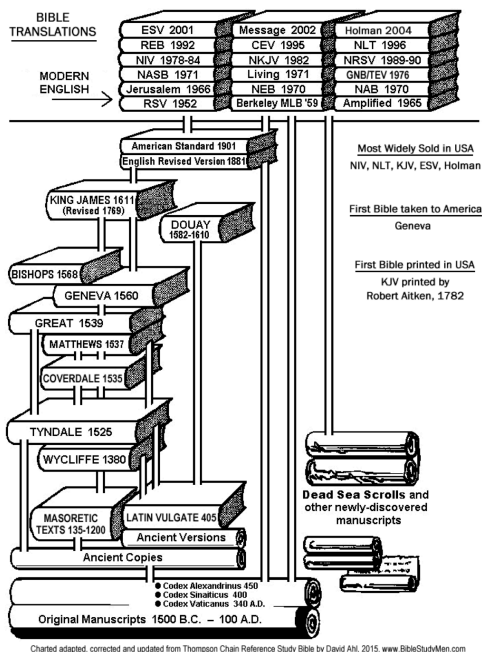
1. Older is Better (Alexandrian manuscripts date back to the 3-4th centuries A.D. & are more complete manuscripts containing most of the O.T. & N.T. canon. Yet these manuscripts are fewer in number (10-20%), and have greater differences between them)
2. Majority is Better (Byzantine manuscripts date mostly to the 10-14th centuries A.D. & are mostly fragments or copies of books rather than complete Testaments. Yet these texts are much more numerous (80-90%), and have better overall agreement with each other)

The Text Behind Translations

1. The Byzantine (Majority text or Received Text)
 - All early translations from Tyndale to King James Version, New King James Version (1982), & Modern English Version (2014).
2. Alexandrian Text (Westcott & Hort)
 - Virtually all modern translations prefer the Alexandrian text type (Revised Version, New International Version, New American Standard Bible, Good News Bible, New English Translation, English Standard Version, American Standard Version, New English Bible, Jerusalem Bible, Living Bible etc.)

Differences Between the Texts?

- Most scholars calculate around 5,000 differences between the Byzantine text type & the Alexandrian text type.
- Even though that sounds like a large number, the texts are in fact in 96% agreement overall.
- Most of the controversy stems from the fact that the Byzantine text type is longer than the Alexandrian.
- Matthew 5:44b; 6:13b; 16:2b–3; 17:21; 18:11; 20:16b; 20:22–23; 23:14; 27:35b; Mark 7:16; 9:44, 46; 11:26; 15:28; 16:8–20; Luke 4:4b; 9:54c–56; 11:2; 17:36; 22:43–44; 23:17, 34; John 5:3b–4; 7:53–8:11; Acts 8:37; 15:34; 24:6b–8a; 28:16b, 29; Romans 16:24; 1 John 5:6b–8a. Comfort, P. (2005). *Encountering the manuscripts: an introduction to New Testament paleography & textual criticism* (p. 99). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman.
- The debate rages over whether the Byzantine text “added” these words, or the Alexandrian “deleted” them. Both sides possess good arguments.
- Are these differences deliberate? Is there a conspiracy to corrupt the Bible?
- I want to look at some of these differences in order to illustrate that most of these differences are extremely minor, with no real bearing on meaning.



Examples:

- 1) Mark 9:44-48 “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” does not appear in the Alexandrian texts in verses 44 & 46, however, it does appear in verse 48. Thus, translations like the NIV will drop these verses. Versions like the HCSB & NASB will include them, but with brackets.
- 2) Matthew 27:35 “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots” is not in the Alexandrian text of Matthew, but it does appear in John 19:23-24 in the same text.
- 3) Matthew 25:13 “Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.” The underlined phrase is not in the Alexandrian, but is understood by the context, and also stated elsewhere in the Matthew manuscript.
- 4) Matthew 20:16 “So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.” The last phrase of the verse does not appear in the Alexandrian in this verse, but does appear later in Matthew 22:14.

- 5) Matthew 8:29 “And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?” The underlined word is excluded by the Alexandrian, but the context makes clear who is being addressed.
- 6) Romans 8:1 “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” The underlined does not appear in the Alexandrian texts of verse 1, but it does appear in verse 4 of the same passage, leaving the interpretation the same.
- 7) Mark 7:9 the Byzantine text uses the verb “reject” the commandment of God, while the Alexandrian uses the verb “lay aside.” The two verbs are spelled similarly in the Greek. Though the verb is different, the meaning remains the same.
- 8) Mark 10:24 “And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answers again, and says unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!” The underlined does not appear in the Alexandrian text, yet the previous verse (v. 23) says “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!” So, context retains the meaning.
- 9) Acts 8:37 does not appear in the Alexandrian texts. “And Philip said, If you believe with all your heart, thou may. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” This is a classic verse on the prerequisite to Baptism, yet this doctrine can still be defended even without this passage.
- 10) John 5:3-4 “In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.” This does not appear in the Alexandrian text and has an asterisk by it in many other texts.
- 11) Some of the O.T. quotations found in the book of Hebrews are shorter in the Alexandrian texts (Heb. 2:7 & 7:21). Those these quotes are shorter, the Alexandrian retains those words in the O.T. text, which is being quoted.
- 12) Luke 2:33 “And Joseph and his mother marveled at those things which were spoken of him.” The Alexandrian texts says “his

father,” rather than Joseph. Though this may be an attack on the virgin birth, the virginity of Mary is extensively discussed in Luke 1 of the same Alexandrian manuscripts.

- 13) Matthew 17:21, “Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting” does not appear in the Alexandrian text, however, the same statement appears in Mark 9:29.
- 14) Matthew 18:11 “For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost” does not appear in the Alexandrian text of Matthew but does appear in the parallel passage of Luke 19:10.

Deity of Christ

- It is often said that the modern translations diminish the Deity of Christ. Acts 3:13, 26; 1 Timothy 3:16; & 1 John 5:7 are the primary texts pointed to.
- However, due to a clearer understanding of Greek, the modern translations are stronger on the Deity of Christ in other passages like John 1:18; Titus 2:13; & 2 Peter 1:1. So the Doctrine of Christ’s Deity is just as strong in most translations as it is in the KJV, yet the passages used to support it may vary.
- The grand exception to this would be John 1:1 in “The New World Translation” by the Jehovah’s Witnesses. This “translation” is an alteration, not a translation!

The BIG THREE

1. Mark 16:8-20 (sometimes called the longer ending of Mark) is present in most Byzantine manuscripts, some, however, have a marking by it to indicate uncertainty. This passage does not appear anywhere in the Alexandrian text, and it also does not appear in several early translations of Mark into other languages. The passage is probably genuine; however, NO theological concept is dependent upon this passage alone, and all the ideas from these verses are retained elsewhere in the Bible (except for snake handling!).
2. John 7:53-8:11 (the woman caught in adultery) is excluded by the Alexandrian manuscripts. It appears in many Byzantine texts, yet in some manuscripts it appears at the end of John, one manuscript even has it appearing in Luke. A couple early church fathers do seem to allude to this story, however, and the account

is rich in O.T. background. So many argue for its authenticity. Yet again note that no major theological concept hinges on this passage alone.

3. 1 John 5:7 “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.” This verse has very little textual or historic evidence. Erasmus would not originally include this verse because it did not appear in any of his manuscripts. He was pressured to put it in and was given a copy of 1 John with this verse written in the margin. So, he included it in his 3rd edition Greek N.T. Therefore, it was translated into the KJV, then retained by the NKJV. Most modern translations do not include this verse. Note the doctrine of the Trinity is not lost without this verse.

Summary

- Recall our statistics on “Preservation.” Only 1% of the 400,000 variants in the Greek N.T. are worthy of debate. This statistic includes the differences between the Byzantine & Alexandrian text types.
- Yet not one of those variants effects any theological concept. So, an honest student of Scripture studying a translation from the Byzantine or Alexandrian texts can still arrive at the same theology.
- Other differences between translations occur because of the translational philosophy. The philosophy of a translation will largely impact the word choices & word order.
- Next week we will deal with this 2nd major area of translational controversy.

The Translation Debate (Translation Philosophy)

1. Define & Identify Translation Philosophies in Various Translations
2. Give Examples of These Various Translation Philosophies
3. Show the Relationship between Various Translations
4. Suggest Some Guidelines for your Personal Study

Modern Translation Debate

- Recall that the debate about English translations centers around two main issues.
- Textual Basis (Last time)
- Translation Philosophy (Tonight)

Lost in Translation

- Translation into any language can be difficult. Often ideas, concepts, or even direct words cannot be directly translated into another language.
- Example: when Coca-Cola began to sell its product in China, they were unaware that “Coca-Cola” actually had a translation into Chinese. These words roughly translated into the phrase, “Bite the Wax Tadpole!”
- Pepsi did not do much better. When Pepsi tried to launch in China, they had a slogan, “Come alive with the Pepsi generation.”
- However, according to some sources, when this slogan was translated into Chinese it meant something like, “Pepsi will raise your ancestors from the dead!”

Types of Translation Philosophy

1. Formal (Word-for-Word)
2. Functional (Thought-for-Thought)
3. Free (Paraphrase)

Formal (Word-for-Word)

- This translation philosophy attempts to have a one for one word ratio in translation. Meaning that every word in the Greek or Hebrew will be represented by a corresponding word in the receiver language.
- Secondly, a “formal” translation also attempts to retain original word order as much as possible, though this is nearly impossible in the majority of cases.

Functional (Thought-for-Thought)

- This translational philosophy is less concerned about word order or word ratio of the original language into the receiver language. Rather, this philosophy is more willing to use multiple words, and change the word order in order to communicate the “idea” from one language into the other.

Free (Paraphrase)

- This philosophy is often not regarded as an official translation, but more of a commentary. This philosophy is a loose paraphrase that is not at all concerned with word order or word ratio, but wants to communicate the ideas in modern idiom.

Strengths & Weaknesses

Formal (Word-for-Word)

- The strength of this philosophy is the retention of the idioms, word ratio, and word order of the original language, which can greatly nuance the translation & aid in-depth study.
- The weakness of this philosophy is that the English can be harder to read & understand without further investigation into both the original languages & culture of the Bible.

Functional (Thought-for-Thought)

- The strength of this philosophy is clearer communication of the ideas of the original language into English. The translation has more natural word order in English, and common vocabulary for the modern English reader.
- The weakness of the philosophy is that the original idioms, word ratio, and word order are often lost in translation, and therefore insights into the original culture & literary techniques are harder to find.

Free (Paraphrase)

- The strength of this philosophy is the commentary like insights given by the translator. You are basically reading the interpretation of the passage rather than a translation of it.
- The weakness of the philosophy is that the translator is interpreting “for you.” Therefore, you are entirely dependent on his understanding of the passage, and are not able to decide for yourself.

Observations

- No Translation adheres perfectly to its own translation philosophy. Yet it is helpful to be familiar with the various philosophies of the various translations, and what they are attempting to do.
- You ought to know the strengths and weaknesses of your own particular translation.
- One very helpful thing about most translations is that if they translate something dynamically, they will footnote the more word-for-word translation.

Personal Preference

- 1) I personally prefer a word-for-word translation.
 - a) The belief in Verbal, Plenary Inspiration implies the importance of each individual word.
 - b) The nuances of the original culture and language are better retained by a word-for-word translation.
- 2) Yet I am willing to consult the more thought-for-thought translations as a interpretive guideline.

Areas Affected by Translation Philosophy

1. Original Idiom vs. Contemporary Idiom
2. Word Repetition vs. Modern Variation
3. Original Word Order vs. Natural English Word Order
4. Vocabulary Choices Influenced by Culture or Doctrine

5. Word Addition or Subtraction for Clarity
6. Translational Interpretation of a Passage

Examples:

- 1) Original Idiom (Genesis 34:26; Ruth 2:13; Philippians 1:8)
- 2) Word Repetition (Judges 13-16) *Judges 13:1; 14:3, 7; 16:21 all make a reference to “eyes.” Many English translations will footnote this literal reading.* (Ruth 2:12; 3:9). (Jonah 1) The Hebrew uses the same verb meaning “to throw, cast, or hurl” in Jonah 1:4, 5, 12, & 15 in order to draw a parallel between the various actors in the passage. Most translations that attempt to be more word-for-word will retain the same vocabulary in these verses in order to show the parallel.
 - a) The KJV, NKJV, NASB, HCSB, use the same word 3 out of 4 verses.
 - b) Ironically the NIV & NLT will also use the same vocabulary word 3 out of 4 times.
 - c) The NET uses 3 different English words for the same Hebrew word.
 - d) ESV is the only English translation that uses the same word all 4 times.
- 3) Word Order (Philippians 4:13)
- 4) Type of Verb (Ephesians 5:1) *Greek word translated “imitator” or “follower” is where we get our English words “mimic” & “mime.”*
- 5) Vocabulary Choice (Judges 5:30; Isaiah 7:14; 2 Cor. 5:7)
- 6) Word Addition for Clarity (Matthew 1:6; John 8:24)
- 7) Word Subtraction (Proverbs 13:24)
- 8) Passage Interpretation (Matthew 6:13)
- 9) Interpretive Bias? (cf. 1 Samuel 18:2; Psalm 34:20; 1 Tim. 3:1-3)
 - a) New Revised Standard Version was translated by an Ecumenical group that wanted to promote gender-neutrality, specifically for women pastors. Look first at 1 Tim. 3:1-3 in the NKJV.
 - b) “This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. ² A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; ³ not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous.”
 - c) Now look at this passage in the NRSV.

- d) “The saying is sure: whoever aspires to the office of bishop desires a noble task. ² Now a bishop must be above reproach, married only once, temperate, sensible, respectable, hospitable, an apt teacher, ³ not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and not a lover of money.”

Relation of Various Translations

- Most modern translations are actually revisions of a former translation.
- Some translations claim to be independent translations that started from scratch, but most acknowledge the use of a former translation as a basis.

Tidbits About Various Translations

- KJV Anglican slant (Bishop & Baptize have long been criticized as intentionally Anglican word choices)
- NKJV has been criticized for having the doctrinal slant of the Trinity & Eternal Security, which is evident in a number of places.
- ESV due to being published by Crossway, and having a nearly entirely Reformed translational committee, is criticized for having Calvinistic leanings. Another interesting thing about the ESV, is that its literary editor (Ryken) purposefully tried to maintain the flow & wording of the KJV as much as possible in order to contribute to overall literary beauty.
- NASB more often than any other English translation attempts to hold to the word order of the original language as much as possible. This leads to the criticism that it is wooden or difficult to read.
- HCSB uniquely uses the Divine Name “Yahweh” or the Title Messiah (in place of Christ) to try and add a sense of cultural correctness to the translation.
- NLT avoids big theological words like “justification” or “sanctification” in order to simplify these concepts for more modern readers.

Suggestions

- Ultimately which translation you use is an issue that you must decide. Ruby Mountain Bible Church does not “enforce” any one translation. Understand the philosophy & textual basis behind your favorite translation, thereby understanding its strengths and weaknesses.
 - Any translation is inspired inasmuch as it accurately reflects the original autographs. But let me make 3 suggestions...
1. For Daily Reading & Meditating, pick one particular translation in order to use it regularly & learn it well. Don’t jump around too much for your reading & memorizing.
 2. For study, pick one or two main translations from the word-for-word category as your primary studying translations.
 3. Then choose another one or two from the more thought-for-thought category to give interpretive guidelines.

Interpretation & Illumination: From the Document to the Mind of the Reader.

Interpretation

- Hermeneutics; is a Greek word for “meaning or interpretation.” This word is derived from the Greek god Hermes, who was considered the god of speech, writing, and eloquence)

Preparation:

- Pray to Confess Sin (James 1:21)
- Pray to Ask for Help to Understand (Psalm 119:18; Ephesians 1:15-18).
- Find a Quiet Place (Mark 1:35)

Observation:

- Read your passage several times.
- Read in several translations if desired.

- Explore the differences between translations and understand their differences.
- Make basic Observations about the text: Don't Try to Find a Subjective, or Mystical Meaning (1 Peter 1:20-21). Interpret Literally (Dan. 9; Neh. 8).

WHO & TO WHOM?

- Identify the primary Characters in the text or writers of the text (those primarily performing the actions or speaking the words).
- Identify the secondary characters in the text (those receiving the actions or words).

WHAT?

- Are the characters primarily speaking or acting?
- What are they saying or doing?
- What words, phrases, actions, or ideas occur multiple times in the passage?
- Are there words or actions you don't understand? Look them up!
- Look up the words in the Original Language to get a definition.
- Note how the words are used in different passages elsewhere in the Bible.
- Idioms or figurative language may be in use.
- Cultural concepts you are not familiar with may be occurring.
- What happens in the next passage?

WHEN?

- Explore what period of Biblical history your text occurs in (e.g. Nahum 100 years after Jonah).
- Were there warnings or prophecies leading up to this?
- Are there warnings or prophecies being given for later?
- Explore what period of World history your text occurs in.
- What is going on in the rest of the world at that time?
- Does world history have an impact on your text?

WHERE?

- What is the geographical location where the events occur?

- What other events have occurred or will occur at this same location?
- Do the prior events or future events in any way impact your understanding of the text?
- What is the canonical location where the events occur?
- What was the previous passage? Did that passage lead to the words or events in our passage?
- What is the next passage? Will our passage lead to the words or events in the next passage?

Interpretation: WHY?

- Interpretation is the attempt to answer the question WHY? WHY is this passage here? WHY did God record this for us?
- Identify the major themes of the text (it will be a key noun or verb)
- What do I learn about God or Jesus?
- What do I learn about sin or sinners?
- What do I learn about righteousness & grace?
- Explore that major theme elsewhere in the Bible through cross-referencing or word searches.
- Summarize the main purpose of the text. What would we not understand about God or the Bible if this text wasn't here?

Illumination

Illumination Defined:

1. "Illumination" comes from a Greek word that means "to bring light and understanding."
2. In Ephesians 1:15-19 Paul prays that God would grant to the believers in Ephesus a supernatural understanding.
3. The word translated "enlightened," in verse 18 is the Greek word φωτίζω, from which we get the English words "photo," or "phosphorescent."
4. The verb *photizo* is used of a general enlightening which Christ brings to all people especially through the Gospel (Jn. 1:9; II Tm. 1:10); of the enlightening experience of conversion (Heb. 6:4); of the understanding of Christian truth (Eph. 1:18; 3:9); and of

the searching character of future judgment (I Cor. 4:5).
(Burggraff)

Illumination is Necessary:

1. Because of the nature of spiritual truth (1 Cor. 2:14).
2. Because of the nature of sinful mankind & the powerful working of Satan (Isaiah 6:9-10; 29:10-12; Hos. 8:12; Matt. 13:13; John 9:39-41; Acts 26:18; 2 Cor. 3:14-4:6).
3. D.L. Moody said, 'The Bible without the Holy Spirit is a sun-dial by moonlight.'

Illumination is Promised:

1. To those who Fear God (Proverbs 1:7; 2:1-6; 9:10).
2. Through the Holy Spirit (Jeremiah 31:33-34; Ezek. 36:25-27; 1 Thess. 4:9; 1 John 2:27).
3. To those who pray to be taught (Psalm 119:18; Jer. 29:13; Eph. 1:18-19; James 1:5). Those who are receptive "This is the attitude of submission and 'mold-ability.' We approach the Bible not to do something to it, but to let it do something to us. Someone very wise once said, 'Men do not reject the Bible because it contradicts itself but because it contradicts them.' With an open heart and mind, we are prepared to understand the Scriptures (cf. Luke 24:45)" (Jensen, p. 28).
4. To those who humbly confess their sin & are willing to submit to what they learn (John 7:16-17; Col. 2:6-7; James 1:21-25).

Illumination is Limited:

1. It is a progressive process that takes time & effort (Heb. 5:12-14; 2 Tim. 2:15).
2. It is a continual process which will not end until glory (Isaiah 55:8-9; Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:26-27; 1 Cor. 13:12; Heb. 8:8-12).

Identifying Application

- After making careful observations of a passage, and then attempting to interpret the passage by asking the question "why," you finally attempt to apply that passage to your life.

- Note that the ultimate purpose of Bible study is not intellectual, but relational, helping us come to know, trust, and obey God (Psalm 78:1-8).
- Know your Bible (Ephesians 6:14; 2 Peter 1:6 & Hebrews 5:12-14), but then Live Your Bible.
- First, you identify the applications found in your text, and then seek to live what you learn.

Process:

- A helpful way to find the specific application of the passage is to ask a series of questions of the text...
 - 1) Are there Examples to follow?
 - 2) Are there Commands to Obey?
 - 3) Are there Errors to Avoid?
 - 4) Are there Sins to Forsake?
 - 5) Are there Promises to Claim?
 - 6) Are there Thoughts about God to believe?
 - 7) Are there Principles to Live by?

Purpose:

- What circumstances in my life, in the lives of my friends, in the life of my nation, in the life of the world do these truths address?

Living Application:

- The Bible NEVER views application of spiritual truth as “easy or automatic.” Rather, the Bible acknowledges the difficulty of living a godly life.
- Yet the Bible also promises the power for a victorious life. So the Bible seeks to equip us with a number of “weapons” for our warfare, so that we may lead our heart instead of follow it (Eccl. 10:2).

Spiritual “Weapons”

- 1) Regular Times of Confession & Cleansing both Privately & Publicly.
 - a) Private Confession (Psalm 66:18; 1 John 1:9; James 4:8-11)
 - b) Public Confession (Psalm 51; James 5:16)

- 2) Regular Renewing of Your Mind through Memorization & Meditation.
 - a) Starve Out Evil Thoughts (Prov. 4:23-27; 2 Cor. 10:3-6)
 - b) Crowd Out Evil Thoughts (Prov. 2:1-6; Phil. 4:8)
 - c) Memorization (Deut. 6:6; 11:18; Psalm 119:11; Col. 3:16)
 - d) Meditation (Josh. 1:8; Psalm 19:14; 63:5-6; 119:15, 23, 27, 48, 78, 97, 99, 148)
 - i) Themes for Meditation
 - (1) The Christian Identity & Destiny (Eph. 1:18-19; Col. 3:1-4)
 - (2) Pictures of Faithfulness (2 Tim. 2:1-7)
 - (3) My Gifts & Calling in Christ (1 Tim. 4:13-16)
 - (4) The Sufferings of Christ (Heb. 12:3)
 - (5) Scripture in General (Psalm 119:15, 23, 27, 97, 99, 148)
 - ii) Methods for Meditation
 - (1) Emphasize Each Individual Word of a Verse by Substituting Synonyms for each Key Word.
 - (2) Realize the Importance of Each Individual Word of a Verse by Exiting out Key Words, and Considering How the Meaning of the Verse is Altered.
- 3) Regular Times of Prayer & Fasting.
 - a) Prayer for God's Grace & Strength (1 Chron. 16:11; Prov. 2:1-6; Matt. 26:41; Eph. 1:18)
 - b) Prayer Strengthened by Numbers (Matt. 18:19; Acts 1:11; 4:24; 12:12; 21:5)
 - c) Prayer Strengthened by Fasting (1 Sam. 7:6; Ezra 10:6; Dan. 10:3; Matt. 17:21; Acts 9:9; 13:2-3; 14:23)
 - d) The Bible Instructs us on how to Fast in Sincerity & Humility (Isaiah 58 & Matt. 6:16-18).
 - e) The Bible Records Exciting Results when Men & Women Give themselves to Prayer & Fasting.
- 4) Regular Church Attendance & Accountability
 - a) Public Teaching of the Word (2 Tim. 4:1-4)
 - b) Exhort One Another to Love & Good Works (Heb. 3:13; 10:24-25)

- c) Confess Sin to One Another & Receive Accountability (James 5:16)
- d) Rebuke One Another of Sin (Matt. 18; 1 Cor. 5)
- 5) Regular Times of Remembrance & Hope
 - a) Israel was warned about the Dangers of Forgetting God's Goodness (Deut. 4:9; 6:10-12; 8:11)
 - b) Seasons of Remembrance were Built into the Mosaic Law (Ex. 12:14; 16:32; Num. 15:39).
 - c) The Psalms Encourage Regular Remembrance (Psalm 105-106).
 - d) Scripture Encourages to Look Ahead, and Anticipate Final Victory (Rom. 5:1-2; 1 Thess 5:8; 1 John 3:1-3).
- 6) Conscious Enjoyment of God-Given Pleasures
 - a) Every Good & Perfect Gift Comes from Above (Prov. 17:22; James 1:17)
 - b) Count your Blessings!
 - c) Enjoy God's Good Gifts (Eccl. 2:24; 3:13; 5:18; 8:15; 9:9)

Live for God

- Armed with the insights given to us by God through consistent & intentional study, we ought to strive to live for the glory of God!
- In so doing we will soon recognize what the Psalmist said, "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the Law of God!"

