

# What You Should Know About **THE BIBLE**



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## INTRODUCTION

### A SUPREME INTELLIGENT IDEA

Because of the compelling evidence, knowledgeable people are finally coming to admit the obvious: behind the complexities of nature exists a supreme intelligence. Blind chance is an “emperor without clothes,” and people are becoming courageous enough to say it.

Well and good, so far. Now, having made the cosmic paradigm shift, reason demands that the premise be pursued to its logical and necessary conclusions. To do otherwise is intellectually unacceptable and ethically irresponsible. So we face the next questions that emerge out of the premise and force themselves on us:

Does this supreme intelligence have a purpose in designing the complexities of nature? That is, is it not logical to assume that an intelligence of such magnitude would also be intelligent enough to have a reason for it all? Would such an intelligence be playing games for no purpose, especially in view of the evidences that the design itself is aimed at providing for our good?

Could this intelligence be impersonal, when the fact of intelligence itself requires personhood? Would this not drive us logically to refer to this intelligence by a personal pronoun?

Because the design itself is structured for our good, would it not be reasonable to conclude that this Person is highly benevolent and therefore virtuous?

Would this supremely intelligent and highly virtuous Person have a purpose in the design and not also want us to know it, in view of our basic need to know it for our own meaning and for our ability to fulfill the purpose so far as it concerns us?

How, then, would this Person communicate with us? Being highly intelligent, would not He (referring to personhood) include among His media of communication the most permanent form of communication—writing—especially when the communication will have to be transmitted fully, precisely, and accurately over many generations?

Since the communication is between Himself and human beings, would it not be logical for Him to bring qualified human beings into the communication—the writing—process?

Would we not then expect this written communication to exist in the form of a sacred book, one that is readable, concise yet comprehensive? Would that not logically and necessarily require us to look for and identify the one Book that stands completely and uniquely above and apart from all others, that tells us all we need to know about the Person, His purpose, ourselves, and where we fit into the design?

Does any sacred book other than the Holy Bible of the Judeo-Christian revelation even begin to meet these necessary criteria?

So our own intelligence has led us logically to one place: The Bible. Let us consider it with the honesty and diligence that its importance demands.

## CHAPTER ONE

### GETTING STARTED

Here is the plan. We are not going to explore what the Bible says about any subject or subjects except what it says about itself. What The Bible teaches us about other important subjects is a specific exploration of each of those subjects. This is about The Bible itself.

The Bible has been with us a long time. It was written over a period of approximately 1,600 years by about 40 different human authors. It has been translated into almost all of the languages on earth, and a serious effort is underway to complete that task.

To Christians, The Bible is structured into two “testaments,” or covenants: the new and the old. The first five books of The Bible taken collectively are called the “Pentateuch” (“a container of five”). It was written by Moses, as Jesus confirms, and gives the early history of the cosmos and of man. It spans a long period of time before it comes to Abraham. Beginning with Abraham it details the history of God's relationship with a chosen covenant people. That people were delivered from bondage and given a special covenant through Moses at Mount Sinai.

Next the Book of Joshua records the conquest of the Promised Land. The Book of Judges tells of the cycle of apostasy and renewal during the time before a unified kingdom was established. Then the historical books detail the ups and downs of the kingdom, its division into two kingdoms, its ultimate dissolution, and the restoration of the remnant of what became known as the Jews. This period of time also covers the devotional writings of the psalmists and others, and the ministry and message of the prophets. These are grouped together in what are called the Poetic Books and the Prophetic Books (Major Prophets and Minor Prophets).

These prepared the way for the coming of the promised Messiah (Anointed One). After hundreds of years between the two testaments (covenants), Jesus came, ministered, died for our sins, rose again, and ascended to Heaven. This is called the gospel (God's news), and is embodied in four books: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

The Acts Of The Apostles records the giving of The Holy Spirit, the creation the new covenant people (The Church) and the spread of the gospel and growth of the Church through the power of The Spirit. The Epistles are the full revelation of God's principles and purpose through Christ and how believers are to live out those principles and that purpose through His indwelling presence.

The Bible ends with The Revelation, an apocalyptic revelation through symbolism and imagery of the scope of the Church Age and the final culmination of God's purpose in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, the judgment, and the eternal state (Heaven and Hell).

God deals with people within a covenant. The two basic covenants are the Old Testament (Covenant) and the New Testament (Covenant). Each covenant has prescribed regulations. As covenants change, so do the regulations. Nevertheless, the moral law itself is unchangeable, no matter in what covenant it is embodied.

The Bible is written in various literary genres (history, poetry, prophecy, instruction). It uses metaphor, simile, imagery. These must be taken into consideration in understanding the Bible correctly.

Also, the Bible was written in historical and cultural contexts. God did not give the deposit of eternal truth in an impersonal technical manual; He gave it in the flow of human history. These contexts also help us understand The Scriptures; however, we must not give too much weight to them. Divine revelation was culturally conditioned and culturally understood. It is *not* culturally derived, culturally determined, or culturally bound.

The Bible was written to be understood grammatically and historically. To understand what the Bible means, first *read what it says*.

The Bible has met with both joyful acceptance and stubborn resistance. It has been belittled, banned, betrayed, burned, abused, bungled, and buried. It is hated, ignored, neglected, admired, revered, misunderstood, twisted, and (by many) loved and obeyed.

Almost everyone has an opinion about the Bible. It is studied “as”—as literature, as history (somewhat), as ethical philosophy, as a set of religious writings, and (by those who are willing to encounter it on its own terms) as the written word of God.

Here is a book that tells with total accuracy about events centuries before they happen; a book that is demonstrated to be accurate by historical and archaeological research; a book that contains a system of theology and morality so perfect that it cannot be the product of mere human thought or culture; a book that records the only possible plan of salvation that is morally and governmentally sound; a book that alone answers with complete satisfaction the basic questions of human origin, nature and destiny; a book that has endured and overcome all attacks against itself; a book that has revolutionized whole societies for good, laying the foundation for human freedom and dignity.

What is this book that is a threat to tyrants; that has endured through time and overcome every onslaught against it; that is the fountainhead of freedom; that talks about who we are, where we came from, and where we are going; that embodies the highest principles of morality; that deals with our sins and reveals the full solution for them; that meets the practical needs of life and fulfills the deepest aspirations of the human soul; that is so sublime that it stands apart from and uniquely above all other religious writings; that alone holds the right to be called inspired divine revelation?

Who alone can be the ultimate Author of such a book? The answer is God. God is talking to us in the Bible, telling us about Himself, revealing His Person, His character, and His purposes.

Its pages are bound, but not the power of its words. It lightens the darkness; it sets people free; it is indestructible.

What is this Book? Let us find out. Come and see.





## CHAPTER TWO

### DIVINE INSPIRATION: INTERNAL EVIDENCES

First, let us define what is meant by divine inspiration. Essentially, it means that God is the ultimate Author of The Bible. It also refers to the process by which God communicated orally and ultimately in writing.

In 2 Timothy 3:16 we read: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (KJV). "By inspiration of God" literally means "God-breathed."

We find this expressed further in 2 Peter 1:21, "for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (NKJV).

The Holy Spirit so superintended the communications process that what was written is exactly what God wanted said, no more and no less. This is called "plenary verbal inspiration." "Plenary" means that the entire text of The Bible is inspired. "Verbal" means that divine inspiration extends beyond the thoughts to the very words themselves.

For this reason the text of The Bible is inerrant (free from factual and doctrinal error) in the original autographs. It is infallible (free from mistake and uncertainty in matters of judgment). It is authoritative (it is not mere advice or idealism, but carries God's full personal authority).

#### The Bible's Testimony About Itself.

The greatest and most forceful internal evidence of the divine inspiration of The Bible is its overwhelming testimony concerning itself. It claims to be the word of God. Numerous times it declares, "Thus says the Lord."

"The secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Deuteronomy 29:29 KJV).

King David said, "The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spoke to me ..." (2 Samuel 23:2, 3 KJV).

"The Lord testified against Israel and against Judah by all the prophets and by all the seers ..." (2 Kings 17:3 KJV).

The Lord said to the young prophet Jeremiah, "Behold, I have put My words in your mouth" (Jeremiah 1:9 NKJV). Many years later, "in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, king of Judah ... this word came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, 'Take a scroll of

a book and write on it all the words that I have spoken to you against Israel, against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spoke to you, from the days of Josiah even to this day” (Jeremiah 36:1, 2 NKJV. See also verse 4).

“The word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest ...” (Ezekiel 1:3 KJV). “And the Spirit of the Lord fell upon me, and said unto me, Speak; Thus saith the Lord ...” (Ezekiel 11:5 KJV).

“Surely the Lord does nothing, unless He reveals His secrets to His servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7).

In the word of the Lord to Zechariah the prophet we read this statement: “Yes, they made their hearts like flint, refusing to hear the law and the words which the Lord of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets” (Zechariah 7:12 NKJV).

“Thus says the Lord.” “The word of the Lord came to...” These and other statements like them run throughout the Old Testament scriptures. And who can miss Psalm 19 and Psalm 119? The Old Testament Scriptures are very definite in their claim to be divinely inspired. Many of those claims are direct quotations of God Himself.

“So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it” (Isaiah 55:11 NKJV).

### The Documentary Hypothesis.

A theory that has become widely accepted in some circles over the past one hundred years or so asserts that the “Hebrew Scriptures” were composed later than they claim. It is called the Documentary Hypothesis, or “JEDP Theory” (J—Jehovist; E—Elohism; D—Deuteronomist; P—Priestly). The theory denies that Moses wrote the first five books of The Bible and holds that the Pentateuch was crafted by later scribes from these four “sources.” This methodology is applied to the rest of the Old Testament, and in this way it attempts to “reconstruct” the history of Israel.

The influence of this theory is most destructive. It effectively destroys the authority of The Scriptures and thus the credibility of the entire Judeo-Christian faith. It leads to theological suicide, and religious leaders who hold it are presiding over the eventual demise of the institutions they lead.

They who teach this theory cannot agree among themselves which parts of the Pentateuch are “Jehovist,” which are “Elohism,” which are “Deuteronomist,” and which are “Priestly.” There are general opinions, of course, but nothing is concrete. Most of this “scholarship” is subjective in its methodology and conclusions.

Above all, what is ultimately fatal to this fatally flawed theory is the testimony of Jesus Christ. Anything that calls itself Christian is expected to take the words of Christ seriously. On this subject Jesus spoke very clearly and emphatically. Here are His statements:

“For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled” (Matthew 5:18 NKJV).

“Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh'? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate [put apart]” (Matthew 19:4-6 NKJV).

“But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living” (Matthew 22:31, 32 KJV).

Jesus quoted two statements from the Book of Exodus and affirmed plainly that they were spoken by Moses and that they are the word of God (see Mark 7:10 and 13).

Jesus confirmed the fact that Moses wrote the Pentateuch and stated that if the people truly believed Moses, they would have believed Him. He said that people who do not believe Moses's writings will not believe His words. The denial of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch leads to the denial of Christ's words. Here is what Jesus said:

“For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?” (John 5:46, 47 NKJV).

Jesus also said, “... the scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35 KJV).

### The Testimony Of The Apostles.

We also have the testimony of the apostles concerning the divine inspiration of the Old Testament. Luke, ever the careful as well as inspired historian, recorded the words of Peter to the rest of the disciples who were assembled in the upper room: “Men and brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas...” (Acts 1:16 NKJV).

Luke also recorded the words of the apostle Paul spoken to the skeptical religious leaders in Rome: “The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers ...” (Acts 28:25 NKJV).

The apostle Peter writes, “Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into” (1 Peter 1:10-12 NKJV).

Remember what Peter wrote in 2 Peter 1:20, 21:

<sup>20</sup>knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, <sup>21</sup>for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

And here is Paul's statement in 2 Timothy 3:16, 17:

<sup>16</sup>All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, <sup>17</sup>that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

We now read Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 2:9 - 13.

<sup>9</sup>But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." <sup>10</sup>But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. <sup>11</sup>For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. <sup>12</sup>Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. <sup>13</sup>These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

The writer of the Epistle To The Hebrews begins with this majestic statement: "God, who at various times and in different ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son..." (Hebrews 1:1, 2 NKJV).

### The Statements Of Jesus.

Jesus made some categorical statements about His own words.

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Luke 21:33).

"The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life" (John 6:63 KJV).

"He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken on my own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak" (John 12:48-50 NKJV).

"If anyone loves Me, he will keep my word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me" (John 14:23, 24 NKJV).

Whoever claims that Jesus did not actually say these things takes upon himself/herself an impossible burden of proof. All that such a person has to go on is subjective conjecture and unfounded speculation. Also, in practically every case, such an assertion is prompted by personal bias and/or outright unbelief.

No, it will not do to dismiss these and other words of Jesus as non-historical. The weight of the evidence is solidly in their favor. Jesus Himself said to His apostles that the Holy Spirit would bring to their memory everything He said to them (John 14:26).

So, what can we say about a Person who startles us with such absolute claims about the divine origin of His words?

It has been said that Jesus is one of three things: a lunatic, a liar, or Lord.

No serious scholar would claim that Jesus was a dishonest charlatan who deliberately deceived people.

And if Jesus was merely an influential but ignorant and misguided Galilean rabbi, we have no savior. But the fact that Jesus rose from the dead proves that He is everything He claimed to be and that everything He said is the truth. He gives us no other option.

Regarding the divine inspiration and authority of the rest of the New Testament, Jesus said to the apostles, "If they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also" (John 15:20 KJV). "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come" (John 16:13 KJV).

### Further Apostolic Testimony.

The apostle Paul wrote to the believers in Thessalonica, "For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep" (1 Thessalonians 4:15 NKJV).

In a letter to the Corinthians church Paul stated boldly, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:37 KJV). In this Paul asserted an authority that Christ Himself gave to His apostles.

We read also Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 11:23:

"For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you..."

Here is Paul's statement about divine revelation in Ephesians 3:1-7:

<sup>1</sup>For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles— <sup>2</sup>if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, <sup>3</sup>how

that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, <sup>4</sup>by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), <sup>5</sup>which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: <sup>6</sup>that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, <sup>7</sup>of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power.

The apostle Peter affirmed the divine inspiration of Paul when he wrote: “And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath [has] written unto you; as in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction” (2 Peter 3:15, 16 KJV).

Notice that the apostle Peter placed the epistles of Paul on the same high level with “the other scriptures,” and affirmed that they who twist Paul's writings in vital matters do so to their own destruction.

History has certainly demonstrated the truth of Peter's words, for there has hardly been a soul-destroying heresy that has not put Paul's words “on the rack” and tortured them into supporting its error.

We go on to the last book of The Bible: Revelation. In its opening verses it identifies itself as “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John, who bare [bore] record of the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw” (Revelation 1:1, 2 KJV).

### Other Internal Evidences.

In addition to its own claims to be God's special revelation, some other features of The Bible are also internal evidences that it is divinely inspired.

Consider its essential unity, its completeness, its balance. Although it was written over a period of about 1,600 years by about 40 different human authors, it maintains an internal unity throughout. One central theme runs through the entire Bible. It is the “scarlet thread” of redemption. It begins with man's creation and fall. It proclaims God's mercy to all who repent and believe on His Son, Jesus Christ; it climaxes with the “great multitude” of the redeemed “that no man could number,” the triumphant return of Christ, and the new heavens and new earth.

The Bible is complete. Anything added to it would be foreign to it. Anything taken away from it would be like a tooth missing from an open smile. We will consider more about this in a later chapter.

The balance of The Bible is seen in its perfect harmonization of justice and mercy, God's sovereignty and human free will, eternal realities and daily routines, heavenly life and earthly living.

The Bible alone stands sublimely perfect in every way. It is honest and real. It does not attempt to glamorize the people in it or gloss over their sins, but deals factually with them. It fits perfectly. It is not "ponderous and out-of-date," but conforms timelessly and fully to practical, objective reality. It is completely suited to every situation in every age, in every culture.

The Bible alone gives satisfactory answers to the great and essential questions of life. It alone meets the demands of reason and intelligent inquiry.

The Bible is its own proof that it is divinely inspired, that it alone is the written word of God—God's all-sufficient revelation to us of all we need to know for faith and conduct.

Yet there is more. The Bible being what it is, we would expect to find external evidences that demonstrate its divine origin. That is our next subject.





## CHAPTER THREE

### DIVINE INSPIRATION: EXTERNAL EVIDENCES

External evidences are those facts outside of the Bible that witness to its divine inspiration in addition to the witness of the Bible about itself and the witness of those considerations that arise from within the Bible.

#### Historical Accuracy.

Historical accuracy in itself is not proof of divine inspiration. One can write a book about some person or event of history that is historically accurate; however, that in itself does not make the book divinely inspired.

On the other hand, if a book is divinely inspired in the true sense of the word, it would have to be historically accurate. If it is God's word, it is accurate. No amount of semantics can change that fact. If God has spoken, He has spoken factually.

Whenever unbelievers have denied the historical accuracy of Biblical references, further scientific research and discovery have always corrected man's views and refuted the denials. This has happened so consistently and for such a long period of time that one would expect intelligent and honest people to approach the Biblical record with humility and respect.

In those areas where science has not yet caught up with the Biblical record, the logical approach (in view of past experience) is to expect to find the data to be as the Bible says they are and not to insist that every new discovery "substantiate" the Bible. The Bible does not need to be "proven" any more than one needs to lower a diver a hundred feet down into the ocean to "prove" that there is water down there.

Biblical archaeology is an advanced science with a voluminous body of data. Anyone who wishes to explore it will find it to be an informative and pleasant journey.

Consider one example among many: the Hittites. Many years ago critics confidently asserted that the Hittites were only fictional, an imaginary people found only in the Bible. Then a vast ancient Hittite empire was discovered, with an extent only hinted at in the Bible.

Consider the gospels from a purely historical perspective, apart from the subject of divine inspiration. These are primary, eye-witness documents. The events they record were proclaimed and written down in a hostile environment during the lifetime of thousands of people who were contemporary with those events.

Peter, one of the main eye-witnesses, wrote: "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus

Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty” (2 Peter 1:16 KJV. See the verses following).

In handling the data of the gospel, Luke was a very careful and precise historian. He made clear at the beginning of his account that he had all the facts and was recording them accurately. He identified historical people, places, and events. He gave exact time references. He used current technical terms, such as “Tetrarch” (Luke 3:1, 19; 9:7).

As precise and well-attested as the gospels are, they would likely not be questioned had they been written on almost any other subject.

In his Acts Of The Apostles, Luke continues his historical methodology. He mentions people and places (such as the huge stadium at Ephesus, the remains of which are in existence to this day).

Many books have been written exploring the historical data contained in the Bible. One that has been widely read is Evidence That Demands A Verdict, by Josh McDowell. It is informative and challenging reading.

### Fulfilled Prophecy.

This is huge.

Read about the prophecy against king Jeroboam's spurious altar. It names Josiah as the son of David who would desecrate that altar. This prophecy was uttered about 350 years before it happened (see 1 Kings 13:1, 2).

The books of 1 Kings and 2 Kings record a number of prophecies that were fulfilled as spoken. See 1 Kings 14:17; 15:29; 16:12 and 34; 20:22 and 26; 21:19; 22:38; 2 Kings 1:4 and 17; 3:16-20; 7:2 and 17.

In the early Seventh Century B.C. the prophet Isaiah said that a ruler named Cyrus would arise and would decree that the temple in Jerusalem be rebuilt. That prophecy was given about a hundred years before Cyrus was born. Read the account in Isaiah 44:24-45:7 (compare with Ezra Chapter 1).

The Eleventh Chapter of Daniel gives such precise details about the events that would happen later between the Seleucidae of Syria and the Ptolemies of Egypt that scholars who reject predictive prophecy are forced on subjective grounds and without substantiation to claim that the prophecies were written after the fact.

In the early part of the Sixth Century B.C. the prophet Ezekiel declared that the city of Tyre would be destroyed and that the very top soil of the city would be removed so that the fishermen would spread their nets on the bedrock of the city to dry them. See Ezekiel, Chapter 26. About a hundred years later the prophet Zechariah repeated the prediction (Zechariah 9:3, 4).

Here is what happened. First, king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon laid siege to the city (ca.

585-573 B.C.). The population evacuated the city and took refuge on an island about a half mile off the coast. The mainland city was destroyed.

Many years later, in ca. 333-332 B.C., Alexander the Great built a causeway out to the island city. He ordered that the very soil of the old city be used to build the causeway. The soil was removed and the bedrock under the old city was exposed. Alexander's forces killed 8,000 Tyrians and sold 30,000 into slavery. After that, fishermen spread their nets on the rocks. Later the Romans attacked what was left of the city, and in A.D. 1291 the Moslems also came against it.

It has been calculated that the odds that all of this happened by chance is one in seventy-five million!

In Hosea 13:16 and Micah 1:6 the prophets predicted what would happen to the city of Samaria. The stones would be poured into the valley and it would become a place for vineyards. All of this happened as prophesied.

Consider also the accurate prophecies regarding:

- Ashkelon and Gaza (Amos 1:8; Jeremiah 47:5; Zephaniah 2:47);
- Ammon and Moab (Jeremiah 48:47; 49:6);
- Edom (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Joel, Amos, Obadiah).

The desolation occurred to the exact detail.

- Thebes and Memphis in Egypt (Ezekiel 30:13-15);
- Nineveh before 612 B.C. (Nahum 1:8-10; 2:6; 3:10-19);
- Babylon (Isaiah 13:19-22; 14:23; Jeremiah 51:26, 43).

All of these prophecies came true.

Over 300 prophecies concerning Christ were fulfilled by Him and in Him. Here are but a few: when and where He would be born; that He would be born of a virgin; that He would be of the royal line of David; that He would go into Egypt and return; that He would be betrayed by a friend and sold for thirty pieces of silver; that He would be crucified with transgressors; that men would gamble over His clothes; what He would say on the cross; that He would be buried with the rich; that He would not see corruption and that not a bone of His would be broken; that He would be resurrected; that He would ascend to the right hand of God.

Matthew Chapter Eleven records our Lord's prophecies against three Galilean cities: Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. All three no longer exist. It is noteworthy that our Lord did not pronounce a woe on Tiberius, another city in the same area. Tiberius has survived and is a modern city.

Matthew 24 records Jesus' prediction of the fall of Jerusalem, which came to pass tragically under the Roman general Titus in A.D. 70.

The Bible also contains prophecies concerning conditions in the "last days." Some of these were spoken by Jesus Himself (Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 17 and 21). Some were given by the Holy Spirit to the apostle Paul (1 Timothy 4; 2 Timothy 3). World conditions and events over the past several decades have been taking shape exactly as prophesied.

### The Durability Of The Bible.

Another fact about the Bible that supports the claim that it is God's word is its durability.

Consider the preservation of the text. No other writings of such long duration come anywhere near the Bible in its vast body of ancient documentation. Thousands of manuscripts preserve the text from early times until now.

The Bible has endured through centuries of persecution that include determined assaults on the Bible itself. Tyrants have tried to destroy it. Skeptics have tried to discredit it. Critics have tried to twist it. Theological liberalism has tried to strip it of its historicity and its authority. Unbelievers have predicted its demise. And still it stands, towering triumphant over all of its adversaries and detractors. Truly it has been said that the Bible is "the anvil that has worn out many hammers." It is indestructible!

### The Influence Of The Bible.

The Bible is the cornerstone of democracy. It is at the foundation of every society that truly values and upholds human worth and dignity. Every attempt to spread democracy will fall short in some way and to some extent unless the democratizing society eventually adopts the foundational principles embodied in the Bible, whether or not that society realizes the source of those principles.

The Bible tells us who we are and demands that we be respected and treated as such. Its persistent principles have produced civil rights legislation, even though at times the process has taken decades and even centuries because of the resistance of the perverse human heart.

No wonder tyrants hate the Bible. It is their worst enemy. If their subjects read it, absorb its message, come to know its Author, and live according to its principles, their tyranny is over.

Just as civilizations built upon the Bible flourish and endure, so civilizations that reject it continue only by ignorance and force. Those that neglect it are in terminal decline, and continue like a cut flower; they look good for a while, but are cut off from their roots. They can maintain certain human values for a while only because of the Judeo-Christian "capital" that they are depleting.

Everyone who enjoys the blessings of liberty have the Bible, its Author, and its adherents to thank.

The story is told of a westerner who was visiting a village inhabited by former cannibals. He saw one of the villagers reading a Bible. He asked the man contemptuously, "Do you believe that?" The former cannibal pointed to a large cooking pot and replied, "If I didn't, you would be in there."

How does one defend a lion? Turn it loose, and it will defend itself. So it is with the Bible.

### Personal Reality.

We must not overlook a very valid and important evidence that the Bible is the inspired word of God: its personal reality in the hearts and lives of those who believe it and live it. The Bible is alive. That does not mean that it is developing or changing. The Bible is changeless. Its perfection cannot be improved. The Bible is a living book in the sense that it produces life and transformation when it connects with genuine faith.

We will come back to this later. Right now we turn our attention to the essential and unchanging qualities of the Bible.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE ESSENTIAL AND IMMUTABLE QUALITIES OF THE BIBLE

The essential qualities of the Bible are concrete, rock-solid, permanent, and unchanging.

Let us look at those essential qualities. They are described in The Scriptures themselves and demonstrated in real life.

#### The Bible Is Perfect.

The Bible is absolutely true. In an age that abounds with falsehood, deceit, and hypocrisy, the Bible stands as 100% pure, unadulterated truth. It does not merely contain truth; it is truth—absolute truth.

“The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times” (Psalm 12:6 KJV).

In Psalm 19:7 and 8 we read four strophes: “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes” (KJV).

The entire 119th Psalm is about the word of God. In verse 140 the psalmist says that he has fallen in love with it. Wise man!

“Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him. Do not add to His words, lest He reprove you, and you be found a liar” (Proverbs 30:5, 6 NKJV).

“I the Lord speak righteousness; I declare things that are right” (Isaiah 45:19b KJV).

#### The Bible Is Complete.

The completeness of the Bible is evident in its symmetry and balance, as was noted previously.

“You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take anything from it” (Deuteronomy 4:2a NKJV).

“Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it, nor take away from it” (Deuteronomy 12:32 NKJV).

“If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book” (Revelation 22:18, 19 KJV).

The Bible is God's special revelation to us. In it He said what He intended to say, all He intended to say, and exactly how He wanted it said.

God's written revelation is complete. All other “sacred” books are only pretenders. They contain nothing to be added to the Bible or substituted for it. God is not “still speaking” new and/or different revelations. The Holy Spirit continues to open and illumine The Scriptures to our minds and hearts, but He does not change, modify, or expand its contents. In this sense God is still speaking, and He has not changed His message. He is not saying anything that contradicts Himself.

Spiritual gifts speak “to edification, exhortation, and comfort” (1 Corinthians 14:3 KJV). They do not form a new deposit of truth. Instead, their truthfulness and validity are to be judged by the absolute standard of The Scriptures.

### The Bible Is Indestructible.

We called attention to the durability of the Bible in the previous chapter.

The Bible is imperishable. It has been said that the Bible is not the book of the month; it is the book of the ages.

“Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven” (Psalm 119:89 KJV).

“Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them forever” (Psalm 119:152 KJV).

Jesus said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Matthew 24:35 KJV).

Jesus also said, “Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled” (Matthew 5:18 NKJV). This means that when the ceremonial laws and types of the Old Covenant found their fulfillment in the realities of the New Covenant, they completed their purpose and disappeared, just as the shadow of an object is drawn into the object itself when the sun is directly overhead.

Christ “abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances ...” (Ephesians 2:15 KJV).

“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross” (Colossians 2:14 KJV).



“For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof” (Hebrews 7:18 KJV).

“In that He says, 'A new covenant,' He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away” (Hebrews 8:13 NKJV).

The fulfillment of the prophecies, the ceremonial law, and the types of the Old Covenant does not mean that part of God's word is temporary. These are only internal processes within the indestructible word of God itself.

“... having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever” (1 Peter 1:23 NKJV). “... the word of the Lord endures forever” (verse 25 NKJV).

### The Bible Is Sure.

King Solomon testified, “There has not failed one word of all His good promise, which He promised through His servant Moses” (1 Kings 8:56 NKJV).

The psalmist declared, “Your testimonies are very sure” (Psalm 93:5 NKJV). “All his commandments are sure” (Psalm 111:7).

God said to the prophet Ezekiel, “I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall come to pass” (Ezekiel 12:25 KJV).

The apostle Peter wrote, “We have also a more sure word of prophecy” (2 Peter 1:19 KJV).

The Bible is our sure foundation. We can confidently build our beliefs, our values, our lives, and our hopes on it with absolute confidence. It has withstood every earthquake, every tornado, every tsunami that has come against it. It will continue to do so.

Jesus said with absolute divine authority, “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock” (Matthew 7:24, 25 NKJV).

Several years ago a devastating hurricane hit parts of Florida. Amid the wrecked homes and other buildings one lone house stood out with only minor damage. The news reporter asked the owner why his house stood when all the others in the area were destroyed. He replied, “I built according to the rules.”



## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE

God has spoken, and He did not stutter or mumble. His word is not advice. It is not merely an ideal. The Ten Commandments were not the ten suggestions.

#### The Exalted Position Of The Bible.

God has highly exalted His word. Psalm 138:2 says, “You have magnified Your word above all Your name” (Psalm 138:2b NKJV). Just as the signature at the bottom of a document validates everything written above it, so everything written in the Bible carries the Divine signature.

“But to this one I will look. To him who is humble and contrite in spirit, and who trembles at My word” (Isaiah 66:2 NASB).

God places His approval on people who have a proper reverence for His word and grants them His favor. They have a deep sense of awe of God's word because they have a healthy fear of His holiness and majesty. Because of their love for God, they shudder at the thought of disobeying His word. Humble and contrite people take the Bible very seriously. God honors that.

Humble people do not treat the Bible as though it were a theological laboratory specimen or a religious toy.

Jesus said that we are going to be judged by what He said. That should sober up anyone who is tempted to trifle with His word.

“He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day” (John 12:48 NKJV).

To be disciples of Jesus Christ requires that we not only pay close and serious attention to His word, but also live it. Jesus said, “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed” (John 8:31 KJV).

#### The Only Infallible Rule Of Faith And Duty.

The Bible is the plumb-line of belief and living.

Several years ago my wife and I were house hunting in The Dalles, Oregon. One area of the city had experienced some ground slippage in past years, and prospective buyers were advised to watch for possible structural damage in that area.

We were looking at one house when I noticed the garage door. Something about it did not seem quite right. So I opened the trunk of my car and got into my fishing tackle box. I cut off several feet of fishing line, tied one end to a lead sinker and made a make-shift plumb-line.

I held the line to the edge of the garage door opening and let the sinker hang still. Sure enough, the bottom of the garage wall had slipped about an inch and a half. Needless to say, we bought a different house, one on solid ground.

### The Tragedy Of Ignorance.

Many gullible people are being deceived into accepting and following false doctrines and subjective pseudo-spirituality. Instead of measuring these ideas, emotions, and experiences by the word of God, they blindly accept them. They appeal to their pride, their prejudices, and their inner sensibilities. This is the height of recklessness and folly.

One would think that after seeing the tragedies that have resulted from people blindly following cult leaders, the public would have learned by now to keep away from them. But no. The blind keep following the blind and end up in the ditch.

The “spirituality” marketplace is full of people peddling snake oil. Buyer beware! The only “Consumer Protection Agency” is the Bible-believing Church.

“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isaiah 8:20 KJV).

The inspired apostle warned, “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:8 KJV). He repeats the warning in the very next verse.

Watch out for so-called “divine revelation” and “sacred books” that have emerged outside of the Bible. Watch out even for “half-truths”; you might get hold of the wrong half!

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hosea 4:6 KJV).

Jesus said it clear and plain: “Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God” (Matthew 22:29 KJV; also Mark 12:24).

They rejected the commandment of God that they might keep their own traditions (Mark 7:9). Placing tradition above The Scriptures is still widely practiced.

Our first mother, Eve, made the fatal mistake of listening to the serpent (Satan) as he contradicted the word of God. In her mind she knew what God had said. At first her enemy asked suggestively, “Has God said?” Then, appealing to Eve's subjective feminine sensibilities, Satan brazenly contradicted what God had said and what she knew God had said. This was a direct assault on the very character and veracity of God. But often

sensibilities triumph over sense. See Genesis 3:1-7.

The word of the Lord came to Israel through the prophet Isaiah, warning them what would happen because they had “cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel” (Isaiah 5:24 KJV).

The same warning came later to the southern kingdom of Judah through the prophet Jeremiah because they had “not harkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it” (Jeremiah 6:19 KJV).

After the predicted judgments came upon Judah, the prophet Zechariah wrote, “And they made their hearts like flint so that they could not hear the law and the words which the Lord of hosts had sent by his Spirit through the former prophets; therefore great wrath came from the Lord of hosts” (Zechariah 7:12 NASB).

And 2 Chronicles records this post-mortem: “But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord of hosts arose against his people, till there was no remedy” (2 Chronicles 36:16 KJV).

How different the history of Israel and Judah would have been had they listened to the words of the psalmist in Psalm 119:165, “Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing causes them to stumble” (NKJV).

Also, Psalm 1 gives us the key to the happy life. Verses 1-3 assure us, “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper” (NKJV).

Jesus said, “Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it” (Luke 11:28 KJV).

### All Under The Authority Of The Bible.

All of creation is under the authority of the word of God. The spoken word of God created everything and that creative decree is inscripturated in Genesis. Nature, man, the Church, the world, are under the authority of the Bible.

Yes, even the Church is under the authority of the Bible. The authority of the word of God is higher than the authority of the Church. If the Bible is the inspired word of God (and it is), then it is nonsense to say that the Church—any Church—has an authority higher than God's own word. The Church is not the “mother” of the Bible. St. Paul himself, one of the foundational apostles of the Church, rebuked the church at Corinth on this very point: “Did the word of God originate with you?” (1 Corinthians 14:36a NIV).

The human authors of the Bible were not its source, its collective “mother.” The Spirit of God is its Source; the writers were the agents of the Spirit in its transmission to the Church

and the world.

God gave The Scriptures to the Church by the Holy Spirit through the inspired prophets and apostles. The Church recognized The Scriptures as the authoritative word of God by applying an objective rule (Canon) that was independent of the Church itself. The Bible is not an authoritative list of sacred writings; it is a list of authoritative sacred writings.

The saying is true: the Bible cannot mean something today that it did not mean when it was written. It is not a sheet of rubber that can be stretched to fit whatever religious or “spiritual” shape people have devised.

The Bible does not have to be made “relevant.” It is totally relevant because it is the truth; and because it is the truth, it demands that whatever and whoever deviates from it line up with it. It is we who are required to become relevant—relevant to the truth.

Regarding faith and practice, the Bible is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth when it comes to God's will for mankind. Our obligation is to obey it. We cannot pick and choose.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE POWER OF THE BIBLE

Years ago in an episode of a popular prime time television series, a script writer composing the dialogue put these words in the mouth of one of the actors: “Now you are becoming biblical—ponderous and out-of-date.”

That opinion about the Bible could not have been farther from the truth.

The Bible is not dead ancient literature, an embodiment of obscure cultic formulas, a museum of impractical ideas long ago abandoned by enlightened people in the course of human intellectual and cultural progress.

On the contrary, the Bible is as up-to-date as tomorrow's news. It is fully relevant to the current life situation of every human being. It is the most powerful and uniquely authoritative database of timeless and timely practical principles. It is the clear and user-friendly manual and tech support of human life provided by the Manufacturer.

Be it ever remembered that the Bible perfectly fits objective reality. Every deviation from it is a deviation from objective reality, and each deviation produces stresses and problems—lots of them. Every problem caused by human choices and behaviors can be traced back ultimately to the violation of a Biblical principle. Conversely, human well-being and happiness are the direct result of obedience to Biblical principles and instructions. Biblical living is healthy living.

“The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the ear; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether” (Psalm 19:7-11 KJV). See also 1 Peter 1:22-25.

#### The Bible Is Alive.

This does not mean that the Bible is changing. Its contents and message do not continue to expand or develop. It is as complete and full-grown as a normal adult.

The Bible is alive in the sense that it is fully and powerfully effective and its effectiveness continues to push back the frontiers of moral ignorance and spiritual darkness. It is like a laser. It probes; it exposes; it challenges; it cuts to the core.

“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12 NKJV).

Remember 1 Peter 1:23. The word of God lives and abides forever.

“He sends out His command to the earth; His word runs very swiftly” (Psalm 147:15 NKJV).

With the modern means of communication now being diligently and vigorously used to spread the word of God, its life-giving message is covering—and circling—the globe with a speed never imagined in ancient times.

When the apostle Paul brought the good news to Ephesus, its effect was powerful. Acts 19:18-20 records: “Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds. A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas [50,000 days' wages]. In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power” (NIV).

A “book burning” is good if the owners voluntarily get rid of what they have come to realize is evil and harmful. The converts refused to sell them or give them away to others; they had too much regard for the well-being of others to mistreat them that way.

“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth, and making it bear and sprout, and furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so shall My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it” (Isaiah 55:10, 11 NASB).

### The Bible Gives Life.

The word of God is creative. God spoke—and it was. Wherever and whenever it is declared in faith, God honors it by performing it. He confirms it, validates it, and makes it operative. Psalm 119:50 says, “Your word has given me life” (NKJV).

Jesus declared, “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63 KJV).

The gospel is the word of life (Philippians 2:16).

### The Bible Produces Faith.

The word of God encourages and brings hope by providing a foundation for belief. We hear the slogan: “God said it; I believe it; that settles it.” That slogan is flawed. It should be: “God said it; that settles it; I believe it.” If God said it, that settles it whether we believe it or not.

Faith is the solid assurance that what God said is true and therefore He will do what He said. Now, to know what God will do, we must know what God said. That requires a



knowledge of His word, the Bible. Romans 10:17 puts it clearly: “faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God” (NKJV).

In the same vein 1 Corinthians 10:11 says, “These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come” (NIV).

### The Bible Purifies.

“The Bible will keep us from sin; and sin will keep us from the Bible.”

The practice of the truth purifies the behavior. The Bible cleans up our act. As the principles of the Bible become the principles of our lives, those principles will determine the walk—the “footsteps”—of our daily living.

“How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Thy word” (Psalm 119:9 NASB).

Jesus said to His disciples (and us), “You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you” (John 15:3 NKJV). Keep in mind that Jesus was speaking in the context of a vineyard. The word of God cleans out everything that inhibits our fruitfulness.

In His great high-priestly prayer to the Father, Jesus asked, “Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth” (John 17:17 KJV). “Sanctify” means to purify, make holy, set apart from evil and to God’s purpose. The Bible is the specifically designed “tool” that the Father uses to answer this prayer of Jesus in us and for us.

Paul wrote concerning the Church as the Bride of Christ, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word” (Ephesians 5:26, 27 KJV).

As we will see in the next chapter, the Bible uses the metaphor of water to represent the cleansing effect of the word of God. This goes back to the symbolism of the Old Testament tabernacle in the wilderness. In approaching the Holy Place, the priests came to the laver, a large round pool filled with water. There they went through a ceremonial washing. The water served two symbolic functions: first, it acted as a mirror that showed the priest what he looked like; and second, it provided a place to wash.

So it is with the word of God. It is a mirror that shows us the truth about ourselves. It also has effective “scrubbing power” to remove anything in our character and behavior that should not be there.

For that to happen we must: (1) pay close attention to what the Bible says and how it applies to our own personal lives; and (2) put what it says into practice. James speaks forcefully about this in his epistle. He uses a similar metaphor: a mirror.

“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does” (James 1:22-25 NKJV).

It is one thing to look casually at oneself in a mirror. It is quite another to concentrate intently with the purpose of identifying things that need to be changed.

Reference has already been made to 1 Peter 1:23. The previous verse says that we have purified our souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit.

God used the Bible as the instrument (tool) of truth to convict us of our sins, bring us to repentance and faith, and produce in us the moral and spiritual transformation known as the new birth.

2 Peter 1:4 says that God has given us His “exceeding great and precious promises,” and it is by these that we become “partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (KJV).

By “the divine nature” Peter means the moral character of God. This is embodied in the character of Jesus Christ and “spelled out” in the Bible. God's purpose is to get His mind, character, and behavior into ours—to conform ours to His. As has been said, God uses the Bible as the specifically designed communications tool to accomplish this. The result is a purified heart, mind, and lifestyle.

### The Bible Judges.

We do not judge the Bible; the Bible judges us. Remember what Jesus said, recorded in John 12:48. “The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (KJV).

People who are honest with God have no trouble honestly facing the Bible and what it says. In fact, they are very willing to do so. They might have honest questions and seek honest answers; however, they will not avoid the Bible or reject what it says. They are not among those who raise carping questions about the Bible and what it says and means, and then refuse to listen to clear and concrete answers.

The Bible judges us now in this life for the purpose of correcting us. At the Day of Judgment the Bible will judge those who have trifled with it and rejected it—and its divine Author. That judgment will be final and forever. This makes the Bible very urgent reading and serious study.

### The Bible Saves.

This does not mean that the Bible has some mysterious mystical powers to save people. It saves us by telling us the truth and pointing us to Christ, the Savior.

Paul wrote to Timothy, his son in the faith, “from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:15 NKJV).

If parents want their children to go to Heaven, it is absolutely essential that they build the word of God into them diligently and consistently, starting as young as possible. If we do not, the unbelieving world will mold their thinking according to its self-centered ideas.

Paul wrote that the gospel of Christ is the power of God to salvation (Romans 1:16). And we have already referred to what James 1:21 says on this point.

Also, we reflect again on the statement by Peter that we are born again by the incorruptible seed of God's word “that lives and abides forever” (1 Peter 1:23).

So, God never saves anyone apart from the truth. Jesus declared, “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32 NKJV).

One way to test and find out whether or not a philosophy, a religious system, a doctrine, is teaching the truth is to look and see if it sets people free from their sin and guilt. If it does not, reject it. It is not the truth. The truth makes people free.

God invites all who are bound by ignorance, fear, their past—all who are enslaved by lust, hate, bitterness, pride, destructive habits, selfishness—all who are chained to their death cell of sin—to face the truth. Turn to God and be reconciled to Him by faith in Jesus Christ. Then you can declare for yourself personally the famous words of Martin Luther King, Jr.: “Free at last. Free at last. Thank God Almighty I'm free at last!”



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE ACTIVE METAPHORS OF THE BIBLE

A metaphor is a word or phrase that literally means one thing, but is used in place of another to suggest a likeness between them, for example: “the ship of state.” The essential qualities of each metaphor and simile (a simile uses the word “like”), in reference to itself identifies some corresponding essential qualities of the Bible itself. We will consider some of them.

#### The Bible Is Like Fire.

The prophet Jeremiah said that God's word was in his heart “as a burning fire shut up in my bones” (Jeremiah 20:9 KJV).

The prophet used the simile of fire to describe the pressure of the inner, Spirit-driven passion to speak out the word of God. The divine message burned within him.

When we think of fire, several of its properties and functions come to mind. Fire gives light; so does the word of God. Fire warms; so the word of God warms the soul with its glow. Fire cleanses, purges, purifies; so does the word of God as it is applied to our lives. Fire consumes; so the word of God consumes all ignorance and error that it encounters and that oppose it.

#### The Bible Is Like A Hammer.

In Jeremiah 23:29 God says that His word is like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces.

When we think of the action of a hammer, several things come to mind. A hammer has a forceful impact when its full weight is brought down suddenly on an object. It can also be used to tap gently if the desired result calls for it. Sometimes it has to hit the same spot repeatedly before the rock finally cracks open.

The various actions of a hammer depend on the purposes, the strength, and the skills of the person using it. The person who wields the “hammer” of God's word must have the God-given power to apply it properly, the knowledge to use it wisely, and the sensitivity to use it constructively.

#### The Bible Is A Sword.

We have already referred to Hebrews 4:12, where the word of God is said to be alive

and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword.

In Ephesians 6 we find the description of “the whole armor of God.” Verse 17 says that the “sword of the Spirit” is the word of God.

A sword is a lethal weapon. It is used both for offence and for defense. Its purpose is to inflict a fatal wound on the enemy. In spiritual warfare the enemy is Satan, his demonic forces, and his works. The word of God—the sword of the Spirit—is our most effective weapon against evil. Its purpose is not to harm people but to liberate them. To do this it has to probe deeply enough to probe and expose the inner “thoughts and intents of the heart.”

In preaching and teaching nothing is more powerful and effective than the written word of God quoted in love and in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is the sword of the Spirit, and it is the Spirit who directs its thrust and drives it “home.”

To use this weapon we must know it and know how to use it. This requires both study and practice. Learn your weapon and put it to effective use.

We have no greater example of the effective use of this weapon than Jesus Himself when He used it to defeat the temptations of Satan in the wilderness. Jesus thwarted every thrust of the adversary with the effective defense: “it is written.” The Savior routed him in the same way: “Get away from me, Satan, for it is written ... .”

A sword is also a deterrent to evil behavior, just as a firearm strapped to the side of a police officer is. Just the sight of it causes some people to pause and think before doing something wrong. That is also the effect that people who know their Bible should have on those who would challenge them, whether they be men or demons.

The sword of the Spirit is available to every believer, and we are to use it in the same way Jesus did. Parry and defeat every attack, every suggestion, every temptation, every doubt of the enemy with the firm and resolute thrust: “IT IS WRITTEN!”

### The Bible Is Light.

“The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes” (Psalm 19:8 KJV).

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105 KJV).

The extent to which any society is truly enlightened depends on the extent to which it knows and is influenced by the Bible.

Of course, unbelievers will sneer at this assertion and will dismiss it as narrow-minded and bigoted. They adopt, follow and inculcate their own supposedly broad-minded and sophisticated ideologies and systems of ethical behavior. In every case these social experiments have either failed or will fail. Sooner or later honest minds are forced back to the Biblical ethic as the only one that truly and completely fits the natural human state.

The words of Jesus speak directly to all who begin with themselves and proceed to develop their own definitions of truth: "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God" (Matthew 22:29 NIV).

The motif of light and darkness as representing truth and error and the contrasting moral and ethical conditions that each produces is prominent in The Scriptures.

"The entrance of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple" (Psalm 119:130 NKJV).

"For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light" (Proverbs 6:23 KJV).

"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20 KJV).

Jesus used the same metaphor often. For examples, read Luke 16:8; John 3:19-21; 8:12; 9:5; 11:9, 10; 12:35, 36, 46.

Jesus also warned that the deliberate rejection of the light (truth) leaves only one alternative: darkness (error). The deliberate rejection of truth and the embracing of error involves more than one's opinions. It is an evil moral choice and its consequences pervade a person's entire being and life. Light rejected becomes darkness, not merely ignorance but self-imposed blindness. It is a dishonest state of the mind. It is self-deception. Truth once perceived and deliberately rejected requires the construction and constant reinforcement of a corresponding bias, a perverse wall that is at once a defense and indefensible.

Jesus warned, "If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!" (Matthew 6:23 NKJV).

The apostle John was inspired by the Holy Spirit to employ the same metaphor in his epistles. Also, John's own mind had been thoroughly saturated by the words and phraseology of Jesus. That is why John's manner of speaking is so similar to the Master's. Consider the passages in John's epistle that contrast light and darkness. You will find them in 1 John 1:5, 7; 2:8-10.

We have already mentioned Peter's reference to "the more sure word of prophecy" that shines in a dark place" (2 Peter 1:19).

So, what are the qualities and functions of light that apply to the moral and spiritual?

Light probes. This is the function of a spotlight, and of the light on the end of a scope. It is especially true of a laser beam.

Light exposes. Clean a room. Then watch what happens when the sun shines into the same room. The light shows up the unseen dust in the air.

Light guides. The stars; the lighthouse; the light from a distant city or the windows of a

house; a lamp or flashlight; a night light in a hallway—these and other sources of light have guided people through the darkness, at times providing the very illumination needed to avert disaster.

Light dispels darkness. Light does not have to fight darkness. Light defeats darkness by its own nature, merely by being itself. People taking a guided tour through some cave formations, such as the Oregon Caves in southern Oregon, have witnessed this power of light as the tour guide leads the group into an inner chamber and turns off all illumination, momentarily plunging everything and everyone into total darkness. Then the guide strikes a match, and everyone is impressed with the amount of illumination that comes from that one little source.

### The Bible Is Seed.

In what is known as the Parable Of The Seed And The Sower, Jesus began His explanation of the parable by saying that the seed is the word (Mark 4;14, 15).

The potential of seed is tremendous. From the acorn grows the mighty oak. One grain of wheat multiplied over and over by successive plantings could eventually feed the whole world.

All of God's works are potential in the “seed”—His word. God spoke, and it was created.

Yet, seed is powerless unless it is planted—planted in good soil, that is, “an honest and good heart” (Luke 8:15). Otherwise it is walked on, gobbled up by birds, withered by the sun, or choked out by weeds, as Jesus said.

The seed of God's word must be watered by prayerful attention. In Jesus' parable some seeds produced nothing because they “lacked moisture.” They dried up by neglect. That is why the word of God did not profit some of the ancient Israelites. It was not “mixed with faith” in the ones who heard it. (Hebrews 4:2).

Paul wrote to the church at Corinth that he had planted, Apollos had watered, and God gave the increase (1 Corinthians 3:6-9).

Remember that Peter wrote that believers are born again by the incorruptible seed of God's word (1 Peter 1:23). The “seed,” God's word, is incorruptible. It lives and remains forever.

A mysterious demonstration of the power of seed and what it produces is seen in its ability to break through what seem to be impossible obstacles. For example, cover an area with asphalt, and in time a tender plant will break through it. So it is with the word of God. It has always emerged through every effort to suppress it. After all, it is seed!

Also, seed produces after its own kind. If you want wheat, plant wheat. The word of God planted in the mind and heart, mixed with faith and watered with prayer and diligence will always reproduce itself in the believer. True Christian faith is Biblical faith. True Christian character is Biblical character. True Christian living is Biblical living.



Because the seed of God's word produces after its own kind, it will produce holy living. We spoke of this earlier when we considered the purifying power of the Bible. 1 John 3:9 says "Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God" (NKJV). The "seed" is the word.

Here again, we see that the seed will produce after its own kind. If the word of God has purified our hearts and minds, we cannot live impure lives. We cannot "do" sin. It is a moral impossibility. We cannot live contrary to our character, our core commitment. The Bible is implanted in believers (James 1:21). The Bible implanted in us will not allow us to continue in sin. It will produce its own character and behavior—nothing else.

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:11 KJV).

And let us not forget that the harvest is guaranteed (see Psalm 126:5, 6).

### The Bible Is Water.

Earlier we considered the cleansing work of the word of God and how that was typified in the laver in the Old Testament tabernacle.

Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5 KJV). Jesus was not talking about water baptism. He was not teaching what is called "baptismal regeneration," the notion that a person is born again mystically by water baptism. Jesus was referring to the fact that believers are born again by the word of God and the Spirit of God. This is what the apostle Paul referred to in Ephesians 5:25 and 26 when he wrote that Christ gave Himself for the Church "that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" (KJV).

Everything that was said previously under the cleansing power of the Bible could be repeated here. Water reflects like a mirror (James 1:22); it cleanses by showing us what needs to be cleaned up in our lives, and by giving us the instructions how to do it. It is effective when we make it's principles personal and put it into action.

Water also gives life. Without water the earth would be a dry, barren wasteland. Water makes the difference. So it does also in human existence. A drought of Biblical knowledge and practice produces a spiritual and moral wasteland.

### The Bible Is Food.

One day I was driving up Washington Street in Oregon City, Oregon, when I noticed a sign on a local restaurant. It said "consume mass quantities." At first I chuckled. Then I thought to myself, "that sign should be on every Bible."

Yes, the Bible is the food of the soul. It alone contains the essential ingredients

necessary to sustain spiritual life.

Jesus said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4 NKJV). So, eat heartily! “Consume mass quantities.”

Bibles are practically everywhere in our society; yet there is a widespread famine, a “truth-famine.” It does no good to have plenty of food on the shelves if one does not eat it. It does no good to study nutrition if one does not eat. Availability is not assimilation. It is vital to develop a healthy appetite for the word of God. The soda pop of fads and fictions might fizz and sparkle, but they will never nourish the “inner man.” They might “tickle our innards,” but they cannot sustain our souls.

Whatever your spiritual state or stage of development might be, the Bible contains exactly what you need. If you are not yet a true born-again believer, the Bible tells you how to be saved. If you are a “new-born babe” in Christ, it is your milk, your complete growth formula.

“Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation” (1 Peter 2:2 NIV). As newly born Christians, let your spiritual appetite take you regularly to the milk of God’s word so that by it you may grow as a saved person.

If you are growing in Christ, the Bible has everything you need for every stage of your spiritual growth. If you are a mature Christian, the Bible provides something you can “sink your teeth into.” The important thing is to get the word of God into you. As you read it, at first you might say, “that’s good milk.” As you grow in Christ, the next time you read and meditate on the same passage of Scripture you might say, “mmm, tasty veggies.” Some day as you study that same passage, you will exclaim, “beefsteak!”

It is all in there. It is delicious and nutritious. It is pure. It is 100% natural, with no additives and no “pesticides.” It needs no preservatives, because it is living food.

Taste it. Chew it. Swallow it. Digest it.

We have all heard that we are what we eat (I heard a small man say that is why he hates shrimp!). This is especially true when it comes to what we feed our minds and our souls. Feed on worldly “wisdom,” quicksand counsel, media “junk food,” popular opinions, new-age froth and foam, religious fads and falsehoods—and that is what we will become: spiritually polluted, emaciated, and starving to death.

Parents especially are concerned about what their children eat. If Jason or Jennifer comes home complaining of a stomach ache, the first thing mother asks is “what have you been eating?” And infants and very young children tend to pop everything into their mouths; for that reason older Christians need to keep a close eye on what new believers are reading and being taught.

People have spiritual “stomach aches” because they have been feeding on “straw and sawdust” instead of the only spiritual diet fit for human consumption—the Bible, the word of God.

When people are listless and lose their appetite, they and their family become concerned. They go to the doctor for a check up to find out what is wrong. When people are spiritually listless and have no appetite, the situation is far more serious. That is time for a thorough, soul-searching spiritual check up, because a healthy Christian has a healthy spiritual appetite.

In many cases it is just a matter of developing an appetite for the right things. If people who are used to feeding on sugary snacks, empty calories and carbonated drinks will change their diet, they will begin to enjoy the taste of real food. The same is true of our spiritual diet. We need to discover the delightful flavor of The Scriptures.

So, let us all get into the word of God and get the word of God into us. We will find ourselves agreeing with the psalmist and the prophet:

“How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth” (Psalm 119:103 NKJV).

“Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart” (Jeremiah 15:16 NKJV).

Consume mass quantities!



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH THE BIBLE?

A can of stew aging on a shelf will feed no one's body. Likewise, a Bible collecting dust on a shelf will feed no one's soul. Both are useless unless put to use.

So, what are we to do with the Bible?

#### Believe it.

First, we must believe it. This is not an act of "blind faith." It is the logical faith-commitment that the solid evidences on which the Bible rests call for. All of those evidences point to one intelligent conclusion: the Bible is the word of God.

If we believe a person, we will believe what that person says. If we believe God, we will believe what He says.

#### Love it.

If we love God, we will delight in what He says. It is natural to want to communicate with someone we love. Two lovers spend lots of time on the phone, often running up huge phone bills. They hardly consider the cost; after all, they are in love. Delightful hours are spent writing and reading love letters. Time is hardly a consideration; time stands still when people are in love.

The 66 books of The Bible have been likened to 66 love letters from the Lover of our souls. Our Lord communicates to us through them. Just as someone in love eagerly looks forward to mail time, grasps the anticipated letter as soon as it arrives, and reads it over and over; so we should treat our "love letters" from Jesus Christ.

We sense the deep love for The Scriptures expressed by the psalmist in Psalm 119.

"I will keep thy statutes."

"Thy word have I hid in my heart."

"I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies."

"Thy servant did meditate in thy statutes."

"I will delight myself in thy statutes."

“I will not forget thy word.”

“I have chosen the way of truth.”

“I will run the way of thy commandments.”

“I will observe thy laws with my whole heart.”

“I will speak of thy precepts.”

“I will never forget thy precepts.”

“I love thy law.”

“I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right.”

“My heart stands in awe of thy word.”

“I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved.”

“O how I love thy law.”

“I love thy commandments above gold.”

“I rejoice at thy word.”

“Thy law do I love.”

If we love the word of God, we will value it highly. We will treasure it far above all other possessions. The truth is our most precious commodity. Proverbs 23:23 urges us to “buy the truth, and sell it not.”

#### Study it and search it.

“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper” (Psalm 1:1-3 NKJV).

Jesus advised his hearers to “search the Scriptures” (John 5:39). They thought that they had eternal life in The Scriptures, which they did have if only they had searched them properly. Jesus the Messiah was the central theme of the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings; but they had totally missed Him.

When the apostle Paul and his team left Thessalonica, they went to Berea; there the Bereans “received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily,

whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11 KJV).

Late in life, on the verge of martyrdom, Paul wrote to Timothy “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15 NKJV).

So, how do we study the Bible? This in itself is a field of study, and good books have been written on this subject. Here are just a few of the basic points:

The Bible is to be approached and received on its own terms. Study it for what it says that it is: the written word of God.

Take what it says literally; that is, take it for what it says, using the normal and usual meaning of words. The Bible should be read and interpreted grammatically and historically. The best way to find out what the Bible means is to read what it says. God spoke, and He did not mutter or stutter.

Take what the Bible says in context. What is the overall theme? What is the main subject of each book? What is the subject of the verses and of the chapter surrounding a particular verse or passage?

Obtain and use some of the basic tools of Bible study, at least a good and complete concordance of the Bible and also a good Bible dictionary. These are available as regular bound books and also as computer software.

#### Fix it in your mind and hide it in your heart.

Christianity is intellectual, volitional, and emotional. That is, it involves the mind, the will, and the emotions.

Because Christianity is about the truth, it involves the intellect. It is God’s revelation of the truth, and the truth is to be perceived and embraced by the mind. Know your Bible and know your way through it. Blessed is the person who begins as early in life as possible to memorize the word of God. If we do not know it, we cannot use it.

Because true Christianity is a life-changing bond with the truth, it also involves the heart (the will). So then, hiding God’s word in the heart means to adhere to it with the firm purpose of conforming to it. The psalmist said, “I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is within my heart” (Psalm 40:8 NKJV). “Your word have I hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You” (Psalm 119:11 NKJV).

Through the prophet Jeremiah God declared that under the New Covenant He would put His law in our minds and write it on our hearts (Jeremiah 31:33).

Referring back to Deuteronomy 30:14, Paul wrote, “The word is near you, even in your mouth and in your heart’ (that is, the word of faith which we preach)” (Romans 10:8 NKJV).

On the same theme Paul also wrote “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom” (Colossians 3:16).

How different would be the history of individuals, of families, of nations, even of the world itself, if they had fully learned and faithfully followed the word of God!

### Obey it.

As has been said, to hid the word of God in the heart means to adhere to it with the purpose of conforming to it. That means to obey it in daily practice.

“And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the Lord and His statutes which I command you today for your good” (Deuteronomy 10:11, 12 NKJV).

Jesus said that obedience is the test of love. “If you abide in My word, then are you My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31, 32 NKJV). “If you love Me, keep My commandments (John 14:15 NKJV). To continue in Christ’s word means to live in consistent obedience to it.

The Holy Spirit inspired the apostle John to expand on this principle. “Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 John 2:3, 4 NKJV). “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3 NKJV).

Also, James writes, “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (James 1:22 KJV).

### Teach it.

Truth is for sharing. In fact, the person who has the truth bears a solemn obligation to communicate it. What would we think of the medical researcher who discovered a cure for cancer or AIDS, and did not share the discovery with the world?

The obligation to teach the truth to others increases in direct relationship to the proximity of others to ourselves. That places the greatest and most direct responsibility on parents and other family members.

“And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart; you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (Deuteronomy 6:6-9 NKJV. See also Deuteronomy 11:18-21).



“Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6 KJV).

And what about our friends, our neighbors, our work associates, our communities, our world? People who have good news and a heart full of love cannot keep silent!

### Promises.

We conclude by looking at the promises to those who love and obey the word of God. We who do so have:

1. A clear conscience (no shame). “Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments (Psalm 119:6 KJV).

2. Peace. “Great peace have they which love thy law” (Psalm 119:165 KJV).

3. Happiness. “Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it” (Luke 11:28 KJV. See Revelation 1:3).

4. Acceptance and fellowship with God. “Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (John 14:23 KJV).

5. Whatever we ask. “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you” (John 15:7 NKJV).

6. A solid foundation in life. “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock” (Matthew 7:24 NKJV. See also Psalm 1).

7. Success and prosperity. “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success” (Joshua 1:8 NKJV. Read also Deuteronomy 28:1-14).

8. Health. “If you diligently heed the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the Lord who heals you” (Exodus 15:26 NKJV). A Biblical lifestyle is a healthy lifestyle.

9. Eternal life. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death” (John 8:51).

“These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name” (John 20:31 NKJV).

