

The Authority Of The Scriptures

INTRODUCTION

We live in a day when anti-authoritarian tides have been raging from every direction. Rampant corruption has led to a growing sentiment from various sectors of society to seek the overthrow of human government institutions on a global scale. Scandals among church leaders have contributed to the erosion of credibility of religious institutions. The situation is no different at home. Sometimes, children do not know whom to follow, especially when marital conflict and child abuse are more of the norm than the exception in the domestic scene. This makes twenty-first century culture conducive to a relativistic mindset - anything goes. One's opinion is just as good as the others. Truth, reality, ethics and moral judgments are being defined by and reduced to the issue of what will bring maximum benefit to oneself. Ethical egoism has become the pervasive ethic in our culture. This is a sure formula for chaos. Is there anyone in a position to demand obedience to set standards and norms that would somehow alleviate the prevailing confusion of our times? If so, what would be those standards? Who is going to impose them?

Authority means the “power to influence or command thought, opinion or behavior.”^[1] Orthodox Christians maintain that since all authority comes from God.^[2] He has taken the initiative to reveal Himself, and that a part of this revelation has been recorded in Scripture. Thus, Scripture is both a personal and propositional revelation of God. What the Bible says is what God says. What the Bible commands, God commands. What the Bible promises, God promises. Does the Scripture have this authority to demand obedience, does it have this right?

This paper is designed to prove why the answer to this question is a resounding “yes!” After looking at certain phenomena that make this piece of literature unique to all others, a survey of Biblical passages will be made to show what the writers (of Scripture) themselves believed with regard to the divine origin of their writings. But the strongest reason for believing the divine inspiration of Scripture will be presented and reserved for last. It is the Lord Jesus Christ's recognition of its divine authority and His submissive attitude toward this time-tested and providentially preserved Book. In other words, if Jesus is who He claimed Himself to be – the incarnate and sinless Son of God, fully divine and fully human – then one cannot escape the inescapable conclusion that whatever He believed and taught must be true. Since He submitted to the authority of Scripture, then we, His finite moral creatures, can do no less because Scripture must then be the authoritative Word of God!

CHAPTER I: THE UNIQUENESS OF SCRIPTURE

The Bible is undoubtedly the most remarkable book ever written. A number of facts make it so extraordinary from all or any other piece of literature. These phenomena may not necessarily prove that the Bible is the Word of God but they certainly make one conclude that this Book is significantly unique. Let's examine some of them.

Its Amazing Unity

Think in terms of the fact that it was written by over forty different authors, covering a period of about 1,600 years. They were all from different diverse backgrounds: Peter was a fisherman, Paul was a Pharisee, Amos was a shepherd (a herdsman), Nehemiah was a king's cupbearer, Matthew was a tax collector, Luke was a physician, David was a king, John and

Peter were fishermen. They were written in three different continents (namely, Africa, Asia and Europe) and in different circumstances. Paul wrote in prison, John was in exile at the isle of Patmos, Moses was in the wilderness. They wrote in three different languages. The Old Testament was primarily written in Hebrew. Most of the Book of Daniel was written in Aramaic. Greek was used in the New Testament (although a few lines were also written in Aramaic). These men had very little time, if any at all, to compare notes. In most cases, they did not even have access or knowledge of the writings of others. Yet, with all this diversity, the Bible has an amazing unity that makes its sixty-six books not merely a library of information and instruction, but one Book! Apologist John Frame took note of this extraordinary structure of the Scriptures when he wrote:

Here we have a wide variety of human authors, writing across many centuries, with very different interests, concerns, styles, and levels of intellectual sophistication, saying many different things, and yet, saying one thing: Jesus is coming, and this is what he will be and do. Does this not indicate something of God's sovereignty over history? Does it not show that the Old Testament is more than an ordinary book? Does it not show some remarkable things about Jesus? Is this not a powerful witness to the Word of God?[\[3\]](#)

Charles Ryrie expresses his astonishment for the Bible by saying that

... it is one book without contradictions in what it says. And what it says is remarkable, for it speaks with equal ease and authority of the known and unknowable, of the pleasant and unpleasant, of man's accomplishments and failures, of the past and the future. Few books ever attempt such scope; none is completely accurate except the Bible.[\[4\]](#)

Its Fulfilled Prophecy

It may take a whole new book to enumerate the numerous prophetic passages from the Old Testament that have found fulfillment in the New Testament. We will only cite a couple here due to space limitations. Let us take the Book of Daniel, since this is one of the most attacked books in the Old Testament. According to the book itself, Daniel lived during the Babylonian empire when he predicted the coming of the Medo-Persian, Alexandrian and Roman empires. He even predicted the rising of another world empire that is yet to come.[\[5\]](#) But the liberal scholars' bias against the divine origin of the Scripture leads them to "late date" the writing of the book, setting it sometime during the 400 silent years between the Malachi and Matthew. This would imply that Daniel just looked back at history and write it rather than predict it. This does not solve the liberal's problem for at around 538 B.C., Daniel predicted that Christ would come as Israel's promised Savior and Prince. This prophecy was stated to happen 483 years after the Persian emperor would give the Jews authority to rebuild Jerusalem, which was then in ruins.[\[6\]](#) This occurred hundreds of years later, just exactly as the prophet predicted. So, even if the liberal puts the writing of Daniel no later than 300 B.C., there were still prophecies that have been fulfilled after that date. It is only logical to conclude that the prophecies that have not yet been fulfilled as of today await future, literal fulfillment.

The prophets Isaiah[\[7\]](#) and Ezekiel,[\[8\]](#) for example, predicted the restoration of the Jews to the land of Israel as a true nation in the latter days. The prospects of this coming to pass seemed utterly impossible for almost 1,500 years. Yet, we now have the nation restored since 1948. God's truth has been marching on!

Its Historical and Archeological Accuracy

The historical accuracy of the Scriptures comes far more superior than the written records of Egypt, Assyria and other early nations. Innumerable archeological discoveries of the past century have served to confirm the Biblical records. Dr. Henry Morris quotes Dr. Nelson Glueck (whom he says to be probably the greatest authority in Israeli archeology), wrote in his book, *Rivers in the Desert*:

No archeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference. Scores of archeological 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.[\[9\]](#)

Years ago, a man named Wellhausen, influenced by Darwin's theory of evolution, came up with a documentary hypothesis that man was always moving to a higher order. He conjectured that the Pentateuch could not have been written by Moses because he did not believe man was advanced enough at that time in the evolutionary scale to have such an advanced code of laws. He also thought that man was unable to write back then. So, he concluded that the first five books of the Bible must have been written by a number of authors who later on attributed their writings to Moses. All these turned when in 1901 at Susa in Persia, some men found a seven-foot slab, six feet in circumference. Archeologists found out that this slab was older than Moses by 2,000 years. On it were 282 statues of law which is now known to be the Code of Hammurabi (King of Babylon).[\[10\]](#) This tore down the foundation of Wellhausen's theory for it has no basis in fact.

Its Survival Through Time

Despite attempts by political and religious leaders to burn the Bible, the Old and New Testament documents remain to be with us. Although all are agreed that the original manuscripts of Scripture do no longer exist, copies of those manuscripts, translations of it, commentaries are too numerous so that it is virtually possible to accurately reconstruct the original texts. Its message has survived persecution, opposition and even generations through the passage of long periods of time.

The Masoretic text is regarded by theologically conservative scholars as an extremely accurate text of the Old Testament. Ryrie points out that:

Indeed, the Masorettes (traditionalists) who between A.D. 600 and 950 added accents and vowel points and in general standardized the Hebrew text, devised complicated safeguards for the making of copies. They checked carefully by counting the middle letter of pages, books and sections. Someone has said that everything countable was counted. When the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered, they gave us a Hebrew text from the second century to the first century B.C. of all but one of the books (Esther) of the Old Testament. This was of the greatest importance, for it provided much earlier check on the accuracy of the Masoretic text...[\[11\]](#)

John Montgomery quotes Sir Frederick Kenyon, formerly director and principal librarian of the British Museum, to summarize the textual advantage of the New Testament. Kenyon wrote:

In no other case is the interval of time between the composition of the book and the date of the earliest extant manuscripts so short as in that of the New Testament. The books of the New Testament were written in the latter part of the first century; the earliest extant manuscripts (trifling scraps excepted) are of the fourth century – say, from 250 to 300 years later. This may sound a considerable interval, but it is nothing to that which parts of the great classical authors from the earliest manuscripts. We believe that we have in all essentials as accurate text of the seven extant plays of Sophocles; yet the earliest substantial manuscript upon which it is based was written more than 1400 years after the poet's death. Aeschylus, Aristophanes, and Thucydides are in the same state; while with Euripides the interval is increased to 1600 years. For Plato it may be put at 1300 years, for Demosthenes as low as 1200.[\[12\]](#)

Since the time Kenyon wrote this at the beginning of the twentieth century, more papyri documents of the New Testament have been discovered which could be dated back to the first century. Thus, shortly before his death, Kenyon (quoted by Montgomery) concluded that:

The interval, then, between the dates of the original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established.[\[13\]](#)

Today, there are more than 5,000 manuscripts of the New Testament. This makes the New Testament the best-attested document in all ancient writings. These are amazing testaments of divine providence to the Old and New Testament Scriptures. No other book can be compared to it.

These external evidences may not conclusively prove that the Bible is the Word of God. But they certainly point to the fact that the Bible is unique from any other piece of literature. This is something one would expect from a book that claims to be of divine origin. Let us now look at the more important evidences - the internal evidences of the inspiration of the Scriptures. This will be the focus of the next chapters.

CHAPTER II: THE TESTIMONY OF THE WRITERS

The human authors of Scripture claimed that their writings were supernaturally inspired by God. The Old Testament, for example, abounds with such statements as “Thus saith the LORD:...”; “The Word of the LORD came unto me, saying...,” indicating that the men who wrote the Bible knew that they were communicating an infallible and authoritative message from God. This is an astounding and bold claim! If these forty or so writers were wrong, then they must be clearly insane or among the greatest liars that ever lived. On the other hand, if these claims are true, then it is pointless for any man to look elsewhere other than the Word of God for instruction, counsel, purpose and direction in this earthly sojourn. Henry Morris points out that “over 3,000 times the various writers stated in one way or another that they were transmitting God's Word to man.”[\[14\]](#) Paul Steele argues that this number is specifically for the Old Testament alone – 3,808 to be exact, according to him. He also counts “forty-four times in the New Testament alone the Scripture is referred to as ‘The Word of God.’”[\[15\]](#) God made sure that those who read the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, will understand that the text they read is not just the word of men, but the very Word of God!

What Old Testament Writers Said of Their Own Writings

Let us look at some of these instances where the Biblical writers clearly expressed their knowledge that they were writing the Word of God.

The context of this passage in II Samuel is that David was about to die. So, what he said here was his deathbed statement. Usually, people's dying words are the most important words they utter. This is no time for small talk. Notice how David began. "The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God."[\[16\]](#) David clearly did not mean he was just giving a hunch of what the Spirit of God was saying. He meant the Spirit of the Lord used him as an instrument and he spoke in the power of the Spirit of God when he wrote these words, including the Psalms. Thus, his writings are not to be looked upon as mere human inventions.

The same happened with the prophet Jeremiah as he was made aware of the awesome responsibility of his call to do the work of the ministry. He argued before God his youthfulness and inexperience as grounds to question his capacity to preach the Word of God to Judah. After the Lord assured him of His presence and deliverance, Jeremiah said, "Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth."[\[17\]](#) In another occasion, God further told him to "speak to all the cities of Judah, ... all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word."[\[18\]](#) In other words, he was not to edit, alter, add, subtract anything that God would say!

In Exodus, Moses explicitly tells his readers that it was God Himself Who both engraved on and made the two tables of stone where the Decalogue was etched! "And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables."[\[19\]](#) This is why we are told in II Kings:

But the LORD, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with great power and a stretched out arm, him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye do sacrifice. And the statutes, and the ordinances, and the law, and the commandment, which he [This pronoun "he" is clearly not referring to Moses but to "the LORD" – Yahweh.] wrote for you, ye shall observe to do for evermore; and ye shall not fear other gods.[\[20\]](#)

What New Testament Writers Said of the Old Testament Writings

The writer to the Hebrews put it plainly as he wrote, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son..."[\[21\]](#) In other words, God spoke to the fathers in times past. How did He do this? The prophets were the human instruments He used in order to speak to them. Notice what the text says as to who did the speaking. Was it the prophets to the people? In some occasions, that was what happened but that is not what the writer is emphasizing. He is underscoring the fact that ultimately, it was God who did the speaking, using the prophets to speak to the fathers in times past. Yes, God Himself is in the business of revealing Himself through His Word.

The Book of Acts is an inspired historical narrative of the first thirty years of the Christian Church. Luke, the beloved physician and missionary companion of the apostle Paul, was the

human author of this book. He cited apostles who quoted Old Testament Scriptures as absolute authority to prove the gospel of Christ. Here are a few examples.

After the ascension of Christ, the disciples traveled a Sabbath-day's journey back to Jerusalem and prayed. Sometime after that, they sought for a replacement for Judas for the office of the apostleship. Peter addressed the one hundred twenty disciples and explained to them that what happened to Judas was a fulfillment of Scripture. He said, "Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus."[\[22\]](#) In other words, Peter is pointing out that what has happened to Judas has been foretold by God the Holy Spirit through "the mouth of David."[\[23\]](#)

A few chapters later, as the number of the disciples grew qualitatively and quantitatively, we find the apostles having to face much persecution from religious and local authorities. Peter and John return to the brethren and report to them what they just encountered. The Bible says,

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

Under the threat of intense opposition, these Christians turned to God, acknowledged His sovereignty over all of creation, and recognized that what they were experiencing was a fulfillment of what He said through David in Scripture![\[25\]](#) This is an attestation to the validity of the Old Testament as being the very voice of God speaking through mortal man!

Here's another instance. This time, the apostle Paul is cited by Luke as quoting the Old Testament prophet Isaiah.[\[26\]](#) The apostle saw the rebellious character of the Jewish people in his day as similar to that of the prophet's day. Paul was, in essence, saying of his fellow Jews that this was to be expected since it was typical of them to reject God's testimony. The record says,

And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive....[\[27\]](#)

Note how he attributes to the Holy Spirit what Isaiah wrote.

In his second and last epistle, Peter exhorted Christians to keep growing in the faith despite the growing apostasy of a pluralistic society. So, he tells them that it would do them well that they "take heed" what they possessed, God's "more sure word of prophecy" since "no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."[\[28\]](#) The context indicates that the "prophecy of scripture being referred to are the prophecies recorded in the Old Testament. These were not "of any private interpretation." The Greek word for *interpretation*[\[29\]](#) means "explanation" is an intensive word in the ablative of origin form. Peter is saying no portion of Scripture originated from the prophet's own explanation. They did not just decide one day that they will write Scripture because their prophetic utterances did not come "in old time by the will of man." Rather, these holy men

received their message from God and wrote them, word for word, while "... they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

What New Testament Writers Said of Their Own Writings

In his first epistle, Peter referred to the phrase "the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."^[30] Then, two verses later, he also says, "But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."^[31] Peter is talking about the gospel spoken by the Apostles as well. He recognized the word of the Apostles found in the New Testament as the Word of God that would endure forever.

Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians was a letter of rebuke to these spiritually immature Christians. One of the symptoms of their carnality was their exaltation of human wisdom at par with divine revelation. These Corinthian saints were enamored by the brilliance of the highly educated Greek philosophers. So the apostle reminded them that even though the gospel was not highly regarded by most people, his message nonetheless was not of human origin. He claimed that it was conceived in the mind of God.

But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.^[32]

Paul's point was that although the unregenerate may find the gospel message foolish, there is profoundness and depth to the Christian message because of its divine origin. The extent to which the Spirit of God made sure that His message would be accurately delivered to man was by giving man, not just thoughts or ideas, but "words ... which the Holy Ghost teacheth." Theologians call this verbal inspiration. This means the Spirit directed and influenced the writers of Scripture right down to the very words they originally wrote.

Another symptom of their carnality surfaced through their misuse of their God-given spiritual gifts. So, Paul censures some self-proclaimed prophets in that congregation, "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." In other words, he is saying, "let me give you a challenge to test your self-proclaimed prophets. See if they will stand up right now and acknowledge that what I am writing is the commandment of God and I am not writing of my own volition." Then Paul adds, "But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant."^[33] Here's his point. If they cannot acknowledge that what Paul wrote is God's commandment, then they are ignorant!

In the Book of Galatians, Paul addresses a serious concern. The brethren there had been misled by Judaizers into thinking that law-keeping (particularly the compliance to the Jewish rite of circumcision) was a necessary requirement to be justified before God. So, the apostle defends the gospel of salvation by faith, not by law-keeping, by pointing out in the third chapter that the law cannot change God's promise. Paul proves his argument by merely showing that both the Jews and the Gentiles grow together in one body of the seed of Abraham, in Christ alone, so that all are one in Christ, just as it is declared later in the chapter.^[34] The passage he quotes from the Old Testament Book of Genesis^[35] has a certain

word in the singular (*seed*) rather than in the plural (*seeds*),^[36] showing therefore the apostle's conviction on verbal inspiration.

Notice how aware Paul was of his apostolic authority of proclaiming the truth of God as he tells the first century brethren, "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."^[37] He was, in essence, saying to these Thessalonian saints, "you received it that way – as the Word of God - and that is indeed what it is."

Perhaps, it would be best to close this chapter by looking at what the apostle Paul clearly taught regarding the divine origin of the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, in his epistles to Timothy. As he gave instructions to Timothy, his son in the faith and fellow-laborer in the field, on how to conduct local church planting ministry, he wrote. "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward."^[38] This is a very interesting passage because, first, Paul referred to a source as basis for his admonition to take good care of elders who taught the Word – "for the scripture saith." Second, the portions he cited are from the Old and New Testaments, Deuteronomy 25:4 ("Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.") and Luke 10:7 ("The labourer is worthy of his reward."), respectively. Later, in his second and last epistle to Timothy, he wrote, "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."^[39] Obviously, the "holy scriptures" Timothy was taught in his youth were the Old Testament Scriptures since not one line of the New Testament was yet written then. Even that was sufficient to bring him to the knowledge of salvation which is found solely in Christ Jesus when He is received Him by faith. And then, notice carefully what he says in the next verse, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."^[40] What portion of scripture "is given by inspiration of God"? The answer is "all scripture." What did that include? Apparently, he already referred to the Old Testament as "scripture" in the previous verse. But it certainly included the New Testament as well since he also referred to that document as "scripture" in his first epistle to Timothy. So, Paul is saying, both the Old and New Testaments are inspired by God. And *inspiration* means "God-breathed" or "divinely breathed in."^[41] This is a quality no other book has!

So, we see the apostles affirm, again and again, that those things that were written aforetime in Scripture were written for our learning. They were well aware that they were writing down a message from God. More than being the Word of God, they are actually the very breath of God! Yea, in fact, "every word ... proceedeth out of the mouth of God!"^[42]

CHAPTER III: CHRIST'S VIEW OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

One wonders how the critics of the Bible and those of us who refer to its authority would answer if the Lord were to ask us a question today which He had asked His audience during His earthly ministry. Jesus said, "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"^[43] He is, in effect, saying, "Either you obey Me, or stop calling Me 'Lord' which means 'Master'." Our practice should be consistent with our profession of who Jesus Christ is and vice-versa.

In fact, this is the first and foremost reason why Christians believe in the divine inspiration and authority of Scripture. It is not because of what churches teach nor is it also only because of what the writers claimed, important as these might be. Neither is it primarily because of what readers sense (e.g., changed lives). Rather, it is primarily because of what Jesus Christ Himself said. People who say they believe Christ but not the Bible as their absolute authority are, in reality, contradicting themselves. Since our Lord endorsed its authority, we are bound to conclude that His authority and the Scripture's authority either stand or fall together.

Submission to Scriptural Authority in His Conduct

The Lord Jesus Christ showed His attitude of submission towards the Scriptures as a powerful argument for its authority. He submitted to the Old Testament in His personal conduct. His temptation in the wilderness is a case in point. In all three instances when the devil tempted Him, Jesus said, "It is written ..."^[44] or "It is said ...,"^[45] to apply the text to Himself. Jesus stopped the mouth of the devil with "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." This coincides with what the apostle Paul says regarding that quality of Scripture underscoring its divine origin. It is inspired of God or God-breathed. It would be more accurate to say that He quoted Scripture to Himself in the devil's presence. He was not quoting Scripture at the devil, as if to use it as a weapon with mystical powers to drive the enemy away, as some have suggested. The devil himself quoted Scripture in one of his temptations.^[46] This clearly indicates that he is a master of the Biblical text and is skillful in twisting it or quoting it out of context. Thus, he does not run away from anyone who simply quotes Scripture at him. But for the Lord Jesus Christ, quoting Scripture to Himself was enough for Him to direct His course of action and to avoid the wicked one's proposals. In other words, the reason for His not submitting to Satan's suggestions was "It is written." There was no need to question, discuss, argue, or negotiate. The matter had already been settled by Scripture.

Submission to Scriptural Authority in His Calling

Secondly, Jesus submitted to the Old Testament in the fulfillment of His calling. He clearly understood His Messianic role from a study of Old Testament Scripture. The gospel of Mark says: "And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again."^[47] Note the word *must*. He knew and accepted that He could enter into His glory only by the road of suffering and death. And why *must* he? The reason for the sense of necessity or compulsion which constrained Him was that Scripture said so. Jesus voluntarily and deliberately put Himself under the authority of what stood written. He determined to fulfill it, both in His mission, His ministry, just as in His manner of life. In fact, Jesus commanded Peter to put his sword back into its place when the latter attempted to protect the Lord from the apprehending soldiers sent by the chief priests and elders at the garden of Gethsemane. What was Jesus' reason? "But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?"^[48] Everything He did was calculated to follow and fulfill Scripture. Years later, the apostle Paul wrote, "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures...."^[49]

Submission to Scriptural Authority in His Controversies

Furthermore, Jesus submitted to the Old Testament in His controversies. The Gospels are replete with examples here. Jesus referred back to the Scriptures to be His final court of

appeal as He was attacked by His critics. In fact, His chief criticism of His contemporaries concerned their disrespect and ignorance of Scripture.

To a lawyer, he said, “What is written in the law? how readest thou?” To the religious leaders, he said, “have ye not read this Scripture...?” To the Pharisees, he contended saying, “Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition ... Making the Word of God of none effect through your tradition ...” To the Sadducees, he said, “Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God?” The point is clear. If the Son of God Himself regarded Scripture as the authoritative Word of God, then shouldn't that settle it for all of us? Not for some.

First, note how Jesus regarded Scripture as historically trustworthy and accurate, including its miracle accounts. Matthew records an incident when the scribes and Pharisees were seeking for a sign from Jesus. Apparently, they did not believe Him and were, therefore, looking for more evidence. Jesus rebukes them by saying:

An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. [\[50\]](#)

It is interesting how the Lord quotes from one of the more often questioned books in the Old Testament, the Book of Jonah. Liberal scholars have difficulty accepting the Biblical account as literally true. They argue that Jonah must have been drowned by all those gastric juices inside the great fish, especially after being in there for three days, so that there is no way he could have survived that experience alive. But Jesus refers to its historical accuracy and uses it as basis for his argument on his predicted literal, bodily resurrection as the ultimate sign for the veracity of His claims!

Second, for the Lord Jesus Christ, the Old Testament stood higher than any human tradition or teaching. Once again, the scribes and Pharisees tried to find fault on Him by raising the question on why His disciples broke human tradition, that of not wash their hands before eating bread. Jesus brought the issue back to them and asked why they broke the commandment of God for the sake of a man-made tradition. He quoted the Old Testament Decalogue when He said:

For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; and honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. [\[51\]](#)

These religious leaders had adopted a practice called Corban, [\[52\]](#) relieving young professionals of their Biblical responsibility to care for and honor their parents for as long as the cost of doing so was given to the temple. In so doing, they have imposed a man-made tradition at the expense of breaking a commandment of God. Jesus called these kinds of people as “hypocrites!” These are strong words coming from the God of love who regarded the Scriptures as far more authoritative than any human tradition of teaching!

Again, Matthew records our Lord addressing a moral question posed by His religious critics. “Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?” He answers it by giving a scientific pronouncement of the creation story from the Book of Genesis!

Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. [\[53\]](#)

Jesus clearly upheld the Genesis record as an accurate, literal, historical narrative. In other words, how can a myth marry a myth and produce a literal child? Geisler gives this helpful comment on this passage,

Here the very validity of Jesus' answer to the question about marriage and divorce depends on the reliability of there being a literal creation in the beginning of a male and a female whom God had joined together as "one flesh." Hence, there is no way here to completely separate the doctrinal or spiritual from the physical and historical in Jesus' teaching. [\[54\]](#)

In another occasion, Jesus was put to the test by the Sadducees on the issue of the resurrection, a truth these religious leaders denied. He rebuked them of their ignorance of the Scriptures and said,

Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. 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. [\[55\]](#)

Jesus did not only show His submission to Scriptural authority amid this controversy. He also displayed His belief in verbal inspiration by resting His argument on one word, and on the tense of it, to refute His religious critics' unbelief of the resurrection. Abraham had been dead for some 300 years when these words were spoken to Moses. [\[56\]](#) Now, in this exchange with the Sadducees, Jesus properly points out to them that God is not the God of the dead, but of the living after quoting God saying, "I am [not *was*] the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." He drew a tremendous conclusion about the resurrection from the present tense of a single verb in an Old Testament passage!

All these show how the Lord Jesus Christ displayed such remarkable confidence on the inspiration and authority of the Old Testament Scriptures. To Him, it is the Word of God which "cannot be broken." [\[57\]](#) Is it conceivable that His followers should have a lower view of Scripture than He? Jesus said, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." [\[58\]](#) If Jesus regarded Scripture with such high esteem, then people who seem to take delight in looking for supposed errors in the Bible are, in effect, calling God a liar!

CHAPTER IV: CHRIST'S PROVISION FOR THE NEW TESTAMENT

How could Christ endorse something that had not yet been written? The answer is in His appointment of the apostles. In the Old Testament, God was active in redeeming and judging Israel, raised up prophets to give a true record and interpretation of what He was doing. Then, God was active through Christ in redeeming and judging the world. Was this supreme and final revelation of God in Christ to be last to future generations? No! There must be authoritative scribes and interpreters for that revelation as well. How did Jesus provide for

this? He chose, appointed, trained, and authorized the Twelve.[\[59\]](#) They became His personal representatives, endowed with His authority to speak in His name.[\[60\]](#) They had a four-fold uniqueness in their ministry.

The Apostles' Personal Call and Authorization

First, they had a personal call and authorization from Christ. This was the case of the twelve apostles after a time of all-night prayer.[\[61\]](#) Our Lord already had several disciples converted through His earthly ministry. But from these disciples, he called out the Twelve whom He appointed and personally commissioned to the work of the ministry. He called these men His apostles.

Paul claimed something comparable. He clearly asserted and defended his apostolic authority.[\[62\]](#)

The Apostles' Eyewitness Experience of Christ

Second, they had an eye-witness experience of Christ. They were sent out by Him but their essential qualification for the work of apostleship was that they should have been “with Him.”[\[63\]](#) He gave them unrivalled opportunities to learn His Words and behold His works so that they might later bear witness to what they had seen and heard.[\[64\]](#) This was especially true of the resurrection. An apostle had to be an eyewitness of the resurrected Christ. It was for this reason that Matthias was chosen to replace Judas.[\[65\]](#)

This raises a question about the Apostle Paul. Basing on the above qualifications, is he fit to be called an Apostle in this technical sense? One way Paul defends his apostleship is by pointing out that the message he preached was not received from man but by divine revelation. It is in this context where he mentions that he spent three years in Arabia.[\[66\]](#) While nothing specific is mentioned regarding the circumstances and purpose of this three-year journey, it seems (from the context) that this had something to do with Christ's revelation of Himself to the Apostle. In attempting to explain why Luke, the Beloved Physician and Historian, does not mention this incident in his inspired writings, particularly in the Book of Acts, Albert Barnes comments:

The journey into Arabia, probably, did not furnish any incidents in regard to the success of the gospel there which required particular record by the sacred historian; nor has Paul himself referred to it for any such reason, or intimated that it furnished any incidents or any facts that required particularly the notice of the historian. He has mentioned it for a different purpose altogether--to show that he did not receive his commission from the apostles, and that he did not go at once to consult them. He went directly the other way.[\[67\]](#)

There seems to be reasonable ground to believe that, perhaps, these three years in Arabia was to make up for three years of Christ's public ministry which the Apostle missed. He argued for the defense of his apostleship that he was an actual eyewitness of the resurrected Christ[\[68\]](#) and adds that he was the last of them.[\[69\]](#)

The Apostles' Influence from the Holy Spirit

They had an extraordinary influence from the Holy Spirit as they wrote the New Testament documents. Jesus gave them a two-fold promise before He left the earthly scene. One, the Holy Spirit would remind them of the teachings He had given them.[\[70\]](#) Two, He would

supplement it, leading them “into all [the] truth,”^[71] including “things to come,” which they could not bear at that moment.^[72] This was fulfilled when they wrote the Gospels, the epistles, and prophetic literature (e.g., the Book of Revelation). Kenneth Good has this insightful comment on this passage:

Our Lord also preauthenticated the New Testament (John 16:12-15). His plan for believers included additional revelation which they were not then ready to receive. This future ministry was reserved for the Holy Spirit. Note two things in this connection: (a) The result would be a complete revelation, i.e., “all truth”; and (b) the human channels were limited in time and number (John 17:8, 18, 20). The context here indicates that the Apostles and their lifetime are directly in view. This would mean that the fulfillment of this promise did not extend beyond John’s death, thus marking the Book of Revelation as closing the canon.^[73]

Thus, the miracle of inspiration has ceased. The Holy Spirit no longer directs men to write His Words down. The Bible is the Word of God and it is final. There is no other Word. All of it is the written Word of God and it is all the written Word of God there is, sufficient for godly life and service.

The Apostles Confirmatory Signs

Finally, they had power to work miracles. The writer to the Hebrews cautioned believers to give earnest heed to God’s Word given through the New Testament writers. He stated,

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?^[74]

His reasons for the urgency of heeding it are mentioned above. Its source: it was spoken by the Lord. Its confirmation: it was delivered to believers “by them that heard him,” an obvious reference to the apostles. How did God confirm or establish their message? He did it “with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will.” In a day when the canon of Scripture was not yet established nor complete, God confirmed His message by bestowing His messengers with the power to work miracles. They had God’s “signs of an apostle” and they performed before men “in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.”^[75] Paul spoke of the “mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God” Christ accomplished through him “to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed.”^[76] These were necessary in order to testify of the gospel of Jesus Christ to distinguish them from the false teachers who gloried in the flesh.

In these four ways, the apostles were unique. These clearly show Christ’s endorsement over their ministries, thus, pre-authenticating the New Testament documents.

The ramifications of these truths are very serious. This would imply that to attack the Bible is to attack the authenticity of God because Scripture “proceedeth out from the mouth of God.”^[77] Questioning the Bible is also tantamount to questioning the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ who pre-authenticated the New Testament. To go against Scripture means to deny the activity of the Holy Spirit who directed its human authors.^[78] To assault the Bible is to engage in an all-out war against the Tri-une God!

CONCLUSION

The evidences, both external and internal, show that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Because it is inspired, it is therefore inerrant, infallible and authoritative or binding upon all men. The product of inspiration is inerrancy, infallibility and authority of Scripture and the proof of inerrancy, infallibility and authority is inspiration. But the strongest argument for this position is what the Lord Jesus Christ said for if Jesus is who He claimed to be, the incarnate Son of God, then, what He says must be true. The proof of the deity of Christ is the fact of the resurrection. His resurrection vindicated all His claims.

The question now is why would people, even educated ones, disregard all these evidences? If Christianity is rational and true, why would some of them choose not to believe it? The answer is simple. They would not believe the divine origin and inspiration of Scripture because they would not recognize or acknowledge the practical ramifications of Christ's deity. This is not so much an intellectual issue as it is a spiritual issue. Submitting to the authority of Scripture is not a scholarship issue. It is a Lordship issue. The reason why educated people do not believe it is the same reason uneducated people do not believe it. We agree with Paul Little as he refers to what Jesus said as the real cause of the problem of unbelief. He wrote,

The moral issue always overshadows the intellectual issue in Christianity. It is not that man cannot believe – it is that he “will not believe.” Jesus pointed the Pharisees to this as the root of the problem. “Ye will not come to me,” He told them, “that ye might have life” (John 5:40). He makes it abundantly clear that moral commitment leads to a solution of the intellectual problem. “If any man will [wants to] do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself” (John 7:17). Alleged intellectual problems are often a smoke screen covering moral rebellion.[\[79\]](#)

Refusal to submit to the authority of Scripture is a problem both outside and inside the household of the Christian faith. The liberal or modernist may recognize Scripture as sacred literature, but he regards human reasoning equally authoritative, if not more authoritative than the Word of God. To him, if something does not square with reason, it cannot be accepted as true. The cults may show a degree of respect for Scripture but regards extra-Biblical revelation and writings equally authoritative, if not more authoritative. The neo-orthodox may claim that the Bible is the Word of God but actually means that it *contains* or *becomes* the Word of God, rather than believe that it *is* the Word of God. The Charismatics and Pentecostals may say that the Bible is the Word of God but, in reality, regards their emotional or religious experiences as far more authoritative than the Word of God. The neo-evangelicals may preach that the Bible is the Word of God but will operate on the principle of pragmatism rather than submit in obedience to its principles and precepts. The orthodox, historic position is that which is upheld by historic Christian fundamentalists. The Bible is the inspired, infallible, inerrant Word of God. Therefore, all are bound by its precepts and pronouncements. Just like Christ, we need to submit to its God-delegated authority.

The problem of failing or refusing to submit to its authority in varied degrees is not due to a lack of brain power but a refusal to submit one's will to the Lordship of Christ. The problem of the unbeliever is not his head but his heart. Jesus said, “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”[\[80\]](#) Each one will have to decide. There is no neutral ground here. Either we obey Him or we stop calling Him “Lord.” Let everyone who opts for the latter beware that there are serious and eternal consequences of their choice. There is a day coming when “at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in

earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”[\[81\]](#) Unfortunately, it will be too late for many. We pray this will not be the case for those who read these pages.

[\[1\]](#) Webster, s.v. “authority,” p. 117.

[\[2\]](#) Romans 13:1

[\[3\]](#) John M. Frame, *Apologetics to the Glory of God* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P & R Publishing, 1994), p. 140.

[\[4\]](#) Charles C. Ryrie, *A Survey of Bible Doctrine* (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1972), p. 36.

[\[5\]](#) Daniel 2, 7, 8

[\[6\]](#) Daniel 9:24-27

[\[7\]](#) Isaiah 11:11

[\[8\]](#) Ezekiel 37:22

[\[9\]](#) Henry M. Morris, *The Bible Has the Answer* (Nutley, New Jersey: The Craig Press, 1971), p. 2.

[\[10\]](#) Paul E. Steele, *On These Truths We Stand* (Cupertino, California: Dime Publishers, 1975), p. 44.

[\[11\]](#) Ryrie, pp. 45-46

[\[12\]](#) John Warwick Montgomery, *History and Christianity* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany House Publishers, 1965), pp. 26-27.

[\[13\]](#) *Ibid.*, p. 28.

[\[14\]](#) Morris, p. 1.

[\[15\]](#) Steele, p. 17.

[\[16\]](#) II Samuel 23:2-3

[\[17\]](#) Jeremiah 1:9

[\[18\]](#) Jeremiah 26:2

[\[19\]](#) Exodus 32:16. Note other references to this: Exodus 24:12; 31:18; Deuteronomy 5:22.

[\[20\]](#) II Kings 17:36-37

[\[21\]](#) Hebrews 1:1-2

[\[22\]](#) Acts 1:16

[\[23\]](#) The reference Peter is referring to among King David’s Old Testament writings is Psalms 41:9.

[\[24\]](#) Acts 4:24-25

[\[25\]](#) Psalms 2:1

[\[26\]](#) From Isaiah 6:9

[\[27\]](#) Acts 28:25-26

[\[28\]](#) II Peter 1:19-21

[\[29\]](#) James Strong, *The New Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984), p. 31 [hereafter cited as NSECB].

[\[30\]](#) I Peter 1:23

[\[31\]](#) I Peter 1:25

[\[32\]](#) I Corinthians 2:10-13

[\[33\]](#) I Corinthians 14:37

[\[34\]](#) Galatians 3:28

[\[35\]](#) Genesis 12:7; 17:7

[\[36\]](#) Galatians 3:16

[\[37\]](#) I Thessalonians 2:13

[\[38\]](#) I Timothy 5:17-18

[\[39\]](#) II Timothy 3:15

[\[40\]](#) II Timothy 3:16

- [41] NSECB, p. 36.
- [42] Matthew 4:4
- [43] Luke 6:46
- [44] Matthew 4:4, 7, 10; Luke 4:4, 8
- [45] Luke 4:12
- [46] Matthew 4:6; Luke 4:9-11
- [47] Mark 8:31
- [48] Matthew 26:54
- [49] I Corinthians 15:3-4
- [50] Matthew 12:39-40
- [51] Matthew 15:4-6
- [52] Mark 7:11
- [53] Matthew 19:3-6
- [54] Norman L. Geisler, *Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1976), p. 359.
- [55] Matthew 22:23-33
- [56] Exodus 3:6, 16
- [57] John 10:35
- [58] Matthew 5:18
- [59] Matthew 10:1-4
- [60] John 13:20
- [61] Luke 6:12-13
- [62] Galatians 1:1; Acts 26:17
- [63] Mark 3:14
- [64] John 15:27; I John 1:1-3
- [65] Acts 1:21-26
- [66] Galatians 1:11, 12, 17, 18
- [67] Albert Barnes, *Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible*. In *SwordSearcher*, Version 5.1.1.1 [CD-ROM] (Broken Arrow, OK: Brandon Staggs, 1995-2007).
- [68] I Corinthians 9:1
- [69] I Corinthians 15:8-9
- [70] John 14:25-26
- [71] The definitive article is supplied in the Greek: pasan thn alhyeian.
- [72] John 16:12-13
- [73] Kenneth H. Good, *God's Blueprint for a Church* (Des Plaines, Illinois: Regular Baptist Press, 1974), p. 3.
- [74] Hebrews 2:3-4
- [75] II Corinthians 12:12
- [76] Romans 15:18-19
- [77] Matthew 4:4
- [78] II Peter 1:19-21
- [79] Paul E. Little, *Know Why You Believe* (Wheaton, Illinois: Scripture Press Publications, 1967), p. 16.
- [80] Luke 6:46
- [81] Philippians 2:10-11