

## The Bible Is God's Word

### 1) How do we know that the Old Testament is God's Word?

A) Jesus' resurrection establishes His claim to be the Son of God. Since Jesus is God, whatever He said is true. Here is what Jesus said about the Old Testament (OT):<sup>1</sup>

- We should believe the OT (Luke 16:16–31; 24:25–27).
- The OT is unbreakable (John 10:35).
- The OT is irrevocable (Matt 5:18; Luke 16:17; Luke 24:44).
- The OT has final authority (Matt 4:4, 7, 10; Matt 21:42; Mark 11:17).
- The OT is the truth (John 17:17; Matt 22:29).
- We should believe the teachings of Moses (Matt 23:1–5, 23; Mark 7:9–13; 12:26–27; John 5:45–47).
- We should believe the message of Daniel (Matt 24:15).

B) Jesus preached one of His first public messages from an OT text (Luke 4:16–19).

C) Jesus justified His actions by referring to the OT:

- when He ate on the Sabbath (Matt 12:1–8).
- when He healed on the Sabbath (Matt 12:10–21).
- when he accepted the praise of the crowds at His triumphal entry (Matt 21:16).

D) Jesus believed in the literal history of the OT. He referred to:

- Creation (Mark 10:6).
- Adam and Eve (Matt 19:5–7).
- The murder of Abel (Luke 11:51).
- Noah's ark (Matt 24:38).
- Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Matt 22:31–32).
- Lot's wife (Luke 17:32).
- Destruction of Sodom (Luke 17:29).
- The burning bush (Luke 20:37).
- Moses and the serpent (John 3:14).
- The wilderness manna (John 6:31).
- The Queen of Sheba and Solomon (Matt 12:42).
- Elijah and the widow (Luke 4:25–26).
- Naaman the leper (Luke 4:27).
- Jonah and the great fish (Matt 12:40).
- The repentance of Nineveh (Matt 12:41).
- The murder of Zachariah (Matt 23:35).

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<sup>1</sup> H. L. Willmington, *Willmington's Guide to the Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1988), pp. 795–796.

- E) “It has been estimated that over 10% of Jesus’ recorded New Testament (NT) words were taken from the OT. In the four Gospels, 180 of the 1,800 verses which report His teachings are either OT quotes or OT allusions.”<sup>2</sup>
- F) From this data, we conclude that the OT is God’s Word.

## 2) How do we know that the New Testament is God’s Word?

- A) When Jesus was here on earth, He did not write His teachings down. Instead, He told His twelve disciples (also called “the apostles”) that they would be guided by the Holy Spirit as they taught others what He had taught them. Jesus said the Holy Spirit would:
- speak through them (Matt 10:19–20; Luke 12:11–12; Mark 13:11).
  - help them remember what he said (John 14:26).
  - guide them into “all the truth” (John 16:13–16).
  - empower them to be his witnesses to both Jew and Gentile (Acts 1:8).
- B) Jesus’ promise to the apostles was fulfilled during the early days of the church. The Holy Spirit guided them as they taught the church the gospel of Jesus Christ. Three of the apostles—Matthew, Peter, and John—wrote down this truth for us to read. Paul, who was later chosen by Jesus to be an apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 26:15–18; Gal 2:7–8; 1 Tim 1:1), also wrote down the truth given to him by the Holy Spirit, and he sent his letters to be read in the churches.
- C) The remaining four authors of the NT—Mark, Luke, James, and Jude—were not apostles themselves, but were associates of the apostles and thoroughly knowledgeable of their teachings:
- Luke was Paul’s companion (Col 4:14; 2 Tim 4:11; Phlm 1:24).
  - Mark was Peter’s associate (Acts 12:11–12; 1 Pet 5:13).
  - James and Jude were half-brothers of Jesus (Matt 12:46; 13:55–56; Mark 6:3; John 2:12; 7:3, 5, 10; Acts 1:14; 1 Cor 9:5; Gal 1:19).
- D) The NT is a reflection of Jesus’ teaching and the revelation that was given to these men by the Holy Spirit. The writers themselves declared their teachings and writings to be the fulfillment of Jesus’ promise. They said that:
- (1) Their writings were “Scripture.” Peter refers to Paul’s writings as “Scripture” (2 Pet 3:16). Paul quotes Luke’s writings (Luke 10:7) and Deuteronomy 25:4 together under the single phrase “for the Scripture says” (1 Tim 5:18). Paul said that “All Scripture is breathed out by God,” so it follows that the NT (as well as the OT) is inspired by God (2 Tim 3:16–17).<sup>3</sup>
  - (2) Their teachings and writings were the “Word of God.” Paul said, “And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 796.

<sup>3</sup> Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, revised and expanded edition (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), p. 94.

- you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers” (1 Thess 2:13; cf. 1 Thess 4:2, 8; 2 Thess 2:15; 3:6, 14; 1 Cor 14:37; Gal 1:6–9).
- (3) Their writings were from the Spirit. Paul told the Ephesians, “When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power” (Eph 3:4–7). It is clear, then, that the NT writers considered their writing to be just as Spirit-directed as the OT.
- (4) Their message was a continuation of the message of the OT and the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb 1:1–2; 2:1–4).
- (5) Their writings were divinely authoritative. Paul told his sons in the faith to “command and teach” his writings (1 Tim 4:11) “with all authority” (Titus 2:15), and he based his own authority and even the truth of the gospel itself on his apostleship (Gal 1:1, 12). Likewise, Peter reminded the believers of apostolic authority, saying, “You should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles” (2 Pet 3:2).<sup>4</sup>
- (6) Their writings were to be read and circulated in the churches. It is obvious that Peter had a collection of Paul's letters (2 Pet 3:15–16), and Paul directed the Colossians to read and circulate their epistle (Col 4:16). The Thessalonians, too, were charged to read their epistle to all the believers (1 Thess 5:27).<sup>5</sup>
- E) The church confirmed these claims by their belief and obedience to the truth of the NT writings. In Acts 2:42 the believers “were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship.”
- F) From this data, we conclude that the NT is God's Word.

### 3) What are some theological terms used to describe the Bible?

- A) Inspired. This word refers to the fact that the Bible has been breathed out by God (2 Tim 3:16). Peter said, “No prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet 1:21). The Bible is not the product of men's minds. It is the result of men being moved by the Spirit to write the words that God wanted them to write. Thus the true author of Scripture is God.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 94.

B) Inerrant. This word means that the Bible is true and without error in all that it teaches and affirms, including its statements regarding history and the physical universe. For further detail on this issue, see the 1978 Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy.

(1) What about errors in copying and translation? The Chicago Statement has this to say about transmission and translation: "Since God has nowhere promised an inerrant transmission of Scripture, it is necessary to affirm that only the autographic text of the original documents was inspired and to maintain the need of textual criticism as a means of detecting any slips that may have crept into the text in the course of its transmission. The verdict of this science, however, is that the Hebrew and Greek text appear to be amazingly well preserved, so that we are amply justified in affirming, with the Westminster Confession, a singular providence of God in this matter and in declaring that the authority of Scripture is in no way jeopardized by the fact that the copies we possess are not entirely error-free. Similarly, no translation is or can be perfect, and all translations are an additional step away from the *autographa*. Yet the verdict of linguistic science is that English-speaking Christians, at least, are exceedingly well served in these days with a host of excellent translations and have no cause for hesitating to conclude that the true Word of God is within their reach. Indeed, in view of the frequent repetition in Scripture of the main matters with which it deals and also of the Holy Spirit's constant witness to and through the Word, no serious translation of Holy Scripture will so destroy its meaning as to render it unable to make its reader "wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim 3:15)."<sup>6</sup>

#### 4) Is the Bible finished?

A) "From the time that the last apostle died, the church has considered the Bible a finished book. It is important to realize that the church did not merely select writings to call Scripture; instead, they recognized that certain writings were inspired by God and had Scriptural authority. The writings that were recognized as Scripture met qualifications that no later writings could meet. For Old Testament books, the church kept the writings that Israel had preserved as Scripture. New Testament Scripture was recognized by the following qualifications: historical tie to the apostles, self-authenticating quality, unanimous church acceptance, respectful use of the Old Testament, and usefulness for resistance of heresy. God still speaks, but can something be added to the Bible now? It is not possible for any new writing to meet the qualifications that led to the inclusion of the original Scriptures. For example, no new writing can be tied to the apostles, for they are not still with us. Neither could any new writing be accepted by the whole church worldwide."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Online at Dallas Theological Seminary: <http://library.dts.edu/Pages/TL/Special/ICBI.shtml>.

<sup>7</sup> *I Believe: Fundamentals of the Christian Faith*, written by the Bible Faculty of God's Bible School and College (Revivalist Press, 2006), p. 15.