

THE WORD OF GOD

Theological

It's Immutability

I. The Design of God's Word

What is truly its Source?

a. John 1:1 - In the beginning was the **Word**, and the **Word** was with God, and the **Word** was God.

b. John 1:2 - He was in the beginning with God.

In the beginning, John uses the phrase in an absolute sense to refer to the beginning of the time-space-material universe.

Was, the verb highlights the eternal pre-existence of the Word. It does not state was-made or were made. ***The Word was with God and was God. It always was (has no beginning) and is God.***

OK, so let's dive in a little more specifically.

The Word, OT Term and also from Greek philosophy, which bridged the gap for Jew and Gentile!

More importantly, God's Word is associated with pre-existence and the parameters of John's Prologue (1-18):

1. Creation (Creator) (vs. 3) ⁴ "Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made."

2. Light and Life (vs. 4-9) Like Genesis 1:3 let there be light In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome^[a] it. ⁶ There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. ⁸ He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. ⁹ The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. ¹

– Life and Light are qualities shared and offered!

3. Confronts and Divides (vs. 10-13) “¹⁰ He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹ He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹² Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— ¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God. ”

4. Incarnation (vs. 14-17) “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵(John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, “This is the one I spoke about when I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’”) ¹⁶ Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given.

5. Supremely manifests Himself to us (vs. 18) “No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and^[b] is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.”

This term denotes the mutual intimacy, love and knowledge existing in the Godhead.

So this WORD is Christ and His powerful self expression in creation, salvation, wisdom and revelation. (Pss 33:6, Prov. 8:27) Or said another way: The triune completeness revealed through the second Godhead – Jesus, The Christ.

Other Scripture:

Rev 19:13 “¹³ He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God.”

Heb 4:12 “For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart”

The Word of God is the name, identity, title and honor given to Jesus alone. This is who He is. As The Word of God He is the promise of God and the fulfillment of that promise. Because Jesus always was, and always will be The Word of God, the very reputation of God was dependant on Jesus fulfilling scripture.

II. The Duration of God's Word

1. "The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever." Isaiah 40:8

2. " For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.." 1 Peter 1:23

3. "For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished" Matthew 5:18

4. "It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law." Luke 16:17 WOW!!

III. The Delight in God's Word

1. "I rise before dawn and cry for help; I have put my hope in your word." Psalm 119:147

2. "I have rejoiced in the way of your testimonies as much as in all riches. I will meditate on your precepts, and contemplate your ways. I will delight myself in your statutes; I will not forget your word." Psalm 119:14-16

4. "...they continued steadfastly in the apostles' **doctrine** and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers." Acts 2:42

5. "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. " Ephesians 4:29

6. 2Sa 22:31 "As for God, His way is perfect. The Word of Jehovah is tried. He is a shield to all those who seek refuge in Him."

IV. The Division in God's Word

1. "Therefore this is what the Holy One of Israel says: "Because you have rejected this message, relied on oppression and depended on deceit,¹³ this sin will become for you like a high wall, cracked and bulging, that collapses suddenly, in an instant. "Isaiah 30:12-13

2. "Because **they have rejected the law** of the Lord of hosts, And **despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.** Therefore the anger of the Lord is aroused against His people; He has stretched out His hand against them and stricken them." Isaiah 5:24-25

3. "Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns." Matthew 16:23

4. "Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone,' and 'A **stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.**' "They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed. But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy." 1 Peter 2:7-10

V. Do Not Delete (Alter) God's Word

1. "**You shall not add to the word** which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you." Deuteronomy 4:2

2. "Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; **you shall not add to it nor take away from it.**" Deuteronomy 12:32

3. "...if anyone preaches any **other gospel** to you than what you have received, **let him be accursed**. For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ." Galatians 1:9-10

4. "For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the Spirit you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough." 2 Corinthians 11:4

5. "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 rebuke you, and you be found a liar." Proverbs 30:5-6

6. "**If anyone adds to these things**, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." Revelation 22:18-19

It's Implications

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,¹⁷ so that the servant of God^[a] may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." **2 Timothy 3:16-17**

1. Evangelism, Conviction of Sin and the Need for Lordship. The Word of God is sufficient for evangelism. Indeed, it is the only thing that works in evangelism. Everything else—captivating music, personal testimonies, emotional appeals, even coming forward to make a commitment to Jesus Christ— all that is at best supplementary. And if it is used or depended upon apart from the faithful preaching and teaching of the Word of God, the "conversions" that result are spurious conversions, which is to say that those who respond do not actually become Christians. They become Christians in name only. The only way the Holy Spirit works to regenerate lost men and women is through the Word of God. (Romans 3:20, Galatians 3:22-25; Hebrews 4:12-13) Also: Peter said it: "You have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God" (1 Peter 1:23).

2. Sanctification. When we think of sanctification today, most of us think of either one of two things. Either we think of a method or else we think of an experience. Paul's approach is to know the Bible and its teaching about what has been done for us by God in our salvation.

Paul makes this clear in the 6th chapter where he says, "In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus" (v. 11). This is the first time in the letter that Paul tells his readers to do something, and what they are to do is "count" or "reckon upon" the fact that God has done an irreversible work in their lives as a result of which they have died to sin (the verb is in the past tense) and have been made alive to God in Christ Jesus. The only way they can understand what has happened to them is to know the Bible, which teaches them what has happened. But then, because they know it, they are to go on with God, acting on the basis of what has been done. In other words, they cannot go back to being what they were before. They are new creatures in Christ. So the only thing they can do is get on with living the Christian life. There is no way for them to go but forward.

It has everything to do with knowing and living by the sufficient Word of God.
(Mark 4:1-20; James 1:22-25)

3. Guidance. The last words on guidance are in the Bible. That is what God has given us to indicate how we are to live and what we are to do to please him. All we need is in the Bible. So if there is something we want or think we need that is not in the Bible - what job we should take, who we should marry, where we should live - it doesn't matter what we do as long as we are obeying what God teaches about living a godly life. That doesn't mean that God does not have a detailed plan for our lives. He does. He has a detailed plan for all things, ordering "whatsoever comes to pass". But it does mean that we do not have to know this plan in advance and, indeed, cannot. What we can know and need to know is what God has told us in the Bible.

4. Correction and Instruction. Correction is not judgment, as the Bible says that we should correct, rebuke and be bold to those who are sinning. It is to be done in an act of caring for them in the hope that they will believe. That way we could contribute to the saving of a soul. If we don't, we could be responsible for suppressing the truth which could mean eternal death instead of eternal life for that person. *"James 5:20²⁰ remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins."*

5. Ultimate Authority in Doctrine and Deed. The Bible is the ultimate authority for the Christian in terms of behavior and belief. (Luke 10:26; 24:44-45; John 10:35; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 3:16). John Stott quote “Scripture/the Word is the royal scepter by which King Jesus governs His Church”

Practical

1. What is the Bible?

A collection of writings that we Christians consider uniquely inspired and authoritative. While it is one unified book, the Bible is also a compilation of 66 smaller books, or literary works. It contains two testaments, Old (39) and New (27). The word testament translates as “covenant” or “agreement”. Thus, the basic division, the first (old) covenant relationship was ratified @ Mount Sinai between God and the Jewish Nation (Exodus 19-31). The covenant was anticipatory and pointed to a new covenant, promised in Jeremiah 31:31, when God would draw a people to himself from all nations and write his words on their hearts (Isa.49:6). In reality, this new covenant was nothing other than a fulfillment of the many saving promises God had made throughout history; (Gen.3:15; Gen 22:18). It is also organized into 7 dispensations: Creation of Man (Innocence Gen 2:25), Beginning of Civilization (Conscience Gen. 3:22), The Flood and Landing of the Ark (Government Genesis 9:5), Call of Abraham (Promise Gen. 12:1-3), The Law Given to Moses (Law Exodus 20:1-17 and Galatians 3:19), The Ascension of Christ and the Descent of the Holy Spirit (Grace Eph 3:2; Romans 6:14), Tribulation Leading to Christ’s Future Kingdom (Kingdom Rev. 21) Note: in the Kingdom Age, the disorder of the previous 6 are restored.

The Purpose and Story Line

The purpose of the Bible is “to make a person wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ” (2 Tim.3:15) The Bible is not an end in itself. As Jesus said to the religious experts in his day, “You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me” (John 5:39). In other words, the WORD (Jesus – our LORD) is the source of salvation and eternal heavenly dwelling, not His revelation.

The basic story line is this: God made everything well and asked for obedience (Gen. 1-2) Humans rejected a perfect LORD and his authority and rebelled, seeking individual autonomy, which manifested to a different relationship, producing sin, decay and death. (Gen. 3: 1-24). The Bible promises that God will send a Messiah

(Jesus) who will defeat death and Satan and ultimately renew all things (Gen 3:15; Rev. 22:1-5)

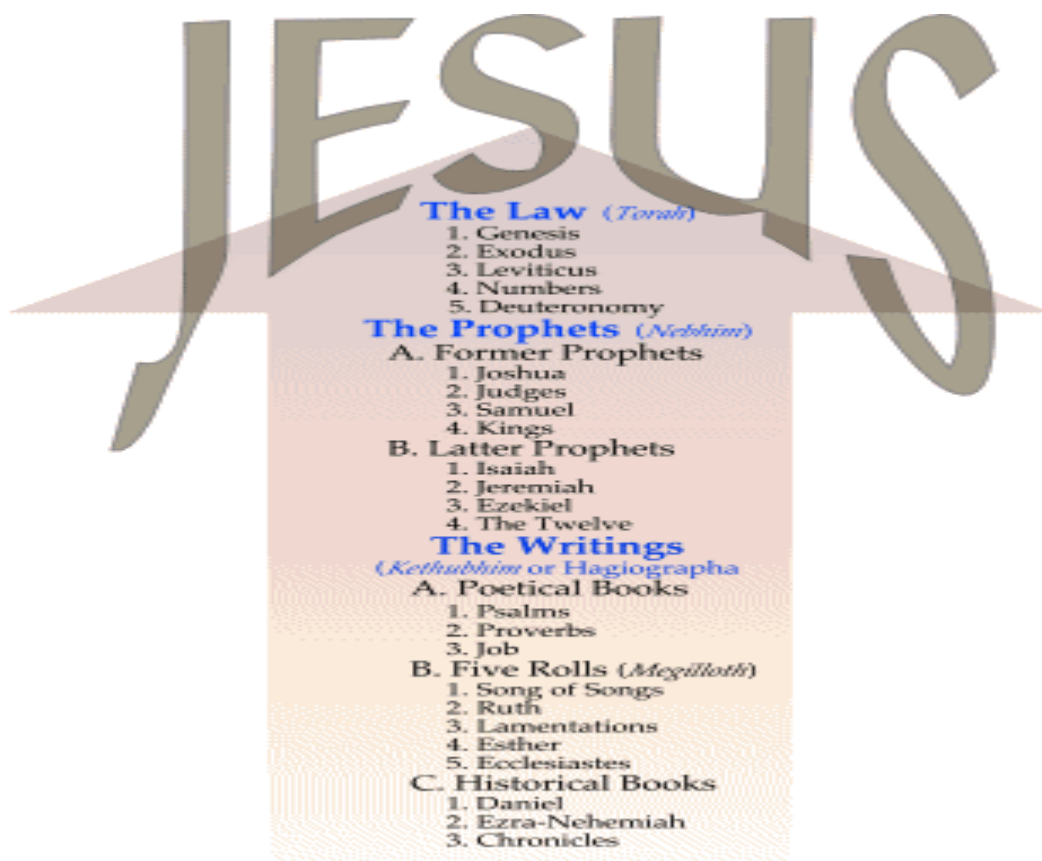
Chronology of the Bible's Composition

The first 5 books in the Old Testament, the book of Moses or (the Pentateuch or Jewish Torah) were written around 1400 BC. The last book of Malachi was written around 430 BC. So the thirty nine books were written over 1000 years by 40 authors. Jeremiah and Lamentations were written by the same author, 1st and 2nd Kings we do not know and Psalms and Proverbs multiple authors. It was written primarily in Hebrew except small portions in Aramaic (Ezra4:8-16; 7:12-26; Daniel 24b-7:28; Jer.10:11).

The first book in the New Testament (possibly James or Galatians) was written in AD mid to late 40's. Most were written in the 50's and 60's (very significant which I will address later) with the last book revelation written between AD 90-95.

2. How is the Bible Organized?

a. Hebrew Bible



b. Christian Bible

The order of the **Old Testament Bible Books** in the English Bible is given below for comparative purposes. The Septuagint (LXX), a Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible in the 3rd century BC, first came up with the four-class organization now used in the English Bible.

<u>Pentateuch</u>	<u>Historical Books</u>	<u>Poetical Books</u>	<u>Major Prophets</u>
1. Genesis	1. Joshua	1. Job	1. Isaiah
2. Exodus	2. Judges	2. Psalms	2. Jeremiah
3. Leviticus	3. Ruth	3. Proverbs	3. Lamentations
4. Numbers	4. I Samuel	4. Ecclesiastes	4. Ezekiel
5. Deuteronomy	5. II Samuel	5. Song of Songs	5. Daniel
	6. I Kings		<u>Minor Prophets</u>
	7. II Kings		1. Hosea
	8. I Chronicles		2. Joel
	9. II Chronicles		3. Amos
	10. Ezra		4. Obadiah
	11. Nehemiah		5. Jonah
	12. Esther		6. Micah
			7. Nahum
			8. Habakkuk
			9. Zephaniah
			10. Haggai
			11. Zechariah
			12. Malachi

New Testament Bible Books

a. Gospel and Acts, b. Pauline Letters c. General Letters (Hebrews, James, 1-2 Peter, 1-3 John, Jude) and Revelation.

b. The Chronological Order we do not really know, numerous theories.

<p>Jesus is born 10 Page Flight to Egypt Childhood at Nazareth In Jerusalem at 12 John the Baptist Jesus' Baptism Temptation in the wilderness Turns water into wine First cleansing of the Temple Jesus and Nicodemus Discourse with the woman at the well Galilean ministry Miracles by the sea Visit to Jerusalem</p>	<p>5 B. C. Matt. 1; Luke 2 4 B. C. Matt. 2:13-18 Luke 2:39-40 Luke 2:41-50 Matt. 3; Mark 1; Luke 3 Matt. 3 Matt. 4 John 2 John 2:13-22 John 3:1 John 4 Luke 4:14; John 4:43 Matt. 8 John 7</p>	<p>The life of Jesus Matthew, Mark, Luke, John 5 B.C. - 29 A.D.</p>
<p>Jesus anointed by Mary His triumphal entry Second cleansing of the Temple Cursing of the fig tree Judas agrees to betray Christ Preparation for Passover Institution of the Lord's supper Jesus washes the disciples' feet Jesus prays at Gethsemane Jesus is betrayed and arrested</p>	<p>John 12:8-11 Matt. 21 Matt. 21:12 Matt. 21:18,19 Matt. 26:14-16 Mark 14:12-16 Luke 22:14-23 John 13:1-17 Mark 14:26-42 John 18:2-11</p>	<p>Jesus' Last Week</p>
<p>Jesus is tried and condemned Peter denies the Lord Jesus before Pilate Jesus before Herod Barabbas released Jesus' walk to Golgotha Jesus is crucified Darkness at noon Jesus dies Jesus' body entombed Resurrection Women visit the tomb Stone rolled away Message of angels Christ appears to disciples</p>	<p>Matt 26:57-68 Matt 26:58; 69-75 Matt. 27:11-14 Luke 23:6-12 Mark 15:6-15 Matt. 27:32-34 Matt. 27:35 Mark 15:33 Matt. 27:50 John 19:42 Luke 24:1-8 Matt. 28:1 Matt. 28:2-4 Matt. 28:5-8 Mark 16:14</p>	<p>The Crucifixion to The Ascension</p>

The Great Commission given Jesus' ascension	Matt. 28:19-20 John 20:26-29	
Pentecost Conversion of Saul (Paul) Peter imprisoned and delivered Death of Herod Paul's first missionary journey Paul attends council at Jerusalem Paul's second missionary journey Paul's third missionary journey Paul goes from Macedonia to Corinth Arrest of Paul Paul's fourth missionary Paul's first imprisonment Death of Paul and Peter Temple at Jerusalem destroyed	Acts 2 Acts 9 Acts 12:1-11 Acts 12:20-23 Acts 13:1-3 Acts 15:1-12 Acts 15 Acts 18 Acts 20 Acts 21 Acts 27 Acts 28:16 A.D. 67-68 A.D. 70	The Ministries of Paul and Peter 29 - 67 A.D.

3. Who Wrote and Revealed the Bible – Humans or God?

- a. “I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand” Philemon 1:19
- b. “This is disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down” John 21:24

So who wrote the Bible? Everyone, who claims they are Christians agree the Scriptures are inspired. However, what does inspiration mean?

- a. **Revelation:** From God to man (man hears what God wants written)
- b. **Inspiration:** From man to paper (man writes that which God wants written)
- c. **Illumination:** From paper to heart (man receives that which God has written)

a. Revelation:

We know that God spoke to man, but how did He speak? Hebrews 1:1 says that He spoke to the fathers and prophets in many portions and many ways:

1. through angels (Gen. 18; Gen. 19; Dan. 9:21-27; Luke 2:8-14; etc.)
2. through a "still, small voice" (1 Kings 19:11, 12; Ps. 32:8)
3. through nature (Rom. 1:20; Ps. 19:1-4; Rom. 10:18; Acts 14:15)
4. through a loud voice (Gen. 3:9-19; Ex. 3:14)
5. through dreams (Gen. 28:12; Matt. 1:20; Matt. 2:12)

b. Inspiration:

What is involved in transferring the voice of God into the vocabulary of man? There are five different areas to be considered: (1) various theories of inspiration; (2) scripture texts on inspiration; (3) implications of inspiration; (4) importance of inspiration; (5) completion of inspiration.

The term inspiration is found only once in the New Testament in 2 Timothy 3:16, 17: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

The Greek word is *theopneustos* and literally means "God-breathed."

Theories of Inspiration

The natural theory--the Bible writers were inspired only in the sense that a poet or writer is inspired naturally. In other words, that spark of divine inspiration that supposedly is in all men simply burned a little brighter in the hearts of the Bible writers.

However, 2 Peter 1:20 says, "no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

The mechanical theory--God coldly and woodenly dictated the Bible to his writers as an office manager would dictate an impersonal letter to his secretary.

The Bible is the story of divine love, and God is anything but mechanical or cold concerning inspiration. The Holy Spirit never transgressed beyond the limits of the writer's vocabulary. We can see this because the highly educated Paul used a larger, more complicated vocabulary than the fisherman, Peter. The Church has never held what has been stigmatized as the mechanical theory of inspiration. The sacred writers were not machines. Their self-consciousness was not suspended; nor were their intellectual powers superseded. Holy men spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. It was men, not machines; not unconscious instruments, but living, thinking, willing minds, whom the Spirit used as His organs....[T]he sacred writers impressed their peculiarities on their several productions as plainly as though they were the subjects of no extraordinary influence.[2]

The content theory--Only the main thoughts of the Bible are inspired. This is the position of the liberal theologian who would cheerfully accept those portions of the Bible which deal with love and brotherhood, but quickly reject the passages dealing with sin, righteousness, and future judgment. But this is contrary to 2 Timothy 3:16 (quoted above). Charles F. Baker writes,

A certain bishop is purported to have said that he believed the Bible to have been inspired in spots. When asked for his authority for such a statement, he quoted Hebrews 1:1, stating that this meant that God spoke at various times in varying degrees. Thus, some spots were fully inspired, others were only partially inspired, and still others were not inspired at all. The bishop was embarrassed when a layman asked: "How do you know that Hebrews 1:1, the one scripture upon which you base your argument, is one of those fully inspired spots?"

The spiritual rule only theory--The Bible may be regarded as our infallible rule of faith and practice in all matters of religious, ethical, and spiritual value, but not in other matters, such as some of the historical and scientific statements found in the Word of God.

Jesus said, however, "If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?"(John 3:12).

The verbal-plenary theory--All (plenary) the very words (verbal) of the Bible are inspired by God. Matthew 4:4 says, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." First Corinthians 2:13 says, "These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual." Jesus says in John 17:8, "For I have given them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them,

and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me." Jesus says in John 6:63, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life."

Scripture Texts on Inspiration

2 Peter 1:20, 21; Hebrews 1:1; John 10:35; Matthew 5:18; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 3:2; 1 Corinthians 2:4; 15:3; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 4:15; and the verses already referred to above.

Implications of Inspiration

As one carefully considers the subject of inspiration, he is led to the following conclusions:

1. Verbal-plenary inspiration does not mean that all the parts of the Bible are equally important, but only that they are equally inspired.
2. Verbal-plenary inspiration does not guarantee the inspiration of any modern or ancient translations of the Bible, but refers only to the original Greek and Hebrew manuscripts (the autographs).
3. Verbal-plenary inspiration does not allow for any false teaching, but it does on occasion record the lie of someone (for example, Genesis 3:6). Therefore, we have an accurate record of the devil's words. As one reads the Bible, he must carefully distinguish between what God records and what He sanctions. Thus, while lying, murder, adultery, and polygamy are found in the Word of God, they are never approved by the Word of God.
4. Verbal-plenary inspiration does not permit any historical, scientific, or prophetic error whatsoever. While it is admitted that the Bible is not a textbook on science, it is nevertheless held that every scientific statement in the scriptures is absolutely true.
5. Verbal-plenary inspiration did not prohibit personal research. The New Testament writer Luke begins his gospel with the following account:

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the

Word have handed them down to us, it seemed fitting for me, as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out....(Luke 1:1-3 NASB).

6. Verbal-plenary inspiration did not deny the use of extra-biblical sources (see Acts 17:28; Titus 1:12; Jude 1:14, 15).
7. Verbal-plenary inspiration did not overwhelm the personality of the human author. The Bible writers experienced no coma-like trance as do some mediums today during a seance, but, on the contrary, they always retained their physical, mental, and emotional powers. See Isaiah 6:1-11, Daniel 12)
8. Verbal-plenary inspiration does not exclude the usage of pictorial, symbolic, hyperbolic, or summary language. This is to say the Holy Spirit does not demand that we accept every word in the Bible in a wooden and legalistic way. For example, a case could not be made that God has feathers like a bird in Ps. 91:4. Here the thought is simply that the persecuted believer can flee to his heavenly Father for protection and warmth.
9. Verbal-plenary inspiration does not mean uniformity in all details given in describing the same event. See Matt. 27:37, Mark 15:26, Luke 23:38, and John 19:19, about the superscription on the cross.
10. Verbal-plenary inspiration assures us that God included all the necessary things He wanted us to know and excluded everything else. 2 Tim. 3:15-17.

Importance of Inspiration

Of the three tools involved in the making of our Bible, the tool of inspiration is the most important. This is true because:

1. One may have inspiration without revelation. For example, rather than supernaturally telling Luke what to write in his gospel, the Holy Spirit led him to carefully check out all of the records.
2. One may have inspiration without illumination. Peter tells us (1 Peter 1:11) that the Old Testament prophets did not always understand everything they wrote about.

Completion of Inspiration

Is inspiration still going on today? Yes, inspiration is still going on today, but with the close of the apostolic age, God led the church fathers to canonize what we know today as the Old and New Testaments. We have all of the information we will ever need regarding God, our relationship to him, and our salvation straight from God to us. If someone claims to have a revelation from God, we must check to be sure that it is in harmony with God's word that has already been revealed.

c. Illumination

We have already stated that without inspiration, no scripture would have ever been written. We may now claim that without illumination, no sinner would have ever been saved. Illumination, then, is that method used by the Holy Spirit to shed divine light upon all seeking men as they look into the Word of God. We need illumination because:

1. We are naturally blind because of sin. (1 Cor. 2:14, Matt. 16:16-17)
2. We are satanically blind. (2 Cor. 4:3-4)
3. We are carnally blind. (Heb. 5:12-14, 1 Cor. 3, 2 Peter 1)

There are two main results of personal illumination: that people are saved and then that the saved people are matured.

Implications of Illumination

1. The Holy Spirit looks for a certain amount of sincerity before He illuminates any human heart. We are quick to point out that sincerity is not enough to save anyone, and so it is. However, it should be also noted that it is equally impossible for an insincere person to be saved. This first implication is brought out in John 4:24.

Furthermore, it should be stated that no Christian should ever look on illumination as automatic. This is to say, God has never promised to reveal precious and profound Biblical truths to any believer who will not search the Scriptures for himself. See John 20:31, Acts 17:11, 2 Tim 2:15, 1 Peter 2:2.

2. The Holy Spirit often seeks out the aid of a believer in performing his task of illuminating the hearts of others. See Acts 8:30, 31, 35, Acts 17:2, Acts 18:26, Acts 18:28.

4. Does the Bible contain Errors?

It is not uncommon to encounter people who assert the Bible has errors in it. Such a view, however, does not square with the Bible's claims about itself or the historic view of Christianity. What do we mean the Bible is inerrant, and how can we support this assertion in light of alleged discrepancies in the Bible.

Up to mid-seventeenth century, essentially all persons who claimed the name of Christians, accepted that the Bible was completely truthful in all matters. However, in the last 100 years, people began to have a more skeptical view and started judging based on human reason, and so called probability.

Two scripture verses that speak to this subject:

John 10:35 It say Scripture cannot be broken

Hebrews 1:1-2 "In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe."

Is the Bible Inerrant?

Jesus never belittled Scripture, or set it aside, or criticized it, (although He criticized those who misused it), or contradicted it (although He rejected many interpretations of it), or opposed it (although He sometimes was free or interpretive with it).

Christ's Use of Scripture

We are not afraid to say it: when we hear the Son of God quote the Scriptures.

1. He knew the Scriptures thoroughly, even to words and verb tenses. He obviously had either memorized vast portions or knew it instinctively: John 7:15.
2. He believed every word of Scripture. All the prophecies concerning Himself were fulfilled, and He believed beforehand they would be.
3. He believed the OT was historical fact. This is very clear, even though from the Creation (cf. Gn 2:24 and Mt 19:4–5) onward, much of what He believed has long been under fire by critics, as being mere fiction. Here are some examples of historical facts:

Luke 11:51—Abel was a real individual

Matthew 24:37–39—Noah and the Flood (Lk 17:26–27)

John 8:56–58—Abraham

Matthew 10:15; 11:23–24 (Lk 10:12)—Sodom and Gomorrah

Luke 17:28–32—Lot (and wife!)

Matthew 8:11—Isaac and Jacob (Lk 13:28)

John 6:31, 49, 58—Manna

John 3:14—Serpent

Matthew 12:39–41—Jonah (v. 42—Sheba)

Matthew 24:15—Daniel and Isaiah

4. He believed the books were written by the men whose names they bear:

Moses wrote the Pentateuch (Torah): Matthew 19:7, 8; Mark 7:10, 12:26 ; Luke 5:14;16:29, 31; 24:27, 44; John 1:17; 5:45, 46;7:19

Isaiah wrote Isaiah: Mark 7:6–13; John 12:37–41.

Jonah wrote Jonah: Matthew 12:39–41.

Daniel wrote Daniel: Matthew 24:15

5. He believed the OT was spoken by the Godhead Himself, and written by the Holy Spirit's inspiration, even though the pen was held by men: Matthew 19:4–5; 22:31–32, 43; Mark 12:26; Luke 20:37.

6. He actually quoted it in overthrowing Satan! The OT Scriptures were the arbiter in every dispute: Matthew 4; Luke 16:29, 31.

7. He quoted Scripture as the basis for his **own** teaching. His ethics were the **same** as what we find already written in Scripture: Matthew 7:12; 19:18–19; 22:40; Mark 7:9, 13; 10:19; 12:24, 29–31; Luke 18:20.

8. He warned against replacing it with something else, or adding or subtracting from it. The Jewish leaders in His day had added to it with their oral traditions: Matthew 5:17; 15:1–9; 22:29 (cf. 5:43–44); Mark 7:1–12. (Destroying faith in the Bible as God's Word will open the door today to a "new" tradition.)

9. He will judge all men in the last day, as Messiah and King, on the basis of His infallible Word committed to writing by fallible men, guided by the infallible Holy Spirit: Matthew 25:31; John 5:22, 27; 12:48; Romans 2:16.

The Nicene Creed

The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy

5. Who Determined what books Would be Included in the Bible?

Many modern Protestants point to the following four "Criteria for Canonicity" to justify the selection of the books that have been included in the New Testament:

1. Apostolic Origin — attributed to and based upon the preaching/teaching of the first-generation apostles (or their close companions).
2. Universal Acceptance — acknowledged by all major Christian communities in the ancient world (by the end of the 4th century) as well as accepted canon by Jewish authorities (for the Old Testament).
3. Liturgical Use — read publicly when early Christian communities gathered for the Lord's Supper (their weekly worship services).
4. Consistent Message — containing a theological outlook similar to or complementary to other accepted Christian writings.

The basic factor for recognizing a book's canonicity for the New Testament was divine inspiration, and the chief test for this was apostolicity. The term "apostolic" as used for the test of canonicity does not necessarily mean apostolic authorship or derivation, but rather "apostolic authority". According to these Protestants, "apostolic authority" is never detached from the authority of the Lord.

History

The church made big steps in between AD 150 and AD 170 primary to defend the Church's position vs. a heretical movement called Gnosticism. Ireanus of Lyons dives this first movement.

Eusebuis becomes another predominant figure and but debates James, Jude, 2 Peter and 2 and 3 John. Then Athanasius of Alexandria in AD 367 first confirms the 27 books of canon. Then in AD 397 A third Council of Carthage the list was confirmed as the closed canon on the New Testament.

	Samuel									
Kings	Yes As 1 and 2 Kings	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Chronicles	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Prayer of Manasseh	No (Apocrypha)	No (appendix)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No historic	Yes part of 2 Chronicles	Yes
Ezra	Yes	Yes (1 Esdras)	Yes (Esdras B)	Yes (1 Esdras)	Yes (1 Ezra)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nehemiah	Yes	Yes (2 Esdras)	Yes (Esdras B)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
1 Esdras (Greek Ezra)	No (Apocrypha)	No (3 Esdras)	Yes (Esdras A)	Yes (2 Esdras)	Yes (2 Ezra)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes (2nd Ezra)	No
2 Esdras (Latin Ezra)	No (Apocrypha)	No (4 Esdras)	No	No 3 Esdras (Appendix)	Yes 3 Esdras	Yes 3Ezra	Yes 4 Ezra	No	Yes Ezra Sutuel	No
Esther	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Additions to Esther/ Esther Greek	No (Apocrypha)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No historic	Yes	Yes
Tobit	No (Apocrypha)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No historic	Yes	Yes

	pha)									
Judith	No (Apocrypha)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No historic	Yes	Yes
Job	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Psalms 1–150	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Psalms 151	No	No (appendix)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No historic	Yes	Yes
Psalms 152–5	No	No	No	No	No	No	No – inc. in some mss.	No	No	No – inc. in some mss.
Lamentations	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Proverbs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes in 2 books	Yes
Ecclesiastes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Song of Songs (Song of Solomon)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Book of Wisdom	No (Apocrypha)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No historic	Yes	Yes
Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)	No (Apocrypha)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

1 Maccabees	No (Apocrypha)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No (historic)	No	Yes
2 Maccabees	No (Apocrypha)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No historic	No	Yes
3 Maccabees	No	No (appendix)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No – inc. in some mss.	No	No	No – inc. in some mss.
4 Maccabees	No	No (appendix)	No (appendix)	No (appendix)	Yes	No	No – inc. in some mss.	No	No	No – inc. in some mss.
Enoch	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Jubilees	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
1-3 Meqabyan	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No

In Protestant Bibles, especially the English King James Bible and the Lutheran Bible, many books are part of the tradition in a section called "the Apocrypha". The Egyptian Coptic Church historically had a larger canon but now only holds to the 66 books of the proto-canon. The Syriac Orthodox and Assyrian Church of the East both hold to the Peshitta tradition. Note that in some Bibles (Armenian, Syriac and Ethiopian) the Apocalypse of Ezra is not the same as the longer Latin Esdras (2 Esdras in KJV, or 4 Esdras in the Vulgate), which includes a Latin prologue (5 Ezra) and a Latin epilogue (6 Ezra).

Colossians	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Greek
1 Thessalonians	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Greek
2 Thessalonians	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Greek
1 Timothy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Greek
2 Timothy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Greek
Titus	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Greek
Philemon	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Greek
<i><u>General Epistles</u></i>						
Hebrews	Yes ^[L 1]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Greek (?) ^[38]
James	Yes ^[L 1]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Greek
1 Peter	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Greek
2 Peter	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^[S 1]	Greek
1 John	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Greek
2 John	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^[S 1]	Greek
3 John	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^[S 1]	Greek
Jude	Yes ^[L 1]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^[S 1]	Greek
<i>Apocalypse</i>						
Book of Revelation/ Apocalypse	Yes ^[L 1]	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^[S 1]	Greek

6. Were the Ancient Manuscripts of the Bible transmitted Accurately?

Old Testament

First, we need to learn a little about the copying process for the Old Testament (Hebrew Bible). The Old Testament was written in Hebrew, a language which originally did not use written vowels. Ancient Jews were able to read this vowel-less text because they knew the language intimately, especially the traditional reading. To preserve this traditional reading, a group called the Masoretes added vowels and punctuation between. That means they added vowels from 1000 - 3000 years after the books were written. This version of the Hebrew Old Testament was known as the Masoretic Text.

The care with which these Jews edited the text has been described by F.F. Bruce, a well-respected biblical scholar:

[The Masoretes wrote] with the greatest imaginable reverence, and devised a complicated system of safeguards against scribal slips. They counted, for example, the number of times each letter of the alphabet occurs in each book; they pointed out the middle letter of the Pentateuch and the middle letter of the whole Hebrew Bible, and made even more detailed calculations than these.¹

In 1948, some Old Testament manuscripts (along with some non-biblical writings) were found in caves near the Dead Sea which dated as early as 250 B.C.E., about a thousand years before the Masoretic text. These are known as the Dead Sea Scrolls. Instead of being anywhere from 1000-3000 years from the original, these are as close as a few hundred. In the case of one of these scrolls – a copy of the book of Isaiah – the only difference between its text and the Masoretic text, was three words, and these only differed in spelling! Though over 1000 years separate these two texts, there are only three spelling changes!

New Testament

The number of extant New Testament manuscripts far out-weighs the number of classical ancient manuscripts available to us today, such as Tacitus' Annals of Imperial Rome; Josephus' The Jewish War; and Homer's Iliad. According to NT scholars, there are well over 5300 partial and complete New Testaments Manuscripts, which includes approximately 10,000 Latin translations; 9000 Ethiopian, Slavic, and Armenian translations. In sum, the number of extant partial or complete manuscripts at our disposal total approximately 24,000 (Strobel, 1998).

In contrast, concerning the classical works of antiquity, the length of time between the originals' and their subsequent copies' is roughly 500 - 1000 years. Whereas, the length

of time between the original New Testament writings or autograph's, and extant copies is approximately 200 years. Thus, no other ancient texts are as well preserved as the New Testament.

"The Wealth of manuscripts, and above all the narrow interval of time between the writing and the earliest extant copies, make it by far the best attested text of any ancient writing in the world"

"Classical authors are often represented by but one surviving manuscript; if there are half dozen or more, one can speak of a rather advantageous situation for reconstructing the text. But there are nearly five thousand manuscripts of the NT in Greek... The only surviving manuscripts of classical authors often come from the Middle Ages, but the manuscript tradition of the NT begins as early as the end of II CE; it is therefore separate by only a century or so from the time at which the autographs [originals] were written. Thus it seems that NT textual criticism possesses a base which is far more advantageous than that for the textual criticism of classical authors"

New Testament Manuscripts vs. Classical works of Antiquity

<u>AUTHOR</u>	<u>When Written</u>	<u>Earliest Copy</u>	<u>Time Span</u>	<u>No. of Copies</u>
Caesar	100-44 B.C.	A.D. 900	1000 yrs.	10
Livy	59 B.C.-A.D.17			20
Plato (Tetralogies)	427-347 B.C.	A.D. 900	1200 yrs.	7
Tacitus (Annals of Rome)	A.D. 100	A.D. 1100	1000 yrs.	20
Pliny the Younger (History)	A.D. 61-113	A.D. 850	750 yrs.	7
Thucydides (History)	460-400 B.C.	A.D. 900	1300 yrs.	8
Suetonius (De Vita Caesarum)	A.D. 75-160	A.D. 950	800 yrs.	8
Herodotus (History)	480-425 B.C.	A.D. 900	1300 yrs.	8
Sophocles	496-406 B.C.	A.D. 1000	1400 yrs.	193
Catullus	54 B.C.	A.D. 1500	1600 yrs.	3
Euripides	480-406 B.C.	A.D. 1100	1500 yrs.	9
Demosthenes	383-322 B.C.	A.D. 1100	1300 yrs.	200+
Aristotle	384-322 B.C.	A.D. 1100	1400 yrs.	49*
Aristophanes	450-385 B.C.	A.D. 900	1200 yrs.	10
Homer (Iliad)	900 B.C.	400 B.C.	500 yrs.	643
New Testament	A.D.50-100	A.D. 125	25yrs.	over 24,000
+ all from one copy.				
* of any one work.				

Textual Criticism

There are 24,000 manuscripts of the New Testament, 5,000 of which were written in the original Greek language. Of these thousands of manuscripts, no two manuscripts are identical. These differences lead to hundreds of thousands of variations. At first impression, this fact makes the Bible sound like the most unreliable book possible! These variations, however, are surprisingly not a major concern. Rather, more manuscripts lead to a greater possibility of figuring out what the original was. F.F. Bruce explained it well:

Fortunately, if the great number of MSS [manuscripts] increases the number of scribal errors, it increases proportionately the means of correcting such errors, so that the margin of doubt left in the process of recovering the exact original wording is not so large as might be feared; it is in truth remarkably small.⁵

In fact, DA Carson notes that the New Testament autographs can be reconstructed with roughly 96-97% accuracy. Furthermore, no text in question affects Christian Doctrine. Most modern English translations include footnotes of variants @ the bottom.

7. Which is the Best English Translation?

In Bible translation **dynamic equivalence** and **formal equivalence** are two approaches to *translation*.

Dynamic equivalence (also known as **functional equivalence**) attempts to convey the *thought* expressed in a source text (if necessary, at the expense of literalness, original word order, the source text's grammatical voice, etc.), while formal equivalence attempts to render the text word-for-word (if necessary, at the expense of natural expression in the target language). The two approaches represent emphasis, respectively, on readability and on literal fidelity to the source text. There is no sharp boundary between dynamic and formal equivalence. Broadly, the two represent a spectrum of translation approaches.

Relationship between some formal equivalence Bible translations

- King James Version (1611)
- American Standard Version (1901)
- Revised Standard Version (1952)
- New American Standard Bible (1995)
- New King James Version (1982)
- English Standard Version (2001)
- New Revised Standard Version (1989)

Moderate use of dynamic equivalence

- New International Version
- Today's New International Version
- New American Bible
- New English Translation

Extensive use of dynamic equivalence

- New English Bible
- Revised English Bible
- Good News Bible (formerly "Today's English Version")
- New Living Translation
- God's Word Translation
- The Message

Theological

I. The WORD and HIS Supremacy, Lordship and Eternality!

CHRIST IS THE "IMAGE OF GOD" AND THE LORD OF ALL CREATION

Christ is the visible representation of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation. For in Him was created the Universe of things in heaven and on earth, things seen and things unseen, thrones, dominions, principedoms, powers - all were created, and exist, through and for Him. And HE IS before all things, and in and through Him the universe is one harmonious whole.

CHRIST IS THE DIVINE HEAD OF THE CHURCH

Moreover He is the Head of His Body, the Church. He is the Beginning, the Firstborn from among the dead, in order that He Himself may in all things occupy the foremost place. For it was the Father's gracious will that the whole of the divine perfections should dwell in Him. And God purposed through Him to reconcile the universe to Himself, making peace through His blood, which was shed upon the Cross to reconcile to Himself through Him, I say, things on earth and things in Heaven.