

The Doctrine of Inspiration

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Introduction: Several years ago, I put together a **Study of Inspiration**, prior to the time that I knew when it was proper to footnote (actually, the study was done primarily for myself at that time). It was more of a compilation of what other authors had put together at that time. I drew heavily from *A General Introduction to the Bible* by Geisler and Nix, from Lewis Sperry Chafer's *Systematic Theology*, Thieme's *Canonicity*, and from *Evidence That Demand a Verdict* by Josh McDowell. In fact, this was so long ago, that I split this 50 page or so study into five parts, as my computer was just unable to scroll through 50 pages. What I hope to have here is the shortened version of the **Study of Inspiration**, which could be taught in a few days, if not less. Therefore, whereas in the **Study of Inspiration**, I attempted to be painstakingly thorough with abundant Scripture and sub-topics (e.g., canonicity), I intend for this to be relatively brief. Furthermore, I don't wish to portray this as something new; this is primarily a compilation of information from various authors. If this sparks an interest, I cannot emphasize enough how helpful to you it would be to get copies of Josh McDowell's *Evidence that Demands a Verdict* or *A Ready Defense*; Geisler and Nix's *General Introduction to the Bible*; Chafer's *Systematic Theology*; or R.B. Thieme's *Canonicity*. I can't tell you how often I just wanted to reproduce entire pages from the works of these men. My problem was more *what can I leave out?* rather than *what should I quote?* All of these books are worthy and highly recommended additions to your library.

If your interest is in how did we get our Bible today; or if you wonder about why some books were chosen and some were not. Perhaps you are curious as to why the Protestants have a different Bible from the Catholics. This is actually the study of *Canonicity*, which is related, but not this particular study. The books named above devote a great deal of space to this topic, as does my **Study of Inspiration**.

There are few doctrines as vital to the believer as the Doctrine of Inspiration. Most believers have some concept that the Bible is the Word of God, but, beyond that, they don't really know what that means. Therefore, it is easy for someone to come along with a great-sounding theory (e.g., the Bible *contains* the Word of God or the Bible *becomes* the Word of God) that many believers will then fall for. As a believer in Jesus Christ, you need to know what it means for the Bible to be the Word of God. This is as important as understanding your salvation and as important as knowing how to get in and out of fellowship (two doctrines which are also very distorted in this day and age).

The tragedy of our age is that very few pastors or believers have even the slightest clue as to the importance of God's Word. I am talking about these pastors who have a Wednesday night Bible study and urge you to read your Bibles, and then to share your opinions with everyone as to how you feel about this passage or that. God did not intend to place His Word in the hands of amateurs with regards to understanding and perceiving it—that means, He has seen to it that various gifts were given to His people, including teaching gifts, so that His Word could be understood. We, as believers new, right out of the package, can barely get a thimbleful of doctrine from God's Word for ourselves, even with all of the study guides in the world. God designed His Word to be taught to His congregation by a pastor-teacher. If such a gift were unimportant, it would not have been mentioned, nor would we have the two epistles to Timothy and the one to Titus.

Let me tell you the second greatest tragedy of the pulpit: even in churches where the Bible is studied, very little time is given to careful, verse-by-verse exegesis. There is certainly a place for jumping from one passage to another; however, bear in mind, that approach is the whole foundation for any cultic religion which uses the Bible. People with screwy ideas continually quote a verse here and there to justify the stupid things that they do and cults do likewise to support their erroneous doctrines. There is probably not a position that you could not give credence to if allowed to quote Scripture from here and there, out of its context. The key to understanding God's Word is a verse-by-verse examination. That should be the basis for all church study of the Word. It is quite difficult to teach God's Word verse-by-verse and lie to the congregation about what is true. So far, I only know of a handful of churches and Biblically-based operations that depend upon verse-by-verse teaching out of hundreds of ministries. This is a tragedy and it should be an embarrassment to any pastor who sends his congregation out to study the Bible for themselves.

1. First we need a **definition of inspiration**: *human authors wrote as moved by the Holy Spirit, so that, without waving their human intelligence, their vocabulary, their personal feelings, their literary style, their personality, their environmental influences or their individuality, they recorded God's complete and connected message to man with perfect accuracy in the original languages of Scripture, the very words bearing the authority of divine authorship.*¹ This is known as the verbal, plenary view of inspiration. Saint Peter gives perhaps the more pedestrian view: **No prophecy was ever made by an act of human volition, but men carried along by the Holy Spirit spoken from God** (2Peter 1:21). Paul says that **all Scripture is God-breathed** (2Tim. 3:16). Chafer writes: *Plenary inspiration means that the accuracy secured by verbal inspiration is extended fully to every portion of Scripture so that in all its parts Scripture is both infallible as to truth and final as to divine authority.*²
 - a. Scripture is given as the word of human authors. In Mark 12:25–27 and Luke 20:37–38, Jesus quotes Ex. 3:6, 15 as coming from the book of Moses. It is actually more difficult to find Scripture referring to previous Scripture as written by men without also mentioning the Holy Spirit.
 - b. Scripture is given as the word of God or of God the Holy Spirit: Matt. 15:3–7, where various portions of Scripture are called the commandments of God and the Word of God. Ex. 3:6, 15 are quoted in Matt. 22:31–32 as spoken by God. See also Heb. 3:7–11 9:8 10:15–16.
 - c. Scripture is given as man moved or inspired by the Holy Spirit or as the word of man and the Word of God. In Mark 7:10, our Lord quotes Ex. 21:17 Lev. 20:9 authoritatively, yet refers to this as what *Moses* said. In Mark 7:13, our Lord refers back to those same words as the *Word of God*. See also Mark 12:36–37 Acts 4:25–26.
 - d. This dual authorship finds its parallel in Jesus Christ, the God-man, Who is fully God and fully man, Who is called both the Son of God and the Son of Man.³ Ironically, in present theology, the debate is often whether or not Christ was God; in ancient theology, the debate was whether or not Christ was really a man. We have a similar parallel in ourselves—a believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. When we lead our lives filled with the Spirit, we are fully man, but we are fully guided and directed by the Holy Spirit. I should point out that, in most cases, past initial salvation, most believers are never again filled with the

¹ Quoted and paraphrased from R. B. Thieme, Jr., *Canonicity*; ©1973 by R. B. Thieme, Jr.; p. 5, who in turn took this from Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*; Abridged Edition; Victor Books, ©1984, Vol. Two, p. 71.

² Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*; Abridged Edition; Victor Books, ©1984, Vol. Two, p. 80.

³ Scripture is filled with parallels between Christ, the Living Word, and the Bible, the Written Word of God. Chafer gives a great deal of Scripture on this point in Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*; Abridged Edition; Victor Books, ©1984, Vol. Two, p. 81.

Holy Spirit because they have no idea as to what the mechanics are (and, again, this is a problem with the pastor teacher leaving Scriptural exegesis in the hands of amateurs).

- e. With respect to this dual authorship of Scripture, there are three incorrect notions and one correct understanding: (1) the Bible is almost exclusively the Word of God as a divine work. (2) The Bible is almost exclusively the word of man. (3) The Bible has portions which are written by man and portions which are exclusively of divine origin. Finally, the correct view is (4) *the divine and human authorship are both without impairment to either, wholly present in every word from the first to the last.*⁴ This final view is the correct understanding of the authorship of Scripture.

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2. Geisler, Nix and Chafer all rightly distinguish between three related doctrines: revelation, inspiration and illumination.
- Revelation is the revealing of truth by God to the writers of Scripture. Although there is a great deal of logic and reasoning involved, apart from God's revelation to man concerning His love, His perfect righteousness, His justice, as well as such things that we cannot actually observe, including the creation of the world and the existence of an unseen world—apart from this, we would not be in the dark concerning all of these things, even with the use of human reason and logic. The actual processes involved in revelation are varied, and best suited for another study.
 - Chafer: *Inspiration was the work of God in guiding and directing the writers of Scripture so that what they wrote was absolutely true, even if some of it was beyond their own understanding.*⁵ God the Holy Spirit guided these men to record God's revelation to man while retaining their individual writing styles, their vocabulary, and their personalities. **No prophecy was made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God** (2Peter 1:21).
 - Illumination: God the Holy Spirit reveals to us divine truths through His Word, whether read, heard from the pulpit, or heard from the voice of any man under any circumstance, whether paraphrased or quoted from a careful translation. The illumination is simply the gift of God the Holy Spirit to us to allow us to understand His revealed Word. Apart from illumination, no one would be able to be saved, as they would not understand the issues. **For we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God predestined before the ages to our glory, which none of the rulers of this age has understood, for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory** (1Cor. 2:7–8).
 - Chafer sums up: *Revelation is God's act of communicating divine truth. Inspiration is God's guidance of the writers of Scripture so that what they wrote was the Word of God. And illumination is the work of the Holy Spirit in making the written Scriptures understood and applied as God intended them to reveal the truth.*⁶
3. The extent of revelation:⁷
- The Bible reveals the unknown past. The creation of the universe and the restoration of earth, as well as the creation of man, are all covered in Gen. 1–2. The fall of Satan, which occurred prior to the history of man, is covered in Isa. 14 and Ezek. 28.
 - The Bible reveals information about ancient history. The Bible is not essentially a historical book; however, throughout Scripture, we find historical incidents, ancient customs and even ancient peoples which are given as a background for the understanding of God's hand in the history of man. Even in the 20th century, many of these incidents were thought to be fabrications, as there were no extra-Biblical corroborative documents. Therefore, some historians and archeologists supposed the Bible to be in

⁴ Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*; Abridged Edition; Victor Books, ©1984, Vol. Two, p. 82. This particular set of points was paraphrased from Chafer from this page.

⁵ Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*; Abridged Edition; Victor Books, ©1984; Vol. Two, p. 63.

⁶ Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*; Abridged Edition; Victor Books, ©1984, Vol. Two, p. 64.

⁷ This point was taken from R. B. Thieme, Jr., *Canonicity*; ©1973 by R. B. Thieme, Jr.; pp. 6–10. Although this is essentially a work of R.B. Thieme, I did a small amount of expanding of this point.

error with regards to these areas. However, we have in this past century translated ancient Canaanite pagan literature as well as enjoyed many archeological discoveries, all of which have supported the historical citations and allusions which are found in Scripture.

- c. Objective law and morality: an objective system of Law, designed particularly for a theocratic nation, is established in the second through the fifth books of the Bible. These laws can be slightly modified and followed by modern governments today in order to enjoy great prosperity, as well as great national order and discipline. People who follow the moral precepts and standards found in Scripture, even apart from the divinely revealed plan for our lives, typically enjoy fuller, more blessed lives—not because God is blessing them, but because these moral and legal rulings are absolute because they come from God.
- d. Dictation: a significant portion of the books of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers are direct quotations from God. Inspiration assures us that these quotations are accurate.
- e. Prophecy: We find throughout Scripture other places where the prophets give prophetic utterances (it is often unclear as to whether these are the prophets quoting directly from God or whether they are simply inspired). In either case, inspiration assures us that the prophets speak is accurate.
- f. *Devotional Literature. This include the Psalms, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes and Job. God uses the problems, the pressures, the prosperity and successes, as well as the failures of certain believers, to reveal His plan and principles of grace.*⁸
- g. Quotations: the Doctrine of Inspiration assures us that the quotations of men, God and angels are accurate, although there are certainly times when a quotation is paraphrased (and several times where a quotation is given in one language, and then quoted in another).
- h. The actions of man: the Bible accurately records the actions of believers and unbelievers, often without laying down a specific judgement of these actions. Because what men do is exposed in Scripture in no way implies that these actions are right and good. Just because the 11 disciples elected a 12th Apostle, this in no way indicates that this was a divinely-inspired action. Just because David committed adultery or just because Solomon had a plethora of wives and mistresses, in no way are these actions supported by the Bible. This simply indicates that these are things which man has done.
- i. The recording of falsehoods: men and fallen angels often say things which are lies. Abraham lied as to the actual identify of his wife Sarah in the book of Genesis; Satan lied when speaking to Eve in the garden; Satan also misapplied Scripture when speaking to God the Son in Matt. 4. The Doctrine of Inspiration assures us that these things are accurately recorded, even though they are lies.

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- 4. The importance of inspiration:
 - a. It is impossible to develop a complete, cohesive and applicable theology apart from divine revelation that we can trust. If we depend upon the ideas of various individuals and their philosophies, or if we depend upon the revelations of various holy rollers, then what we will have is as many points of view as we have people. As Chafer wrote, *It is an act of futility to attempt to debate theology and the truths relating to it without agreeing on the foundation and source of this truth.*⁹
 - b. Apart from Holy Scripture, where else can we go for truth?
 - i. Human reason; philosophy. Whereas, there is nothing wrong with using your mind, intelligent men can reasonably come up with opposite viewpoints on the same issue (the death penalty, for instance).
 - ii. Divine revelation to holy rollers. These are the ones who get slain in the *spirit*, who have ecstatic experiences, who tell jokes in tongues that no one understands, but they laugh anyway. These are men upon whom I am not going to depend for my theology.
 - iii. Other *scriptures* from other religions. When we finish this brief study, you will find that there is no book of any kind which is even in part comparable to the Bible.

⁸ R. B. Thieme, Jr., *Canonicity*; ©1973 by R. B. Thieme, Jr.; p. 8.

⁹ Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*; Abridged Edition; Victor Books, ©1984, Vol. Two, p. 71.

- iv. Take the kernel of all religions and apply that to our lives. Be nice to our fellow man and lead nice, moral lives. Again, we have the problem of just exactly what is moral and right (religions disagree here); and, more importantly, this is strictly man-centered. Our inner rebellion, our past transgressions, God's perfect righteousness and justice—these issues are not addressed at all by trying to be nice most of the time. Don't misunderstand—there is nothing wrong with morality. This often allows a society to function and prosper (particularly when the norms and standards which are taught line up with the Bible). It just isn't enough.
5. False theories of inspiration:¹⁰
- a. The mechanical or dictation theory: some maintain that God the Holy Spirit dictated Scripture to various men, and they simply wrote it down. Although there are places in Scripture which are obviously dictated (this would be a significant portion of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers), the bulk of Scripture reflects the writers' vocabulary, emotions, background, and intelligence. Even in individual books, one can observe abrupt changes in writing styles and vocabularies (i.e., where one author ended his work and another began; Genesis, Joshua and Judges are chief examples). Chafer: *Paul wrote regarding Israel, "I have great sorrow and increasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, the people of Israel"* (Rom. 9:2–4). *These statements would lose meaning if Paul were merely the stenographer of what God said.*¹¹
 - b. The theory of partial inspiration: some assert that when the writers of Scripture wrote, that some of what they wrote was inspired and some was not. This of course gives us the problem of interpretation. That is, anyone could throw out what they didn't like and keep what they did in Scripture. However, this is not the view of the Bible (Rev. 22:18–19 sternly warns against adding to or subtracting from the Word of God); nor is it the view of our Lord, Who tells us that *neither one jot nor one tittle will pass away...* in Matt. 5:18. If Scripture is only partially inspired, then that part would have to exclude these passages as well.
 - c. Degrees of inspiration: some theologians have tried to teach that Scripture is inspired, but just in varying degrees. We lodge the same objections to this point as in the previous point. Furthermore, whereas there are varying degrees of falsity, absolute truth is absolute.
 - d. Concept inspiration: the words are not inspired, but the concepts taught in Scripture are. *The Bible, when referring to its own message, never calls attention to a mere concept; it speaks of its message as committed to men in the words taught by the Spirit (1Cor. 2:13).*¹² Furthermore, any disagreement as to concept would then have to depend upon the words used to present that concept. Again, one has no basis for any theological position unless one can go to the very words of Scripture. Our Lord said, *"The words I have spoke to you are spirit and they are life."* (John 6:63). Or, Jesus speaking in prayer to God: *"For the Words which You gave to Me, I have given to them. And they received and truly knew that I came out from beside You, and they believed that You sent Me"* (John 17:8).
 - e. Natural inspiration: this theory asserts that men, in some height of spiritual awareness, wrote the words of Scripture. This ignores a plethora of Scripture where the Holy Spirit is said either to be the Author or the inspiration behind Scripture.
 - f. Mystical inspiration: this theory asserts that men, while in some mysterious, heightened spiritual awareness, recorded the words of Scripture. Again, this is not much different from the previous point, and the objections are similar.
 - g. Geisler and Nix have a marvelous classification of the incorrect views of Scripture which are highly recommended.¹³

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¹⁰ These are taken primarily from L.S. Chafer, but they are also found in Geisler and Nix, as well as in many other similar books..

¹¹ Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*; Abridged Edition; Victor Books, ©1984, Vol. Two, p. 76.

¹² Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*; Abridged Edition; Victor Books, ©1984, Vol. Two, p. 77.

¹³ Norman Geisler, William Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*; Chicago; Moody Press, ©1968, pp. 37–47. These were covered in much greater detail in my **Study of Inspiration**.

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6. Objections to the doctrine of inspiration: there are those who allege that the Bible is filled with contradictions and error. Although there is no way that we can deal with every alleged error, we will cover some of them when we deal with the accuracy of the Bible with regards to history, science and prophecy in later points. Other detractors suggest that Scripture is filled with contradictions. Most of the ones which I have seen are easily explained away. There are very few supposed contradictions which do not have a simple explanation. In my careful verse-by-verse studies I have come across only very minute points which suggest actual contradiction—although, 95% of the time, I can explain it without even having to refer to reference material. One of the more difficult points to deal with is the post-crucifixion activity at the tomb of our Lord. Interview ten people at an accident and you often get ten differing views. The four gospels all present differing views of the tomb activity; however, with careful examination, none of these views are contradictory, but they all supplement one another. Three outstanding books which have been written that deal with alleged contradictions, theological problems, and ethical problems are *When Critics Ask*, *When Skeptics Ask*, and *Hard Sayings of the Bible*. There are, no doubt, many more other than these. However, if you have come across some objection that you truly think would cast aspersions on the inspiration of Scripture, then one of these three books has probably dealt with that objection already.
7. Important points concerning the inspiration of Holy Scripture:
- What the Bible affirms is true is always true, and what the Bible affirms as false is always false...it is an act of futility to attempt to debate theology and the truths relating to it without agreeing on the foundation and source of this truth.*¹⁴
 - Whereas, everything the Bible teaches is true; not everything found in the Bible is true—e.g., the Bible includes the lie of Rahab (Joshua 2:4) and the distortion and misapplication of Scripture by Satan (Matt. 4:1–17). Geisler and Nix carefully distinguish between what the Bible *records* and what It *says*.¹⁵ The Bible records David's immorality; however, this cannot be misconstrued as the condoning of his actions.¹⁶ Every event recorded in the Bible as historical is true; however, it is not placed in Scripture to encourage us to ape or to emulate it. One is hard-pressed to find a single decent act in the book of Judges (particularly in the last five chapters); however, what is being taught is how far astray Israel had gone. The complete and abysmal failure of the people in the last few chapters helps to explain the lameness of their judges and saviors in the previous chapters.
 - Similarly, when a parable is taught, it is the thrust or the meaning of the parable which is true, not the events of the parable itself. Events similar to those described by a parable may have occurred hundreds of times, although these events may not be known first-hand by the one speaking the parable or the ones to whom the parable is addressed. And it is possible that these events never occurred. The key is *what* the parable teaches, rather than zeroing in on the events of the parable as being an accurate recording of events witnessed by the person speaking the parable. I realize that some of you are thinking *well, duh!* Given the goofy criticisms which have come down the pipe over these centuries, it is better to cover all bases.
 - The inerrancy of Scripture is a doctrine adhered to in both the Old and New Testaments, as well as a central doctrine of the church throughout church history, despite the fact that such a position has many detractors, going back to the time when Satan questioned Eve in the garden and disparaged God's Word.
 - Properly speaking, inspiration belongs to the writings rather than to the writer himself. Not everything that Paul wrote was inspired by the Holy Spirit nor was he always inspired by the Holy Spirit (recall when he went to Jerusalem to offer a vow, working in direct opposition to the Holy Spirit).

¹⁴ Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*; Abridged Edition; Victor Books, ©1984, Vol. Two, p. 71.

¹⁵ Norman Geisler, William Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*; Chicago; Moody Press, ©1968, p. 57.

¹⁶ Many a fool, in writing criticisms of Scripture, invariably point to David's evil actions and to the fact that David was a man after God's own heart. They therefore conclude that the former is an illustration of the latter. They foolishly do not realize that **All have sinned and come short of the glory of God** (Rom. 3:23). This obviously includes David, whose failures, mistakes and sins are recorded right along with his successes. They generally regard David's sins to be much more shocking than Paul's, so they harp on David's sins instead, although it could be argued that Paul's failures were every bit as serious.

- f. It is the autographs which are inspired. An autograph is the original manuscript or a perfect copy of the original manuscript. A translation is not inspired in its every word nor are even the imperfect copies of God's Word made throughout the ages. Obviously, you will wonder, *how do we know what is inspired then?* Some of the great spiritual gifts of the past 19 or so centuries revolve around textual criticism, canonicity, interpretation and translation of the Holy Scriptures. There are great men who have devoted their lives to these areas whose names we, for the most part, do not know, but on whose shoulders we stand. Their reward in heaven will be great, although few believers have even a clue as to the appreciation that we owe these men. It is through their dedication that we know with 99% accuracy what is found in the New Testament autographs and with 95% accuracy what is found in the Old Testament autographs.
- g. No part of Scripture is more inspired than any other part. If your Bible is a *red-lettered* edition, with Jesus' words in red, this does not mean what He said is more important than the rest of the Bible. For new believers, this may be a little hard to grasp. After all, Jesus is God, so why wouldn't His words be of greater importance? Simply because the entire Bible is the Word of God.
- h. Even though the very words of Scripture are inspired, this does not mean that there is only one way to say something or that parallel Scripture must be verbatim. The Ten Commandments were written by the *finger of God*. However, when given in Ex. 20, the reason for the Sabbath was historical, going back to creation. Since God rested on the seventh day, the Jews were to do likewise as a memorial to His finished work (Ex. 20:10). However, Moses, in giving the Decalogue to the second generation, also added that the Sabbath was a memorial to the redemption of the Jews—God had paid the price to redeem them out of slavery from the Egyptians (Deut. 5:13–15). There is no contradiction in all of this, but the completed work of God in creation on behalf of all mankind and the redemption of Israel from their slavery both pointed ahead to His finished work upon the cross on our behalf wherein He purchased us out from the slave market of sin. In fact, the meaning of the Sabbath is expanded in the book of Hebrews to mean the rest that we believers enter into when we believe in Jesus Christ. **For indeed, we have had good news proclaimed to us, just as they also, but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. Therefore, we who have believed entered into that rest...there remains, therefore, a Sabbath rest for the people of God** (Heb. 4:2–3a, 9). That Sabbath rest is the resting from works to obtain salvation. A person who has believed in Jesus Christ is no longer working for salvation. **For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one fall through the same example of disobedience** (Heb. 4:9–10).
- i. Few parallel passages are ever given verbatim, yet there are no real contradictions. When Peter gave his confession of faith, he said, **"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."** (Matt. 16:16). In Mark 8:29, this reads **"You are the Christ [i.e., the Messiah]."** In Luke 9:20b, it is simply **"The Christ of God."** Matthew gave his entire confession and Mark and Luke recorded only a portion of it. That is not a contradiction nor is it verbatim.
- j. The Doctrine of Inspiration does not preclude the use of non-Biblical, heathen, and/or secular writings from being used by men of God. Luke studied several documents of his day (apparently including the books of Matthew and Mark), as well as interviewed eyewitnesses, and based his gospel upon thorough research. Paul quoted a heathen poet on Mars hill (Acts 17:38); several books are referred to in the book of Genesis, Samuel and Kings; and even Jude cites a passage from a religious, but noncanonical work in Jude 14. Just because God uses the word of man to make a point, this does not in any way denigrate Scripture. After all, God uses the wrath of man to praise Him (Psalm 76:10).
- k. Because the Bible was written in a nonscientific age in nonscientific language, there are phrases which are used which are clearly understood, although they cannot be taken 100% literally. Joshua speaks of the sun rising in Joshua 1:15, as do modern scientists. This does not mean that the sun *literally rises*. In the day of Pentecost, it is said that there were people from every nation under heaven (Acts 2:5). This obviously did not include people from Australia, or North America or South America. This referred to the known world at that time to those people.
- l. Extremely important: inspiration extends to the accurate recording of the miracles found in Scripture. There have been movements to *demythologize* Scripture—that is, to remove the events which are miraculous in nature (the miracles of Jesus, events preceding and following the exodus from Egypt). Such people assert that the truth is found once these miraculous events are removed from Scripture.

Whereas, many of the events recorded in Scripture were not miraculous as we think of them, but a result of God’s plan put into motion thousands of years ago,¹⁷ there are still events which occurred which go against the laws of nature as we understand them recorded in Scripture and these events did occur. To remove these events from history is to remove the power from Jesus Christ. His miracles, whose authenticity were never in dispute in the ancient world, were His credit card. They gave Him His authority. These same sorts of miracles gave the early Apostles their authority as well. Charismatics do not grasp that they incredible and undeniable miracles which gave the early Apostles their authority are no longer operational as we have the Word of God, which is **alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword** (Heb. 4:12a) as our authority. They either do not believe or they do not fully grasp that the power of God’s Word is far greater than the power of the miracles performed by Jesus and His disciples. These miracles established the original authority of the Apostles, so that their writings would be understood to be inspired of God.¹⁸

- m. A similar point is that Jesus did not affirm the historicity of Adam, Noah and Lot (as well as others) as an accommodation to the thinking of the people of His time on earth. That is, he did not go along with the myths of the people of that day in order to make some spiritual point. What He affirmed was true was actually true.¹⁹
8. The approach that the skeptic should take is: *assuming for a moment that it would be possible for God’s Word to be recorded, just what characteristics would such a book have?*
- a. This book should be unique.
 - b. If there are demons and if there is a devil, and if the Bible is God’s Word, then we should see attacks against this book unlike any other book in history. Still the Bible should emerge triumphant.
 - c. The book should claim to be the Word of God.
 - d. The book should outsell every other book, both in the past and in the present.
 - e. The Bible should be accurate in its transmission throughout the ages.
 - f. It should be available in essentially every human language.
 - g. It should have universal meaning for men of all different walk of life, cultures, background, nationalities and personalities.
 - h. When pronouncements are made concerning science, these pronouncements should be accurate.
 - i. When history is recorded, it should be accurate.
 - j. When prophecy is written, it should be inerrant.
 - k. Such a book should foster libraries of books from supporters and detractors alike—a greater number of books should be inspired by the Bible than by any other single book.
 - l. As a book to come out of ancient history, it should be absolutely unique.
 - m. As the Word of God, it should have the power to change man individually.
 - n. Despite the diversity of the human authors of Scripture, the Bible should carry to man the same message throughout.

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9. The uniqueness of Scripture:
- a. The Bible is composed of 66 books which have been recorded by over 40 authors/editors (I would put the number closer to 50 or 60) over a period of over 1600 years (I would maintain that Scripture was recorded very early on in man’s history, making this time period extend over a period of over 3000

¹⁷ And this is a whole other topic.

¹⁸ If anyone legitimately had the gift of healing today, he would get off his fat ass and walk into hospital after hospital and cure every person he touched, stopping only to give the gospel to the patient, the patient’s friends and relatives, as well as to the doctors and nurses. Those who claim to speak with the gift of tongues would get up off their fat ass and fly to Africa or to India and walk from village to village and give the gospel of Jesus Christ to people of every language and dialect, even though they do not speak it. But, I digress...

¹⁹ Accommodation theory is a whole other topic covered in the **Study of Inspiration**.

years). These men were kings (David and Solomon), judges (Gideon, Samson, Samuel), military types (Joshua, David); musicians (David and Asaph), prophets (Isaiah, Amos, Micah), religious types (Paul, who was a pharisee and Phinehas and Ezra, who were priests), scholars (Paul and Solomon), historians (Luke and the editor of Genesis), fishermen (Peter and John); and there was a tax collector (Matthew), a herdsman (Amos), a prince and a statesman (Daniel), and a doctor (Luke). These books were written while in variety of emotions and states of mind: depression and sadness (Psalms , Lamentations); extreme joy (Psalm); during times of war (David) and peace (Solomon). These books have varying literary styles from historical (Genesis, Numbers, Luke, Acts), doctrinal (Leviticus, Romans); legal (Exodus, Leviticus); biographical (1Samuel, Mark); poetry (the Psalms); philosophical (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes); quotations (most of Exodus and Leviticus); verbal dissertations (Deuteronomy); prophetic (Isaiah, Jeremiah); letters to churches (I and I1Corinthians); letters intended for wide distribution (Hebrews); personal letters (Philemon, II and I2John); and apocalyptic (Revelation). The books of the Bible were written in widely varying places: *Moses in the wilderness, Jeremiah in a dungeon, Daniel on a hillside and in a palace, Paul inside prison walls, Luke while traveling, John on the isle of Patmos, [and] others in the rigors of military campaign* (e.g., Moses, Joshua, David).²⁰ The books of the Bible were written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek on three different continents (Asia, Africa and Europe). The Bible deals with hundreds of controversial subjects, from the existence of God, to the redemption of man by Christ Jesus, to the futility of gathering riches, to deviant lifestyles. In fact, the topics found in Holy Write are so controversial, that in some school districts, a teacher could be fired for talking about some of these subjects. In fact, I wrote a short, couple page essay dealing with the existence of God that I read to several of my high school classes. I e-mailed this essay to several friends (20 or 30). This sparked a rash of arguments and disagreements and, in one case, I have one friend of twenty-plus years who, insofar as I know, is no longer speaking to me as a result of this.

- b. Despite this incredible variety of authors, moods, topics, types of literature, etc., the Bible hangs together as one unified whole which speaks from beginning to end of God's redemptive work on behalf of man. From the day that man fell, in Gen. 3, to the almost completed human sacrifice of Isaac by his father Abraham, to the prophecies of David in the Psalms and Isaiah concerning the coming Messiah, to the fulfillment of these prophecies in our Lord as recorded in the gospels, to His sacrifice on the cross, to the doctrinal dissertations of Paul and Peter and the writer of Hebrews concerning our Lord's sacrifice, to the final book of the history of man, Revelation, we have the scarlet thread of the death of Jesus Christ on our behalf. We have the same God found throughout these 66 books, the same fallen man found throughout Scripture, and the same viewpoints given on the same topics. These are topics which have remained controversial from the dawn of man; and yet, we have 66 books within the Bible, written by over 40 authors, who are in agreement on the most controversial religious topics of man's history.
 - c. Josh McDowell spoke to a representative of the *Great Books of the Western World*; the guy was recruiting salesmen for this series of books. McDowell writes: *Then we spent an hour and half talking...about the Greatest Book. I challenged him to pick just ten of the authors, all from one walk of life, one generation, one place, one time, one mood, one continent, one language and just one controversial subject. I asked him: "Would those ten authors agree?" He paused and then replied, "No!" "What would you have?" Immediately, he said, "A conglomeration." Two days later he committed his life to Christ.*²¹
 - d. Given the background of the Bible, that the resulting book would be a unified whole is a greater miracle if one makes the assumption that men were **not** guided by the Holy Spirit.
10. If there are demons and if there is a devil, and if the Bible is God's Word, then we should see attacks against this book unlike any other book in history. Still the Bible should emerge triumphant. In other words, the Bible is unique in its survival in the face of human (and demonic) persecution.²²
- a. We will cover in another point the Bible's uniqueness with regards to survival in time. However, no other book has faced the attacks that the Bible has. The Bible has been burned, banned, ridiculed, criticized as has no other book in history. Both the Bible and its adherents were attacked in the ancient Roman empire, it was withheld from the people for hundreds of years by the Roman Catholic Church, it stands

²⁰ Josh McDowell, *A Ready Defense*; Here's Life Publishers; ©1990; p. 27.

²¹ Josh McDowell, *A Ready Defense*; Here's Life Publishers; ©1990; pp. 28–29.

²² I took much of this point directly from Josh McDowell's *A Ready Defense*; Here's Life Publishers; ©1990; p. 30–31.

- banned in many Communist countries, and it is practically anathema in the public schools of the United States.²³
- b. The Diocletian Edict, circa 303 A.D., commanded that the Scriptures be burned. Today, you should be wondering, *Diocletian, what or who the heck is that?*
 - c. Sidney Collett wrote: *Voltaire, the noted French infidel who died in 1778, said that in one hundred years from his time Christianity would be swept from existence and pass into history. But what happened? Voltaire has passed into history, while the circulation of the Bible continues to increase in almost all parts of the world, carrying blessing wherever it goes.*²⁴ McDowell continues: *Concerning the boast of Voltaire on the extinction of Christianity and the Bible in a hundred years, Geisler and Nix point out that “only fifty years after [Voltaire’s] death the Geneva Bible Society used his press and his house to produce stacks of Bibles.”*²⁵
 - d. Hastings wrote: *Infidels for eighteen hundred years have been refuting and overthrowing this book, and yet it stands today as solid as a rock. Its circulation increases, and it is more loved and cherished and read today than ever before...When the French monarch proposed the persecution of the Christians in his dominion, an old statesman and warrior said to him, “Sire, the church of God is an anvil that has worn out many hammers.” So the hammers of the infidels have been pecking away at this book for ages, but the hammers are worn out, and the anvil still endures. If the book had not been the book of God, men would have destroyed it long ago. Emperors and popes, kings and priests, princes and rulers have all tried their hand at it; they die and the book still lives.*²⁶
 - e. And Bernard Ramm: *A thousand times over, the death knell of the Bible has been sounded, the funeral procession formed, and inscription cut on the tombstone, and the committal read. But somehow the corpse never stays put. No other book has been so chopped, knived, sifted, scrutinized, and vilified. What book on philosophy or religion or psychology...of classical or modern times has been subject to such a mass attack as the Bible? With such venom and skepticism? With such thoroughness and erudition? Upon every chapter, line and tenet? The Bible is still loved by millions, read by millions and studied by millions.*²⁷
 - f. Even today, the Bible is ridiculed for its account of creation, and children are taught from their earliest years that evolution is the correct theory of our origins (and in most schools, the problems with evolution and the evidence which supports creationism is never mentioned). Still, more people believe in creationism than evolution, and, when people are exposed to both teachings in a classroom environment, more people are converted to creationism than to evolution.²⁸
 - g. Jesus Christ said, **“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My Word will not pass away.”** (Mark 13:31).

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²³ I have had more than one student ask me whether it was legal for me to have Bibles in my high school classroom. They were not being funny or typically pain-in-the-butt teenagers—that was their sincere take on the separation of church and state.

²⁴ Sidney Collett, *All About the Bible*, Old Tappan, NJ, Revell, n.d., p. 63 taken from Josh McDowell, *A Ready Defense*; Here’s Life Publishers; ©1990; p. 30.

²⁵ Josh McDowell, *A Ready Defense*; Here’s Life Publishers; ©1990; p. 30; the last quotation comes from Norman Geisler, William Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*; Chicago; Moody Press, ©1968, p. 54.

²⁶ I quoted this from Josh McDowell, *A Ready Defense*; Here’s Life Publishers; ©1990; p. 31. He quoted it from John Lea, *the Greatest Book in the World*, Philadelphia, n.pub., 1929.

²⁷ Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Christian Evidences*; Chicago, Moody Press, 1957, p. 32–33; and taken from Josh McDowell, *A Ready Defense*; Here’s Life Publishers; ©1990; p. 31.

²⁸ Henry Morris in one of his books, spoke of a class that he taught at a university which, in the beginning, gave equal time to evolutionary theories and to creationism. The students were surveyed as to their predispositions and then as to their conclusions at the end of the course. More people ended up believing in creationism at the end than did at the beginning. The division of time was changed until, if memory serves, the creationists were given only two class periods out of the semester in which to present their material; the end result was the same. I think that this was documented in a book which Morris co-wrote, but I cannot find the reference right now.

11. Scriptural affirmation that the Bible is the Word of God (if the Bible is indeed the Word of God, then it should clearly tell us this):²⁹
- a. Christ Jesus continually affirmed the power of the Holy Scriptures and that they were the Word of God. “You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God.” (Matt. 22:29). “The Scriptures cannot be broken.” (John 10:35b). In Mark 12:36, our Lord attributed the words of David to the Holy Spirit. In Matt. 5:18, He said, “For I say in truth to you that until heaven and earth pass away not the smallest letter or stroke will pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished.” In Luke 24:44, He said, “Everything written about Me in the Law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled.” In Matt. 19:3–6, Jesus uses the phrase *God said* to refer to the narrator’s comment in Gen. 2:24. We have many instances of this; see also Matt. 1:22–23 (Isa. 7:14) 2:15 (Hosea 11:1) 21:42 Mark 14:49.
 - b. The writers of Scripture continually appealed to Scripture as the final authority: **For what does the Scripture say?** (Rom. 4:3a). Paul often used Scripture when arguing with the Jewish religious legalists (Acts 17:2).
 - c. The writers of Scripture, just as Jesus did, quote various portions of the Old Testament and attribute the writing to God. 1Cor. 3:1 (Job 5:13) Heb. 1:8 (Psalm 45:6) 1:10–12 (Psalm 102:25, 27) 3:7 (Psalm 95:7).
 - d. In fact, some quotations of Scripture make a point out a small historical detail (Heb. 7:4–10), out of a word or phrase (Acts 15:13–17), and there is one instance where Paul makes an argument based upon the distinction between the singular and the plural (Gal. 3:16).
 - e. The writers of Scripture affirm the Bible to be the Word of God: **All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work** (2Tim. 3:16–17). When quoting what David had written in Psalm 41:9, Peter asserted that this was said by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:16). Peter quotes Psalm 2:1–2 and affirms there that God had spoken in Acts 4:25–26. Paul quotes Isa. 6:9–10 and tells us that the Holy Spirit spoke through Isaiah in Acts 28:25–27. It is important to note that in those passages, the people that they were speaking to also had similar leanings—i.e., that Old Testament is the Word of God. The Apostles may have antagonized some Jews with their interpretation of Scripture, but they never antagonized them because they touted it as the Word of God. Old Testament writers also referred to Scripture as flawless: **The words of Jehovah are pure word [flawless]; as silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times** (Psalm 12:6; see also Prov. 30:5–6). David wrote: **The Law of Jehovah is perfect, restoring the soul. The testimony of Jehovah is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of Jehovah are right, rejoicing the heart. The commandment of Jehovah is pure, enlightening the eyes** (Psalm 19:7–8). Peter confirms the authority of Paul’s writings in 2Peter3:16 (calling them *Scripture*), which, in itself, is a marvelous admission, as Paul had previously chewed Peter out for his legalistic behavior (Gal. 2). In 1Tim. 5:18, Paul first quotes Deut. 25:4, and then adds a quote from Luke 10:7, putting the incomplete New Testament on equal footing with the completed Old Testament.
 - f. The writers of Scripture uniquely categorize Scripture. **You have magnified Your Word above Your name [or, reputation]** (Psalm 138:2b). Prov. 8 personifies wisdom, and says, in part: **For wisdom is better than jewels and all desirable things cannot compare with her** (Prov. 8:11).
 - g. Primarily what has been covered in the previous points is the Old Testament, which was known as Scripture during the time of the Apostles. However, the New Testament is also God’s Word. Geisler and Nix provide us with some logical syllogisms to prove this:³⁰
 - i. All Scripture is inspired by God (1Tim. 3:16); the New Testament is Scripture (1Tim. 5:18 2Peter 3:16); therefore, the New Testament is inspired.
 - ii. All prophetic writings are inspired (2Peter 1:20–21). The New Testament is prophetic writing (Eph. 3:5 Rev. 22:18); therefore, the New Testament is inspired.
 - iii. Whatever God says is inerrant. The words of the Bible are God’s words. Therefore, the words of the Bible are inerrant.

²⁹ This particular point is covered in much greater detail in **The Study of Inspiration**.

³⁰ Taken from Norman Geisler, William Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*; Chicago; Moody Press, ©1968, p. 51–54.

12. The Bible is the complete Word of God. In several places throughout Scripture, man is warned not to add to the words of Scripture. Deut. 4:2 12:32 Prov. 30:6 Rev. 22:18.³¹
13. The Bible outsells every book, past and present. *The Bible has been read by more people and published in more languages than any other book in history...Hy Pickering says that about thirty years ago, for the British and Foreign Bible Society to meet its demands, it had to publish "one copy every three seconds day and night; 22 copies every minute day and night; 1,369 copies every hour day and night; 32,876 copies every day in the year."*³² When a book is translated into five or so languages and sells a million copies, it is thought to be a great commercial success. Well over two billion copies of the Bible have been printed and distributed. No other book even comes close.
14. The Bible should be accurate in its transmission. John Lea writes: *It seems strange that the text of Shakespeare, which has been in existence less than two hundred and height years, should be far more uncertain and corrupt than that of the New Testament, now over eighteen centuries old, during nearly fifteen of which it existed only in manuscript...With perhaps a dozen or twenty exceptions, the text of every verse in the New Testament may be said to be so far settled by general consent of scholars, that any dispute as to its readings must relate rather to the interpretations of the words than to any doubts respecting the words themselves. But in every one of Shakespeare's thirty-seven lays there are probably a hundred readings still in dispute, a large portion of which materially affects the meaning of the passages in which they occur.*³³
15. In the ancient world, it was very rare for any book to be translated into another language. Early Christian missionaries translated the Bible into Syriac, Latin and Coptic (the Syriac and Latin translations were done as early as 150 A.D., which is almost as soon as the New Testament had been completed). We have 15,000 existing copies of various translations of the Bible (either in full or in part). The Bible was one of the first major books to be translated into a different language. The Old Testament was translated into Greek circa 250 B.C. According to a 1966 copy of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, the Bible had been translated into 240 languages and dialects, with portions of the Bible being available in another 739 languages and dialects. Between 1950 and 1960, there were 3000 Bible translators at work translating the Bible.
16. The Bible should have universal meaning for men of all different walk of life, cultures, background, nationalities and personalities. At the end of Josh McDowell's *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, and at the end of *A Ready Defense*, we have a set of testimonies from every walk of life, from every religion, from every culture and background, from every vocation, from every nationality. Okay, perhaps not from every one of those, but a large sample from each of those categories. Kenneth Scott Latourette, a noted historian at Yale University states: *"Never has Jesus had so wide and so profound an effect upon humanity as in the past three or four generations. Through Him millions of individuals have been transformed and have begun to live the kind of life which he exemplified."*³⁴
 - a. Josh McDowell spends several pages on the Christian experience and its commonalities. This is found in both books and highly, highly recommended.³⁵
 - b. Picking examples from his book would be rather difficult and go beyond the scope of this study. In one section, he gives the testimonies of people from various professions, including a physicist, computer expert, policeman, prostitute (former, of course), Nazi pilot, former criminal, minister, football coach (Tom Landry), other sports figures, Miss American, billionaire, cartoonist (Charles Schulz), author, businessman, doctor, farmer, U.S. Senator, former president of the U.N. general assembly, city planner, philosopher, former gang leader, and prisoner. Personal testimonies are given from 15 different nations. Testimonies from converts of all the major religions are given; and we have the testimonies of a half-dozen former skeptics who became believers. There is a program called *Unshackled* which dramatizes the lives of men and women who have become believers in Jesus Christ, most of whom have had some

³¹ Unfortunately today, we have hundreds of ministers around who think they speak with the gift of tongues or with gifts of prophecy and that they are, in their own way, adding to the Word of God. Even the simplest unbeliever observes this kind of behavior to be hokey.

³² Josh McDowell, *A Ready Defense*; Here's Life Publishers; ©1990; p. 29.

³³ John W. Lea, *The Greatest Book in the World*; Philadelphia; ©1929, p. 15. This was taken from Josh McDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*; ©1972 by Campus Crusade for Christ; p. 22.

³⁴ Kevin Scott Latourette, *Anna Domini*; New York; Harper and Brothers, 1940, p. 227 (taken from Josh McDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*; ©1972 by Campus Crusade for Christ; pp. 337–338.

³⁵ Most of the testimonies are found in *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*. *A Ready Defense* has fewer testimonies, but adds a couple new ones. *More Evidence That Demands a Verdict, Vol. Two*, however, is not really meant for everyone.

connection with Pacific Garden Mission in Chicago, where these dramatizations are performed and taped. They have thousands upon thousands of dramatized testimonials and thousands more which are a result of their mission outreach.

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17. The accuracy of the Bible with respect to science: The Bible is not a scientific book; however, when it speaks of things scientific, it presents them accurately (this is apart from such common sayings e.g., *the sun sets and rises*).
- From Bert Thompson, Ph.D.: *After practically a lifetime of study, British philosopher Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) declared that there are basically five fundamentals of science: time, force, action, space and matter. Little did Spencer realize that he was doing nothing more than echoing what had been said...some 3,000 years prior to him. Gen. 1:1 [reads]: "In the beginning (time) God (force) created (action) the heavens (space) and the earth (matter)."*³⁶
 - Probably the most famous scientific observation found in the Bible is the shape of the earth. Isaiah wrote: *It is He Who sits above the sphere of the earth and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in* (Isa. 40:22). When I presented this some time ago to some skeptics, they were concerned about the word *sphere*. The Hebrew word is *chûwg* (חֹוֹג) [pronounced *khoog*], which means *circle, sphere*. It is found only in Prov. 8:27 Job 22:14 Isa. 40:22. Strong's #2329 BDB #295.
 - The Bible makes a very subtle distinction between *light* and *darkness* in Job 38:19: *Where is the way to the dwelling place of light? And darkness, where is its place?* The word used with light is the masculine noun *derek*^e (דֶּרֶךְ) [pronounced *DEH-rek^e*] and it means *way, distance, road, journey, manner, course*. Strong's #1870 BDB #202. Light does travel in a path. However, the word associated with darkness is *mâqôm* (מָקוֹם) [pronounced *maw-KOHM*], which means *place*. Strong's #4725 BDB #879. Darkness does not travel along any sort of path; darkness occupies the place where light is absent. Until the 17th century, it was commonly believed that light was transmitted instantaneously. *Sir Isaac Newton suggested that light was composed of small particles that traveled in a straight line, Christian Huygens proposed the wave theory of light, and Olaus Roerner measured the velocity of light as evinced by its delay as it travels through space.*³⁷
 - In Psalm 19, we read: *The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge...[the sun], which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber; it rejoices as a strong man to run his course. Its rising is from the ends of the heavens and its circuit is to the ends of the heavens and there is nothing hidden from its heat* (Psalm 19:1–2, 5–6). Science has only recently discovered that the sun is hurling through space at a speed of 600,000 mph, in an orbit so large that it would take 200+ million years to complete.³⁸
 - There have always been scientists who have wondered as to the number of stars in the heavens. In 150 B.C., Hipparchus determined that there were 1026 stars; however, Ptolemy, another astronomer, not only counted the stars but documented that there were 1056 of them in 150 A.D. Later astronomers even proposed fewer stars (Tycho Brahé in 1575 A.D. suggested 777, Kepler in 1600 A.D. suggested 1005). Finally, Carl Sagan has determined that there are 25,000,000,000,000,000,000 (or 25 sextillion) stars and that there are many more beyond that. Gen. 15:5 and Jer. 33:22 suggest that the number of stars are uncountable and in Gen. 22:17, the stars in the heaven are compared to the sand

³⁶ Bert Thompson, Ph.D., *Scientific Evidences of the Bible's Inspiration*; pamphlet; Apologetics Press, Inc.; ©1996, p. 1. The illustrations under this point will primarily come from this excellent pamphlet, some of them quoted and some paraphrased.

³⁷ Quoted and paraphrased from Bert Thompson, Ph.D., *Scientific Evidences of the Bible's Inspiration*; pamphlet; Apologetics Press, Inc.; ©1996, p. 2.

³⁸ Quoted and paraphrased from Bert Thompson, Ph.D., *Scientific Evidences of the Bible's Inspiration*; pamphlet; Apologetics Press, Inc.; ©1996, p. 3.

of the sea. Given that you can hold 1000 grains of sand in one hand quite easily, it is fascinating that the authors of Scripture knew, several thousand years ago, what science is only most recently beginning to realize.

- f. One of the interesting scientific facts found in Scripture is the correlation between milk and the nourishment of one’s bones. In Job 21:24, we read: [His pails are filled with milk and the marrow of his bones is watered](#). Studies of nutrition seem to have begun in the 1700’s and vitamin D (the nutrient in milk which pertains to the bones) was not identified until 1922 by Elmer McCollum.³⁹ It is fascinating that Job, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, recognized this relationship between milk and bones 4000–5000 years earlier.
 - g. There are nearly 20 more examples of how the Bible revealed millenniums ago what science has only recently determined to be true.
18. The accuracy of Scripture with respect to history:
- a. One of the great oddities—although not to the believer with doctrine—of human history is the seven day week. In all of the civilized world, time is often broken down into the unit of a week of seven days. Given that this was the way time was organized from the beginning of human history, and so recorded in the Bible (and not elsewhere), we would expect this to be a unit of measure found throughout human history, even to today. Mathematicians often tout 6 as a perfect number; and various systems of measurement are based upon numbers which have many divisors (e.g., 12, 36, 360, 5280, etc.), that our lives would be organized around *weeks* is a testimony to the accuracy of Scripture in recording that which occurred even prior to man’s beginnings here on this earth.
 - b. The archeologist Albright wrote: *Hebrew national tradition excels all others in its clear picture of tribal and family origins. In Egypt and Babylonia, in Assyria and Phoenicia, in Greece and Rome, we look in vain for anything comparable. There is nothing like it in the tradition of the Germanic peoples. Neither India nor China produce anything similar, since their earliest historical memories are literary deposits of distorted dynastic tradition, with no trace of the herdsman or peasant behind the demigod or king with whom their records begin. Neither in the oldest Indic historical writings (the Puranas) nor in the earliest Greek historians is there a hint of the fact that both Indo-Aryans and Hellenes were once nomads who immigrated into their later abodes from the north. The Assyrians, to be sure, remembered vaguely that their earliest rulers, whose names they recalled without any details about their deeds, were tent dwellers, but whence they came had long been forgotten.*⁴⁰
 - c. One of my favorite quotes comes from the unbeliever historian Will Durant, who wrote: *The discoveries here summarize have restored considerable credit to those chapters of Genesis that record the early traditions of the Jews. In its outlines, and barring supernatural incidents, the story of the Jews as unfolded in the Old Testament has stood the test of criticism and archeology; every year add corroboration from documents, monuments, or excavations...We must accept the Biblical account provisionally until it is disproved.*⁴¹

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19. When prophecy is recorded, it should be inerrant. There are hundreds of books which deal with the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy (and I don’t mean those goofy recent books written by wide-eyed authors who are proffering the apocalypse for money). I refer to prophecies which were far off prophecies made throughout Scripture which have clearly come to pass.
- a. One such book is called the *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy*, and it lists all 8,352 prophetic verses which are found in Scripture and covers their fulfillment more or less. Although this book is not at the

³⁹ *The World Book Encyclopedia*; ©1983 by World Book, Inc.; Vol. N–O, p. 470.

⁴⁰ William Albright, *the Biblical Period from Abraham to Ezra*; New York; Harper, 1960, p. 3; taken from Josh McDowell, *A Ready Defense*; Here’s Life Publishers; ©1990; p. 32 (the citation reference may be incorrect as to page number).

⁴¹ *The Story of Civilization; Volume I Our Oriental Heritage*; Will Durant; MJF Books; ©1963; p. 300.

top of my list of books to buy, its 700 plus pages give you an idea as to how pervasive prophecy is in the Bible.

- b. One of the best single chapters to go to concerning Biblical prophecy is the 53rd chapter of Isaiah where we have a clearer delineation of the events of the crucifixion than we do anywhere else in Scripture, and it is written over 700 years prior to the incarnation of our Lord (and we have manuscripts of Isaiah which date back to 100 B.C.—I mention that for the skeptical). Allow me to quote from that chapter: *Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of Jehovah been revealed? For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot and like a root out of parched ground. He has no beauty, form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and like one from whom men hide their faces. He was despised and we did not esteem Him. Surely our griefs He Himself bore and our sorrows He carried, yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities, and the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him. And by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way, but Jehovah has caused the iniquity of us all to fall upon Him. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth, like a lamb that is led to the slaughter and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth. By oppression and judgment He was taken away and as for His generation, who considered that He was cut off out of the land of the living. For the transgression of my people was the stroke of judgement. His grave was assigned to be with the wicked men, yet with a rich man in his deaths, although He had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in His mouth. But Jehovah willed to crush Him, putting Him to grief. If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days and the will of Jehovah will prosper in His hand. As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied by His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities. Therefore I will allot Him a portion with the great and He will divide the booty with the strong because He poured out Himself in deaths and He was numbered with the transgressors, yet He Himself bore the sin of many and interceded for the transgressors (Isa. 53:1–12).* You may wonder how the Jews could have all of this and still, as a nation, reject Jesus. The Bible tells what will happen in their future, at the end of the tribulation: *“And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look upon Me Whom they have pierced, and they will mourn for Him as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born.”* (Ezek. 12:10).
- c. Peter Stoner takes but eight prophecies concerning Christ Jesus in his book *Science Speaks*, and explores the probability of those prophecies being fulfilled in another man. He comes up with the figure that one in 10²⁸ men would fulfill just those eight prophecies that he quotes. By way of probabilities, this figure is completely beyond your imagination. Mr. Stoner deals with only eight of the more than 300 prophecies concerning our Lord in Scripture. Now, these do not include the sacrifice of our Lord being presented in shadow form, as we have when Abraham offered up his only son Isaac (Isaac was his only son who was heir to the promise). Although there are some who just tout this chapter in Genesis as proof of Abraham's great act of obedience, what happened in Gen. 22 goes way beyond obedience—it is one of the earliest illustrations of Christ dying on the cross, being sacrificed by God the Father (I have covered this in great detail in my exegesis of the book of Genesis). Nor do these three hundred prophecies include the transgression of Moses or the explanation for it. When leading the children of Israel out of Egypt, they became thirsty and complained that they had no water. God instructed Moses to strike a rock (Jesus is called the Rock in both Old and New Testaments) and out from it gushed a geyser (most Bible picture books illustrate this as a small flow of water coming out of a rock). What God told Moses is that He would stand before his face, upon the rock, and Moses, the father of the nation Israel, would strike the rock (and, therefore, strike the Lord Who stood before him). This was an illustration of the nation Israel striking our Lord, yet out from Him came living waters. The great transgression of Moses occurred almost 40 years later and Israel was faced with the same situation. The people were thirsty; there was no water; and Moses was to speak to the rock, because our Lord was only offered up one time—therefore, Moses was not to strike the rock—he was only to speak to the rock, just as we call upon Jesus Christ to cleanse us from our iniquities (He is not crucified again). When Moses struck the rock, God still provided the water, but Moses was not allowed to enter into the land with

his people (this is all from Num. 20). One of the more interesting prophecies which deals with the coming Messiah is Psalm 22:16–18, where the method of execution (crucifixion) is implied, although unknown at the time of writing. *For dogs [i.e., Gentiles] have surrounded me. A band of evildoers had encompassed me. They pierced My hands and My feet. I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at Me. They divide My garments among them and cast lots for My clothing.*

- d. One of the great prophecies to come out of the Bible is Lev. 23 where the Jews are cooling their heels right outside the Land of Promise and Moses starts telling them how they will be taken out of the land—the land that they haven't even entered into yet. However, even though God promised the Israelites that they would be scattered throughout the nations, He also promised them that they would remain a people until the end of time and that they would return to Him. How many other ancient peoples from that time period do you know? Do you know any Phœnicians, any Philistines, any Hittites, and Babylonians, any Samaritans, etc.? But you do know some Jews—no matter what nation you live in, you know people who are Jewish. This was predicted again and again in the Old Testament, but first in Lev. 23.
- e. The Bible is filled with prophecies that deal with ancient cities and ancient nations. Imagine, if you will, to choose, say, a large city of the United States, and to predict that it would be completely destroyed and never built upon again. Prophets of the Old Testament did this. Picking just one of these is rather difficult, so I will just choose the first one given in Stoner's book.⁴² Quoting from Ezek. 26:3–5, 7, 12, 14, 16 (which was written in 590 B.C.): *“Therefore, so speaks Jehovah God; Listen, I am against you, O Tyre, and I will cause many nations to come up against you, as the sea causes its waves to come up. And they will destroy the walls of Tyre and break down her towers. I will also scrap her dust from her and I will make her like the top of a rock. It will be a place for the spreading of nets...for so speaks Jehovah God, “Listen, I will bring upon Tyre Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon...and they will lay your stones and your timbers and your dust in the middle of the water...And I will make you like the top of a rock and you will be a place to spread nets upon; you will be no more, for I Jehovah have spoken it...then all the princes of the sea will come down from their thrones, and they will lay away their robes and put off their brodered garments; they will clothe themselves with trembling.”* To sum up, God has promised that seven things will occur: (1) Nebuchadnezzar will take the city of Tyre. (2) Other nations will participate in the fulfillment of this prophecy. (3) The city will be made to look like the top of a rock. (4) Tyre will become a place where fishermen spread their nets. (5) Its stones and timbers would be placed in the sea. (6) Other cities would view the fall of Tyre with great fear and trembling. (7) The old city of Tyre would never be rebuilt. Along the northern coast of Palestine, we have the Phœnician city of Tyre. These were a strong people who were never defeated by Israel during their first several hundred years in the Land of Promise. In 586 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, attacked Tyre and kept up this attack for thirteen years. When he finally took the city of Tyre in 573 B.C., he found that the Phœnicians had surreptitiously moved all their valuables to an island which was a half-mile off the coast. Nebuchadnezzar had taken the city, but he had not conquered the people, nor did he have their wealth. He was unable to pursue them out to the island, so he returned to Babylon. He had conquered the city of Tyre, but he had done precious little else. Alexander the Great, 241 years later, had begun his great conquest of the surrounding nations, but ran into a problem with Tyre. The city of Tyre proper was still pretty much as Nebuchadnezzar had left it, and the island was still impossible to take. However, Alexander the Great could not ignore this, as Tyre's great navy could attack Greece at any time. Therefore, Alexander conquered other cities in that general area in order to use their fleets to take Tyre, but was still unsuccessful so he finally took the materials used to build Tyre and laid them in the water to make a causeway out to the new Tyre. He had to scrape up the soil in order to have enough material to reach the island, a feat which took seven months. Thus, using fleets from other cities and attacking from this causeway, Alexander was able to take the island, thus fulfilling prophecies 2, 3 and 5. Other cities, believing Tyre to be invincible, simply opened up their city gates to Alexander in the aftermath of this great victory, thus fulfilling #6. Today, this area has become a marvelous place for fishermen, which fulfills #4. Now, here is the most amazing fulfillment. Three are great freshwater springs which gush from Raselain at the rate of 10 million gallons a day which run into the sea. This would be an

⁴² McDowell's books, Stoner's book, and a veritable plethora of books deal with this particular topic.

outstanding place for a city. However, 2500 years later, the old city of Tyre has not been rebuilt, thus fulfilling prophecy #7.⁴³

- f. Several other books, including Stoner's *Science Speaks* and McDowell's books, go into great detail concerning the fulfilled prophecy of Scripture. In this point, I have only scratched the surface.
20. The Bible has inspired tens of thousands upon thousands of writers to comment upon its comments, both pro and con. There are tens of thousands of books which deal with every aspect of the Bible.
21. The Bible should be a unique book with regards to all books of ancient literature. Bernard Ramm wrote: *Jews preserved it as no other manuscript has ever been preserved. With their massora (parva, magna and finalis) [methods of counting] they kept tabs on every letter, syllable, word and paragraph. They had special classes of men within their culture whose sole duty was to preserve and transmit these documents with practically perfect fidelity—scribes, lawyers, massorettes. Who ever counted the letters and syllables and words of Plato or Aristotle? Cicero or Seneca?*⁴⁴ Ancient manuscripts of books of antiquity are comparatively few in number. Josh McDowell has a table comparing the Bible to other works of ancient literature. Allow me to reproduce a portion of that table here:⁴⁵

How the Bible compares to other ancient writings:

| Author | When written | Earliest copy | Time span | Number of copies |
|---------------------------|--------------|---------------|------------|-------------------|
| Homer (<i>Iliad</i>) | 900 B.C. | 400 B.C. | 500 years | 643 |
| Demosthenes | 383–322 B.C. | 1100 A.D. | 1300 years | 200 ⁴⁶ |
| Sophocles | 496–408 B.C. | 1000 A.D. | 1400 years | 193 |
| Aristotle | 384–322 B.C. | 1100 A.D. | 1400 years | 49 ⁴⁷ |
| Tacitus (<i>Annals</i>) | 100 A.D. | 1100 A.D. | 900 years | 20 |
| Caesar | 100–44 B.C. | 900 A.D. | 1000 years | 10 |
| Aristophanes | 450–385 B.C. | 900 A.D. | 1200 years | 10 ⁴⁸ |
| The New Testament | 40–100 A.D. | 125 A.D. | 25 years | over 24,000 |

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An interesting addendum to this point. Sir David Dalrymple was asked, "Suppose that the New Testament had been destroyed, and every copy of it lost by the end of the third century, could it have been collected together again from the writings of the Fathers of the second and third centuries?" Dalrymple's conclusion: *That question roused my curiosity, and as I possessed all the existing works of the Fathers of the second and third centuries, I commenced to search, and up to this time I have found the entire New Testament, except eleven verses.*⁴⁹ Among ancient literature, this is also unique to the Bible. There is another related topic,

⁴³ This was quoted or paraphrased from Peter W. Stoner, *Science Speaks*; Moody Press, ©1968, pp. 72–76.

⁴⁴ Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Christian Evidences*, Chicago Moody Press, 1957, pp. 130–131; taken from Josh McDowell, *A Ready Defense*; Here's Life Publishers; ©1990; p. 30.

⁴⁵ Josh McDowell, *A Ready Defense*; Here's Life Publishers; ©1990; p. 45.

⁴⁶ All from one copy.

⁴⁷ This is of any one work.

⁴⁸ McDowell named several other works, all of which had fewer than 10 extant manuscripts.

⁴⁹ Charles Leach, *Our Bible: How We Got It*; Chicago: Moody Press, 1898, pp. 35–36. Taken from Josh McDowell, *A Ready Defense*; Here's Life Publishers; ©1990; pp. 47–48.

which was covered in “The Study of Inspiration”; the amazing accuracy of the manuscripts of the Old and New Testaments.

22. The Word of God should have the power to change man individually.
 - a. Even the Bible records this early on. When our Lord rose from the dead, two men were walking toward the village Emmaus discussing the events of recent history. Jesus met and walked with them, explaining Scripture and explaining how it foretold of Him. **And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures** (Luke 24:27). Their response, was: **And they said to one another, “Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?”** (Luke 24:32).
 - b. Again, let me refer you to the dozens of testimonies at the end of Josh McDowell’s books or to the show *Unshackled* where thousands of people’s lives are dramatized.
23. Despite the diversity of the human authors of Scripture, the Bible carries the same message throughout.
 - a. Man’s depravity.
 - i. Whereas, many religions and philosophies teach the inherent goodness of man, we do not find this anywhere in the Bible.
 - ii. Men who were born subsequent to Adam are not said to be in God’s image, but in Adam’s (Gen. 5:3).
 - iii. We are said to be conceived in iniquity (Psalm 51:5).
 - iv. Every great man in the Bible committed acts of disobedience to God, from Abraham, to Moses, to Elijah, on into the New Testament for Peter and Paul. There are some men whose lives are recorded in part in Scripture where it is difficult to find anything that they have done right (Jacob or anyone from the last five chapters of Judges). Paul’s own internal struggle mirrors our own: **For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. For that which I am doing, I do not understand, for I am not practicing what I would like, but I am doing the very thing that I hate. But if I do the very thing I do not wish to do, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which indwells me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh, for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. For the good that I wish, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not wish. But if I am doing the very thing that I do not wish, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good** (Rom. 7:14–21).
 - v. The Bible records and continually affirms our separation from God. Additional Scripture on the inherent depravity of man: Gen. 6:5 8:21 Job 15:14 25:4
 - vi. The people who have the most trouble with this point are people who are inherently moral with most of the things that they do. No one is 100% righteous, but there are people who make a sincere effort day-in and day-out to do that which is morally right, and they succeed quite often in this endeavor. It is difficult for them to fully grasp this point.
 - b. Man’s deserved punishment is death (Gen. 2:17 Ezek 18:4 Rom. 6:23).
 - c. The Scriptures and the central event of history: the incarnation of our Lord and His subsequent death on the cross on our behalf.
 - i. From our standpoint, the most important event in all of human history is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on our behalf on the cross. This is the central event of human history (we even mark our era, albeit inaccurately, by the life of our Lord) and therefore the central event of Scripture.
 - ii. The Bible predicts from the earliest time, again and again, the incarnation of our Lord and the sacrifice that He will become on our behalf.
 - (1) Christ was promised from the very beginning. When Adam and the woman sinned, God promised them a Savior, known then as the *Seed of the Woman* (Gen. 3:15).
 - (2) Moses told the people: **“Jehovah your god will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, and you will listen to Him.”** (Deut. 18:15).
 - (3) The Messiah is promised throughout the Old Testament: Gen. 12:1–3 Isa. 9:6 11:1–10 Micah 5:2–3.
 - (4) That the promise of the Messiah is fulfilled in Jesus is affirmed by our Lord during his public ministry: **“You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life, and it is these that bear witness of Me.”** (John 5:39).

- (5) Our Lord proclaimed Himself to be a fulfillment of Scripture in Luke 4:17–21: **And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him and He opened the book and found the place where it was written: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He has anointed Me to proclaim the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim the release of the captives and recovery of sight to the blind; to set free those who are downtrodden; to proclaim the gracious year of the Lord.” And he closes the book and He gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon Him. And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”**
- (6) This is affirmed by the various authors of Scripture after His death and resurrection: **For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead** (John 20:9).
- (7) And, unlike man in general, He alone is said to be without sin (2Cor. 5:21 Heb. 4:15 7:26 1John 3:5).
- iii. The Bible itself appears to slow down and to take a careful, paced examination of the life of our Lord, and of His death on the cross. Whereas there are books which cover over a thousand years of human history (e.g., the book of Genesis) and there are periods of time not covered at all in God’s Word (e.g., the four hundred years which precede the incarnation), suddenly, at the birth of our Lord, we have four relatively lengthy books covering His life, which concentrate on His public ministry, and even more so on the last week prior to the crucifixion; two of these books composed by eyewitnesses to the events recorded.
- iv. In retrospect, Scripture affirms and reaffirms the importance of the death of our Lord on our behalf.
- (1) After His death and resurrection, Jesus explained to the men walking to Emmaus: **“O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken. Was it not necessary for the Messiah to suffer these things and to enter into glory?”** (Luke 24:25b–26).
- (2) Our Lord reappeared to these men while they were telling of their walk and visit with Him to others. **Now He said to them, “These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” Then He opened their mind to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, “Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem..”** (Luke 24:44–47).
- d. This short examination found in this point is in no wise a complete and thorough study of man’s depravity or of the Messiah in the Old and New Testaments. This is a mere thimbleful of the ocean of Scripture which could be brought to bear witness of the Oneness of Scripture with regards to major theological issues.
- e. Even though this harkens back to a previous point, keep in mind that we have this great theological unity running throughout God’s Word, the Bible. Despite the fact that it was written by over 40 men from all walks of life, over a period of two millenniums, on three different continents, from a complete variety of ancient world environments, while in every state of human emotion and despite the fact that the Bible is composed using essentially every literary form known to the ancient world—despite all of this, on all issues, even the most difficult ones, there is this incredible unity as if the Bible had been written by one man with a complex, but clearly thought out point of view. There is no book, in modern or ancient literature, which is even similar to the Bible, in any way.
24. Charles Wesley put together quite a reasonable argument that the Bible is the Word of God. The Bible has to be the product of good men or bad, angels or demons, or of God.
- a. If the Bible was put together by good men or angels, then every time we have the verbiage *thus says Jehovah*, these good men or angels would be intentionally lying.
- b. It would be illogical for demons or evil men to have written this book, as it is a book which demands obedience to God, forbids all sin, and condemns their souls to eternal damnation.
- c. Therefore, the Bible must be given by divine inspiration.⁵⁰
25. Let me close with one of the great passage of Scripture, where the our Lord Christ Jesus is spoken of as the embodiment of the Word of God: **In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by Him and apart from Him, nothing**

⁵⁰ Norman Geisler, William Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*; Chicago; Moody Press, ©1968, p. 123; they took it from Robert Burtner and Robert Chiles, *A Compend of Wesley’s Theology*, p. 20.

came into being that has come in into being. In Him was life and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness; and the darkness did not comprehend it. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:1–5, 14).

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