

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

FUNDAMENTALS OF THE FAITH **“The Inspiration of the Bible” [Part 1]**

Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, James Gravelle.

“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” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Welcome to *THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST*. This is the third lesson in our series on “Fundamentals of the Faith.” As Christians, we must be able to prove the existence of God. We also must be able to prove that Jesus is Deity. And, we must be able to prove that the Bible is God’s Word. In our last two lessons, we gave extensive evidence proving the existence of God and that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah.

In this lesson, and in the next, I will be providing evidence to show that the Bible is exactly what it claims to be—the inerrant, all-sufficient, inspired Word of God. By “inerrant,” we mean free from (or without) error. “All-sufficient” means that God’s Word is all that we need. Peter explains this point in 2 Peter 1:3, “His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue.” God has first of all provided all things for us that pertain to life. This means that God, in His greatness, has provided the air we breathe, the sunlight we need, the water we drink, and the food that sustains us—in order to make our existence possible. Peter also tells us that God has provided everything we need in areas of godliness. This tells us that everything we need to live faithfully before God has been provided for us. To help us understand the word “inspired,” let’s look at 2 Timothy 3:16-17—“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God....” The word “inspiration” can be translated as “God breathed.” A further explanation of inspiration can be found in Jeremiah 1:9 where the prophet wrote, “Then the Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me: ‘Behold, I have put My words in your mouth.’” In our times, there are many scoffers. The atheist says that there is no God. The agnostic says that there is not enough proof for the existence of God. The skeptic, regardless of the evidence presented, has doubts about God’s existence. And the modernist says, “Yes, I know what the Bible says, but....” Then the modernist tries to rationalize and undermine the Truth. God has given Christians certain marching orders, which include Peter’s comments in 1 Peter 3:15—“Be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.” We should be able to provide evidence proving that the Bible is exactly what it claims to be—God’s Word. In 1 Thessalonians 5:21, Paul wrote, “Test [prove] all things; hold fast what is good.” We need to understand that God expects us to be concerned about evidence. He has not left us without proof. In Hebrews 11:1 we read, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Faith is based upon evidence. As we know from Romans 10:17, faith comes by hearing the Word of God. But the Word of God can be evidence only if we are able to show that the Bible is credible. Remember that God has given to us “all things that pertain unto life and godliness.” So, what evidence is there that could help us to know that the Bible is truly God’s Word?

First, we know that the Bible is the Word of God because man did not write it. The atheist certainly did not write it, because he would not write a book that condemns him. He would not write such words as we find in Genesis 1 and 2, explaining how the heavens, the Earth, and all that is in them were created in six literal days. The atheist would not have written Psalm 95:3-6.

“For the Lord is the great God, and the great King above all gods. In His hand are the deep places of the earth; The heights of the hills are His also. The sea is His, for He made it; and His hands formed the dry land. Oh come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.”

Can you imagine an atheist or evolutionist saying such things? The atheist would never have written the words spoken by Paul on Mars Hill in Athens, as recorded in Acts 17:24 —“God made the world and everything in it.”

The evolutionist did not write the Bible, Ten times in Genesis 1 the words “after its kind” are found. This tells us that within the animal and plant kingdoms, everything reproduces only after its own kind. There is no exception to this. Even though scientists have tried to force different things to happen, this law continues to exist because God put it in place. Everything reproduces “after its kind.”

The religious man did not write the Bible either. The phrase, “Thus says the Lord” appears in that exact form over 400 times. If a religious man were to have written the Bible instead of God, then the Bible would be no more than just a book of lies. In Revelation 21:8 we find, “But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” If religious men were truly the author of the Bible, yet the Bible repeatedly says, “Thus says the Lord,” that would make those men liars, and Revelation 21:8 would condemn such men.

Second, we know that the Bible is the Word of God because it is indestructible. The Bible is the most-loved book that has ever been compiled. Did you know that it is also the most-hated book in the world? Yet the Bible is the number-one best seller of all time. No other book even comes close to the number of volumes that have been sold. Why, then, do some men hate the Bible so much? There are several reasons. Let’s look at just a few of them.

The Bible pictures man as he really is. It shows man that he has committed sin, and it underscores the things that we ourselves know all too well—that we are sinners. It claims authority over man as well. Throughout the ages, people have rarely liked being shackled to a higher form of law. But we understand, as we read the Bible, that there is a Superior Being (God). It tells man that he is accountable to that Superior Being. We are accountable to God, and we must be able, then, to live our lives in such a way so that, at the end of time we will not be found wanting, with a devil’s Hell awaiting us.

The Bible tells men that they will one day stand in judgment—which is not something that we like to think about. In our court system today, we find that when someone is arrested and put on trial, it is a very lonely place. When the judgment is rendered that sentences a person to prison, no one would ever want to hear such words. Man, on his own, would have nothing but those kinds of words to hear. Without God, there would be no “Enter in, good and faithful servant.” The Bible interferes with men’s sinful schemes. It has such wonderful morals, yet as we look at mankind around us, we see how sinful men really are and how sinful men can be.

The Bible tells us that we must live a better life—to a higher standard. When men hate other books, they simply ignore them and those books pass into insignificance. However, the Bible demands attentions. It cannot be ignored. Over the years, many forces have set them-

selves against the Bible. Let's name just a few. Voltaire lived from 1694 to 1778. He prophesied that in less than one hundred years, the Bible would be discarded and Christianity would be swept from the Earth. Voltaire lived in the Age of Enlightenment. It was a time in which the knowledge of the average person increased greatly. As Voltaire looked at the situation, he believed that men would "outgrow" the Bible and would progress from the "superstitions and fables of the Bible" to the truth. But, as you can see, Voltaire was wrong. Now, Voltaire's works are scarcely read. His own printing press was used to print Bibles, and his house was used for the storage of those Bibles produced on his printing press. Thomas Paine, who was so influential in American history, wrote a book titled *The Age of Reason*. He said that his book would destroy the Bible and Christianity. You seldom hear of *The Age of Reason* any more, yet the Bible lives on. The proponents of the theory of evolution have done everything in their power to undermine and corrupt our belief in the Bible. They continue to do so. They tell us that we did not arrive here in human form as a result of the spoken word of God. They do not want us to understand that we have God to thank for our very existence. Instead, they suggest that over a period of billions of years, a process of evolution took place. That is simply not true. Even though the evolutionist continues to wage war upon the Bible, the Bible still stands. There is a poem that I really enjoy when I think about those who would attack the Bible. It is called *The Anvil*.

Last eve I passed beside a blacksmith's door,
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
Then looking, I saw upon the floor,
Old hammers, worn with beating years of time.
"How many anvils have you had," said I,
"To wear and batter all these hammers so?"
"Just one," said he, and then with twinkling eye;
"The anvil wears the hammers out, ye know."
And so, thought I, the anvil of God's Word,
For ages skeptic blows have beat upon;
Yet though the noise of falling blows was heard
The anvil is unharmed...the hammers gone.

Third, we know that the Bible is the Word of God because of its unity of purpose. The purpose of the Bible, as is evident from Genesis through Revelation, can be summed up in these words: **the glory of God and the salvation of man through Jesus Christ our Lord**. Others have said essentially the same thing in a different way, of course, but these words—the glory of God and the salvation of man through Jesus Christ our Lord—capture the purpose of the Bible. This theme runs throughout every book of the Bible. This marvelous and unique book was produced by roughly 40 different writers. It was composed over a period of approximately 1600 years. It was begun by Moses in the deserts of Arabia, and completed by John on the Isle of Patmos. It was written by fishermen, farmers, shepherds, soldiers, and by kings. It was written in pastures, in palaces, in prisons, and in tents. It was written by both educated and uneducated men, as Acts 4:13 reveals. Yet when brought together, the Bible's sixty-six books exhibit perfect unity. Consider forty men, widely separated in geography, with varied backgrounds, living over a period of 1600 years, and writing a few lines. Yet when those lines are brought together, they constitute a beautiful poem. That is the type of thing that happened when the Bible was compiled. Imagine that you are walking down the street, and as you approach an intersection the screeching of tires grabs your attention. You look up and see two cars collide in the middle of the intersection. You are not alone in seeing what happened. Ten other people also witnessed the same accident. As the police officers arrive to take care of the scene, and as the ambulance EMS

technicians begin to help the injured, the investigation of what caused this accident begins to take place. An officer walks up to you and asks, "Did you see this accident?" You answer, "Yes, officer, I did." He says, "Would you take just a moment of your time and help me complete this report, explaining exactly what you saw?" This not only happens with you, but also with the other nine people who saw the accident and who are now going through the same process you are. They tell the officer exactly what they saw. When you bring all ten of these reports together, do you think that you will have perfect unity? Hardly! In fact, ten different people seeing the exact same event might well offer up ten completely different stories. Yet that is not the case with the Bible, where we find forty different men, over a period of 1600 years, writing words that, when assembled into a single volume, exhibit perfect harmony, perfect agreement, and perfect unity. How could such single-mindedness have happened? It is due to one thing—the fact that God is the Author.

Fourth, we know that the Bible is the Word of God because of its brevity. When we look at the Bible (a book of over 1,000 pages), we hardly think that it is a "brief" book. If you have ever gone through a daily Bible-reading program that takes you through the Bible in one year, then you know that The Book contains quite a bit. But when we consider the span of time that it actually covers, the conclusion we must draw is that it actually is very brief. The writers had an abundance of source material. Take, for example, John 21:25, where John recorded, "There are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written." Imagine if some of the world's most prolific writers were turned loose on just the life of Christ. In my library, there is a book that I enjoy reading titled *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. It was written by Alfred Edersheim. This book covers only the Gospel accounts (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John). Yet Edersheim's book is more than 830 pages in length, and is written in extremely fine print. The Bible would be a much different book had it been authored solely by men. Luke summarizes the Lord's life from infancy to age twelve in a single verse (Lk. 2:3). He likewise summarizes the period of time in Jesus' life from age twelve to age thirty in one verse (Lk. 2:52). Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John record the Lord's life in less than an average of thirty-five pages each. Two writers do not even mention His birth at all, yet the world at large places quite a bit of emphasis on that birth. The Book of John covers a period of 1,270 days (roughly three-and-a-half years). But in that three-and-a-half years, John gives us information about the Lord's ministry covering only thirty different days within that period. That is only one out of every forty days. Where is the other material? The point I am trying to make is that nowhere else is such significance combined with such brevity. The reason? God Himself selected the material.

Fifth, we know that the Bible is the Word of God because of the calmness of its writings. The men who wrote the Bible were men of normal emotion. Their emotions, however, did not enter into their writings. Without emotional display, they recorded such horrific things as the persecution that came upon the early church, the Master's miracles, the murder of John the Baptizer, the Lord's crucifixion and resurrection, and His ascension into Heaven. All of these things were discussed by the writers with great calmness, which precludes a purely human agency in the Bible's authorship. God selected the words, the thoughts, and the emotions of those whom He wanted to do the writing.

Sixth, we know that the Bible is the Word of God because it contains prophecy made and prophecy fulfilled. Prophecy was not a guess or a speculation. It was not a statement of "possibility." Prophecy represents the unveiling of the future beyond the realm of human foresight. It was a divine message spoken long enough beforehand to preclude the possibility of the prophet himself being able to bring about the fulfillment. Prophecy was a divine message containing a sufficient number of details as to preclude guesswork or acci-

dent. The prophets gave over 330 specific details regarding the Christ—each and every one having come to pass. Daniel included in his book visions of four world empires, where Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon were the first empire, the Medo-Persian Empire was the second, the Greek Empire (and Alexander the Great) was the third, and the Roman Empire (of which Daniel 2:44 speaks) was the fourth. Daniel wrote in that passage, “And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will establish a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.” Isaiah’s prophecy of Cyrus the Great is one the most amazing prophecies of the entire Old Testament. It enhanced Daniel’s prophecy of the four great world empires. It is found in Isaiah 44 and 45. Isaiah called Cyrus by name, and said that he would release Israel from captivity in Babylon. This prophecy was made over four hundred years before its fulfillment. It named the king (Cyrus), and said exactly what he was going to do. This, of course, is a perfect illustration of Old Testament prophecy that was made and fulfilled.

Regarding prophecy concerning the Jews, Halley says in his *Bible Handbook*, “The twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, placed alongside the history of the Hebrew nation, constitutes one of the most astonishing and indisputable evidences of divine inspiration of the Bible.” Truly, one who sees the prophecies made throughout the pages of this book can come to no other conclusion. The Bible **is** the inerrant, all-sufficient, and inspired Word of God. Because it is the inspired Word of God, 2 Timothy 3:16-17 tells us that it 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 God Who has placed His Word into our hands also has devised a plan by which mankind can be saved. Romans 3:23 tells us that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Because of this, mankind is in need of salvation. From Romans 6:23 we learn that “the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Man, left to his own devices, and without obedience to the Gospel message, would have nothing to which to look forward except an eternity spent in a Hell that had been prepared for the devil and his angels. God has freely given us **so** much, however, as John 3:16 points out: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God? If you do not, you need to listen to Jesus’ words in John 8:24—“If you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.” Have you told others of your belief? Matthew 10:32 quotes Jesus as saying, “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.” Have you repented of your sins? Luke 13:3 tells us that we must because “unless you repent, you shall all likewise perish.” Mark 16:16 tells us that we also must be baptized. Acts 2:38 tells us the reason why. Baptism is “for the remission of sins.” Do you worship with the church that Jesus said that He would build (Mt. 16:18)? If your answer to any of these questions is “no,” then why not make things right? Romans 5:8 tells us, “God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” The evidence I have mentioned here for the Bible’s inspiration is the tip of the iceberg. In the next lesson, I will continue to examine the evidence that proves beyond any doubt that the Bible is what it claims to be—the Word of God. Join me, won’t you?

Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

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STUDY QUESTIONS FOR “THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE” [PART 1]

1. What one word from the text of 2 Timothy 3:16-17 best describes the Bible as God's Word?
2. What is the meaning of the word “inspiration”?
3. According to Jeremiah 1:9, what did God do for the prophet Jeremiah?
4. In 1 Thessalonians 5:21, what did Paul admonish Christians to always do?
5. According to Romans 10:17, what is the origin of faith?
6. Approximately how many men wrote the text of the Bible?
7. Approximately how many years did the writing of the Bible span?
8. In Daniel 4, Daniel wrote of four separate world kingdoms (or empires) that eventually would come to pass. What were those four kingdoms?
9. What did the prophet Isaiah do in chapters 44 and 45 of his book that is so astonishing?
10. Approximately how many messianic prophecies are there in the Old Testament?
11. What words are used in this lesson to sum up the purpose of the Bible?
12. According to 1 Peter 3:15, what are Christians always to be ready to do?
13. According to 1 Corinthians 2:12, what is the origin of the words used by the men who wrote the text of the Bible?
14. What important message is contained in passages such as Genesis 1:1 and Acts 17:24?
15. How does the Bible's brevity support its claim of inspiration at the hand of God?
16. What, according to this lesson, is the definition of biblical prophecy?
17. How does the statement, “The Bible pictures man as he really is,” support the concept of biblical inspiration?
18. How does the calmness of the text of the Bible support its claim of inspiration at the hand of God?
19. What three items are listed in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 as being things for which the Bible is profitable?
20. What important point for us today is contained in Romans 5:8?