



FIRST STEPS

STUDIES TO BEGIN YOUR WALK WITH CHRIST
By Marlon Furtado

“Inspiration of the Bible”

Why do we need the Bible?

Some people don't think we need the Bible. For them, the beauty and intricacies of nature seem sufficient. But it isn't, really. Creation is limited in its ability to communicate the nature of God.

Creation teaches us that God exists

Psalm 19:1-4

"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth..."

Romans 1:20

"For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse."

Creation cannot teach us everything about God

1 Timothy 6:15-16

"God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see."

Romans 11:33

"Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!"

The Bible reveals accurate information about God

Observing and studying the world around us and discovering its wonders will never lead us to know that God is kind and compassionate, holy and righteous, or merciful and gracious. Discovery of God is impossible using our five senses.

These magnificent wonders of God's character are made known to us only through the Bible. Had God not taken the initiative to reveal Himself, we'd know nothing of His personality and character qualities. Without the Bible, we'd know nothing of our need for a Savior or that Jesus came to save us. We'd know nothing about heaven and hell, the devil, the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. There is so much we would not know if we did not have the Bible.

Creation is referred to as God's **General Revelation** because it is general knowledge that is available to everyone. The Bible is God's **Special Revelation** because it contains information that is special, that came directly from God.

Inspiration - basis for confidence in the Bible

Some modernists say the Bible is an out-of-date book written by people who had a very different world-view than today. And as such, they say it is foolish to allow such an old book to determine how you should live life now. If the Bible were, in fact, only the thoughts of a few people far removed from our time, I'd agree.

But the Bible is not simply the writings of distant times and thoughts. It is the timeless words of God, good for all people of all times in all places. One of the clearest declarations of this is found in **2 Timothy 3:16**,

"All Scripture is God-breathed [inspired by God] and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness."

The original language of the New Testament is Greek. When men and women translate it into other languages, they seek to choose words that most clearly convey the original meaning.

The New International Version states that the Scripture is **God-breathed**. Many other English versions express that the Scripture is **inspired by God**.

Both translations correctly convey the fact that God determined which events to record, how to interpret those events, and what other information to include in the Bible.

God breathed His Word into 40 men over a period of 1600 years and **inspired** them to write the Bible. Note that other major religions are usually based on the writings of a single man. God orchestrated the process of **inspiration** to insure that our Bibles accurately conveyed His will and thoughts. The Bible is the only Book on which God has placed His stamp of approval. However, God did not put these men into trances and control their writing like a robot. He allowed them to maintain their personalities and to use their own vocabularies and writing styles when they wrote.

What about the Old Testament?

HOLY SPIRIT INSPIRED OLD TESTAMENT

Hebrews 1:1

"In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways."

2 Peter 1:20-21

"Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

1 Peter 1:10-11

"Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow."

God's Holy Spirit actively revealed the Scriptures to the prophets. These men did not simply study the events of their times and write what they thought might happen in the future. In fact, they did not always understand everything the Spirit of God revealed to them. But their predictions about future events were accurate because God, who knows the future, revealed the future to them.

JESUS AFFIRMED OLD TESTAMENT INSPIRATION

- Jesus declared the entire Old Testament to be accurate and trustworthy

Matthew 5:18 *"I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law [entire Old Testament] until everything is accomplished."*

Luke 24:44 *He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."*

NOTE: These are the three major divisions of the entire Old Testament.

- Jesus referred to the people and events of the Old Testament as real people and historic facts

MOSES: John 5:46-47

"If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?"

DANIEL: Matthew 24:15

"So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—"

NOAH & FLOOD: Matthew 24:37-39

"As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man."

LOT & SODOM: Luke 17:29

"But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all."

ABRAHAM, ISAAC, JACOB: Mark 12:26

"Now about the dead rising—have you not read in the book of Moses, in the account of the bush, how God said to him, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?'"

DAVID: Matthew 12:3

"He answered, 'Haven't you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry?'"

SOLOMON: Matthew 12:42

"The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom, and now one greater than Solomon is here."

Summary:

The Old Testament was completed hundreds of years before Jesus was born. It was the Bible He grew up with and used. It is clear that Jesus fully accepted the Old Testament as historical, true, reliable, and accurate. Jesus believed in the *inspiration* of the Scriptures and so can we!

What about the New Testament?

HOLY SPIRIT INSPIRED NEW TESTAMENT

Even though the New Testament wasn't written until after Jesus ascended to heaven, He promised that the Holy Spirit would come and enable His followers to remember and record what should be written. Like the Holy Spirit worked through the prophets of the Old Testament, He worked through the apostles and their close associates to write the New Testament.

John 14:26

"But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."

John 16:13

"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come."

John 16:15

"All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you."

1 Corinthians 2:9-13

"However, as it is written: 'No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him'— but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words."

Summary:

The writing of the New Testament was completed during the first century. The books were circulated, gathered, and compiled as inspired Scripture by the church by the early second century. By the middle of the third century the list of 27 books and letters in the New Testament was accepted by nearly all Christians.

The list of books in our Old and New Testaments are recognized as inspired. Therefore, they are often referred to as the **Canon of Scripture**.

Inspiration does NOT mean that the Bible *"contains"* the Word of God
It ***IS*** the Word of God.

Inspiration does NOT mean that the Bible is simply *"inspirational"* reading.
Whereas music or art may inspire us, that is not the meaning of biblical inspiration.

M.A.P.S.

In Hank Hanegraaff's book *Christianity in Crisis*, I ran across this acronym which outlines supportive evidence which confirms that the Bible is the inspired Word of God.

M - Manuscripts

A - Archeology

P - Prophecy

S - Single theme

M - MANUSCRIPTS

Before the invention of the printing press, the Scriptures were copied by hand. There are thousands of these copies in existence. The copiers were very careful in their work, realizing that they were handling the very Word of God. When these manuscripts are compared, there are very few differences, but none of any theological significance. By comparing these manuscripts it is clear that the Bible has not been changed over the centuries.

In fact, a copy of the scroll of Isaiah was found in the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the 1950's. This scroll was written around 100 BC, 1,100 years earlier than the previously oldest manuscript we had. When compared, they were nearly exact. They hadn't changed in over a thousand years of copying. This gives clear evidence that these copiers maintained great accuracy. Therefore, the manuscripts upon which our modern translations are based haven't changed since they were originally penned.

A - ARCHEOLOGY

There have been charges leveled against the Bible because a reference to a person or event or place could not be confirmed as accurate history. But as archeologists have unearthed thousands of sites, they have affirmed that the people, places, and events recorded in the Bible are accurate history. Archeology is a friend to the Bible. This sets the Bible apart from other religious writings that contain accounts of only fictional people and places.

P - PROPHECY

The Bible contains very detailed descriptions of events that were to take place still far into the distant future at the time of the writing. Many which dealt with the coming of the Messiah were written hundreds of years before He was born. Yet they were fulfilled exactly. Others dealt with cities, nations, and people. They, too, were fulfilled exactly.

This is an objective test of the Scriptures being inspired by God. Only He could know the future and reveal it to men. Lest you think these prophecies were like those in the tabloids at newstands, if a prophet proclaimed a future event and it never occurred, he was killed and his writings destroyed.

S - SINGLE THEME

Though the Bible is the accumulation of sixty-six separate books and letters written by 40 men over the course of 1600 years, it has a single theme throughout. From start to finish, it focuses on God's plan to redeem people from sin through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Most other religious writings are the work of a single man. Only God could orchestrate the writings of three dozen writers over the course of sixteen centuries to produce a single book with a single message.

Summary:

When studied as a historical document, the Bible is in a class all its own. Our faith is based on solid evidence. The Bible can stand up to any scrutiny.

Is anything missing from our Bibles?

You will run across people who state that "Lost Books" of the Bible have been found and should be included in the Old or New Testament. You don't have to worry; they were **never** included as *inspired Scripture* by the people who were alive when they were written. Below are the common writings to which people refer to as "lost."

Pseudepigrapha

The final texts of the Old Testament were written during the times of Ezra and Nehemiah, approximately 400 years before Jesus was born. No other inspired Scripture was revealed during that time.

However, during those 400 years there were other books written. Some of them are called **pseudepigrapha** because they were written under a *pseudo* name, a fraudulent name of someone famous who lived in the distant past. In doing so, the writer hoped to gain greater authority and acceptability. A few examples are *The Assumption of Moses, First Enoch and Second Enoch, Life of Adam and Eve, Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah, and Psalms of Solomon*.

Apocrypha

Also during these 400 "Silent Years" books of the **Apocrypha** were written. These 15 books are included in Catholic Bibles, but they were **never** considered **Old Testament Scripture** by the Jewish people nor by Protestants. One of the most significant reasons we know they should not be considered *inspired* is that Jesus never referred to any of these books. He never included them when He spoke of the Old Testament. He did not accept them as the Word of God.

Other Gospels

There are some "scholars" who suggest other **Gospels** have been discovered and should be included in our New Testaments, such as, the Gospels of *Thomas, of Mary, of Peter, of Nicodemus, of Bartholomew, of Phillip, and of Mark*, among others. These "gospels" were never included as Scripture by the early church. The books that we have in our New Testaments have not changed since the first century.

Summary

When we pick up our Bibles we can have 100% confidence that we have everything God wants us to know in order to live a godly life before Him.

There is nothing more that needs to be included in our Bibles.

We have **all** that God has revealed.