

## ***Is the Bible from God or from Men?***

by David Stewart

Written revelation is one of the ways in which God has revealed himself to mankind. In God's love and wisdom, he has given us direction for living in the form of the Bible. This collection was written over a period of about 1,500 years, from the time of the exodus (c. 1440 B.C.) to the end of the first century A.D. It contains 66 books with about 40 different human authors and evidences an amazing unity. The Holy Spirit guided this process as the message of God progressively unfolded.

The claim of inspiration is constantly found within Scripture itself. The apostle Paul wrote, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). The apostle Peter wrote, "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" (2 Peter 1:20, 21).

For this reason, Old Testament prophets often prefaced their message with the words "This is what the LORD says." During Jesus' ministry, he continually emphasized that the Old Testament was the authoritative Word of God (Matthew 22:29; Luke 16:16, 17; 24:44; John 10:35).

Concerning the inspiration of the New Testament, Jesus promised his apostles that, after his ascension into heaven, he would send the Holy Spirit to "guide [them] into all truth" (John 16:13). Therefore, the message of Christ was "revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets" (Ephesians 3:5). The apostle Paul wrote, "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" (1 Corinthians 2:13).

Some have charged that the Bible is simply a fallible book written by men and has no authority for people's lives today. There are many responses to this false notion.

*1) The Unity of the Bible.* As has already been stated, the Bible was written over a 1,500-year period by numerous authors. However, it shows unity of theme and purpose, unfolding God's eternal plan to save mankind through his Son, Jesus Christ. Thus, it declares that there is one supreme Author.

*2) The Message of the Bible.* The Bible answers the most difficult questions of life: Where did we come from? Why are we here? Where are we going? These are questions that the greatest human thinkers cannot answer without the Word of God. It teaches that we were created by Almighty God in his image (Genesis 1:27; 5:1, 2). Our purpose in life is to "fear God and keep his

commandments” (Ecclesiastes 12:13). Our eternal destiny is either heaven or hell, depending on whether or not we have obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ (2 Thessalonians 1:6-10) and lived faithfully to him (Matthew 25:31-46).

3) *Prophecy in the Bible.* The Word of God records numerous prophetic statements, sometimes many centuries prior to their fulfillment. Some of those prophecies concern Jesus’ sacrifice for sinners (Psalm 22; Isaiah 53), the establishment of Christ’s church/kingdom (Daniel 2:44), and the promise of his second coming (Acts 1:11).

4) *The Preservation of the Bible.* The Bible is the best preserved book of antiquity. It has survived the many attempts of its enemies to destroy it. The accuracy of the Hebrew Old Testament (Masoretic Text) has been confirmed by the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The New Testament has been preserved in about 6,000 Greek manuscripts and many more copies of versions, such as Syriac, Latin, and Coptic. God, by his divine providence, has preserved his message for us even today.

5) *Scientific Observations in the Bible.* The Bible was not written as a scientific textbook, but there are scientific principles in it that were unknown to man at the time they were written. For example, many of God’s commands to Israel concerning diet, quarantine, cleanliness, and bodily waste served to prevent diseases from spreading among them (Exodus 15:26; Leviticus 11:7, 8; 13:45, 46; Numbers 19:16-22; Deuteronomy 23:12-14). God also commanded his people to circumcise every male on the eighth day after birth (Genesis 17:12; Leviticus 12:3). The eighth day is the best time for circumcision, because on this day vitamin K and prothrombin are at ideal levels for blood clotting.

6) *Historical Accuracy of the Bible.* The Bible accurately records the history of the ancient Near Eastern people as well as those in the Greco-Roman world of the first century. Some examples of finds corroborating the Bible include the Merneptah Stele, Moabite Stone, Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III, Hezekiah’s Tunnel and Inscription, Sennacherib’s Prism, the Pilate Stone, Caiaphas’ Ossuary, and the Arch of Titus. Archaeological discoveries have refuted some of the charges that skeptics have made against the Word. Numerous artifacts have also served to illustrate the customs of the people living during those times.

7) *The Impact of the Bible.* The Bible’s moral ethics have made a great impact on the world for good. Such principles as respect for human life, love for enemies, forgiveness, self-sacrifice, and justice served as a foundation for American democracy. The Bible has also inspired the world’s greatest paintings, sculptures, and music.

There is a human side to the Bible. It was written by men in the common languages of their times: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Those authors used their own vocabularies to express God’s divine truth. In some cases, they investigated events that had already occurred in order to provide

orderly accounts (Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1). Sometimes writers expressed their personal greetings and requests (Romans 16:3-16; 2 Timothy 4:13). None of these facts, however, diminishes the Bible's authority. The Holy Spirit supervised all of these processes. The Bible ultimately is the Word of God.

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