

The Bible Study, by Dan Hummel, from Dr. Chafer's Systematic Theology.

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Part 1: The Supernatural Origin of the Bible

It is good to know evidences that the Word of God is the Word of God.

The Bible surpasses all other books as to “authority, antiquity, literature, and popularity.”

Two kinds of counter claims to the Bible.

Everywhere in the Bible it is claimed that it is the Book of God.

Some reasons a human writer could never come up with the Bible:

- the concept of a triune God spread on all pages of the Bible;
- the balance of the triune God in redemption;
- the ongoing history that proves interdependent notions...
- Idolatry.
- Genesis account of creation vs. man's so error-filled and inconsistent story of creation.
- All 40 (or more) writers of the Word of God see eye to eye on sin.
- The cure of evil according to the Bible.
- The reaches of Bible revelation.
- The ethics of the Bible and their supernatural origin and the Christian's high calling.
- The Bible's perfect continuity sustained against seemingly insuperable impediments.
- The Bible's “harmony is not that of trumpets in unison, but rather orchestration where, though absolutely in tune, the instruments are perfectly distinguished.”
- Hundreds of predictions fulfilled in history, extending over thousands of years.
- Types and their antitypes.

The Bible as Literature

- The observation of all the scholarship of the world in general concludes that as literature the Bible is paramount.
- Each age loses most of its literature yet the Bible abides.
- The devout individual is, to some degree, unable to judge the Bible in the limited field of its literary claims.
- Some examples of the Bible's literary excellence:
 - Quoted by many a public speaker or writer, from the demagogue to the divine.
 - Simplicity of language “ye in me, and I in you” (John 14:20).
 - Concise, inimitable brevity, yet never hurried, cramped, or unreadable.
 - It fascinates the child and entrances the sage.
 - It makes its appeal to all races and peoples.
 - Translated into about one thousand languages.
 - It has provoked a prodigious volume of exalted literature, music and art.
 - Though only a 300th of all Greek or Roman literature, it has produced more works about it than all the Greek and Roman works combined.

Man-made headings in the Bible can hinder drawing our own conclusions directly from the Scripture through the enlightening power of its Author—the Spirit of God.

Another proof of the Bible's supernatural character is its intention to surmount human opposition and defeat the forces of evil by reliance upon divine power.

Part 2: Revelation

Revelation: “the divine act of communicating to man what otherwise man would not know.”

Revelation: three important doctrines distinguished:

1. Revelation and Reason: We don't ignore reason, how useful is it?

2. Revelation and Inspiration: often mixed up.

Inspiration: “The direct divine influence which secures an accurate transference of truth into language which others may understand.”

People who had revelation but not inspiration: multitudes who heard Christ's preaching.

Problems of how the revelation of God could be transmitted without error through fallible men...

3. Revelation, Inspiration, and Illumination: also mixed up and most important to clarify.

“Illumination, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, enables all who are in right relation with God to understand the Scriptures already given, but does not contemplate the exalted responsibility of adding to those Scriptures, nor put into language what the Spirit teaches.”

Romanists and rationalists.

People who had divine inspiration without spiritual illumination: Balaam, King Saul, Caiaphas.

People who are blessed by spiritual illumination but do not receive revelation or exercise the functions of inspiration: _____.

1 Corinthians 2:9-16 has reference to revelation, illumination and inspiration in just a few sentences.

THE NATURE OF REVELATION

God revealed:

1. through Nature.

2. through Providence.

Rom. 8:28! Deut. 30:1-10; Dan. 2:31-45; 7:1-28; 9:24-27;

Hosea 3:4-5; Matt. 23:37-25:46; Acts 15:13-18;

Rom. 11:13-29; 2Thess. 2:1-12; Rev. 2:1-22:21.

3. through Preservation.

Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 1:3, 10

4. through Miracles.

Matt. 11:2-6; 2Cor. 11:14, Rev. 13:1-18

5. by Direct Communication.

6. through the Incarnation.

John 1:1, 2, 14; Romans 9:5; 1 Timothy 3:16.

5 aspects of God expressed in the Living Word's incarnation: power (John 3:2); wisdom (John 7:46); glory (John 1:14); life (1 John 1:1-3); love (John 3:16, 1 John 3:16, Romans 5:8).

7. through the Scriptures.

Seven features of the Bible: varied; partial; complete; progressive; for redemption; final; accurate.

<u>Divisions of Revelation</u>	
general	specific
natural	supernatural
original	soteriological
from nature	an intervention into the natural course of things and history

Part 3: Inspiration

Inspiration: "That controlling influence which God exerted over the human authors by whom the Old and New Testament were written. It has to do with the reception of the divine message and the accuracy with which it is transcribed."

Bible serves two purposes: expands man's knowledge and corrects man's knowledge.

Can be treated scientifically: induce and scientifically arrange the truth bearing on this theme which God has been pleased to reveal. Don't make things up.

The fact and importance of inspiration.

- The difference between "objections" and "difficulties" in regard to a doctrine.
- The doctrine stands every proper test put upon it.
- Devout men of all generations, including Christ and the apostles, have stood on the doctrine.
- The Scriptures are so immensely marvelous as to testify to their divinity.
- The writers were trustworthy in themselves, not deceived nor deceivers.
- Writers agree on everything they teach, and never intimate that the Bible is not the written Word of God.

Theories of inspiration.

- Mechanical or dictation theory.
- Partial inspiration.
- "Degrees of Inspiration" theory.
- Concepts and not words theory.
- Mystical inspiration.

Verbal, Plenary Inspiration

"Verbal inspiration means that, in the original writings, the Spirit guided in the choice of the words used. However, the human authorship was respected to the extent that the writers' characteristics are preserved and their style and vocabulary are employed, but without the intrusion of error."

"Plenary means that the accuracy which verbal inspiration secures, is extended to every portion of the Bible so that it is in all its parts both infallible as to truth and final as to divine authority."

Citations where dual authorship is recognized.

- Matthew 15:4 and Mark 7:10
- Psalm 110 and Mark 12:36, 37

Some of the many passages that combine a reference to both authorships in one passage:

- Acts 1:16; Acts 4:25; Matthew 1:22; Matthew 2:15

Hebrews contains passages that declare the Holy Spirit is the voice speaking through the Psalms, the Law, and the Prophets. Hebrews 3:7-11; 10:15; 9:7-10.

Dual Authorship

- Greek word Logos means God's written word (about 200 times) and the Son of God (7 times by John).

Part 3: Inspiration (continued)

God's Word about God's Word

- Two passages supporting the Bible's own claim to inspiration that are of surpassing importance: 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21
- Peter comments on Paul and Apostles' writing 2 Peter 3:2, 16; 1 Timothy 5:18 is Paul commenting on Luke
- Jesus gave unvarying and unqualified honor to the Scriptures as the authoritative Oracles of God:
 - John 10:34, 35
 - His three-fold challenge of Satan, all from Scripture;
 - constantly declared that Scripture must be fulfilled during His ministry on earth;
 - road to Emmaus began at Moses and all the prophets;
 - also said the Scriptures continuously testify of me (John 5:39).
- The twofold fact that is the most conclusive evidence that the Bible is inspired of God:
 - that Christ so accepted the Old Testament as a whole as well as in every separate portion,
 - that the New Testament was written at His direction and the human authors were promised superhuman ability to write according to the mind of God.
- Remembrance would be given to them. John 14:26, 16:13.

General Objections to Verbal, Plenary Inspiration

Certain important facts that tend to dissolve almost every recorded objection to the doctrine of verbal, plenary inspiration:

- the progress of doctrine over the Bible or over even Paul's writings.
- variations in languages, translations, citations.
- human understanding is imperfect and archeology has contributed much.
- original writings only, and all original texts are not available.

Some evidence from the consistency of the ancient manuscripts:

- How many variations are there in the ancient manuscripts? 100,000
- How many variations affect the sense of the material? 400
- How many affect the sense in an important way? 50
- How many of these variations affect an article of faith or a precept of duty not abundantly sustained by other and undoubted passages, or by the whole tenor of Scripture teaching? 0

Verbal, plenary inspiration is the unqualified claim of three important sources: The Bible for itself, the teaching of Christ and the apostles, and the belief of the church from her beginning.

What does the Bible tell us about how God transmitted the Word to human authors and secured inerrant oracles at human hands? The Scriptures are silent on this point.

The major consequence of disagreeing with the conclusions leading to the dual authorship of inerrant Scriptures: Must reckon with Christ, the apostles, and the prophets, upon whom, after all, we must depend for any knowledge of truth whatsoever. If their testimony is broken regarding the truth-worthiness of the Scriptures, it is broken regarding all else.

Part 4: Canonicity and Authority

Definition from American Heritage: **4.** The books of the Bible officially accepted as Holy Scripture.

- The part of the human in choosing the canon is where the doubt comes into inspiration.
- One piece of evidence: the Bible is present and demonstrates divine perfection.
- “Exceedingly few literary efforts” were being produced when the Scriptures were written.
- No “design or effort” approved the canon: based on the merit of each portion.

Seven different sources of authority of the Scriptures that give them their canonical preeminence:

- The Scriptures are Authoritative being God-Breathed.
- The Scriptures are Authoritative being written by chosen men who were “borne along” by the Holy Spirit.
- The Scriptures are Authoritative being accredited by those who received them first.
- The Scriptures are Authoritative being attested by the Lord Jesus Christ—the second person of the Godhead. “I am... the truth” (John 14:6)... Revelation 22:18-20.
- The Scriptures are Authoritative being received, delivered, and attested by the prophets. Rev. 22:9; Eph 4:11; 2:20; 1 Cor. 14:3.
- The Scriptures are Authoritative being the Word employed by God the Holy Spirit.
- The Authority of the Bible is seen in the fact that without the slightest deflection it vindicates and satisfies its every claim.

The different responsibilities of Old Testament groups and officials with respect to the Scriptures:

- "The Congregation: Deut. 4:2.
- "The King: Deut. 17:18, 19.
- "The Officials
- "The Levites: Deut. 31:26
- "The Prophets

Seven ways the authority of the Bible is seen in the fact that without the slightest deflection it vindicates and satisfies its every claim:

- Enduring power. The claims that the Word would endure is miraculously fulfilled.
- Imperial power. Transformational, and to be obeyed.
- Sanctifying power. Proven by countless lives of saints.
- Revealing power. Wisdom confirmed at every turn.
- Accuracy. Predictions all come true, all to come true.
- Prevailing power. Against all odds it prevails, always.
- Prophecy. Only God could direct the paths of men and nations and the Church the way He has.

The Authority of the Word of God may be traced to three actualities, namely,

- a) the Scriptures are the breath of God—His own Word to man;
- b) the Scriptures are given the attestation, or royal assent of the Son of God; and
- c) they originate with and are employed by the Holy Spirit of God.

Part 5: Illumination

Since the fall, God contemplates man with two phrases: “Gross darkness” and “in the shadow of death.” Four specific types of spiritual darkness: Israel's blindness, Gentile darkness, Satanic darkness, carnal darkness.

The passage that details the carnal man: 1 Cor. 2:14-3:2

Part 6: Interpretation

Proof-texts can claim anything from the Scriptures.

Hermeneutics, the science of interpretation, must be subjected to seven general rules or procedures:

- 1 The Purpose of the Bible as a Whole
- 2 The Distinctive Character and Message of Each Book of the Bible
- 3 To Whom Is A Given Scripture Addressed
- 4 Consideration of the Context
- 5 Consideration of All Scripture Bearing on Any Given Theme
- 6 Discovery of the Exact Meaning of the Determinative Words in the Text
- 7 Necessity of Avoiding Personal Prejudices

#3: To Whom Is A Given Scripture Addressed

- 2 Tim. 3:16: But not all scripture is addressed to us as Christians.
- Primary and secondary applications
- Jewish Sabbath
- Study Hebrew and Greek and don't be entirely dependent upon the findings of other men.

Part 7: Animation

“By the term animation reference is made to that inimitable element of vitality or life which obtains in the Bible as in no other book.” That Scripture is life, that it seems to have a life of its own and also imparts life.

"Attributes predicated of the written Word of God:
(Ps. 19:7-9; Ps. 119; John 17:17; 2 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 4:12)"

perfect, converting the soul
sure, making wise the simple
right, rejoicing the heart
pure, enlightening the eyes
clean, enduring forever
true and righteous altogether
faithful, broad, right, wonderful, pure, everlasting, righteous.
truth, profitable, quick, powerful

The Bible is not a living creature, but is “quick” or alive and living and active and two major stupendous accomplishments are thus said to be wrought by the Word of God: Transforming the unsaved unto salvation and transforming the saved unto sanctification.

Part 8: Preservation

- The preservation of the Scriptures is neither accidental, incidental, nor fortuitous. It is the fulfillment of the divine promise.
- The Scriptures are the legal instrument by which God obligates Himself to execute every detail of His eternal covenants and to fulfill every prediction His prophets have made.

There are more than 24 000 manuscript copies of portions of the New Testament in existence today!

Lets us compare this amount with the number of copies of other ancient historical writings:

- a) The 'Iliad' by Homer has the second greatest number of manuscript copies of any work of antiquity. There are 643 manuscript copies. Here are some examples of other works of antiquity:
- b) Caesar's "Gallic wars" (10 manuscript copies)
- c) Livy (20 manuscript copies)
- d) Plato's 'Tetralogies' (7 manuscript copies)
- e) Pliny The Younger's 'History' (7 manuscript copies)
- f) Sophocles (193 manuscript copies)

The number of manuscript copies of the New Testament *far* surpasses the number of copies of any other ancient document.

What length of time passed between the original and the earliest copies?

Several papyrus fragments, which contain significant portions of the New Testament, have been dated to within 50-150 years of the original New Testament documents. Examples include:

- a) John Ryland's MS (130 AD) contains a portion of the Gospel of John and was found in Egypt
- b) Bodmer Papyrus II (150-200 AD) contains most of John
- c) Chester Beatty Papyri (200 AD) contains major portions of the New Testament

We also have several nearly complete New Testament Greek manuscripts, which were copied within 300-400 years of the originals, for example:

- a) Codex Sinaiticus (350 AD), found near Mt. Sinai
- b) Codex Alexandrinus (400 AD), found near Alexandria in Egypt
- c) Codex Vaticanus (325-350AD), located at the Vatican in Rome

In fact, there are 500 different copies of the New Testament that are earlier than 500 AD.

Let us again compare this with other classical manuscripts

- a) The 'Iliad' by Homer – the earliest copy is 500 years removed from the original
- b) Caesar's "Gallic wars" – 1000 years
- c) Livy - 350 years (and the earliest copy is only a fragment).
- d) Plato's 'Tetralogies' – 1200 years.
- e) Pliny The Younger's 'History' – 750 years.

Since scholars accept as generally trustworthy the writings of the ancient classics, even though the earliest manuscripts were written so long after the original writings and the number of existing manuscripts is in many instances so small, it is clear that the reliability of the text of the New Testament is likewise assured.

Some variations exist between the many thousands of manuscripts available, but textual criticism has recovered the New Testament text with 99% accuracy.