

**“STUDY TO SHOW THYSELF APPROVED UNTO GOD, A
WORKMAN THAT NEEDETH NOT TO BE ASHAMED,
RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH.”**

II Tim. 2:15

EXCERPTS FROM THE “BOOK OF BOOKS”

No other book in the world has had so many enthusiastic supporters, or has been so greatly misunderstood by its friends, as the Bible. No other book has had so many and such bitter enemies, and has so successfully withstood their attacks. Many have been cruelly persecuted for possessing the Bible, and devious attempts have been made to remove it from circulation. But the Bible still lives, and more copies are now being sold each year than of any other book ever published.

Today there are increasing numbers of Bible believers who are convinced that this peer of all books contains the explanation and points out the solution with which human wisdom seems to be so completely unable to cope.

While the Bible’s outline of God’s glorious plan for the redemption and recovery of the dying race from death is not set forth in sequential story form, the harmony, and at the same time, the contrast of its first three and the last three chapters is striking. The one describes the original creation of man and his fall from favor with God; the other the renewed or restored creation, with sin and its curse removed.

HOW READEST THOU?

‘Tis one thing now to read the Bible through,
Another thing to read, to learn and do;
‘Tis one thing to read it with delight,
And quite another thing to read it right.

Some read it with design to learn to read,
But to the subject pay but little heed;
Some read it as their duty once a week,
But no instruction from the Bible seek.

Whilst others read it without common care,
With no regard to how they read or where.
Some read it as a history, to know
How people lived three thousand years ago.

Some read to bring unto themselves repute,
By showing others how they can dispute;
Whilst others read because their neighbors do,
To see how long 'twill take to read it through.

Some read the blessed Book – They don't know why,
It somehow happens in the way to lie;
Whilst others read it with uncommon care,
But all to find some contradictions there.

One reads with father's specs upon his head,
And sees the thing just as his father did;
Another reads through Campbell or through Scott,
And thinks it means exactly what they thought.

Some read to prove a pre-adopted creed,
Thus understand but little what they read;
And every passage in the Book they bend
To make it suit that all important end.

Some read the Book to find that God is love,
Whilst others read – the opposite to prove.
Some people read, as I have often thought,
To teach the Book, instead of being taught.

THE INSPIRED WORD OF GOD

BOLD CLAIMS

The Bible is not timid in boldly claiming its own inspiration. Note the following texts:

- **“ALL SCRIPTURE is give by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” – 2 Tim. 3:16**
- **“FOR THE PROPHECY came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” – 2 Pet. 1:21**
- **“VERILY I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.’ – Matt. 18:18**

INSPIRATION CHALLENGED

In the past 150 years, critics have been increasingly bold to challenge this concept of inspiration on four main grounds: (1) differing historical accounts in the Biblical record; (2) seemingly irreconcilable conflicts with archaeology; (3) seemingly irreconcilable conflicts with recorded history; and (4) internal textual evidence of a variety of authors for Biblical books claiming single authorship.

The challenges are no doubt sincere and often the result of heavily researched scholarship. Nevertheless, they remain theoretical and are open to counter-challenge. Let us briefly review the four main areas of criticism.

INTERNAL CONFLICTS

These fall into two main categories: conflicts as to the order of events, and variations of fact in narrating the same event by two different writers. An example of the first is in the case of the cleansing of the temple which John connects with the beginning of Jesus' ministry, while the other three evangelists concur that it happened in the final year of that ministry.

An example of the second type of conflict is in the records of the healing of the blind man in Jericho, recorded in Matt. 20:29-34, Mark 10:46-52 and Luke 18:35-43. The Matthew account says that two were healed, while the others concur that it was only one. Matthew and Mark state that it occurred during their approach to Jericho, while Luke put it at their departure from the city.

The answer to the first problem is comparatively simple. Only Luke, of the Gospel writers, claims to be writing a chronological account. Matthew was writing a treatise to prove to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah and John was writing a record of the historical events which precipitated noted sermons by Jesus. Neither claims to be necessarily writing in chronological order. Also, in some cases, one writer records one event while another records a similar, but different, event from a later period.

The second type of problem requires a deeper inquiry into the nature of inspiration. While many variations in recorded events can be clarified with continued study, others remain. However, the Bible does not claim to be **verbally** inspired, that is, that every word was dictated by God.

Rather, the inspiration of the Scriptures is **conceptual**, leaving the observers to record events in their own words, while exercising general supervision to prevent factual inaccuracies.

A visit to a modern court room will suffice to show how each observer or witness sees events from their own peculiar perspective. While each is accurate, one places greater

stress on one item than another. Thus, in recording Jesus' sermons, one Evangelist stressed one detail, while another featured a different one.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE BIBLE

Scores of archaeological expeditions dig deeply into the Middle East soil each year to find "hard" evidence of the accuracy or inaccuracy of Biblical records. While frequently recovering confirming artifacts, there are numerous occasions when the record in stone apparently conflicts with the written word. These, the critics are quick to point out, argue against the inspiration of Scripture.

Professor W. F. Albright of the American Schools of Oriental Research writes: "There can be no doubt that archaeology has confirmed the substantial historicity of Old Testament tradition." The remarkable references to Abraham in the excavations at Ebla and the uncovering of Pontius Pilate's name at Caesarea are good examples.

But what of the other occasions where there are conflicts? It is important to remember that archaeology is not an exact science, but an interpretative one. The evidence it unveils is factual. The interpretations of that evidence, however, may not be so. Frequently two or more schools of interpretation are founded upon the same unearthed evidence. Suffice it to say that no direct contradiction of the Biblical record has yet been found. All seeming contradictions have resulted from the interpretation and dating of that evidence.

THE HISTORICAL RECORD

What of the conflicts between recorded history and the Bible? One might as well ask, What of the conflicts between recorded history and recorded history? Differing accounts between historians are numerous simply because they are subject to the bias and interpretative slant of their given historian.

Even today, the same current event, when read from a newspaper in the United States and in another country, say, from Russia, almost appears to be a different event. Once again, the example of the modern courtroom interrogation of witnesses emphasizes the uniqueness of each observer's viewpoint.

TEXTUAL CRITICISM

The schools of Higher Criticism that developed in the 19th Century have challenged much of the authorship of the Bible. Educated and scholarly discussions of internal evidence for multiple authors of Genesis or Isaiah have created doubts in the minds of many sincere readers of the Scriptures. But once again we are dealing with theories and not documented facts. Sufficient to the reader of faith will be the simple statement of Jesus of Nazareth, "as Moses wrote," omitting any speculation into multiple authors and secret documents. (See Matt 19:7, 8; Mark 10:3; Luke 20:28; John 1:45)

Some critics call our attention to Isaiah 44:28 and Isaiah 45:1 where, many years before Israel's Babylonian captivity, the name of Cyrus is mentioned, years before he was born. But is that so surprising? One of the greatest claims for Biblical inspiration is the accuracy of its prophecies. Some 40 prophecies were specifically fulfilled in the events concerning the life of Jesus of Nazareth. We note just a few for ready reference:

PROPHECY	FULFILLMENT
Gen. 49:10.....	From Tribe of Judah..... Luke 3:33
Isa. 9:7.....	Of David's Lineage.....Matt. 1:1
Micah 5:2.....	Born in Bethlehem.....Matt. 2:1
Dan. 9:25.....	Time of Birth.....Luke 2:1, 2
Isa. 7:14.....	Born of a Virgin.....Matt. 1:18
Hos. 11:1.....	Flight into Egypt.....Matt. 2:14

INSPIRATION TO UNDERSTAND

A wise man once wrote, "It not only required an inspiration to write God's plan, but it also requires an inspiration of the Almighty to give *an understanding* of this revelation; yet this inspiration is of a different sort."

The Apostle Paul treats this theme in 1 Cor. 2:11-14: "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God...But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

What Paul writes is clear. To understand spiritual things one must become spiritual. To become spiritual, one must give up his own natural will, and turn his mind over to God for the comprehension of God's will and his word. It is the same kind of dedication, or consecration, to do God's will which Jesus made in fulfillment of Psalm 40:7, 8: "Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Because the Bible is much more than a book of comfort and encouragement, but the means to understand God's Divine Plan of the Ages, we need to trace its message from cover to cover. This is the object of The Book of Books, which gives a short review of each of the 66 books of the Bible, and which we are glad to make available at the publisher's cost of \$2. Contact us at this website to obtain your copy.