

## LESSON 1: THE BIBLE

### I. Introduction

The Bible – literally “Book” in Latin – is far and away the bestseller of all time. It has been translated into more languages, and distributed to more parts of the earth, than any other book. Some have contended that this compilation of 66 books is an essentially human work – an account of man’s religious strivings toward, and encounters with, God. Yet the first four words, “*In the beginning, God*”, reveal that the Bible is not primarily about man but about God. It is God’s autobiography; He is the centerpiece.

- Why must a study of theology begin with bibliology – the study of the Bible?

### II. General Revelation vs. Special Revelation

- A. **General Revelation** refers to the knowledge of God’s existence, character, and moral law which comes through creation to all humanity. For instance, when I look at a diagram of the eyeball I realize that such an intricate organ must have a creator, that this creator must be very wise, and that he is intentional about what he has created. Or, as I observe that all humans dislike selfishness in others, and that my conscience is pricked by my own blatantly selfish behaviors, I realize that God cares how we treat one another and does not want people to be selfish. All of these observations come as a result of “general revelation.”
- B. **Special Revelation** refers to God’s words addressed to specific people. This includes the words of the Bible, the messages of the Old Testament Prophets, and the spoken words of Jesus. For us, special revelation consists of what we know about God directly from the Bible.<sup>1</sup> This lesson addresses this category of revelation.

### III. Inspiration

- A. **Definition of Inspiration:** *God superintended the human authors of the Bible so that they composed and recorded without error His message to mankind in the words of their original writings.*<sup>2</sup>
- B. **Verbal Plenary Inspiration:** A few other terms help us to define the scope of the inspiration of God’s Word. It is *plenary* (not in part but the whole) and *verbal* (inspiration extends to the words as well as the ideas). Thus, when we speak of the

<sup>1</sup> Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology p. 122-123.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Ryrie Systematic Theology p. 71.

*verbal plenary inspiration of the Scriptures* we stress that the totality of the Bible is the inerrant, infallible, and very Word of God.

### C. Scriptural Support

2 Timothy 3:16-17 ***All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.***

**Note on “inspired”:** Literally “God-breathed,” this word offers the sense of words coming directly from the mouth of God. Nearly 4,000 times in the Old Testament you will find words like “the Lord spoke,” “the Lord commanded,” “Thus saith the Lord,” “The Lord said,” etc.

2 Peter 1:20-21 ***But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.***

1. Consider the usage of “move” (“driven along”) in Acts 27:15 (especially in light of the interaction between the wind and the sailors). What does this suggest about the Holy Spirit’s role in writing Scripture?

Acts 27:15 ***and when the ship was caught in it and could not face the wind, we gave way to it and let ourselves be driven along.***

2. What are some distinctly “human” characteristics of the Bible? How does this explain why different books have different styles?
3. Ultimately, who is responsible for the authorship of Scripture?

### IV. Authority

The doctrine of *Sola Scriptura* holds that the Bible alone is the infallible rule of faith. The Bible contains all the information God has given us about how to know Him, how to receive salvation, and how to live godly lives. No other revelation is needed, and all other teachings must be evaluated through the lens of Scripture. This important doctrine is foundational for the authority of the Bible, and it is taught by the Bible itself in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, below:

***All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.***

A. What is meant by the term *Scripture*? What did it mean to Timothy? (cf. 2 Tim. 3:14-15)

B. A cynic may point out that the reference in 2 Timothy refers exclusively to the Old Testament and thus, to say that this passage teaches *sola scriptura* would make the New Testament superfluous. There are a few answers to this objection:

1. Paul had already recognized portions of the New Testament as Scripture. Compare the following:

1 Timothy 5:18 ***For the Scripture says, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING," and "The laborer is worthy of his wages."***

Luke 10:7 ***"Stay in that house, eating and drinking what they give you; for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not keep moving from house to house.***

2. Paul is emphasizing the ***nature*** of Scripture, not the ***canon*** of Scripture. If it is Scripture, then it is God-breathed, and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness. . . And, as we will contend, it is the ***nature*** of Scripture that makes it authoritative.

C. In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, what do the phrases "adequate" and "every good work" suggest about the sufficiency of Scripture? Do Christians need additional knowledge to live a Christian life pleasing to God? Why or why not?

D. Is all revelation that ever existed contained in the Holy Bible (cf. John 21:25)? Does that mean that our current copy of the Scriptures is somehow incomplete? Why or why not?

## V. Internal Testimony of the Holy Spirit

This doctrine teaches that God Himself helps believers to discern the truth from error. Through the supernatural ministry of the Holy Spirit, Christians can recognize His voice in the pages of the Bible. Thus, we do not need a man-made institution to unveil the "true meaning" or composition of Scripture.

A. The Problem:

Matthew 13:13-15 ***“Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. “In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, ‘YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE; FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES, OTHERWISE THEY WOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I WOULD HEAL THEM.’***

Romans 1:21 ***For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.***

2 Corinthians 4:4 ***in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.***

- According to these passages, why can't men understand the Bible?

B. The Solution:

1 Thessalonians 1:5 ***for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.***

Ephesians 3:14-19 ***For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, <sup>15</sup> from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, <sup>16</sup> that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, <sup>17</sup> so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, <sup>18</sup> may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, <sup>19</sup> and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.***

2 Corinthians 3:16 ***but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.***

- According to these passages, how does a person come to recognize that the Scriptures are true?

C. The Result:

John 10:27 ***“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me”***

- What is the difference between recognition and comprehension? According to this passage, how does a believer know to follow Jesus?

1 John 2:27 ***As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.***

- According to this passage, do you need a teaching authority to instruct you in the Scriptures? Why or why not?

The internal testimony of the Holy Spirit enables us to:

1. Believe the Bible
2. Understand the Bible
3. Grow in the Word (Sanctification)
4. Discern truth

In the words of Nigel M. Des. Cameron, *“The Scripture seems to be self-attesting, it is the divine author of Scripture, the Holy Spirit of God, who inspired the writing of that same Scripture, who is its final witness. He assures the believer that this canonical Scripture is verily the word of God written. That is, God offers his own witness to his word.”*<sup>3</sup>

## VI. Perspicuity (or Clarity) of Scripture

Closely related to the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit is the idea of the Perspicuity or Clarity of Scripture. In our postmodern world, where “what the Bible means to me” is considered a legitimate interpretive principle, this point of doctrine has come under attack.

A. **Definition:** Wayne Grudem gives the following definition:

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<sup>3</sup> Elwell, Walter A., and Walter A. Elwell. *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. electronic ed. Baker reference library; Logos Library System. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1997, c1996.

*The clarity of Scripture means that the Bible is written in such a way that its teachings are able to be understood by all who will read it seeking God's help and being willing to follow it.<sup>4</sup>*

## B. Scriptural Support:

1. Deuteronomy 6:6-7 ***“These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.”***
  - a. What is the general command in this passage?
  - b. How does this passage support the clarity of Scripture? (Hint: remember the audience)
  
2. Psalm 19:7 ***The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.***
  - a. What does the term *simple* imply about the audience?
  - b. How does the Scripture's impact on the simple affirm its clarity?
  
3. Matthew 21:42 ***Jesus said to them, “Did you never read in the Scriptures, ‘THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone; THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD, AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES’?***
  - Did the fact that these Scriptures were written centuries before, and in a different cultural context, excuse the audience for their misunderstanding? Why or why not?

## C. Why Do Some People Misunderstand Scripture?

When God-fearing Christians disagree on what Scripture teaches, there are two possible explanations:

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<sup>4</sup> Wayne Grudem, “Systematic Theology” (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994,) p. 1204.

1. They are seeking to make Scripture speak where it is silent.
2. They have misinterpreted the word.

In both cases, the problem is not with the Scriptures themselves, but with our failure to correctly interpret the Bible.<sup>5</sup>

## VII. The Canon

The Canon of Scripture is the collection of books that met certain tests and thus were considered authoritative, and are our rule of life.<sup>6</sup> Due to the presence of the Apocrypha – books which the Catholic Church views as authoritative but are not found in most Protestant Translations – some debate has ensued over which Canon is correct.

- Why is it important to determine which books belong in the Bible?
- If we see the Bible as authoritative on all matters to which it speaks, what role should it play in defining the canon?

The Scriptures make claims about their own canonicity in a number of ways:

1. *The Old Testament canon seems to be settled by Jesus.* In Luke 11:51 Jesus refers to martyrs ranging **“from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah.”** In this “from A to Z”-style statement, Jesus lays out his understanding of the Hebrew canon. He starts with Abel, the first martyr in the book of Genesis, and ends with Zechariah, the last martyr in the last book of the Hebrew canon (Chronicles), showing that this was the scope of true Scripture up to that point. Notably, this canon excludes the apocryphal books, which were not even accepted by the Catholic Church until 1546 (when it decisively affirmed the Canon of Augustine).<sup>7</sup>
2. *The Old Testament canon closes itself until the opening of the New Testament.* The prophecy of Malachi 4:4–6 reads, **“Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel. <sup>5</sup> Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. <sup>6</sup> And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”**

<sup>5</sup> For more on how to correctly interpret the Bible, see *How to Get the Most From God’s Word* by John MacArthur.

<sup>6</sup> Charles Ryrie, p. 534.

<sup>7</sup> Note: the translator of the Latin Vulgate (the official interpretation of the Roman Catholic Church for centuries) did not affirm the canonicity of the Apocrypha.

This text promises that God would one day send an “Elijah” to announce the advent of the Lord. Until then, revelation from God would cease. This silence lasted four centuries, until the angel appeared to Zacharias in the temple and prophesied the birth of John, the promised Elijah figure (Luke 1:11). After that came a flurry of new revelation in the words of Jesus Christ, whose every utterance was from God.

3. *Christ also hints at the canonicity of the future New Testament writings.* Jesus promises in John 14:25-26 to send the Holy Spirit to **“teach [the disciples] all things, and bring to remembrance all that I have said to you.”** With the assistance of the Holy Spirit these disciples-turned-apostles would be able to accurately recall all things that Jesus had taught them. Thus, their teaching and instruction—including their writing—would be authoritative, since they would speak on behalf of the Lord.
4. *The apostles treat their own letters as canonical.* Paul makes this very clear in 1 Corinthians 14:37 when he says, **“if anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord.”** His writings are not merely his own message or opinions, but God’s, and any Spirit-filled person will recognize this. The authoritative tone of all of the epistles testifies to their authenticity, and in several instances they even state that to disobey their words is to disobey God (e.g. Gal. 1:9). It is clear that *“portions of the New Testament were written with the expectation that they were to be received and obeyed.”*<sup>8</sup> Finally, in several places the apostolic writers pointed to other New Testament works as inspired as well (e.g. 2 Pet 3:15-16).
5. *The last book of the Bible seems to close the canon.* Jesus’ statement at the end of Revelation (22:18-19) asserts the sufficiency of the prophecies contained in the book to cover all future events: ***I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book,<sup>19</sup> and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.*** As one commentator writes, “The comprehensive scope of Revelation’s coverage of encouragement-parenthesis (chaps 2-3) and predictive elements (chaps. 4-22) and of the extensive time span from the first century to the eternal state also commends the view that vv. 18-19 anticipate no more prophecy.”<sup>9</sup> Just as Malachi prophesied a gap in revelation from his writing until the first advent of Christ, it follows that the next revelation of God will transpire during His second advent (Joel 2:28).

In conclusion, the canon was vindicated by the stunning unanimity among the early church as to what should and should not be recognized as holy Scriptures. The books that were

<sup>8</sup> R. Laird Harris, *Inspiration and Canonicity of the Scriptures*. (Greenville, SC: A. Press, 1995), 234.

<sup>9</sup> Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8:22 An Exegetical Commentary*. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995), 517.

excluded were rejected for good reason, since they taught bizarre doctrines and strange practices that contradict the rest of the teachings of Scripture (i.e., the Didache taught baptismal regeneration, the Gospel of Thomas taught that Mary needed to become a man, etc.).

- Do we need the Catholic Church to validate the canon? Why or why not?

### VIII. Inerrancy

In recent years, modern scholarship has severely attacked the accuracy of the Scriptures. This has led even some evangelical theologians to concede that there may be errors in the Bible regarding things like dating of events, the mode of creation, exaggerated numbers, etc. These theologians claim to still be evangelical because they believe the Bible is *infallible*—in other words, though it may contain errors, the Bible still speaks with perfect authority on matters of faith and practice.

- If the Bible has errors about things like history, origins, etc., how can we be certain that it does not also err in its teachings about Christ?

**A. Definition of Inerrancy:** *Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives.* (The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, 1978)<sup>10</sup>

Point of Clarification: Inerrancy pertains to the original manuscripts (autographs). To the extent that our copies and translations of the Scripture faithfully represent the original, they are inerrant.

#### B. Proofs of Inerrancy:

1. By Syllogism: Inerrancy can be proved through the following simple syllogism.
  - a. God is true (Rom. 3:4)
  - b. Scripture is breathed out by God (2 Tim. 3:16)
  - c. The Scriptures must be true because they were breathed out by God.

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<sup>10</sup> As quoted in Wayne Grudem, "Systematic Theology" (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994,) p. 1204.

2. By Christ's View of Inerrancy:

In Matthew 5:17-20, Jesus gives us His view of the Old Testament: ***“Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”***

- D. What can we gather from this text about Jesus' view of inerrancy in the Old Testament Scriptures?
  
- E. How does affirming every “smallest letter or stroke” uphold inerrancy?

3. By Christ's Use of Scripture:

In Matthew 22:43-45, we see that Jesus' interpretation of key passages depended on these “smallest letters” and “strokes.” ***He said to them, “Then how does David in the Spirit call Him ‘Lord,’ saying, ‘THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, “SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, UNTIL I PUT YOUR ENEMIES BENEATH YOUR FEET” ’? If David then calls Him ‘Lord,’ how is He his son?”***

- 1. What single word serves as the crux of Jesus' argument?
  
- 2. How does this support inerrancy?

Again, consider Jesus' use of the Old Testament in Matthew 22:31-32, ***“Have you not read what was spoken to you by God: ‘I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB’? He is not the God of the dead but of the living.”***

- 1. Why is the verb tense so important to Jesus' argument?
  
- 2. Again, how does this support inerrancy?

### C. Parameters of Inerrancy:

1. ***Inerrancy allows for variety in style.*** The gospel of John was written in the simple style one might expect of an unlearned fisherman; Luke was written with the more sophisticated vocabulary of an educated person; Paul's epistles reflect the logic of a philosopher. All these variations are entirely compatible with inerrancy.
2. ***Inerrancy allows for variety in details in explaining the same event.*** This phenomenon is particularly observed in the synoptic gospels. It is important to remember that Jesus spoke in Aramaic and the writers of Scripture wrote their accounts in Greek, meaning they had to translate the original words into Greek. It is therefore entirely understandable that two writers would use slightly different words to describe the same incident, yet both would give the same meaning. Also, details vary from author to author because each writer chose to emphasize those aspects of an event that would best convey their message. Though the details would appear different, both accounts would be accurate.
3. ***Inerrancy does not demand verbatim reporting of events.*** In times of antiquity it was not the practice to give a verbatim repetition of details every time something was written out.<sup>11</sup>
4. ***Inerrancy allows for departure from standard forms of grammar.*** Obviously it would be wrong to enforce English grammar rules upon the Scriptures.
5. ***Inerrancy allows for problem passages.*** With a work as vast as the Holy Scriptures it is nearly impossible to provide solutions to all the problems. In one case the solution awaits the findings of the archaeologist's spade; in another case it awaits the linguist's research; in still others the solution may never be discovered. It is never an option, however, to say that because we cannot solve every problem, there must be errors or contradictions in Scripture. If the Scriptures are God-breathed they must be entirely without error.
6. ***Inerrancy demands that the account does not actually contain error or contradiction.*** In the things addressed by Scripture, whatever is written is in accord with things as they are.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> A verbatim quote could not be demanded for several reasons. First, as already mentioned, the writer had to translate from Aramaic to Greek in recording Jesus' words. Second, in making reference to Old Testament texts it would have been impossible to unroll the lengthy scrolls each time to produce a verbatim quote; furthermore, the scrolls were not readily available, hence, the freedom in Old Testament quotes.

<sup>12</sup>Enns, Paul P.: The Moody Handbook of Theology. Chicago, Ill. : Moody Press, 1997, c1989, S. 167

## IX. Conclusion

The foundation of all theology is the word of God. What you believe about the word will determine what you believe about Creation, the Resurrection, Salvation, and the Return of Christ. Yet the Scripture is more than just a theological tome. As the author of Hebrews says,

***For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*** (Hebrews 4:12)

May God give us a deep love and reverence for His word so that we might pursue Him through the pages of Holy Scripture. In the words of Puritan divine Thomas Watson:

*The Word is the field where Christ the pearl of price is hid. In this sacred mine we dig, not for a wedge of gold, but for a weight of glory. The Scripture is a sacred eye-salve to illuminate us. "The commandment is a lamp, and the law is light" (Proverbs 6:23). The Scripture is the chart and compass by which we sail to the New Jerusalem. It is a sovereign cordial in all distresses. What are the promises but the water of life to renew fainting spirits?<sup>13</sup>*

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<sup>13</sup> Thomas Watson, *A Body of Divinity* (Edinburgh and Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2003), pp. 35-36.

## Appendix:

### COMMON OBJECTIONS AND ANSWERS

- A. **Objection 1:** We don't have the original Bible. After all, the various texts were written thousands of years ago and passed down through the centuries by men.

**Response:**

The guardianship of the Old Testament was entrusted to the Masoretes, a group of Hebrew scholars who meticulously copied the Old Testament text using such techniques as numbering the letters, words, and lines in each book. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 confirmed the success of their efforts to pass on exact copies: When scholars compared the Isaiah Scroll (dated around 150 BC) with the Masoretic copy (dated around AD 900), they determined that there was 95% agreement between the two texts. The disagreements were obvious slips of the pen and variations in spelling.

Scholars, archeologists, and researchers have sifted through over 24,000 manuscripts related to the New Testament that date all the way back to the first half of the second century. By comparison, only 647 manuscripts of Homer's classic *Iliad* have been recovered. Through the science of textual criticism (comparing manuscripts of similar passages in order to detect human errors), scholars believe that we have at least ninety-eight percent of the New Testament accurately reconstructed. The disputed two percent in no way interferes with orthodox (mainstream) Christian doctrine.

- B. **Objection 2:** Doesn't the Bible contradict itself?

**Response:**

Few who make this objection have ever taken the time to actually read the Bible and see for themselves. The vast majority of the Bible's "contradictions" are cleared up by a simple study of the context of the passages. Many books are available to assist in resolving these apparent contradictions, such as Gleason Archer's *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* and Norman Geisler's *When Critics Ask*.

- C. **Objection 3:** What about other books of revelation, like the Koran?

**Response:**

The Bible is absolutely unique from all other books in its composition, unity, and accuracy. The Bible was written by multiple authors in confirmed historical settings over thousands of years through a variety of literary forms and types of revelation – and yet, it still holds together and maintains the same message throughout. In contrast, books like the Koran and the Book of Mormon have a single author, contain gross historical inaccuracies,

and misrepresent the Bible.<sup>14</sup> In addition, the Bible stands apart with its proven track record of fulfilled prophecies. Here are just a few examples:

1. ***Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, nor will I so abhor them as to destroy them, breaking My covenant with them; for I am the LORD their God.*** (Leviticus 26:44)

In the near context of this verse, Yahweh tells the Israelites that the Promised Land will be abandoned on account of their unfaithfulness. Yet, as we read in verse 44, the Lord will graciously preserve them while they are in the land of their enemies. This passage clearly alludes to the Babylonian exile, which transpired roughly 850 years later (see 2 Kings 17:6; 24:10-16).

2. ***And Babylon, the beauty of kingdoms, the glory of the Chaldeans' pride, Will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It will never be inhabited or lived in from generation to generation; Nor will the Arab pitch his tent there, Nor will shepherds make their flocks lie down there.*** (Isaiah 13:19-20)

This prophecy was penned by Isaiah in the seventh century BC. At that time, Babylon was at its height and was a formidable military city. Yet today this once-prosperous city is a barren wasteland because of the extreme salinization of the surrounding farmland—a fulfillment of the words “Nor will shepherds make their flocks lie down there.” The reference to Arabs not pitching their tents on the site of this once-mighty city is significant because they did not inhabit the region until the eighth century AD.

3. The account of the suffering servant in Isaiah 52:13-15 and 53:1-12, composed during the late seventh century BC, offers a striking Old Testament portrait of the life and death of Christ. Phrases such as “He was pierced through for our transgressions” and “by His scourging we are healed” clearly point to the crucifixion of Christ and our spiritual salvation through His suffering on the cross.<sup>15</sup>

Ultimately, the truth of the Bible will commend itself above and beyond any human work. The wisdom of the Scriptures speaks for itself, even when the sinfulness of our own hearts (see Jeremiah 17:9) interferes with our ability to completely understand it. In conclusion, let us remember Jesus’ challenge in John 7:17, ***“If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself.”***

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<sup>14</sup> For specific examples of the inaccuracies of the Koran and Book of Mormon consult: Gleason L. Archer, Jr., A Survey of Old Testament Introduction (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1994), pp. 549-556.

<sup>15</sup> For more examples of fulfilled prophecy see Gleason L. Archer, Jr, A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, pgs. 563-568.