



# **Deepening Discipleship**

My relationship with the Bible

# Overview of the Lesson

- The Nature of the Bible
- Inerrancy and Challenges to it
- The Sufficiency and Authority of the Scriptures (Sola Scriptura)
- How did Jesus View the Scriptures
- The Canon of the Bible
- How we Got our Bible and the History of English Bible Translation
- Bible Translation Approaches and Different Modern English Bible Translations

# The Nature of the Bible

- Inspired by God
- Every scripture is inspired by God (2 Tim 3:16).
- No prophecy of scripture ever comes about by the prophet's own imagination, for no prophecy was ever borne of human impulse; rather, men carried along by the Holy Spirit spoke from God (2 Pet 1:20-21).

# Implications of Inspiration - 1

- ***First: The Bible is a human book***
- 1. Authors used their own language, writing methods, style of writing and literary form of writing
- 2. Authors wrote to an audience in a specific historical context for a specific purpose.
- 3. The Bible is influenced by the culture in which the author wrote.
- 4. The Bible has over 40 authors and was written over a time period of 1500 years

# Implications of Inspiration - 2

- *Second: **the Bible is a Divine Book:***
- 1. The Bible is inerrant
- 2. The Bible is authoritative
- 3. The Bible has unity (66 books; about 40 authors over 1500 years). It has a consistent message and can be compared with itself for proper interpretation.
- 4. The Bible has an element of mystery: some passages may be hard to understand.
- 5. The Bible has an interpretation to it that is intended by God

# Example of Matt 1:22-23

- This all happened so that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet would be fulfilled: “Look! The virgin will conceive and bear a son, and they will call him Emmanuel.”
- 1. The OT passage of Isaiah was spoken “**by the Lord**” (Divine ultimate source)
- 2. The OT passage of Isaiah was spoken “*through the prophet.*” (Human intermediate source)

# The Nature of the Bible: First

The **act of the Holy Spirit** in which He superintended the writers of Scripture so that, while writing according to their own styles and personalities, they produced God's Word, written, authoritative, and free from error in the original writings

# The Nature of the Bible: Second

**Definition of Inerrancy:** The teaching that since the Scriptures are given by God, they are **free from error** in all their contents, including doctrinal, historical, scientific, geographical, and other branches of knowledge

# The Nature of the Bible: Third

## **Some Challenges to Inerrancy:**

- *Alleged* Contradictions of the Bible with **Science**
- *Alleged* Contradiction of the Bible with **History**
- *Alleged* Contradictions of **the Bible with Itself**

# Alleged Scientific Discrepancy: *First*

Evolution is often stated but macro-evolution (one species evolving to another species) is **theory** and not a fact. It has never been observed and not subject to the scientific method.

# Alleged Scientific Discrepancy: *Second*

**Matthew 13:31-32** He gave them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. <sup>32</sup> It is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest garden plant and becomes a tree, so that the wild birds come and nest in its branches.”

# Alleged Scientific Discrepancy: *Third*

**Veracity of inerrancy problem for some:  
The wild orchid seed is smaller.**

- The statement is proverbial
- Jesus is referring only to sown seeds; The wild orchid is not a sown agricultural seed.
- Within the Judean world view in their context it was the smallest seed

# Alleged Contradiction of the Bible with History

Prior to the advent of the archaeological era of the 19 and 20th centuries critics often called into question the historicity of the Bible especially the OT in terms of places, peoples and events.

- **However**, over time archaeological discoveries have often silenced specific historical criticism.

# Three Examples of (**Once**) Alleged Historical Discrepancies (**validated** by archaeological finds)

- **The Hittite Empire**
- In 1876 and later in 1906 evidence of the Hittite capital and language was discovered at Boghaz-koy in modern Turkey.
- **The Cities of Sodom and Gomorrah**
- Starting in 1924 excavations were done in the area of the Dead Sea and evidence of cities which had been burned is present during the time of the biblical account.
- **King David**
- In 1993 at Tel Dan in Northern Israel a 9th century BC inscription was discovered referring to the “King of Israel” and the “House of David.”

# William F. Albright, Ph.D.

Renown Archaeologist and professor at John Hopkins (1930-1958). Albright became known to the public for his role in the authentication of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1948

- **"There can be no doubt that archaeology has confirmed the substantial historicity of Old Testament tradition."** — (William F. Albright, *Archaeology and the Religions of Israel*. Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1956, p. 176.)

# Nelson Glueck, Ph.D.

Renown Archaeologist and President of Hebrew Union College

- "It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference. Scores of archaeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or exact detail historical statements in the Bible. And, by the same token, proper evaluation of Biblical description has often led to amazing discoveries." - Dr. Nelson Glueck, *Rivers in the Desert*, (New York: Farrar, Strous and Cudahy, 1959, 136).

# Alleged Bible Contradictions: First

Differences in parallel passages do not require actual contradictions

- Harmonization and understanding that nature of historical reporting most often provides good solutions to differences.
- For example in a football game on a pass interference play one reporter states the cornerback bumped the receiver while another states the receiver bumped into the cornerback. Both statements while different may be true but they are being reported from a little different perspective.

# Alleged Bible Contradictions: Second

## Two Blind Men or One?

- As they were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed them. Two blind men were sitting by the road. When they heard that Jesus was passing by, they shouted, “Have mercy on us, Lord, Son of David!” (**Matt 10:29-30**)
- They came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus the son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the road. When he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to shout, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me! (**Mark 10:46-47**)””

# Alleged Bible Contradictions: Third

## Harmonization?

- Mark chooses to **focus on one** of the blind men naming him.
- Matthew writing to a Jewish audience may wish to confirm the testimony of the blind men (Jesus = the son of David = a Messianic title) by the Jewish required number of at least two (Deut 17:6).
- Because Mark reports that one blind man was healed it does not preclude that another blind man was healed on the same occasion.

# Alleged Bible Contradictions: Fourth

How does one explain the differences in Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi?

## Question

- Mt 16:13: Who do people say the Son of Man is?"
- Mk 8:27 "Who do people say I am?"
- Lk 9:18 "Who do the crowds say I am?"

## Answer

- Mt 16:16 "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God"
- Mk 8:29 "You are the Christ"
- Lk 9:20 "The Christ of God"
- Sometimes the Bible authors condense speeches and events. This is the nature of historical reporting.

# Alleged Bible Contradictions: Fifth

## The Time of the Crucifixion:

- And it was the **third hour** when they crucified Him. (Mk15:25)
- When Pilate therefore heard these words, he brought Jesus out, and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. 14 Now it was the day of preparation for the Passover; it was about the **sixth hour**. And he said to the Jews, "Behold, your King!" (Jn 19:13-14)

# Alleged Bible Contradictions: Sixth

**Bart Ehrman**, in his book: *Jesus Interrupted: Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible*, 2009, claims

- "It is impossible that both Mark's and John's accounts are historically accurate, since they contradict each other on the question on when Jesus died"

# Sensible Explanation

- Matthew, Mark, and Luke are using a **Jewish time** reckoning system which starts the day at 6:00 am. They wrote years before John.
- John is writing to a Roman population and is using a **Roman time** reckoning system that started the day at 12:00 midnight

# Theology Professor **Norman Geisler, Ph.D.**

"After forty years of continual and careful study of the Bible, I can only conclude that those who have "discovered a mistake" in the Bible do not know too much about the Bible - they know too little about it. This does not mean, of course, that we understand how to resolve all the difficulties in the Scriptures. But we have seen enough problems resolved to know these also admit answers."

# Deductive Argument for Inerrancy

- God cannot err. (John 14:6; Heb 6:18)
  - The Bible is the Word of God (Mark 7:13; John 10:35; Rom 9:6).
  - **Therefore**, the Bible cannot err.
- (See Dr. Norman Geisler's article :  
[http://www.inplainsite.org/html/alleged\\_bible\\_errors.html](http://www.inplainsite.org/html/alleged_bible_errors.html))

.

# The Authority and **Sufficiency** of the Bible

- Sola Scriptura from the Latin = “**by Scripture alone**” was one of the themes of the reformation.
- Simply it means that the Scripture alone is our supreme authority to all other authorities in matters of faith and practice.
- For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any double-edged sword, piercing even to the point of dividing soul from spirit, and joints from marrow; it is able to judge the desires and thoughts of the heart. (Heb 4:12)

# Martin Luther

**"The true rule is this: God's Word shall establish articles of faith, and no one else, not even an angel can do so!"**

(Martin Luther, Smalcald Articles II, 15)

# Thomas Campbell

## Declaration and Address

3. ... nothing ought to be inculcated upon Christians as articles of faith; nor required of them as terms of communion; but what is expressly taught, and enjoined upon them, **in the word of God**. Nor ought any thing be admitted, as of divine obligation, in their church constitution and managements, but what is expressly enjoined by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ and his Apostles upon the New Testament church; either in express terms, or by approved precedent.

# Thomas Campbell

## Declaration and Address

5. That with respect to the commands and ordinances of our Lord Jesus Christ, **where the scriptures are silent**, as to the express time or manner of performance, if any such there be; no human authority has power to interfere, in order to supply the supposed deficiency, by making laws for the church; nor can any thing more be required of Christians in such cases, but only that they so observe these commands and ordinances, as will evidently answer the declared and obvious end of their institution. Much less has any human authority power to impose new commands or ordinances upon the church, which our Lord Jesus Christ has not enjoined. Nothing ought to be received into the faith or worship of the church; or be made a term of communion amongst Christians, **that is not as old as the New Testament.**

# How Did Jesus View the Bible?

- Jesus said “I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth pass away not the smallest letter or stroke of a letter will pass from the law until everything takes place” (Matt 5:18)
- “**the scripture cannot be broken**” (John 10:35)

# The Canon of the Bible

- Definition of the Canon:** from Greek word *kanon* (κανών) meaning "rule" or a "standard." By the 4th century A.D. for the New Testament it is what was applied to a list or collection of books that met a prescribed standard.
- Now the canon refers to the **closed collection** of Jewish and early Christian writings that constitute divinely inspired, authoritative Scripture for the beliefs and practices of the church.
  - The Hebrew Bible, also known as **Mikra** ("what is read") or **T a N a K h**, an acronym referring to the traditional **Jewish** division of the Bible into **T** orah (Teaching), **N** evi'im (Prophets), and **K** etuvim (Writings), is the founding document of the people of Israel.

# Principles of Canonicity

## Principles of the Canonicity of the OT

- **Basic Guideline: Prophetic origin** (Deut 18).
- **The OT Canon** is divided between the Law (Torah), Prophets (Nebbim) and Writings (Kethubim).

## Principles of the Canonicity of the NT

- **Basic Guideline: Apostolic origin or association**
- The Gospels Matthew, and John. Mark (associated with Peter); and Luke (associated with Paul). Acts (Luke Associated with Paul). The Epistles (Paul, Peter, Jude, James, Paul, the Author of Hebrews) and John, the Author of Revelation (John)

What about books written between the Old Testament and New Testament (mostly 250 BC-AD 100) referred to as the **Apocrypha**?

- There are **15 books**: 1 & 2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, Additions to Esther, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus (Ben Sirach), Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah, Prayer of Azariah and Song of the Three Young Men, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, Prayer of Manasseh and 1&2 Maccabees
- **Jerome** included them in the **Latin Vulgate** but separated them as “Deuterocanonical.”

The reformers strongly opposed the Apocrypha. In response to the strong position against these books by the reformers, in 1546 the Roman Catholic Church at the Council of Trent declared them all canonical (except the Prayer of Manasseh and 1&2 Esdras)

- **The Apocryphal books should not be part of the canon because:**
- They are not accepted in the NT as authoritative (no direct quotations)
- They never make the claim “Thus says the Lord” like the OT does
- They are not part of the Hebrew Bible and the Jews never viewed the books as authoritative or canonical and they wrote them.
- 1500 years after the books were written, the human agency known as the Roman Catholic Church declared them official scripture.

# Why the Canon is Closed

## Scriptural Reasons:

- **Deuteronomy 4:2** You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.
- **Deuteronomy 12:32** Whatever I command you, you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to nor take away from it.
- **Proverbs 30:5-6** Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. 6 Do not add to His words Or He will reprove you

# Why the Canon is Closed

## Scriptural Reasons, continued:

- **2 Peter 1:3** seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.
- **2 Timothy 3:16-17** All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

# Why the Canon is Closed

## Scriptural Reasons, continued:

- **Jude 3** Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.

Only the Johannine writings came after this and John was an apostle. He **closes the canon** of the NT in 95 A.D. with

- **Revelation 22:18-19** I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.

# Why the Canon is Closed

## Theological Reason:

- **Hebrews 1:1-2** God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.
- God's revelation of himself to the present age is **complete in Jesus Christ and His delegated apostolic witnesses.**

# Why the Canon is Closed

## Historical Reasons:

- A closed canon doesn't mean God has ceased to reveal Himself to people today but that there will be no new revelation of truth outside of what He has already revealed in the Bible to the church. God has placed in the closed canon of Scripture everything we need to know about Himself, and about who we are, how we ought to live, and what will happen in the future.
- An open canon would allow books or passages of Scripture to be added to the Bible through continued or ongoing revelation. By adding books to the canon, we would essentially be saying that the current Bible is incomplete, or lacking in some way.

# Why the Canon is Closed

## Historical Reasons, Continued:

- The most significant implication of a closed canon is that additional books cannot be added to the Bible and none of the books that are currently included can be removed. **God has spoken.**
- A closed canon implies that other religious books that devotees claim to be inspired by God should be rejected as spurious. The Book of Mormon, The Great Controversy, Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, the Quran, and the Vedas, —all of these are works of men and women and **not** the product of God's Holy Spirit.
- A closed canon also implies that **there are no apostles or prophets today** who are receiving new messages from God. The church is gifted with teachers and preachers of the Word today, but anyone who claims a new revelation from God, proffers his or her message as divinely inspired, or assumes authority on par with the Bible is leading people astray.

# Why the Canon is Closed Review

**Scriptural Reasons:** Jude 3-4 refer to “**the faith** (I.e., the body of apostolic doctrine) **once for all delivered to the saints.**” Only the Johannine writings came after this and John was an apostle.

**Theological Reason:** God’s revelation of himself to the present age is complete in Jesus Christ (Heb 1:2) and the apostolic witness.

**Historical Reasons: There is no longer the apostolic office to originate or validate the writings** (cf. 1 Cor 9:1-2; 2 Cor 12:11; Eph 2:20).

# The Authority Relationship of the Canon and The Church

## **The Incorrect View**

- The Church is the determiner of the Canon
- The Church is mother of the Canon
- The Church is magistrate of the Canon
- The Church is regulator of the Canon
- The Church is judge of the Canon
- The Church is master of the Canon

# The Authority Relationship of the Canon and The Church

## **The Incorrect View**

- The Church is the determiner of the Canon
- The Church is mother of the Canon
- The Church is magistrate of the Canon
- The Church is regulator of the Canon
- The Church is judge of the Canon
- The Church is master of the Canon

# The Authority Relationship of the Canon and The Church

## **The Correct View**

- **The Church is discover of the Canon**
- **The Church is child of the Canon**
- **The Church is minister of the Canon**
- **The Church is recognizer of the Canon**
- **The Church is witness of the Canon**
- **The Church is servant of the Canon**

# The Authority Relationship of the Canon and The Church

## Dr. Norman Geisler's Summary:

In the "**Incorrect View**" the authority of the Scripture is based upon the authority of the church; **the correct view** is the authority of the church is to be found in the authority of The Scriptures. The **incorrect** view places the church over the canon, whereas **the proper position** views the church under the canon. In fact **if** in the "Incorrect view" the word church be replaced by God, then the proper view of the canon emerges clearly. It is God who regulated the canon; man merely recognized the Divine Authority gave to it. God determined the canon, and man discovered it..

# How We Received our Bible

## **Hebrew** (Most of the OT)

- Text transmitted by professional Jewish scribes. The Massoretic Text is the authoritative (canon) Hebrew and Aramaic text of the 24 books of the Tanakh in Rabbinic Judaism
- Dead Sea Scrolls (mss. 1000 years earlier than others)

**Aramaic** (Gn 31:47; Jer 10:11; Ezra 4:8-6:18; 7:12-26; Dan 2:4b-7:28)

## **Koine Greek** (All the NT)

- Transmitted by Christian scribes
- Over 5600 Greek manuscripts (2nd to 15th A.D.)

<https://bibletranslation.ws/manu.html>

# Early Bible Translations

Purpose: To get the Bible in a language that the people could understand

## Old Testament

- Koine Greek: Septuagint (LXX) 3rd Century B.C.
- Syriac: Peshitta 2-3rd Century A.D.?
- Aramaic: Jewish Targums 2-3rd Century A.D.
- Latin: Vulgate done by Jerome 400 A.D.

## New Testament (Early Translations in 2nd century A.D.)

- Latin: Old Latin and Vulgate (Western Church)
- Coptic: (Egypt)
- Syriac: Old Syriac and Peshitta (Eastern Church)

# John Wycliffe (1330-1384)

- **First Complete English Translation**
- Translated from the Vulgate
- Matt 22:37-40: **Thou schalt love thi Lord God of al thin herte, and of al thi soule and of al thi mynde, and thi neighebore as thi self, for in these twey comaundements hangith al the lawe and prophetis**
- Copied by hand
- In 1415 Wycliffe Bible was condemned by the Roman Catholic church. His followers were jailed, Wycliffes bones were dug up, burned and ashes scattered in a river.

# William Tyndale (1492-1536)

- **Used Greek and Hebrew mss. for translation.**
- Motivation: “I will cause a boy that driveth a plow to know more of the Scripture than a learned scholar.”
- John 14:6: **lesus sayd vnto him: I am the waye verite and lyfe. Noman cometh vnto the father but by me.**
- 6000 printed copies smuggled into England. **First complete printed edition of English Bible**
- Hunted down and burned at the stake by the Roman Catholic Church for the translation.
- Prayed as being burned “**Lord open the King’s eyes.**”

# God answered Tyndale's Prayer

- its fulfillment was just one year later with King Henry's authorization of the Matthew Bible, which was Tyndale's own work, with missing sections translated by John Rogers and Miles Coverdale.
- The Coverdale Bible (1535); Matthew's Bible (1537); The Tavner Bible (1539); The Great Bible (1539); The Geneva Bible (1560; Bible used by the Pilgrims); The Bishops Bible (1568); The Douai-Rheims Bible (1609-10)
- These were largely revisions of each other.

- In 1603 King James I took the throne of England. He was unhappy with the Calvinist notes in Geneva Bible and the anti-protestant notes in the Douay-Rheims Bible. Wanted to have **one standard Bible** for the English church.
- Supported 50 scholar/translators to complete the King James Bible in **1611**.
- He controlled the translation and the English press.
- Translation underwent revisions in 1629, 1638, 1762, 1769 (Current KJV), 1982 (**NKJV**)

- 1885 Revised Version (British)
- 1901 American Standard Version
- 1952 Revised Standard Version;
- 1989 NRSV
- 1958 The Phillips Bible (Paraphrase)
- 1960/95 The New American Standard Bible (Evangelical)
- 1966 Jerusalem Bible; 1985 NJB (Catholic)
- 1971 The Living Bible; 1996 New Living Translation (Evangelical)
- 1979 New International Version (Evangelical)
- 1993 The Message (Paraphrase)
- 1995 Contemporary English Version (Evang.)
- 2004 Holman Christian Standard Bible (Evang.)
- 2005 The NET Bible (Evangelical)

# Types of Bible Translations

## Dynamic Equivalence

- Translation seeks to express the meaning of the text in a way that is idiomatic in English. More **concerned about good stylistic English** and willing to forgo some literalness to accomplish objective. Usually easier to read and understand; more interpretive (what text means)
- Examples: NIV, NLT, CEV, (NET and HCSB in part)

# Types of Bible Translations

## **Word Equivalence**

- Translation is more literal to the language structure of the original text. Translation seeks to produce the semantic equivalence of each word and represent it in the translation. Usually harder to read; sometimes can confuse what author means with unfamiliar idiom; less interpretive in translation and allows more interpretive options (what text says not necessarily what it means)
- Examples: NASB, NKJV, RSV (NET and HCSB in part)

# Types of Bible Translations

## **Paraphrase**

- Not a translation from the original language, but someone putting something in their own words as to how they would say it.
- Examples: Living Bible, The Message

# Comparison of Ps 1:1

## NASB - Word Equivalence

- How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers.

## HCSB - Dynamic Equivalence

- How happy is the man who does not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path of sinners, or join a group of mockers.

## The Message - Paraphrase

- How well God must like you— you don't hang out at Sin Saloon, you don't slink along Dead-End Road, you don't go to Smart-Mouth College.

# Concluding Reflections

“God’s words will give men new life more than other words that are for pleasure. O marvelous power of the Divine Seed which overpowers strong men in arms, softens hard hearts, and renews and changes into godly men, those men who had been brutalized by sins and departed infinitely far from God.” --- John Wycliffe

# Questions to Ponder

- If we as Christians believe the Bible is inspired by God and inerrant how should this affect our interaction with it?
- What challenges to the reliability of the Bible have you encountered? How have you responded?
- What are some questions you have about what books are included in the canon and what books are not? Are you comfortable with it?
- Are there any differences in the Bible that you think are very difficult or cannot be reconciled? What are they?