

ADVANCED BIBLICAL COURSE



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GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

FOR BIBLE STUDY/SCHOOL LECTURERS

- ◆ Beforehand preparation and familiarisation with the notes is essential.
- ◆ Preparation in prayer will turn a lecture into a time of spiritual impartation.
- ◆ Be at your venue early enough to have everything set up before the study begins.
- ◆ Time management: for instance begin as close to 7:30pm as possible and end at 8:30, allowing time for questions and responses. Therefore, we will honour those attending by finishing no later than 8:45pm. Please stick to these times, and prepare accordingly.
- ◆ Make use of visual aids, as they greatly help in the teaching process. E.g. OHP slides, use of a flip-chart or white board, etc (whatever is useful).
- ◆ In the context of your study, use illustrations and examples to turn your lecture into a time of discipling.
- ◆ Ensure that your hand-out notes have been timeously prepared and have been proof read for errors.
- ◆ Remember the idiom: prepare as if there is no Holy Spirit, and teach relying on the Holy Spirit, as if you have not prepared.

GUIDELINES

FOR ADVANCED BIBLICAL COURSE

In 1877 Bishop Ryle wrote: *"The Lord Jesus Christ declares, 'I will build My Church'...Ministers may preach, and writers may write, but the Lord Jesus Christ alone can build. And except He builds, the work stands still... Sometimes the work goes on fast, and sometimes it goes on slowly. Man is frequently impatient, and thinks that nothing is doing. But man's time is not God's time. A thousand years in His sight are but as a single day. The great builder makes no mistakes. He knows what He is doing. He sees the end from the beginning. He works by a perfect, unalterable and certain plan."* [J.C. Ryle 'The True Church' in Warnings to the Churches, 1877, pp13-14]

Although, every Christian and every fellowship is able to witness to the gospel, here is a guideline for you to be managing in the Advanced Biblical Course. In fact, many fellowships create their own evangelistic courses under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. However, it should not be necessary to rely on the methods and techniques of another fellowship when we have all the instruction and teaching material we need in Scripture, all the experience we need in each of our relationships with the Lord Jesus and are each empowered by the Holy Spirit to go and do it. But if leaders do decide to use the Advanced Biblical Course they should at least consider the following points in light of the concerns above: -

- ◆ That they ensure non-believing (even believing, especially newly conversions) participants have fully understood the meaning of the cross and are saved before propelling them into a course on Christian Living.
- ◆ That they ensure converts are fully aware of their conversion experience and are becoming stable in their daily relationship with the Lord Jesus before thrusting them into the baptism of the holy Spirit, for which they are not yet ready and which could allow into their lives the influence of an alien spirit through ground given, albeit unintentionally.
- ◆ That they ensure participants understand the different nature of the work of each person in the Trinity.
- ◆ That they ensure the fruit of the Holy Spirit, and his convicting and sanctifying work in a believer's life is not submerged beneath the gifts and the power of the Holy Spirit.
- ◆ That they ensure participants are taught to proceed from the Word to experience, not from experience to the Word.
- ◆ Following from this, that they ensure participants understand that deception regarding doctrine and supernatural phenomena has always been Satan's main weapon against the Church and that knowing and standing fast in the Word is our weapon of defence, as it was for Jesus. (Matthew 4:1-11)
- ◆ That they ensure participants are taught to become Bereans (Acts 17:11) able to test everything against Scripture for themselves, not relying on leaders, who are not infallible (e.g. Galatians 2:11-14), to do their thinking and living for them.

SCRIPTURAL VERSES

PSALMS 1:1-6

“Blessed is the man who has not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, and has not stood in the way of sinners, and has not sat in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is only in the Law of Jehovah; and in His Law he meditates day and night, and he shall be like a tree planted by the rivulets of water that brings forth its fruit in its seasons, and its leaf shall not wither, and all which he does shall be blessed. The wicked are not so, but are like chaff which the wind drives away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For Jehovah knows the way of the righteous; but the way of the ungodly shall perish.”

ACTS 2:42

“And they were continuing steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and in fellowship and in the breaking of the loaves, and in prayers.”

ROMANS 16:17-18

“And I exhort you, brothers, to watch those making divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them. For they who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches they deceive the hearts of the simple.”

1 TIMOTHY 4:6 & 16

“Having suggested these things to the brothers, you shall be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the Words of Faith and by the good doctrine which you have followed. Hold on to yourself and to the doctrine; continue in them, for doing this you shall both save yourself and those who hear you.”

2 TIMOTHY 2:2 & 15; 3:16-17 & 4:1-7

““And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit the same to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. Study earnestly to present yourself approved to God, a workman that does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. All Scripture is God-breathed, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfected, thoroughly furnished to every good work. Therefore I solemnly witness before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who is going to judge the living and the dead according to His appearance and His kingdom, preach the Word, be instant in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. For a time will be when they will not endure sound doctrine, but they will heap up teachers to themselves according to their own lusts, tickling the ear. And they will turn away their ears from the truth and will be turned to myths. But you watch in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fully carry out your ministry. For I am already being poured out, and the time of my release is here. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.”

TITUS 2:1 & 7

“But you speak the things which become sound doctrine. In all things having shown yourself a pattern of good works: in the doctrine, purity, sensibleness, without corruption.”

2 JOHN 1:9-11

“Everyone transgressing and not abiding in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ, he has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house, nor speak a greeting to him. For he who speaks a greeting to him is partaker of his evil deeds.”

Promise of the Father

ACTS 1:4-8

“On one occasion, while He was eating with them, He gave them the command; ‘Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptised with water, but in few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.’ So when they met together, they asked Him, ‘Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?’ He said to them: ‘It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by His own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.’”

Among the last things that Jesus said to His disciples were the instructions concerning the power they would need for the task He was leaving them to do; of going into all the world and making disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-20). We note that: -

- ◆ it was “power” that was promised. (Acts 1:8)
- ◆ it would come when the Spirit came “upon them.”
- ◆ it would make them “witnesses, or people who have experienced something, and are able to tell others about it!”
- ◆ it would come about by being baptised by the Holy Spirit! (Acts 1:4-5)

I PROMISE FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

ISAIAH 44:3-5

“For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants. They will spring up like grass in a meadow, like poplar trees by flowing streams. One will say, ‘I belong to the Lord’; another will call himself by the name of Jacob; still another will write on his hand, ‘The Lord’s’, and will take the name Israel.”

In this prophecy given many, many years before the event took place; we have the thought of ‘refreshment and renewal’ in the words, “I will pour out water on a thirsty land and streams on dry ground.” In this scripture too, we have the idea of this great promise being poured out on young people and on future generations, for He says “I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring and My blessing on your descendants.” Here we also have implied in these verses that one of the effects of the Promises of the Father in a person’s life is to give him a new boldness expressed in the words “this one will say I am the Lord’s and that one will call on the name of Jacob and another will write on his hand, belonging to the Lord.”

JOEL 2:28-31

“And afterwards, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.”

This is the most classic prophecy concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit more than four hundred years before it took place. Here we have several matters of importance we must get across to those to whom we teach the subject.

- ◆ The first is that God will “*pour*” out His Spirit. That is the concept of “*abundance*.” The idea conveyed here is that God is not stingy or tightfisted with His provision of the Holy Spirit, but it is His desire to abundantly lavishly pour out the power of His Spirit upon all His children.
- ◆ The second thought is that of the fact that this promise is available to “*all mankind*.” Therefore, it is available for everyone, and it is further clarified by a catalogue of people i.e. “*sons and daughters, old men, young men, servants, etc.*”
- ◆ The third matter we emphasise in this passage is that there will be supernatural manifestations accompanying the promise of the Father in a person’s life. There is mention of “*prophecy, dreams, visions, etc.*” This is important for the benefit of those who might not accept these supernatural manifestations – or who are afraid of them. It also serves to arouse expectancy and faith in the individual.
- ◆ In the fourth place, we must emphasise that this prophecy is linked to the events that are clearly part of the last days of World history – (according to Luke 21:11, 25 and Matthew 24:29). This link answers the objection that Joel’s prophecy was only meant for the early New Testament Church and the Day of Pentecost 2000 years ago. To emphasise that the prophecy is absolutely relevant to our day encourages faith.
- ◆ The product will be that those upon whom the Spirit has come, will live, act as the “*witnesses*” or in other words ‘agents’ representing the Lord Jesus Christ both in their home situation and also far afield.

II PROMISE FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

JOHN 1:29-33

“The next day John saw Jesus coming towards him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is the one I meant when I said, ‘A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’ I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptising with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.” Then John gave this testimony: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptise with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptise with the Holy Spirit.’ I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.””

In this passage we seek to emphasise that “Jesus” is the One Who does the “baptising” or fulfilling of the Promise of the Father in the lives of Christians. John clearly points out that “*this is the One Who baptises in the Holy Spirit.*” (John1:33) This is an important emphasis because to many, Jesus is the One Who has picked them up out of darkness and put their feet on the rock and brought a great transformation in their lives. To them He is very precious. He is the center of their faith, and to know that He is the One Who brings about this phenomenon in our lives gives the individual added confidence to trust Him and not be afraid of the supernatural or the unknown. Fear of the supernatural and the unknown is a common problem in the lives of those who are seeking the Promise of the Father, and every effort must be made to awaken confidence in Jesus Christ, and that He has the situation under control and no matter how amazing and unusual the spiritual manifestations may be, they will never harm us.

ACTS 2:38-39

“Peter replied. “Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call.””

In these two verses we make the following points: -

- ◆ It is a normal natural procedure for an individual to: -
 - Repent
 - Be baptised
 - Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (or the Promise of the Father)

This indicates that it is not something optional or specially for some people, but that it is the normal procedure for those who have turned their backs on the old life and have defected from the kingdom of Satan and joined the Liberation Army of Jesus Christ, to receive the promise of the Father, which will empower them to carry out the will of God in their lives.

- ◆ We emphasise from verse 39 that the promise is for “*all*” who the Lord has called to Himself. Many, many people are overcome with a feeling of inadequacy and unworthiness and that they are not eligible for such blessing as this. We need to drive home with these verses that it is the normal expectancy of God for us to receive the promise because it is His will that we should live for Him. The Lord would not be so unreasonable to expect us to live out the impossible life in a world full of hostile forces without supernatural assistance. Therefore where God commissions He always equips, and here is a case where God expects us to receive the equipment and power to fulfill the commission He gives every Christian.

GALATIANS 3:2

“I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard?”

Our next point is that the whole operation of receiving the Promise of the Father is achieved by “*faith*.” The laying on of hands and many other things to help our faith are not the basis on which we receive the Promise of the Father. Paul, writing to the Galatians makes it very clear that the Holy Spirit is received by “*hearing with faith*.” There are times when one prays with folk to receive the Promise of the Holy Spirit, that there is very little manifestation and that their baptism is a very quiet and a mild one. This often leads to people questioning the genuineness of the experience. They may not have had a dramatic experience as others whom they know. Therefore, the answer to this problem is that we receive the Promise by faith rather than by feeling, just as with the conversion experience of many people. Many, many who received Jesus Christ have had dramatic experiences. Others have had hardly any feeling other than a sense of peace when they made the great commitment of their lives to Him. However, upon studying the lives of both such cases, there is no indication that the genuineness of the conversion has much to do with the degree of ecstasy accompanying the commitment. (We must note that we never pray for Jesus Christ to be baptising someone in the Holy Spirit. He is only too willing to do this. We rather pray for the individual – that their faith may be aroused and released that they may appropriate or receive the Promise of the Father).

GALATIANS 3:14

“He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.”

Here is another verse to strengthen the position that the Promise is received through faith. At this point the chain takes us into the second section which deals with the examples of people who received the Promise of the Father in the New Testament. It is possible to stop at this point and perhaps lead the person to accept the Promise of the Father. However, if time permits and if it is at all possible at a later stage perhaps, it is important to proceed with the Chain through the examples as there are many things that the examples teach us concerning the Promise of the Father.

ACTS 2:1-4

“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.”

This is the first account in the New Testament of people receiving the Promise of the Father i.e. the hundred and twenty disciples on the Day of Pentecost. Here we emphasise some of the results.

- ◆ In verse 4 they were all *“filled”* with the Holy Spirit. This was the experience of the disciples. They sensed and felt something coming upon them and filling them – namely, the Holy Spirit.
- ◆ The second result was that they began to *“speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.”* As we study the passage we discover that these *“tongues”* were in fact languages understood by a number of the people in that day. The point we make here is that it is quite normal and natural for the manifestation of tongues to occur in conjunction with the event in a Christian’s life where he receives the Promise of the Father of faith.

The Doctrine of the Word of God

I THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE

A. THE MEANING OF THE TERM ‘CANON’

The word ‘canon’ is derived from the Greek word ‘kanon,’ which is a derivative from the Hebrew word ‘ganeh,’ meaning ‘reed’ which was used as a measuring rod and came to mean ‘standard’ or ‘norm.’

Applied to the Scriptures the term ‘canon’ is used to indicate a collection of books to which a prescribed test has been applied and which have been acknowledged to be authentic or ‘canonical.’ Those books, which were measured by the standard or test of Divine inspiration and activity and were adjudged to be God-breathed, were included in the canon.

B. THE TESTS FOR CANONICITY

It is important to remember that certain books were canonical even before any tests were put to them. The tests only prove what is already intrinsically there. Neither the church nor councils made any book canonical or authentic; either the book was authentic or it was not when it was written. Either the church or its councils recognised certain books as the Word of God, and in time those so recognised were collected together in what we now call the Bible.

◆ The Authority of the Writer.

The books were, for the most part, written by men who were recognised as appointed by God to reveal His will. In the Old Testament – lawgivers, prophets and leaders. In the New Testament – apostles and their immediate associates or those who were backed or acknowledged by an apostle.

◆ Internal Evidence.

The contents of the books were recognised to be sound doctrine, in accordance with the apostolic teaching on which the churches had been reared. There is an inexplicable, undefinable quality about these writings which cause them to be accepted into the Canon.

◆ Genuineness.

Is the writing genuine? Can it be traced back to the time and the writer from which it professes to have come?

◆ External Evidence.

The consensus of opinion among the existing churches as to the canonical nature of the books was important. There was in reality surprising unanimity among the early churches as to which books belonged in the inspired number. A few books were temporarily doubted by a

minority in the church but no book whose authenticity was doubted by any large number of churches was later accepted.

C. THE NEED OF A CANON

- ◆ There was an ever increasing number of uninspired and spurious literature which was claiming the right to be recognised as ‘inspired.’
- ◆ It became necessary for people to have a complete objective written revelation from God. The Canon is one Book; one Author – the Holy Spirit; one subject -- the redemption of man. The whole is a revelation from God and the whole is needed to make the revelation complete.
- ◆ To secure the preservation of the Holy Books from corruption and destruction, especially necessary during the times of persecution.
- ◆

D. THE FORMATION OF THE CANON

- ◆ Old Testament.
 - In the Old Testament itself, there is evidence of a collection of authorised books. These were deposited in the sacred buildings. (Exodus 25:21 & 40:20; Deuteronomy 10:5; 1 Kings 8:9 & 2 Kings 22)
 - At the time of our Lord there were the Hebrew Scriptures, consisting of the Law, the Prophets and the Hagiography (Holy Writings). Jesus Himself not only accepted these for His own life and ministry, but authorised them for His disciples (Luke 24:27). In the New Testament, quotations are found from almost all the Old Testament books (Matthew 5:17-18 & John 10:34-36). Jesus frequently refers to the books of the Old Testament (Luke 16:29-31, 24:27 & 44 & John 5:45-46 & 7:19). Our Lord also endorsed a number of the main teachings of the Old Testament as true: The creation of the universe by God (Mark 13:19); the personality of Satan and his malignant character (John 8:44); The Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. (Luke 16:29-31, 24:27 & 44 & John 5:45-46 & 7:19)
 - Our Bible has the same Old Testament Canon as that referred to above, although the number of books differs and they appear in a different order. Chronicles is the last book instead of Malachi (the present Hebrew Bible also ends with Chronicles). The Jews consider the Minor Prophets as one book and also combine 1 & 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Kings, etc. This is what the Jewish Old Testament looks like: -
 - The Law (Torah)
Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

- The Prophets (Nebhim)
Former Prophets: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings
Latter Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, 12 Minor Prophets
- The Writings (Kethubhim or Hagiographa)
Poetical Books: Psalms, Proverbs, Job
Five Scrolls (Megilloth): Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Esther, Ecclesiastes
Historical Books: Daniel, Ezra – Nehemiah, Chronicles

The earliest record of a three-fold division of the Old Testament is in the prologue of the book Ecclesiastes (ca 130 B.C.). In this work, there is reference to “the Law and the Prophets and the other Works of our Fathers.” This shows that at least by 130 B.C., if not earlier, there was the general recognition of the tripartite division of the Old Testament. Philo (20 B.C. – 50 A.D.) and the Jewish historian Josephus (37-95) knew the Scriptures in their three-fold division – Josh McDowell, page 31 and College Notes.

◆ New Testament.

The formation of the New Testament took place gradually by a natural (supernatural?) development: -

- The words of Jesus Christ were regarded as absolutely authoritative from the time of His first public ministry.
- Reports (by those who heard Him) were received as being as authoritative as the living voice.
- The apostle’s letters were received and publicly read, with the same attitude as that accorded to their spoken ministry.
- These letters were being exchanged between the neighboring churches.
- Then, when the apostles were being removed by martyrdom and imitations of their writings were slowly creeping in, the question of the authority of any additions arose.

The New Testament books were written during the period AD 50-100. By the end of the first century, the four Gospels were viewed as a unity and so were the letters of Paul.

Toward the end of the second century, all but seven books, Hebrews, 2 and 3 John, 2 Peter, Jude, James and Revelation, were recognised as apostolic. The unity of the entire New Testament – in fact of the entire Bible – was beginning to become apparent. By the end of the

fourth century, all twenty-seven books in our present Canon were recognised by all the churches.

E. THE COMPLETENESS OF THE CANON

The question is inevitably asked “How do we know that the Canon is complete?” “Why does our Bible not include the apocryphal books?” (Apocryphal: hidden; also: of unknown origin, spurious, uncanonical.)

Through the Council of Trent (1546), the Roman Catholic Church declared the following books to be canonical: Tobit, Judith, The Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch and 1 & 2 Macabees.

The answer to the above question is that our Canon is complete and that the apocryphal books do not belong in the Bible for the following reasons: -

- ◆ They are not found in the original (Hebrew) Old Testament.
- ◆ They belong to the intertestamental period; a time when the spirit of prophecy had departed from Israel. Some of these writings even disclaim inspiration. (cf II Macabees 2:23; 15:38).
- ◆ Their content is inferior in quality, in historical accuracy and in moral teaching compared with that of the canonical books.
- ◆ They contain anti-biblical teaching such as praying for the dead.
- ◆ These works are never quoted in the New Testament, nor are they in any manner considered canonical.

“It is not because the church or some ecclesiastical assembly or council upon a certain date, long ago, made an official decision, that these sixty-six books constitute the inspired Bible. On the contrary, it is because God’s people had long since accepted these books as being the very Word of God that the church finally made this official declaration before the world. These sixty-six books, by their very content, immediately attest themselves to the hearts of God’s children as being the ‘living oracles’ of God. The official declaration is necessary to guard against all heresy and misunderstanding, and to make a public confession before the world” – Survey of the Bible, Wm Hendriksen; pages 23 & 24.

II THE RELIABILITY OF OUR PRESENT TEXT

We have established that the original writings were the inerrant Word of God, but since these documents no longer exist, the accuracy of the present day copies, compared to the original text, needs to be determined. Do the contents of the 66 canonical books in our Bibles accurately represent the original text?

A. THE OLD TESTAMENT

The books of the Old Testament were written in ink (Jeremiah 36:18), on papyrus or skins prepared for writing and rolled up into a roll (Psalm 40:7; Jeremiah 36:14 ff; Ezekiel 2:9; Zechariah 5:1). Only consonants were used.

Papyrus does not last for very long and thus it became necessary to copy the original autographs and later to recopy the copy, etc. All this was done by hand.

For hundreds of years, scribes copied and recopied manuscripts. In order to ensure accuracy, each copy was carefully checked by counting the number of letters in each line, then on each page and also in each book.

The minor changes which did creep into the various copies were studied by a group of Jewish scholars known as Masorites, who developed a standard Hebrew text. This was accomplished about 100 years after Christ and was called the Masoretic Text.

As time progressed, this text too was copied and recopied. The Masorites (A.D. 600-960) were responsible for adding accents and vowel points and in general standardising the Hebrew Text. They devised complicated safeguards for the making of copies. Until the sensational discovery of The Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947, we did not possess copies of the Old Testament earlier than A.D. 895.

The most popular version of how these scrolls were discovered is as follows: - A young Arab boy who was herding sheep among the caves located in the cliffs close the northwestern corner of the Dead Sea (just south of Jericho) threw a stone into a hole of one of these rocks. As the stone landed, the youth heard a shattering noise of a jar. He ran to the place and discovered several jars. They were sealed and contained leather scrolls, giving us a Hebrew text from the second to first century B.C.

Some of these scrolls were subsequently taken to the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem and were photographed. Among the many discovered at that time and later were: the complete Isaiah Scroll, the Habakkuk Commentary (the text of Habakkuk 1 and 2 plus running commentary), and the Manual of Discipline, which are some of the most famous.

Literally hundreds of scrolls or scroll fragments have been discovered. With the exception of Esther, they cover every book of the Old Testament, generally only in part. Many non-Biblical writings were also found. These scrolls were evidently written and produced in the so-called “Monastery”, the remains of which were discovered a little to the south of the cliffs.

It is called Khirbet Qumran (also means Qumran Ruin), often simply Qumran. On the basis of their writings – see especially their Manual of Discipline – it is held that the writers (copyists) and those associated with them were a sect of Jews who, no longer satisfied with the Jerusalem priesthood, had decided to live by themselves under their own rules. They may have been Essenes, described by Josephus. But we know too little about conditions prevailing before and in the first century A.D. to identify these Qumran people definitely. What we do know, from their writings, is that they were ascetics.

The scrolls contain references to celibacy, community of possessions, fastings, vigils, sobriety, supererogatory observance of the Law, and strict obedience to superiors. These people held the Scripture in high esteem but often interpreted it in a very narrow sense. For example, as if the Old Testament prophets in their writings had in mind particularly the Qumran community. They placed great emphasis on the study of the Law of Moses and on ritual purity, baptisms, etc. Some of them seem to have accepted marriage and family life; others were probably celibates.

They seem not to have been very mission-minded, some of their statements probably implying that knowledge of spiritual matters is for the purpose of being concealed rather than revealed. They accepted a kind of dualism of light versus darkness. For them, this meant that they, as the sons of the light, must hate the sons of darkness. This dualism, however, is not one of spirit against matter but of good against evil. They had much to say about angels, especially evil angels.

However, we hasten to mention that they also here and there stressed the necessity of wholehearted devotion to God and confidence in His promises. On the other hand, what detracts from the value

of this emphasis is the additional fact that they seem to have regarded such devotion and such confidence as being possible only for those belonging to their group.

On the basis of the kind of script and of coins and other articles found in the general area of this cluster of buildings, it is generally held that, with an interruption of about thirty years, this sect occupied the Qumran Monastery from the last part of the second century before Christ until the first Jewish Rebellion against Rome, A.D. 66.

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls has provided evidence of the accuracy of the Masoretic text even though these scrolls sometimes differ, in minor points, from the Masoretic text.

Besides the “proof” of accuracy that the Dead Sea Scrolls provides, other early checks on the Hebrew text include the Septuagint translation (c 250 B.C.), the Aramaic Targums (paraphrases and quotes of the Old Testament), quotations in early Christian writers, and the Latin translation of Jerome (A.D. 400) which was made directly from the Hebrew text of his day.

All of these give us the date for being assured of having an accurate text of the Old Testament.

B. THE NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament was completed within the span of a hundred years. Here too, the original documents are no longer in existence, but multiplied copies were made and circulated to the churches around the world.

Thousands of portions of the New Testament manuscripts were copied by hand and there are now more than 5,300 known Greek manuscripts in existence. To this figure can be added over 10,000 Latin Vulgate and at least 9,300 other early versions (Syriac, Latin, Greek and Egyptian) giving us more than 24,000 manuscript copies of portions of the New Testament in existence today. In addition, there are 2,000 lectionaries (church service books containing many Scripture portions), more than 86,000 quotations of the New Testament in the church Fathers. This makes the New Testament the best-attested document in all ancient writings. In comparison, the “Illiad” by Homer is second with only 643 manuscripts that still survive. The first complete preserved text of Homer dates from the 13th century – Josh McDowell, page 39.

Many of these manuscripts are early. The approximately seventy-five papyri fragments date from A.D. 135 to the eighth century and cover parts of twenty-five of the twenty-seven books and about

40 percent of the text. Of the many hundreds of parchment copies, the following five uncials are among the most famous: -

- ◆ Codex Vaticanus (B) dating from the fourth century
- ◆ Codex Sinaiticus (Aleph) also fourth century
- ◆ Codex Alexandrinus (A) from the fifth century
- ◆ Codex Ephraemi (C) fifth century
- ◆ Codex Bezae (D) fifth or sixth century

There are minor variations in these Greek manuscripts, as there were in the Hebrew text. But the science of textual criticism, which makes careful comparisons of the manuscripts to determine what readings best represent the original, has reached the point where no one word in a thousand is seriously questioned. No basic teaching of Scripture is in doubt because of uncertainty about the correctness of the text.

All of this data plus all of the scholarly work that has been done with it assure that the Greek and Hebrew texts in our hands today, accurately and reliably reproduce the words and message of the original writings.

C. THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR TRANSLATED BIBLE

The Jews who returned from the Babylonian Exile no longer spoke Hebrew but Aramaic. For this reason, the Hebrew passages which were read in the synagogue services had to be translated into Aramaic. These oral Targums or translations were later reduced to writing. When Greek was becoming a world language (after the conquests of Alexander the Great), the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek – the Septuagint (LXX) in 285 B.C.

During the second century A.D., Tatian produced a Harmony of the Four Gospels in Syriac (Christian Aramaic). The Syriac Peshitta (simple) version of the Bible was produced around 150-250 A.D.

By the end of the second century A.D. a Latin translation was in circulation in Africa; a little later, another Latin version appeared in Italy. The Latin Vulgate was Jerome's translation. He was the secretary of the bishop of Rome and at the bishop's request he translated the Bible into Latin between 366 – 384 A.D. Soon after Jerome had completed his task, missionaries began to carry the gospel into the regions of Great Britain.

Pope Gregory the Great sent St. Augustine to the British Isles in 597 A.D. to convert the inhabitants to Christianity. He and in his possession the Vulgate which was the only translation that was understood at that time. Few listeners were able to read and those who were able to read did not have easy access to a Latin Bible. He found it difficult to penetrate the people's thinking without a vernacular translation. Soon certain portions of the Bible were translated into the vernacular. There was, however, no complete English Bible until almost the end of the fourteenth century.

Caedmon, a priest of Lady Hilda Abbey, wrote a paraphrased version of both Old and New Testaments in Anglo-Saxon in 670 A.D. This was known as Caedmon's Poem on Creation. This as the first evidence that any attempt was made at translating the Bible. The Bishop of Aldhelm, (640 – 709), has been credited with the translation of the Psalms in Anglo-Saxon in the form of songs. These were very popular.

The Venerable Bede wrote the first church history of Britain towards the end of the 8th century. He wrote in Latin but translated the Lord's Prayer into Northumbrian. He had almost finished a translation of the Gospel of John into Northumbrian by the time of his death.

King Alfred, in an attempt to re-organize his government into a theocracy in the 9th century, had Moses' commandments as well as the Psalter, translated into Anglo-Saxon.

In the 10th century Aldred the Priest produced the Lindisfarne Gospels – an interlinear gospel written between the lines of the original text.

The Rushworth manuscript followed which was also interlinear and was produced for missionary purposes.

The Oxford manuscript, which was a translation of the gospels, was the last translation for many years due to the Norman conquests during which time all translating came to a standstill.

The beginning of the 13th century saw the resumption of literary work.

During the 14th century William of Shoreham translated the Psalter. The 14th century was marked by religious revival. The country has experienced long wars against France. It was poor and

suffered great discontent. The higher dignitaries were wealthy – mainly due to exploitation, the ordinary people were impoverished. The British parliament, due to pressure by reformists, refused to pay a money levy imposed by the Pope.

John Wycliffe attended Milton College at Oxford University. He was proclaimed a national hero and leader for his treatise and support of parliament. He supported demands for reform at Oxford; reforms which were based on God's commands in the Bible. Wycliffe, together with a team of young Oxfordians translated the Bible in 1380. He was responsible for translating and publishing the first complete English Bible in 1382. This version of the Bible was, however, not a translation from the original. Wycliffe boldly proclaimed that everyone should read it. He organized a group of voluntary workers (Lollards), to travel across England preaching God's Word in the common tongue. Because of their outspokenness against the country they had to leave. After the death of Wycliffe in 1400 this Bible was revised by one of his disciples, probably Purvey. Approximately 5 different dialects are visible in this 1st translation. There were about 170 copies of this revised Bible.

All the above were handwritten copies.

1453 saw the fall of Constantinople, which up until then had housed the seat of learning. Greek and Hebrew, which formed part of Classical learning returned to Europe.

In 1448 the printing press had been invented. As a thirst for knowledge increased so did the need for printed matter. There was a demand for translations of the Bible in the vernacular.

Mentelin translated it into German. The first Italian translation was completed in 1477. 1478 saw the first Dutch translation followed by a French translation. In England, William Caxton printed "the Golden Legend," which was the greater part of the Bible in print.

The renaissance set the reformation alight. The Bible was now printed, "en masse" and became freely available.

1520 – Martin Luther's translation made the Bible easier for the people to understand.

Tyndale, a man with radical views, which were unacceptable to the church at the time, was forced to flee Britain and went to Germany. There he came into contact with Luther's ideas. He used Luther's translation together with Wycliffe's text and by 1525 the English New Testament was

ready. He had the 1st edition printed in Worms. Bishop Tunstall and King Henry VIII heard about these Bibles. The king commanded them be seized and burnt. Tyndale now engaged Dutch printers and sailors to smuggle these Bibles into Britain. The king's command to destroy these was so effective that only a number of scraps survived. Tyndale did not give up. He used the Masoretic text to translate the Pentateuch and Jonah. They appeared in print with marginal notes and decorated. Only 1 copy survived.

Henry VIII began his wife trouble. Anne Bolyn influenced the king in his persecution of Tyndale's efforts. Tyndale remained in Antwerp. Henry Philips discovered him in hiding and turned him over to Charles V who in turn sent him to Henry VIII. Tyndale was committed to trial for heresy and condemned to "strangling" in 1536. His last words were "Lord open the king of England eyes." Interest in his work did not perish. The Coverdale Bible, for which Tyndale had been largely responsible, became the basis for the Authorised or King James Version.

Thomas Cromwell, as secretary of state, promoted the translated Bible. Miles Coverdale was asked to reconstruct and complete Tyndale's version. It appeared in 1537. This was simply a revision of Tyndale's work. A great deal of Latin was still used due to the influence of the Vulgate. The Bible was now freely circulated as Henry VIII was otherwise occupied. Revisions of this Bible were rapid e.g. Matthew's Bible which contained many marginal notes.

Cromwell was afraid that the king would see and object to the marginal notes and thus commissioned a new translation published in 1539 – The Great Bible (because of its large size) – had a front piece by the artist Holbein depicting the king. A hand-illuminated copy was given to the king.

In 1540 Bishop Tunstall edited this Bible. In 1541 copies of this Bible had to be placed in every church.

25 years later politics forced the revision of the Bible and the Geneva Bible was produced:

Henry VIII's mood changed. Although he favoured a break with Rome, he did not intend to hand the church over to Protestants. He had discovered the marginal notes and would only allow bibles without them to be used. It was his opinion that the laity should not be allowed to read the Bible.

Edward VI became king and shortly after this Mary Tudor began her reign. She was a strict Roman Catholic who only allowed the Vulgate to be used. Many Protestants were burnt at the stake. Cromwell and Coverdale escaped. All Bibles which had been translated were burned. The best scholars fled, many to Geneva. Under the guidance of Beza new translations began. They worked from Greek translations, Tyndale and others. This was known as the Geneva Bible. It was a vast step forward. Mary Tudor was replaced and the Geneva Bible was allowed in England. This set the final stages for the Authorized Bible.

Elizabeth I became queen. It appeared to her that the done thing was to have her own translation. She organized a team of revisers, mostly bishops. It became known as the Bishop's Bible. It does not compare to the Geneva Bible. The marginal notes had crept back with an explanatory text.

Thirty years later the authorized version was produced by Douce and Martin. In 1604 King James I commissioned 54 officials (learned men) from Oxford and Cambridge to check and counter check all available documents. By 1611 this new Bible was complete and became known as the King James or Authorised Version. During the Elizabethan period a call was made to formulate a graceful translation of the Bible.

By 1890 many new discoveries of old manuscripts had been made thus calling for a new version of the Bible.

In 1881 the Old Testament was revised and 1885 the New Testament.

The English Revised Version appeared in 1885 and the American Revised in 1901.

In 1905 the Moulton translation was completed.

In 1913 the Moffat translation was followed by a translation by Goodspeed and P. Smith, then J.B. Phillips published a translation, and the Westminster version followed this.

1947 a Council met to formulate a good modern English version. The NEB was completed in 1961.

The Word of God

INTRODUCTION

Every person has a basis of authority on which he thinks and acts. For the Christian, the “Ultimate Authority” to which he appeals is the Bible – the inspired and inerrant Word of God.

- ◆ An External Absolute Authority is necessary because: -
 - ◆ Each man is basically rebellious and wants to build his own kingdom and make his own rules.
 - ◆ Man is influenced by others around him and adjusts his values and standards accordingly.
 - ◆ The Bible alone has the answers for the problems faced by the world today.
- ◆ Other Authorities to which people appeal are: -
 - ◆ Reason – “It doesn’t make sense so I can’t believe or accept it!” However, reason was affected by the fall. It is often speculative, unaware of all the facts and no more than wishful thinking.
 - ◆ Feeling – “If it feels good and/or right, it is fine...”
 - ◆ Oneself – “There is no absolute authority” thus making oneself the authority.
 - ◆ Existentialism – Culture, circumstances, conditions, etc. determine what one does.
 - ◆ Tradition – “We have always done it this way.”
 - ◆ “Church” – It is what the Church (Roman Catholicism, Greek Orthodoxy) says that goes.
 - ◆ Extra biblical writings – Koran, Joseph Smith (the founder of Mormons), etc. but also at times Christian writers, leaders or teachers.

The Word of God is our only basis of authority. *“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.”* (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

I THE UNIQUENESS OF THE WORD OF GOD

Unique – “of which there is only one, unequaled, having no like or equal or parallel; remarkable, unusual.” (Oxford Dictionary)

This section is extracted from Josh McDowell’s book “Evidence that Demands a Verdict.” For a more detailed account, please refer to that book. The Bible is the book “different from all others.”

A. UNIQUE IN ITS CONTINUITY

- ◆ Written over a 1,500 year period
- ◆ Written over 40 generations

- ◆ Written by over 40 authors from every walk of life
- ◆ Written in different places
- ◆ Written at different times
- ◆ Written during different moods
- ◆ Written on three continents: Asia, Africa, Europe
- ◆ Written in three languages: Aramaic, Hebrew, Greek
- ◆ Authors wrote on hundreds of controversial subjects, e.g., sin, with complete harmony from Genesis to Revelation. There is one unfolding story: “God’s redemption of man.”

B. UNIQUE IN ITS CIRCULATION

The Bible has been read by more people and published in more languages than any other book. There have been more copies produced of its entirety and more portions and selections than any other book in history. The first major book printed was the Bible in approximately 1450.

C. UNIQUE IN ITS TRANSLATION

The Bible was one of the first major books translated – the Septuagint, approximately 250 B.C. It has been translated and paraphrased more than any other book in existence.

D. UNIQUE IN ITS SURVIVAL

- ◆ The Bible has stood the test of time.

Until the fifteenth century (when the printing press was invented) every manuscript was copied and recopied by hand on material that perishes. In spite of these difficulties, the Bible has not diminished in its style, correctness nor existence. The Bible, compared with other ancient writings, has more manuscript evidence than any other book or writings.

- ◆ The Bible has survived through persecution.

No other book has been attacked as much as the Bible. In 303 A.D., Diocletian ordered Christians to stop worshipping and to destroy the Scriptures. Possession of the Scriptures meant execution. 25 years later, Constantine had 50 copies of the Bible prepared at the expense of the government.

- ◆ The Bible has survived through criticism.

The Bible has constantly been criticised. In spite of that, more people trust, read and love the Bible today than any other time in history. Critics have said that Moses couldn’t have written the Pentateuch because there was no alphabet but it has been discovered that there were five written languages dating back to Abraham.

E. UNIQUE IN ITS TEACHINGS

◆ Prophecy.

25% of the Bible when written was prophetic. In fulfillment of these prophecies (long after they were spoken and written) cities were destroyed; Jesus Christ, the Messiah was born, the Jewish people were scattered and resettled in their own land, etc.

◆ Personalities.

The Bible deals very frankly with the sins of its characters. Some of the writers expose their own sins. The Bible tells it like it is. Biographies often cover up failings and gloss over life.

F. UNIQUE IN ITS INFLUENCE ON LITERATURE

Much more literature has been written about the Bible than about any other book. The Bible is often quoted in other writings.

Josh McDowell concludes that the above does not prove the Bible to be God's Word but it does prove that it is unique ("different from all others; having no like or equal") - "Evidence That Demands a Verdict," page 24.

II THE INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

A. THE MEANING OF INSPIRATION

The Greek word, translated, 'inspired' is 'Theopneustos' and means 'God-breathed.' It occurs only once in the Bible. (2 Timothy 3:16)

When attempting to describe what is meant by 'inspiration,' it needs to be borne in mind that the exact nature, mode and limitations of inspiration are not clearly defined in Scripture itself, but are alluded to. (2 Chronicles 15:1; Matthew 22:43 & 2 Peter 1:21)

Many definitions have been offered in order to explain what is understood by the term 'inspiration.' The following elements need to be noted: -

- ◆ Inspiration is a supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit on certain individuals, chosen from all walks of life, so that the Scriptures should be as close to the many facets of human life as possible.

- ◆ Inspiration relates to a product – the Scriptures. While one may speak of the ‘writers’ as inspired, inspiration primarily refers to the ‘specific works’ of those writers. They were especially inspired to write that which had been spoken by God Himself. These men probably wrote other works which would not be classified as ‘inspired.’
- ◆ Inspiration involves the sovereign selection of God in choosing men as His vessels to speak and write. God ‘oversees’ that speaking and writing.
- ◆ Inspiration is concerned with the trustworthiness of written documents and implies that they are of such a nature that their readers will not be deceived.
- ◆ Inspiration does not imply ‘mechanical dictation.’ The human writers thought processes and personalities were not superseded. Each writer of the Bible has his own literary style. Each reflects the language patterns of his culture. Each uses language that reveals his education and background.
- ◆ Inspiration implies that the product was, in its original manuscripts, accurate and without error. The doctrine of inspiration guarantees that the writings themselves, as they came from the author’s pens, reliably communicate the message God intended to share.

From the above definitions, it can be concluded that: “Inspiration is a supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit on men, chosen by God, who enabled them to record God’s special revelation in a trustworthy manner so that their writings, under the superintendence of God, constitute the Word of God in verbal form.”

B. ERRONEOUS VIEWS ABOUT INSPIRATION

- ◆ The Bible was written by people who were religious geniuses – people who had a high degree of religious insight. The Bible is great religious literature reflecting the spiritual experiences of the Hebrew people.
- ◆ The Bible ‘contains’ the Word of God. Not all of it is inspired and accurate.
- ◆ The Bible ‘becomes’ the Word of God. Only those passages which speak to one personally are inspired. This view is conveyed by those who say “I’m not going to do it because I haven’t been convicted yet.” This is the Neo-Orthodox view holding that the Bible is a record or witness of the revelation of God rather than being the revelation of God. (Karl Barth)
- ◆ Only those parts which agree with man’s ‘religious consciousness’ can be considered as the Word of God. Nothing should be accepted as inspired merely because it occurs in the Bible (Schleiermacher’s view). This means that man decides what belongs in Christianity. If part of

the Bible agrees with his opinions, he accepts it; if it disagrees, he is free to throw it out. This is the Liberal view.

C. THE EVIDENCE OF INSPIRATION

- ◆ There are many prophecies which have been fulfilled to the letter.

- Concerning Christ

Event	Prophecy	Fulfillment
Place of Christ's birth	Micah 5:2	Matthew 2:1
Christ born of a virgin	Isaiah 7:14	Matthew 1:18
Triumphal entry into Jerusalem	Zechariah 9:9	Mark 11:7-9
Betrayed by a friend	Psalms 41:9	Mark 14:10
Sold for 30 pieces of silver	Zechariah 11:12	Matthew 26:15
Christ silent before His accusers	Isaiah 53:7	Matthew 27:12-14
Mocked and insulted	Psalms 22:6-8	Matthew 17:39-40
Pierced His hands and feet	Psalms 22:16	John 20:27
Soldiers cast lots for His coat	Psalms 22:18	Mark 15:24
His resurrection	Psalms 16:10	Matthew 28:9
His ascension	Psalms 68:18	Luke 24:50-51

- Concerning Christ

Many unique prophecies regarding both the scattering abroad of Israel's people and the historically unique assembling again of the Jews into a nation and state in 1948 have been fulfilled.

- ◆ Jesus Christ and others accepted the Bible as inspired by God (already dealt with in the previous sections). There are over 3,800 references within Scripture to "God said" or "the Lord said," etc.
- ◆ There is a wealth of historical and archeological evidence in favour of the reliability and accuracy of the Bible.

III THE INERRANCY OF SCRIPTURE

The conservative evangelical's answer to the question "Is the Bible accurate and fully truthful in all of its teachings?" is an emphatic "yes!" To accept the Authority and Inspiration of the Scriptures logically entails that the inerrancy of the Bible be accepted. The church has historically held to the

inerrancy of the Bible. Jesus, Paul and others regard and employed details of the Scriptures as authoritative. Because Christ's attitude toward Scripture was one of total trust, we hold to its inerrancy. Even the selection of details within the text are viewed as completely inspired.

"If the biblical writers erred in one particular, we have no assurance they did not err in many more." - Pinnock, C.H.; "Biblical Revelation," page 73.

A. DEFINING INERRANCY

Inerrant inspiration of the Bible means simply that God by His Spirit so guided the writers of Scripture that their words fully teach the truth and never teach what is false.

Some principles need to be noted. These will enable us to define inerrancy more specifically and to remove some of the difficulties.

- ◆ Inerrancy pertains to what is affirmed or asserted rather than what is merely reported. The Bible reports false statements made by ungodly persons. The presence of these statements in the Bible does not mean they are true; it only guarantees that they are correctly reported (e.g. the recorded speeches of liars in the book of Job).
- ◆ The truthfulness of the Scriptures must be judged in terms of what the statements meant in the cultural setting in which they were expressed. We should judge the Bible in terms of the forms and standards of its own culture. For example, the Hebrew expression for 'son' describes a broader field of relationships than does the English word. It may refer to a grandson or a descendant in an indefinite sense. The names parents chose for their children also carried a special meaning which is rarely true today. When we speak of inerrancy, we mean that what the Bible affirms is fully true in terms of the culture of its time.
- ◆ The Bible's assertions are fully true when judged in accordance with the purpose for which they were written. The intended purpose of the writing needs to be considered. For example, approximations are often found in the Bible and thus there is no real conflict between the statements, in Numbers 25:9 that 24,000 died by the plague and Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 10:8 that 23,000 died. Both are approximations and for the purpose involved, both are adequate and therefore may be regarded as true.
- ◆ Reports of historical events and scientific matters are written in accordance with how they appear to the eye. This is the ordinary practice in any kind of popular (as opposed to technical) writing; for example, the matter of the sun rising, the four corners of the earth, etc. Biblical reports make no effort to be scientifically exact; they do not attempt to theorise over what

actually occurred when the walls of Jericho fell, or the Jordan River was stopped. There is no effort in the use of such expressions to convey scientific information on cosmology. Inerrancy is unaffected by them.

- ◆ Often Scripture contains duplicate or parallel accounts of the same event or sermon in which different details occur, a different standpoint is adopted, or a different mode of description is employed. But inerrancy does not require standardisation of all such accounts and there is no reason why we should jump to the conclusion that the truth has been violated because differences exist. It may well be, if everything were known, that all the apparent discrepancies would disappear. Difficulties and apparent contradictions do exist in the Bible. But there is sufficient evidence to establish the basic truthfulness of Scripture and to suggest that the difficulties which exist are not sufficient to warrant abandonment of the principle of infallibility or inerrancy. “In a world in which there are so many erroneous conceptions and so many opinions, the Bible is a sure source of guidance. For when correctly interpreted, it can be fully relied upon in all that it teaches. It is a sure, dependable and trustworthy authority.” - M.J. Erickson “Christian Theology” page 240.

B. SOME SUPPOSED CONTRADICTIONS IN THE BIBLE

- ◆ 1 Kings 6 – Gives the period between Exodus and the beginning of the Temple at 480 years; actually according to history it was 573 years. The difference of 93 years is exactly the period of the Captivity under the Judges and not reckoned in the Jewish history. Years spent away from God are lost years, wasted and not reckoned with the Lord.
- ◆ 1 Samuel 6:19 – Says God smote 50,070 for looking into the Ark of the Covenant; Josephus the historian says that only 70 people were smitten. Probably both are correct; God may have killed 70 people outright on the spot and the 50,000 later or as a consequence of this incident.
- ◆ John 1:18 – “*No man hath seen God at any time.*”
Exodus 24:10 – “*And they saw the God of Israel.*”
Actually, both statements are true. They did not see God for He is Spirit, but they saw a physical reflection of God. When I look in the mirror I see a reflection of my face, but I have never seen my face as others see it.
- ◆ Numbers 25:9 – “*24,000 died in the plague.*”
1 Corinthians 10:8 – “*23,000 fell in one day.*”
23,000 is the number that fell in one day and 24,000 the total number that died.
- ◆ 2 Samuel 24:24 – “*David paid 50 shekels of silver for the threshing floor.*”
1 Chronicles 21:25 – “*David paid 600 shekels of gold.*”

There are two distinct transactions; first David bought the threshing floor for 50 shekels and later bought the whole farm (estate) for 600 shekels.

- ◆ Isaiah 40:28 – “*God never gets tired and never needs rest.*”

Exodus 31:17 – “*God created the world in six days and rested and was refreshed on the seventh day.*”

It does not say that God rested because He was tired; God does not get tired. God rested the seventh day to appreciate that which He had created.

- ◆ Acts 1:9-12 – “*Jesus ascended from Mount Olivet.*”

Luke 24:50, 51 – “*Jesus ascended from Bethany.*”

Both are correct, for Bethany is a place on the side of Mount Olivet.

- ◆ 1 Timothy 6:16 – “*God dwells in light.*”

1 Kings 8:12 – “*God dwells in thick darkness.*”

Both are true, for God is omnipresent; dwelling everywhere.

- ◆ Acts 9:7 – Paul’s companions heard the voice.

Acts 22:9 & 26:14 – Paul’s companions did not hear the voice.

Other apparent contradictions are as easily explained – the Bible is inerrant!

IV UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

The Bible is written revelation from God to man. To assert that God would offer man a revelation incapable of being understood does not make sense. The Bible is an unveiling by God for information that, apart from His communications, would have remained hidden. It follows that if God’s intention is to unveil, the Bible cannot be obscure or impossible for us to understand. It is intended for every age and for people of every race and social standing and type of education.

A proper understanding of the Scriptures is dependent on: -

- ◆ the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit and
- ◆ the interpreting work of the reader.

A. ILLUMINATION

The same Holy Spirit Who inspired the writers of old to write the Scriptures must be trusted and relied upon to make clear the truth of the Written Revelation. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would teach us all things and bring to our remembrance all that Jesus himself had taught, (John 14:26).

The Christian has been promised that the Bible (God's Written Word) would be illumined to him, (John 16:12-15 & 1 Corinthians 2:9 & 3:2). The unbeliever, on the other hand, does not experience the illuminating ministry of the Spirit since he is blinded to the truth of God (1 Corinthians 2:14). He is able to learn about the facts of the Bible, but he considers what he knows as foolishness.

B. INTERPRETATION

The basic principle of interpretation is to interpret plainly. Normally, one will take the Bible words in their ordinary sense, as plain talk.

- ◆ Understand what each word, phrase, statement, question means in its normal grammatically historical sense. What did the author mean? Why did he use that particular word? What did the first readers (or hearers) understand by it?
- ◆ Always read the context in which a verse or passage appears – this throws light on its meaning. Most parts of the Bible are written in units of thought. Scripture is not lists of unrelated ideas. There is a definite train of thought and to understand a particular verse, one needs to see how it fits into the whole.
- ◆ Recognise the progress of revelation. The Bible was written over a period of about 1,600 years. The New Testament adds much that was not revealed in the old. What God revealed as binding in one period may be rescinded in another, for example: the prohibition of eating pork, once binding on God's people, has been lifted today. (1 Timothy 4:3)
- ◆ Recognise the important divisions of the Bible. Besides the difference between the Old and New Testaments, the Bible also uses different kinds of writings – historical, poetic, prophetic. Figures of speech are used.
- ◆ Read the Bible intelligently. Stop to consider and ponder what is said. Don't jump to conclusions e.g. Mark 10:21.
- ◆ Re-read the Bible expectantly. Realise that it is God who has given us the Bible and that he meets us in its pages. Expect God to touch your heart and your mind and be open to what God's Spirit wants you to learn.

C. EXPERIENCE THE BIBLE

The Bible is not only to be understood but it is to be experienced. God did not share His Word with man simply to give information. God gave His Word to bring man into a transforming relationship with Himself. The Word of God needs to be applied to one's heart and life. The Word needs to be read with faith – it's a personal document from God to His dear child. The Bible

needs to be read with openness – allowing God the Father to communicate with His child in whatever area He chooses to do so or in whatever area man may have a need. The Scriptures need to be read with a readiness to respond. What God speaks to the reader, he must be willing and ready to apply what God instructs. This is done because of one's love and commitment to the Father through his relationship with Jesus Christ.

V THE WORD OF GOD

2 TIMOTHY 3:16, the authority for our beliefs and conduct

- ◆ There are other authorities, which are not reliable
- ◆ Tradition
- ◆ Reason
- ◆ Feelings
- ◆ Other writings

2 TIMOTHY 3:17

The Word equips for good works. Shows us: -

- ◆ who God is
- ◆ His Requirements and Standards
- ◆ how He works with me
- ◆ His ways of doing things
- ◆ Jesus – the Living Word
- ◆ to love Him
- ◆ a spiritual image
- ◆ if it fades, so does love
- ◆

HEBREWS 4:12

The Word reflects us – we see ourselves in the characters of the Word. The Word exposes us – our thoughts and intentions.

JEREMIAH 23:29

The Word purges us as a fire. The Word breaks down hard and wrong ideas like a hammer breaks rock.

PSALM 119:97, 100

The Word gives insight and understanding

- ◆ of how we are to live
- ◆ Kingdom Rules and Principles
- ◆ of dangers and pitfalls
- ◆ the devil and the pitfalls he engineers if we let Him

PSALM 119:105

“Thy Word is a Lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.” The Word – “a lamp to my feet.”

- ◆ to expose: -
 - the immediate path (i.e. where I am and can walk)
 - Philosophies of Men
 - Standards of Men
- ◆ The Word – “a light to my path” ahead - guidance and God’s will for my life.

PSALM 119:52

“I remember Your ancient laws, O Lord and I find comfort in them.” The Word – a means of comfort.

PSALM 119:92-93

“Helps us through affliction, preserves our lives.” The Word – a means of renewal and refreshment.

PSALM 119:11

“I have hidden Your Word in my heart that I might not sin against you.” The Word – a means of protection.

ROMANS 10:17

“... Faith comes from hearing the message and the message is heard through the Word of Christ.”

The Word – a catalyst to build faith.

1 TIMOTHY 4:6

The Word – a means to nourish spiritual life, also in ACTS 20:32, *“and to the Word of His grace which is able to build you up.”*

EPHESIANS 6:17

“Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.” The Word – a spiritual weapon.

1 PETER 1:25, 2:2

- ◆ “But the Word of the Lord stands forever.”
- ◆ “.... Crave pure Spiritual Milk”

The Word – we must desire and love it.

2 TIMOTHY 2:15

“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the Word of Truth.” The Word – we must read and study it.

JOSHUA 1:8

“Be careful to obey the law... Do not turn from it, that you may be successful wherever you go... your mouth... day and night... do everything written in it... prosperous and successful” The Word – we must confess and meditate on it.

PSALM 1:1-3

1:1 “Blessed is the man...but his delight is in the law of the Lord and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of living water, which yields its fruits in season and whose leaf does not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.” The results are a happy, successful and fruitful life.

The Fatherhood of God

INTRODUCTION

MATTHEW 7:7-11

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you, if his son asks for bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!”

LUKE 11:1-8

“Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught His disciples.’ And He said to them, ‘When you pray, say: Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it in heaven. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil one.’ And He said to them, ‘Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, “Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him”; and he will answer from within and say, “Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you”?. I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs.’”

Because of sin man is born an enemy of God. Before our conversion experience we were all enemies of God; estranged. God is our Judge. But through Jesus Christ that estrangement turns to reconciliation whereby God no longer is seen as the ‘awesome’ Judge but as our loving and caring Father. Jesus taught His disciples to address the living God as their “Father” – “Our Father” (Luke 11:12ff). Jesus also sought to show men what God is like so that they may enjoy an intimate relationship with Him. Sometimes people have had bad experiences with their own (earthly) fathers. They may not have had a father. Because of these unfortunate experiences many people have a distorted view of God, the Father. There may be a fear within that God will somehow also neglect or abuse or desert or hurt or fail us, just as our earthly fathers may have done. God promises in His Word that He wants the best for us. (Matthew 7:7-11 & Luke 11:5-3)

I HUMAN FATHERHOOD

A. AS HUMAN PARENTS, WE HAVE DESIRES FOR OUR CHILDREN

For our families we all desire the best that God can give. We want them to be happy, healthy, secure, etc. *“How much more your Heavenly Father.”* (Matthew 7:11)

B. BUT WE HAVE A DISTORTED VIEW OF GOD AS OUR FATHER

Very often this is because of our earthly parents or loved ones. They have “let us down”: -

- ◆ maybe deserted us
- ◆ misused us
- ◆ promised something, then broken their word, etc
- ◆ rewarded us only if we ‘performed’ well

C. WE TRANSFER THESE CONCEPTS TO GOD

We often fear, even if it is only deep down in our subconscious, that God will or might do the same.

D. WHY DID OUR PARENTS DO THESE THINGS?

Normally because of their own inabilities and inadequacies: -

- ◆ they were trying to cope with and handle life’s hurts in their own strength.
- ◆ like the couple at the wedding at Cana, (John 2) they did not have the resources to be what they knew they should be.

Forgive them!

II THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD, A HUMAN CORRELATION

God is far greater than the example of an earthly father, He is the source of everything: -

- ◆ power
- ◆ health
- ◆ love
- ◆ wealth
- ◆ strength
- ◆ stability

- ◆ security, etc

GOD IS OUR FATHER

Jesus taught us to pray “*Our Father...*”

A. GOD IS AN ADOPTING FATHER (Roman 8:15; Galatians 4:5 & Ephesians 1:5)

In Roman households the father had absolute power (*Patria Potestas*). Father could do with his family whatever he desired. If he wanted to sell his son (to be adopted by another man) he was free to do so.

The adoption procedure consisted of a symbolic sale using copper and scales (3x). After this symbolic sale the adopting father would go to the magistrate to legalise the process in the presence of seven witnesses; as a result, the adopted son: -

- ◆ Lost all rights in his old household and gained new rights and privileges.
- ◆ Became heir in the new home even if there were others.
- ◆ In law, his old life was cleared (e.g. debts were cancelled).

B. GOD IS A FATHER TO THE FATHERLESS (Psalms 68:5-6 & 27:10)

- ◆ He is committed to us.
- ◆ He will be to us all that we ever needed or desired a human father to be and more.
- ◆ He will “*set us in families.*” (Psalms 68:6)
- ◆ He will “*lead forth the prisoners with singing.*” Release us from all the bondage and deprivation of not having a human father.
- ◆ Stop looking at your problems, circumstances, sin and needs. Look to Him, He wants to be your Father. He will take you in His arms and speak healing into your emotions, insecurities, rejections, fear. (2 Timothy 1:7)
- ◆ He is like a Father to those that have lost loved ones, taking up their cause.
- ◆ He not only ‘fights’ for them, but supplies all their needs (Philippians 4:19) and heals all their hurts.

C. GOD IS A COVENANT-KEEPING FATHER (Luke 15:11-24 & Chronicles 6:14-15)

- ◆ He is always committed to us.
- ◆ Even when the “*prodigal son*” was “*doing his own thing*” the Father was committed to him and longing for his return. (2 Timothy 1:12 & Jude 24)

- ◆ He is committed to “*keeping*” you, in weakness, trial, temptations etc. (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

D. GOD IS A REWARDING FATHER (Matthew 6:3-4)

- ◆ On earth. (Matthew 6:3-4 & 10:41-42)
- ◆ In heaven. (Matthew 5:12)

E. GOD IS A PRAYER-ANSWERING FATHER (Luke 11:9-13)

- ◆ Healing
- ◆ Needs
 - Financial (Philippians 4:19)
 - Material
 - Emotional
 - He wants us to “*make our needs known*” to Him (James 4:2 & Luke 11:9-10, 14:13-14, 15:16 & 16:23-24)
- ◆ Deliverance
 - He wants us to be “*free indeed.*” (John 8:32)

F. GOD IS A GIVING FATHER (James 1:17 & Matthew 7:11)

- ◆ He gives us all we need.
- ◆ He will never withhold anything from us that is for our good. (Psalms 34:11, 34:10 & 37:4)

G. GOD IS A FORGIVING FATHER (Matthew 6:8-15)

There is not a sin that you have committed that God cannot forgive, except the sin against the Holy Spirit, Matthew 12:31 and if you fear that you have committed that sin, then you haven't!

God has made adequate provision for all your sins. (John 1:9)

II GOD HAS RECORDED HOW HE FEELS TOWARD US

- ◆ The Psalmist gives us a list of some of the benefits and blessings of being part of God's family (Psalms 103): -
 - Forgives sin – doesn't punish us for them (Psalms 103:3 & 10)
 - Heals (Psalms 103:3)
 - Redeems (Psalms 103:4) – no matter how you ‘blew’ it, God is redemptive.
 - Satisfies (Psalms 103:5)

- Renews (Psalms 103:5)
- Releases oppressed (Psalms 103:6)
- Reveals Himself to us (Psalms 103:7)
- Pours out mercy (Psalms 103:8 & 17)
- Has compassion upon us (Psalms 103:14)
- ◆ He is understanding and gentle. (Isaiah 42:3)
- ◆ He knows all about our struggles and problems.

Divine Attributes of God

INTRODUCTION

Can God be defined? That is a question often posed by Theologians. However, no creature, much less man knows all that is proper of God; and therefore, no creature can give an exhaustive statement of all that God is. To define, is simply to separate or distinguish, so that the thing defined may be discriminated from all other things.

Probably the best definition of God ever penned by man, is that given in the ‘Westminster Catechism’ “God is a Spirit, Infinite, Eternal and Unchangeable, in His Being, Wisdom, Power, Holiness, Justice, Goodness and Truth.” This is a true definition; for it states the class of being to which God is to be referred. He is Spirit; and He is distinguished from all other spirits in that He is Infinite, Eternal and Unchangeable in His Being and Perfections.

I BEING OF GOD

‘Being of God’ is here meant that which has a real, substantive existence. It is equivalent to substance, or essence. It is opposed to what is merely thought, and to a mere force or power. God, therefore, is in His nature a substance, or essence, which is Infinite, Eternal and Unchangeable; the common subject of all Divine Perfections, and the common agent of all Divine Acts. If, therefore a Divine Essence, Infinite, Eternal, and Unchangeable exists, this Essence existed before and independent of the world. It follows also that the Essence of God is distinct from the world.

II DIVINE ATTRIBUTES (DEFINITION)

To the Divine Essence, which in itself is Infinite, Eternal and Unchangeable, belong certain absolutes shown to us in our nature and in God’s word. These absolutes are called Divine Attributes. The Attributes, although broken down into different names, must be considered in close relationship. In attempting to explain God’s nature to the Attributes as well as the relationship of the Attributes themselves, there are two extremes to be avoided. First, God is not a composite being, composed of different elements. Secondly, we must not fuse the Attributes, making them all mean the same thing. Which is the same as denying them altogether.

III DIVINE ATTRIBUTES (CLASSIFICATION)

There have been many different attempts classifying the Attributes, without any single one seemingly being superior.

A. ATTRIBUTES

- ◆ Some preclude the necessity of classification at all. This as described above is not acceptable
- ◆ Others arrange them according to the way in which we arrive at the knowledge of them.

CAUSATION	NEGATION	EMINENCE
God being the first cause of all things.	Denying God limits and imperfections.	Exalting to an infinite degree without limit.

- This however gives rise to only two classes: -
 Positive and negative or/
 Immanent and transient or/
 Communicable and incommunicable or
 Absolute and relative

- ◆ A third principle is that derived from our own nature: i.e. classification on the ground of personality.

ESSENCE (SOUL)	INTELLECT	WILL
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- ◆ Miley (Systematic Theology) – on the other hand classifies the attributes as such. With some notable omission which he claims are not Attributes per sê but rather tributes pertaining to God.

DIVINE OMNISCIENCE	DIVINE SENSIBILITY	DIVINE OMNIPOTENCE
DIVINE WISDOM	HOLINESS RIGHTEOUSNESS	PERSONAL WILL
	JUSTICE	DIVINE WALL
	LOVE	
	MERCY	
	TRUTH	

B. NON ATTRIBUTES

- ◆ **TRUE TO GOD BUT NOT ATTRIBUTES**

ETERNITY	UNITY
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◆ **PERFECTION OF ATTRIBUTES**

IMMUTABILITY	OMNIPRESENCE
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◆ **GOD AS SUBJECT**

SPIRITUALITY

◆ The writer of the book “In Understanding Be Men,” expands on the natural and moral attributes.

NATURAL	MORAL
Infinity	Goodness
Spirit Personality	Holiness
Eternity & Immutability	Righteousness
Omnipresence	
Omniscience	
Omnipotence	

◆ Charles Finney (Systematic Theology) in his book uses the classifications as such: -

KNOWLEDGE	SENSIBILITY	WILL
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but does not attempt to discuss the Attributes of God, but rather truths, laws, and government.

◆ Hodge in his book ‘Systematic Theology’ expands on the ‘Westminster Catechism’ to structure the Attributes as such.

	GOD IS SPIRIT	
INFINITE	ETERNAL	IMMUTABLE

	IN HIS BEING	
INTELLIGENCE OMNISCIENCE		WILL

NAMELY	NAMELY
KNOWLEDGE	POWER OMNIPOTENCE
WISDOM	HOLINESS
	JUSTICE
	GOODNESS
	TRUTH

IV DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

So without preferring any of the above classifications, I think it's worth elaborating on each 'Attribute'.

IV NATURAL ATTRIBUTES

◆ INFINITY

God fills heaven and earth; He is exalted above all we can know or think. He is infinite in His Being and Perfections. What this means is that no limitation can be assigned to God's essence. Because we exist in space and time, it is impossible to experience any alternative. So to start with we can only describe what infinity is not. I.e. it is not limited to space, or possible duration, this suggests a negative stance – true. We cannot, indeed, form a conception or mental image of an infinite object, but the word, infinity nevertheless expresses a positive judgment of the mind. I will further expand on infinity under the subject, “Omnipresence and Eternity.”

◆ SPIRIT PERSONALITY

If God be a Spirit, it follows of necessity that He is a Person, a self-conscious, intelligent, voluntary agent. It follows that God is a simple being. Nothing can either be added to, or taken from God. We must not limit the name “Personality” to what we understand on a physical level. A simple definition of personality is “an individual substance which thinks and feels, and has the power of self determination. This definition manifest in the Spirit realm is God's Spirit personality.

◆ ETERNITY

The infinitude of God relative to space is His omnipresence; relative to duration it is His eternity. With God there is no distinction between the present, past, and the future. But all things are equally and always present to Him. With Him duration is an eternal now.

◆ OMNIPRESENCE

God's omnipresence is the infinitude of His being, viewed in relation to His creatures. He is equally present with all His creatures at all times and in all places. God is not absent from any portion of space, not more present in one portion than in another. God's omnipresence is not only to be understood as a mere presence in knowledge and power but in His divine essence.

◆ **IMMUTABLE**

The immutability of God is closely connected with His immensity and eternity. God is absolutely immutable in His essence and attributes. He can neither increase nor decrease. He is subject to no process of development, or of self-evolution. He can never be wiser and holier, or more righteous or more merciful than He ever has been and ever must be.

◆ **OMNISCIENCE (KNOWLEDGE)**

By knowledge is meant the intellectual apprehension of truth. Being the cause of all things, God knows everything by knowing Himself, all things possible, by the knowledge of His power and all the things actual, by the knowledge of His own purposes. As far as man’s freewill is concerned God’s knowledge does not affect this in any way. Our freewill is limited to time and space. Whilst God’s knowledge relates to His other attributes, which is revealed in eternity. God’s foreknowledge relates to God’s omnipresence, and to the fact that God exists out of time and space.

◆ **(WILL)**

A sub category under which many philosophers and theologians will group.

POWER OF SELF DETERMINATION
EFFICIENCY/OMNIPOTENCE
ALL MORAL ATTRIBUTES

Turretin says – the object of the intellect, is the truth. The object of the will, is the good. God, as a Spirit is a voluntary agent. From the beginning to the end the Bible speaks of the will of God, of His decrees, purposes, counsels and commands.

◆ **OMNIPOTENCE**

It is by removing all the limitations of power, as it exists in us, that we fully grasp the idea of the omnipotence of God. God can do whatever He wills. We, beyond very narrow limits, must use means to accomplish our ends. With God means are unnecessary. He wills, and it is done. He by a volition created the heavens and the earth. This is the highest conceivable idea of power and this is clearly presented in scriptures.

IV MORAL ATTRIBUTES

HOLINESS

Holiness, on the one hand, implies entire freedom from moral evil, and, upon the other, absolute moral perfection, freedom from impurity is the primary idea of the Word. Infinite purity, even more than infinite knowledge or infinite power, is the object of reverence.

JUSTICE

In theology, justice is often distinguished as moral excellence or rectitude of conduct. God is a righteous ruler, all His laws are holy, just and good. In His moral government He faithfully adheres to those laws. He is impartial and uniform in their execution.

GOODNESS

Goodness in the Scriptural sense of the term includes: benevolence, love, mercy and grace: -

- ◆ Benevolence means the disposition to promote happiness, all sensitive creatures are it's objects.
- ◆ Love includes complacency, desire, and delight and has rational beings for it's objects.
- ◆ Mercy is kindness exercised towards the miserable and includes pity, compassion, forbearance and gentleness.
- ◆ Grace is love exercised towards the love a Holy God to sinners is the most mysterious attribute of the Divine Nature.

TRUTH

The primary meaning of the Greek word is openness: what is not concealed. But in the Hebrew, and therefore in the Bible, the primary idea of truth is, that which sustains, which does not fail, or disappointed our expectations.

The truth therefore is: -

- ◆ That which is real, as opposed to that which is fictitious or imaginary.
- ◆ That which completely comes up to it's idea, or to what it purports to be.
- ◆ That in which the reality exactly corresponds to the manifestation.
- ◆ That which can be depended upon, which does not fail, or change, or disappoint.

The truth of God therefore is the foundation of all religion.

CONCLUSION

SOVEREIGNTY

Sovereignty is not a property of the Divine Nature of God, but a prerogative arising out of the perfections of the Supreme Being.

If God be a Spirit, and therefore a person infinite, eternal and immutable in His being and perfections, the creator and preserver of the Universe, He is of right its absolute sovereign.

Infinite wisdom, goodness and power, with the right of possession, which belongs to God in all His creatures, are the immutable foundation of His dominion.

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Repentance from Dead Work

INTRODUCTION

The Doctrine of Repentance is one that has been overlooked and neglected very much in our modern day Christian world. When we turn to the Bible we find that it is in fact of the ‘foundational truths’ – see Hebrews 6:1-2. In Hebrews 6:1-2 we have Paul giving us the foundational truths which are necessary in order to move on “*towards maturity.*” In the passage Paul is challenging his readers or his students to move on from being “*babies*” (compare Hebrews 5:12-14) towards becoming mature Christians. In doing this he also gives us a list of the foundational doctrines which have to be laid in a believer’s nature before he can go on to maturity.

I THE NATURE OF REPENTANCE

HEBREWS 6:1-2

Here we find that repentance has to be “*from*” dead works and is followed by faith “*toward*” God. This indicates a change of mind and direction. The English word ‘repentance’ is translated from the Greek word ‘metanoia’ which right down through the history of the Greek language, and also classical Greek, always indicates ‘to change one’s mind.’ Repentance therefore is primarily a decision! it may also involve strong emotions, but it is not essentially an emotion.

In the minds of most people repentance is an emotion, and they interpret it as feeling ‘sorry’ for what one has done. This can also include such emotions as remorse and also the matter of tears and crying. We must make it clear in our teaching that although these emotions can and very often do accompany repentance, repentance is still basically a change of mind and a decision.

Another false concept regarding repentance is that of ‘penance’ – an idea that comes from many religions which call for some kind of self imposed infliction and hardship that one has to endure to pay for one’s sins. This is a concept that is totally contrary to the Word of God. All these things i.e. emotions penance etc. can in fact take place in a person’s life without repentance actually being achieved.

In the Old Testament the word repentance primarily emphasises the thought of “turning, to return, to turn back.” When we combine the New Testament emphasis on an inner change of mind and heart involving a decision, and the Old Testament emphasis on the outward action of turning or returning to God, we begin to get the full picture of the meaning of true repentance. Therefore, true repentance is

“an inner change of mind resulting in an outer action, of turning around or back and facing in a different direction.”

LUKE 15:11-24

An ideal example in the Scriptures of Repentance. The story of the Prodigal Son outlines for us the process of Repentance. He left his father, went his own way, until eventually he came to the point where he made a ‘decision’ (Luke 15:18) “*I will get up and go to my father.*” At this point came his first step of repentance. This was followed by the second step which was the outward action following the decision (Luke 15:20) and he got up and “*came to his father.*”

We see in Hebrews 6 that repentance is “*from dead works.*” In the life of the Prodigal Son his “*dead works*” were his own style of life which he followed and pursued with his back turned to his father, going his own way. Repentance was the point at which he turned from his own lifestyle, having made a decision, and started walking home toward his father. It involved a new direction. This latter part is referred to in Hebrews 6 by the words “*faith toward God.*” It includes confession of sin (Luke 15:18, 19 & 21) – Repentance “*from dead works*” – all acts will then be based upon repentance and facts i.e. prayer, Bible reading, church attendance etc. (Isaiah 64:6)

MATTHEW 27:3-4

An example in the Scriptures of Remorse without repentance. We need to see a clear contrast between true repentance and mere remorse for our sins. The one is sorrow which leads toward faith and salvation, the other is sorrow that leads to death. (2 Corinthians 7:10) Although in some translations, Judas is described as repenting of what he did, the original Greek word from which repentance is translated in this passage, is not the same as that used previously. In this case it is the word ‘metamelomai’ which can be translated more accurately as ‘anguish’ and ‘remorse.’

In the case of Judas we find that there is no (change of mind) regarding Jesus Christ and also no change of the course or direction he followed – in fact he went on the same way and hanged himself.

1 SAMUEL 15:1-31

Here is another example of a man who, although he appeared to repent, did not in fact have a proper inner change and outward action to follow it in his life and therefore did not in fact repent. Saul’s disobedience is one of the pathetic stories in the Word of God. The crisis comes when he is confronted by Samuel who challenges him concerning his disobedience, for God had told him to destroy all the people of the Amalekites, plus all the oxen and sheep etc. However Saul in his

disobedience, preserved the best of the animals and also brought the King back alive. When confronted by Samuel, Saul replies, in verse 24, *“I have sinned. I have indeed transgressed the command of the Lord and your words.”* In verse 25 he goes on to request pardon and says *“Now therefore please pardon my sin.”*

This may appear to be a good act of repentance. However, upon closer study, we find that Saul did in fact, not have any change of heart or mind at all. In verse 25 he says to Samuel, *“Return with me that I may worship the Lord”* and again in verse 30 *“Please honour me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and go back with me that I may worship the Lord your God.”* These statements betray Saul’s real concern. His primary concern was not with the fact that he had disobeyed God’s Word, but that he was worried about his reputation in the eyes of his people.

When we study the customs of Israel, we discover that when the King went to worship, if the Prophet was not with him, it indicated that God’s favour was not with him. So it would have been detrimental to Saul’s reputation if Samuel had not gone with him. Thus in Saul’s life we find no sign of a change of heart nor the action that should have followed such a change, which would have naturally been to immediately command that his soldiers kill the King Agag and also destroy all the animals brought with. We find the result in verse 26. God *“rejected”* Saul permanently. See also Hebrews 12:16-17 – Esau.

II REPENTANCE MUST ALWAYS PRECEDE WITH FAITH

MARK 1:2-4

In this passage we find God’s principles of *“repentance preceding faith”* expressed through the ministry of John the Baptist. His message was one of *“repentance”* (Mark1:4) *“for forgiveness.”* Forgiveness will never take place without proper repentance, which must come first as we have seen in the lives of Saul and Judas Iscariot.

MARK 1:14-15

In these verses we find that the content of Jesus’ preaching was *“repent and believe in the Gospel”* (Mark 1:15). Again we see that repentance precedes faith and belief. The first commandment that ever fell from the lips of Jesus was the men must first *“repent”* and then believe.

LUKE 24:46-47

Our Lord's commission to His disciples at the end of His walk on earth was that "Repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His Name to all nations..." In other words Jesus commissioned the church to preach this message in which repentance comes first.

However, unfortunately, we often find that repentance is lacking in much of our modern preaching with the unfortunate results that we have already seen. The message of the church should not be 'only believe' but rather 'repent and believe.' Many of the problems that Christians face with improper conversion, lack of commitment and inability to find proper forgiveness, is due to failure to properly repent.

ACT 2:37-38

Again we find the process laid out for us which begins with repentance and then faith, which is involved with baptism, which in turn leads to the reception of the Promise of the Father.

Again we must emphasise that repentance is a foundation for many other things and when it is not properly exercised we have a number of problems. One of the main difficulties experienced in the area of deliverance from demonic oppression and possession, is that people refuse to repent from the impressions, emotions and desires and operations of demonic personalities in and upon them. Whereas they want to get rid of the torment of demon powers, they do not want to change their mind and turn around from those activities and thoughts and emotions that give demons their place in their lives.

IV OPPORTUNITY FOR REPENTANCE GIVEN BY GOD

JOHN 6:44

It is clear from the Scriptures that no man is capable of repenting on his own. It is God who draws him and creates the circumstances which are favourable towards making a decision. These circumstances often involve hardships, difficulties and problems where we burn ourselves out and come to the end of our tether, although not in every case. It is when the Holy Spirit has both brought a man to this point as in the case of the Prodigal Son, as well as revealing to man his need and the Gospel Message, that man has to make his decision.

Therefore, although the opportunity is given by God, the actual act of repentance still remains man's responsibility. In the Life of Saul we see such an opportunity arising, but Saul chose to carry on his own way and exalt himself. It is also possible for man to throw away the opportunity to repent and go

beyond, and too far, and find himself in a position where he can no longer repent! This appears to have been the case with Judas, who had chosen to take a path from which he no longer could find an exit. It is therefore so important for man to be submissive and humble enough to receive the opportunity God gives him and turn around and receive God's offer of forgiveness.

PSALM 51:10

It is possible for man to pray and ask God to help him to change his heart, and bring him to the place for repentance. Here we find David virtually asking God for this. There are many cases in history where unbelievers have cried to God to help them to come to a place of repentance, a call which God is only too eager to answer.

Repentance of course does not only apply to the unsaved, but also to the Christian who is in the process of sanctification. Very often the process of sanctification is that we first are convicted concerning the things that are wrong in our lives by the Word of God. We can then call on the Lord to help us to repent and change our minds and go in the opposite direction. Sometimes the situation arises where we even stop doing what is wrong because we know it is wrong, and sometime later, the actual change of heart comes about, where we no longer want to do what is wrong.

ACTS 17:30

We must always remember though, that the final decision to change still remains man's responsibility, as God commands us in this passage to repent. This must be emphasised, as there are people who put the whole responsibility on God, and when we challenged about their sin, simply say "Oh, God has not given me a heart of repentance yet." In such cases it is usually an excuse to carry on doing what they enjoy, and they in fact betray the fact that they have rejected God's opportunity and are going their own way. We must always remember that faith is "doing what God commands, unconditionally." This can only be done when we have turned from doing our things our way. Therefore, true faith can only follow true repentance, and very often the reason why we do not have faith, is because we have not repented from our own ideas and thoughts and lifestyles. See also Psalm 80:3, 7 & 19 and Lamentations 5:21.

SUMMARY

Repentance is a radical change of mind and heart which is the result of seeing your true spiritual state in the light of God's perfection.

HOW DO YOU REPENT?

You accept only God's attitude to sin.

You see yourself as personally guilty of rebellion against God and His holy laws.

You obey God's call and turn to him from sin.

IDEAL SINNER'S PRAYER

“Lord Jesus, I acknowledge that you are the Saviour of the World. That You have conquered sin and death forever. That you died on the cross so that my sin can be forgiven. I acknowledge that I am a sinner and am in need of salvation. I come to You as I am. I repent of all my sin. I ask You to forgive me and cleanse me from all past sin. By faith, I invite You into my life. I commit myself to You. I ask You to help me, by Your Spirit to live a new life with You and for You. Thank You Jesus for accepting me as I am. Amen.” – New Life New Lifestyle, Malcolm Black, page 20.

Faith Toward God

I THE IMPORTANCE OF FAITH TOWARD GOD

‘Repentance from... faith toward...’ – from and toward are the negative and positive aspects of justification. It is not enough to repent. We must run from sin to God.

- ◆ The word ‘*faith*’ is mentioned 200 times in the Bible.
- ◆ Hebrews 11 tells us that these great men accomplished all they did “*through faith in God.*”
- ◆ It is the only basic of all religious living. “*The just shall live by faith*” (Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11 & Hebrews 10:38).

II WHAT IS FAITH TOWARD GOD?

◆ **Faith is the evidence of things not seen.**

Not the evidence of our physical senses, but of the invisible truths revealed by God’s Word. (Hebrews 11:1 & 2 Corinthians 5:7) Seeing is not believing, but believing is seeing. (John 11:39-40) Faith sometimes contradicts physical ‘evidence’. (Romans 4:17-21)

◆ **Faith is associated with the heart.** (Romans 10:10)

It is more than just in the mind. It must produce a change in the lives of those who profess salvation. “*With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.*” It produces a change and transformation of habits, character and life.

◆ **Faith is associated with the mouth.** (Romans 10:10)

There is a direct connection between “*faith in the heart*” and “*confession of the mouth.*” It is one of the great basic principles of the Bible (Matthew 12:24-25; Corinthians 4:13 & Mark 11:22-23). The word “*confession*” means “saying the same as.”

◆ **Faith relies on the mercy and grace of God.** (Luke 18:9-14)

Not on good works or self-righteousness or self-improvement. Pride is a stumbling-block to justification. To be justified you must recognise that your salvation is entirely dependent upon God’s grace. (Ephesians 2:8-9 & Galatians 2:15-16 & 21)

◆ **Not faith in our faith, but faith in God (objective, not subjective).** (Hebrews 11:6)

- Faith is “utter confidence in its object.” “*Through faith.*” (Ephesians 2:8-9) Faith is the channel, not the object; it is the channel through which God’s grace is received.
- Faith takes God at His Word. (Romans 10:17)
 - we believe what God has to say about the subject
 - we accept it without question.

Billy Graham says that “faith is not some peculiar, mysterious quality for which we must strive. Jesus said we must become as little children, and just as little children trust their

parents, so we must trust God.” Faith is not “taking a leap in the dark,” but is based on the best evidence in the world – the Bible.

- God’s Word says that Jesus Christ has taken my place of punishment and judgment.
- God counts me righteous because I am depending upon what He has done for me on the Cross. (Romans 4:4-6, John 1:12, Acts 16:31 & Hebrews 10:39)
- Faith involves an act of the will. (Hebrews 11:24-27)
- Moses chose God’s way, after careful consideration.
- it involved sacrifice.
- he burned all bridges of possible retreat.
- Faith is to be our principle of life. *“The just shall live by faith.”*
- It does not end with trust in Christ for salvation.
- It must continue (grow). *“The life I now live.”* (Galatians 2:20)

III. THE FOUR ‘ELEMENTS’ OF FAITH (Hebrews 11:1)

◆ Clear-cut objective. *‘Faith is the substance of things hoped for.’*

- Do not be vague about your goal.
- You must have a clear and defined faith goal e.g. Bartimaeus
 - everyone knew he was blind, but Jesus asked him *“What do you want Me to do for You?”* *“Sir, I want to see.”*
- God does not answer vague prayers.

◆ A burning desire for those objectives. (Proverbs 10:24)

“The desire of the righteous shall be granted.” (Psalms 37:4)

- You should have a burning desire for a goal.
- You should keep on ‘seeing’ that goal accomplished.

◆ Pray for assurance.

‘Substance’ means ‘title deed, or legal paper.’ You now pray for assurance concerning the clear-cut objectives and burning desire in your heart.

◆ Speak the Word.

- This is the evidence of your faith.
- Your words are creative – they go out and create.
- They are the material which the Spirit uses to create. *“God spoke and the world came into being.”*

IV FAITH (TO BELIEVE)

Act 2:37-38 & 16:30, in repentance man turns his back on sin whereas faith is the turning of the person to God. Faith involves an intellectual, an emotional and volitional transaction. Men believe with the “*heart*” to be saved (Romans 10:9-10); this includes thought, will and emotions.

◆ The intellectual element

This element includes belief in the revelation of God in nature and in the historical facts of Scripture, and the doctrines taught therein as to man’s sinfulness, the redemption provided in Christ, the conditions to salvation and to all the blessing promised to God’s children. Faith must be based on fact (that has ample reliable evidence). (Romans 1:19-20 & 10:14 & 17)

◆ The emotional element

Matthews 13:10-21 & Mark 12:32-34, it is not merely a matter of agreeing with the facts (truths) but to respond personally to the facts as they apply to the individual. The emotional element of faith may be defined as the awakening of the soul to its personal needs and to the personal applicability of the redemption provided in Christ, together with an immediate assent to these truths. It is that faith which comes as a result of the person seeing his/her need of that which Christ has done for him. While the emotional element is certainly to be recognised as a constituent of faith, it must not be treated as if it were the sole characteristic of faith.

◆ The voluntary element

This element of faith is the logical outgrowth of the intellectual and the emotional. If a person accepts the revelation of God and His salvation as true and comes to assent to it as applicable to himself personally, he should logically go on to appropriate it to himself. The voluntary element presupposes the other two elements. It includes the surrender of the heart to God and the appropriation of Christ as Saviour. (John 1:12 & 4:12 & Revelation 3:30) The sick man must surrender himself to his doctor, but he must also appropriate the remedy for his disease. He won’t be healed by simply acknowledging the fact of his condition and that the medication can make him better. He must take the medicine.

In the New Testament faith is exceedingly prominent. The Greek noun ‘pistis’ and the verb ‘pisteuo’ both occur more than 240 times, while the adjective ‘pistos’ is found 67 times. This stress on faith is to be seen against the background of the saving work of God in Christ. Central to the NT is the thought that God sent his Son to be the Saviour of the World. Christ accomplished man’s salvation by dying an atoning death on Calvary’s cross. Faith is the attitude whereby a man abandons all reliance on his own efforts to obtain salvation, be they deeds of piety, of ethical goodness or anything else. It is the attitude of complete trust in Christ, of reliance on him alone for all that salvation means. When

the Philippian jailer asked, “*Men, what must I do to be saved?*” and Paul and Silas answered without hesitation, “*Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.*” (Acts 16:30). It is “*whoever believes in him*” that does not perish, but has everlasting life. (John 3:16) Faith is the one way by which men receive salvation.

For Paul, faith means the abandonment of all reliance on one’s ability to merit salvation. It is a trustful acceptance of God’s gift in Christ, a reliance on Christ, Christ alone, for all that salvation means. Faith is clearly one of the most important concepts in the whole NT. Everywhere it is required and importance insisted upon. Faith means abandoning all trust in one’s own resources. Faith means casting oneself unreservedly on the mercy of God. Faith means laying hold on the promises of God in Christ, relying entirely on the finished work of Christ for salvation, and on the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit of God for daily strength. Faith implies complete reliance on God and full obedience to God.

V FAITH (SUBJECT AND SCRIPTURES)

- ◆ **Is the substance of things hoped for.** (Hebrews 11:1)
- ◆ **Is the evidence of things not seen.** (Hebrews 11:1)
- ◆ **Commanded.** (Matthew 11:22 & 1 John 3:23)
- ◆ **The objects of, are**
 - God. (John 14:1)
 - Christ. (John 6:29 & Acts 20:21)
 - Writings of Moses. (John 5:46 & Acts 24:14)
 - Writings of the prophets. (2 Corinthians 20:20 & Acts 26:27)
 - The Gospel. (Mark 1:15)
 - Promises of God. (Romans 4:21 & Hebrews 11:13)
- ◆ In Christ is
 - The gift of God. (Romans 12:3; Ephesians 2:8 & 6:23 & Philippians 1:29)
 - The work of God. (Acts 11:21 & 1 Corinthians 2:5)
 - Precious. (2 Peter 1:1)
 - Most holy. (Jude 1:20)
 - Fruitful. (1 Thessalonians 1:3)
 - Accompanied by repentance. (Mark 1:15 & Luke 24:47)
 - Followed by conversion. (Acts 11:21)
 - Christ is the Author and Finisher of. (Hebrews 12:2)

- Is a gift of the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:9)
- The Scriptures designed to produce. (John 20:31 & 2 Timothy 3:15)
- Preaching designed to produce. (John 17:20; Acts 8:12; Romans 10:14-15 & 17 & 1 Corinthians 3:5)

◆ Through it is

- Remission of sins. (Acts 10:43 & Romans 3:25)
- Justification. (Act 13:39; Romans 3:21-22, 28 & 30 & 5:1 & Galatians 2:16)
- Salvation. (Mark 16:16 & Acts 16:31)
- Sanctification. (Acts 15:9 & 26:18)
- Spiritual light. (John 12:38 & 46)
- Spiritual life. (John 20:31 & Galatians 2:20)
- Eternal life. (John 3:15-16 & 6:40 & 47)
- Rest in heaven. (Hebrews 4:3)
- Edification. (1 Timothy 1:4 & Jude 1:20)
- Preservation. (1 Peter 1:5)
- Adoption. (John 1:12 & Galatians 3:26)
- Access to God. (Romans 5:2 & Ephesians 3:12)
- Inheritance of the promises. (Galatians 3:22 & Hebrews 6:12)
- The gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 11:15-17; Galatians 3:14 & Ephesians 1:13)
- Impossible to please God without. (Hebrews 11:6)

◆ Produces

- Hope. (Romans 5:2)
- Joy. (Acts 16:34 & 1 Peter 1:8)
- Peace. (Romans 15:13)
- Confidence. (Isaiah 28:16 & 1 Peter 2:6)
- Boldness in preaching. (Psalms 116:10 & 2 Corinthians 4:13)
- Christ is precious to those having. (1 Peter 2:7)
- Christ dwells in the heart by. (Ephesians 3:17)
- Necessary in prayer. (Matthew 21:22 & James 1:6)
- Those who are not Christs have not. (John 10:26-27)
- An evidence of the new birth. (1 John 5:1)

◆ By it saints

- Live. (Galatians 2:20)
- Stand. (Romans 11:20 & 2 Corinthians 1:24)
- Walk. (Romans 4:12 & 2 Corinthians 5:7)

- Obtain a good report. (Hebrews 11:2)
 - Overcome the world. (1 John 5:4-5)
 - Resist the devil. (1 Peter 5:9)
 - Overcome the devil. (Ephesians 6:16)
 - Are supported. (Psalms 27:13 & 1 Timothy 4:10)
- ◆ Saints should
- Be sincere in. (1 Timothy 1:5 & 2 Timothy 1:5)
 - Abound in. (2 Corinthians 8:7)
 - Continue in. (Acts 14:22 & Colossians 1:23)
 - Be strong in. (Romans 4:20-24)
 - Stand fast in. (1 Corinthians 16:13)
 - Be grounded and settled in. (Colossians 1:23)
 - Hold, with a good conscience. (1 Timothy 1:19)
 - Pray for the increase of. (Luke 17:5)
 - Have full assurance of. (2 Timothy 1:12 & Hebrews 10:22)
- ◆ **True, evidenced by its fruits.** (James 2:21-25)
- ◆ **All difficulties overcome by.** (Matthew 17:20 & 21:21 & Mark 9:23)
- ◆ **All things should be done in.** (Romans 14:22)

Doctrine of Man

INTRODUCTION

Anthropology is the study of man – the human being. In a theological sense it relates to the study of the whole man as he stands in relation to God. Man cannot be known by any scientific analysis. The human being can only truly be known in terms of his relationship to God – his Creator. He cannot know himself apart from divine revelation. Man's existence has never been in isolation but always a relational one. His value has been conferred upon him by a Supreme Being, and he is fulfilled only when serving and loving that Being.

The Bible never speaks of man in himself, as isolated, but always in terms of his relationship to God for example: -

- ◆ He is a creature made by God. (Genesis 2:27)
- ◆ He has fallen “from” God. (Genesis 3 & Romans 5:12ff)

I ERRONEOUS VIEWS OF MAN

- ◆ Man is a God.

Humanism involves a concentration on man which does not take God into account. Man is put onto centre-stage and is glorified. Humanism attempts to see man as essentially good and minimises the fact of sin.

- ◆ Man is a machine.

To many, man is viewed in terms of what he is able to do. The employer is often interested in the strength, energy, the skills and capabilities of an individual. The individual is important only so far as what he is able to produce. If a machine or computerised robot is able to do a more accurate and efficient job, then the individual is replaced.

- ◆ Man is an animal.

Some see man primarily as a member of the animal kingdom; he has derived or evolved from some higher form(s).

II THE BIBLICAL VIEW OF MAN

Scripture does not say very much about the creation of heaven and earth, the sun and the moon and stars, of plants and animals. These are reported in brief words. But when dealing with the creation of man specific detail seems to be important. (Genesis 1:26-28)

◆ A created being.

Man is said to be a creature who is created by God after careful thought and deliberation on the part of the Godhead. As a result of an executive decision man was brought into existence. (Genesis 1:26)

Thus man did not originate through a chance process of evolution, but by a purposeful, conscious and deliberate act of God. This means that there is a reason for man's existence. He was created for a purpose and that purpose lies in the heart and intention of the Creator. This does not imply, however, that everything else came into existence by chance. Nothing came into existence by chance but the careful planning and decision of God is far more clearly manifest in the making of man than in the creation of the other creatures. Man is something unique.

◆ Created in the image of God.

The Bible says that man is made in the image of God. This indicates that he stands in an entirely different relationship to God, from that of other creatures. Unlike other creatures the human being alone is capable of having a conscious personal relationship with the Creator. Man alone is able to know love, worship and obey his Creator.

◆ An eternal being.

Man, created by an eternal God has an eternal future although he had a finite beginning in time. The human being is not merely a machine nor an animal, but a very special creation. The Creator gives man a real sense of identity and importance. The Bible indicates that every person is valuable and precious to God. Everyone is known to God. (Matthew 10:28-31; Luke 15:3-7 & Psalms 84:4-6)

III MAN IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

The Bible states that man is created in the image and likeness of God. (Genesis 1:26-27, 5:1 & 9:6; 1 Corinthians 11:7; James 3:9 & Acts 17:28)

In Genesis the terms 'tselem' (image) and 'demuth' (likeness) are used. Both words are used in Genesis 1:26; 'tselem' is used in Genesis 1:27, 5:3 and 9:6. In Genesis 5:1 and 5:3, 'demuth' is used.

Paul uses the word 'eikon' in 1 Corinthians 11:7 (image) and James uses the term 'homoiosis' (likeness) in James 3:9.

Some have drawn a clear distinction between the two words, 'image' and 'likeness;' this however does not seem to be justified by their usage in Genesis where they are used interchangeably.

IV THE CONSTITUTIONAL NATURE OF MAN

In this section consideration will be given to the makeup of man – what man is. It will be endeavoured to establish what the essential nature of man is. Is he a unitary whole, or is he made up of two or more different components? If he is made up of different components, what are they?

Various words are used in Scripture to describe man in his relationship to God and to his environment, and in the structure or nature of his own being:-

Spirit – ruach (Hebrew); pneuma (Greek)

Soul – nephesh (Hebrew); psuche (Greek)

Body – soma (Greek)

Flesh – basar (Hebrew); sarx (Greek)

Generally it is agreed that man is basically both a material and immaterial being. It is obvious that the body is the material part of man. Soul, spirit, heart, mind, will and conscience are all facets of man's immaterial nature. It is very difficult to make hard and fast distinctions between these.

◆ Basic views on the nature of man.

- Trichotomy

Believers in 'trichotomism' hold that man in his essential nature is composed of three distinct elements or parts i.e. body, soul and spirit.

- The body is the physical nature of man – something he has in common with animals and plants. The body is the material part of our constitution.
- The soul is the psychological element of man. It is the basis of reason, of emotion and of social interrelatedness.
- The spirit is that element of man which enables him to perceive spiritual matters and respond to spiritual stimuli.

The major foundation of this 'tripartite' view of human nature is seen in certain passages in Scripture although Greek philosophy has contributed to its origins. 1 Thessalonians 5:23

and Hebrews 4:12 are the two particular texts used to support this view. But what about scriptures like Luke 10:27.

- Dichotomy

Believers in dichotomy hold that man in his essential nature is composed of two parts of element: body and soul. The body is the material part and the soul (or spirit) is the immaterial part of man. The terms ‘soul’ and ‘spirit’ often seem to be used interchangeably (Luke 1:46-47) and therefore no clear distinction is made between them.

Furthermore, in Matthew 6:25 and 10:28 man is said to be made up of body and soul (psuche) whereas in Ecclesiastes 12:7 and 1 Corinthians 5:3, 5; body and spirit (ruach, pneuma).

In Genesis 35:18, 1 Kings 17:21 and Acts 15:26, death is described as giving up the soul whereas Psalm 31:5 and Luke 23:46 describes death as the giving of the spirit.

There are references to being troubled in spirit (Genesis 41:8 & John 13:21) and to being troubled in soul. (Psalms 42:6 & John 12:27)

- Monism

Believers in this view insist that man is a radical unity. In their understanding, the Bible does not view man as composed of different parts or entities. The terms “body,” “soul” and “spirit” are to be taken as basically synonymous. Man is viewed as a self. – Erickson, page 524. It is said that “body” and “soul” are not contrasting terms, but interchangeable synonyms.

- Unity

Believers in unity hold that the Bible emphasises the fundamental wholeness or unity of man’s nature and that all attempts to divide man into certain essential elements have no Scriptural warrant.

In considering the question of man’s essential make-up (nature) the issue is not whether terms such as soul and spirit may be used but whether the Bible teaches that man is composed of two or more distinct substance or parts. This is not a question of whether or not dual, triple or multiple aspects of man’s nature may be conceived. Obviously, the Bible, in using terms such as “body,” “soul,” “spirit,” “mind,” “heart,” etc., indicates that various aspects of man’s nature may be separately conceived.

It is a vastly different matter, however, when the simple duality of body and soul is taken to indicate a scientific substantial dichotomy of nature which suggests an essential dualism in man. It is quite legitimate to use terms such as “body,” “soul” or “spirit” to describe different aspects of man’s nature.

The evangelists (Matthew 22:37 & Mark 12:30) did not wish to indicate significant distinctions between elements in man but rather that Christ commanded people to love God with the whole being.

Genesis 2:7 simply states that man was formed from the dust of the ground and that he became a living being (“soul” – nephesh) when God breathed into him. It says quite clearly that he became a living soul – that man is a soul; not, man has a soul.

The essence of man’s nature is that his being a living soul is wholly dependent on the life-giving breath of God. He is fundamentally a creature of God who can have no existence apart from the breath of God.

Scripture places much emphasis on the whole man. Man is to be treated as a unity. His spiritual condition cannot be dealt with independent of his physical and psychological condition and vice versa. Man, as a whole being, is the object of God’s love, not only his soul, or spirit. It is the whole man who is restored, saved and called into the service of God. (Romans 5:7-10 & 12:1-2 & 1 Corinthians 6:8-20).

The body is not, as in Greek philosophy, regarded as the prison-house of the soul. Salvation is not escape from the physical into the spiritual. Man’s ultimate hope is the resurrection of the body. (1 Corinthians 15:12-20)

V THE FALL OF MAN – SIN

Man has never been able to find answers to the question of why sin was included in the plan of God. The Bible does not give us any clues either but the means by which sin entered the world is carefully and clearly detailed in the Word of God in Genesis 3. Although many critics do not consider this to have actually happened, the Scriptures do add weight to its being historically true. (Matthew 19:3-6; Romans 5:12-21; Luke 3:38 & Jude 14)

T.C Hammond points out that there are certain underlying principles in Scripture which are abundantly clear in spite of the fact that no final answer can be given to the question, “Why did not God’s foreknowledge lead Him to anticipate and to prevent sin both in the first man and also at its first entry into the universe?” What is clear on the authority of revelation is: -

- ◆ “God is not the author of sin.
- ◆ God has no need of sin in order to enhance His glory, and He did not permit it solely in order to demonstrate His moral grandeur.
- ◆ The subsequent responsibility of mankind in relation to sin is in no way diminished nor excused on the ground that the men now living were not guilty of its inception.
- ◆ God is not to be regarded as a ‘party’ to the repeated acts of sin – e.g., those of sex – which man has all too successfully perpetuated nor is He to be held as partly responsible for the perpetuation of vice simply because He has not withdrawn His sustaining power from the universe. If man freely chooses to misuse certain of his wonderful endowments and to prostitute his remarkable abilities to base ends, it is scarcely just to blame God.” – “In Understanding Be Men,” page 75.

◆ The origin of sin.

The origin of human sin, according to the Bible, is very simply ascribed to the willful self-corruption of the creature under temptation. This is seen in the account given in Genesis 3 and Romans 5:12-21. Man was created a holy being – fellowship with God. God placed man in an environment that was “*all very good*”; but man was tempted to sin by a personal being of another kind. This being had already sinned against God; pointing to the fact that sin was present in the world before the fall of Adam and Eve. But in this study, we are concerned with the origin of sin in the human race.

The process of sin entering the human family is described in Genesis 3. Romans 5:12ff shows that Adam’s sin has been imputed to all mankind.

From the Word of God it is seen that: -

- Sin is not caused by God. (James 1:13)
- Sin is the choice of the person himself. Man has certain desires which, at root, are legitimate; the desire for food (hunger), the desire for sex, the desire to obtain things, etc. There are proper ways to satisfy each of these desires, and there are also divinely imposed limits (e.g. Luke 4:1ff).

- Sin originated in an act of free will in which the creature deliberately, responsibly and with adequate understanding of the issues chose to corrupt the holy character of godliness with which God had endowed His creation.
- Man is held responsible for his sin. (James 1:13-15)

◆ The results of sin.

The sin of Adam and Eve was not an isolated event. The consequences were immediately apparent and have far-reaching effects. Sin affects man in several dimensions.

◆ Sin affects man's relationship with God.

- Man becomes an enemy of God: -

By rebelling against God, it is man, not God, who breaks the relationship. Man becomes an enemy of God. (Romans 8:7; Colossians 1:21 & James 4:4). In the case of Adam and Eve, trust, love, confidence and intimacy were replaced by fear alienation and avoidance of God. (Genesis 3:7-10) Instead of 'running' to the Lord with positive anticipation to their fellowship with God, they ran away and hid themselves in fear. (Similar situation with officers of the Law, or guilty child hiding from his parents). Shame and fear were now the dominant emotions (Genesis 2:25 & 3:7, 10), indicating the disruption that had taken place.

- Man becomes the object of God's wrath: -

God is angered by sin and because God is righteous He cannot be complacent towards sin. Sin elicits God's wrath and displeasure. (John 3:36 & Romans 1:18, 2:5 & 9:2)

"From the foregoing it is evident that God looks with disfavour upon sin, indeed, that sin occasions anger or wrath or displeasure within him. Two additional comments should be made, however. The first is that anger is not something that God chooses to feel. His disapproval of sin is not an arbitrary matter, for His very nature is one of holiness; it automatically rejects sin. He is, as we have suggested in another place, 'allergic to sin' as it were. The second comment is that we must avoid thinking of God's anger as being excessively emotional. It is not as if he is seething with anger, his temper virtually surging out of control. He is capable of exercising patience and long-suffering and does so. Nor is God to be thought of as somehow frustrated by our sin. Disappointment is perhaps a more accurate way of characterising his reaction." – Erickson, page 607.

- Man is destined to die: -

Death is one of the most obvious results of sin. (Genesis 2:17 & 3:19 & Romans 6:23) This death is primarily spiritual but physical death is included. Spiritual death is the separation of the person from God, in the entirety of his nature.

◆ Sin affects man himself.

As a result of sin man becomes a slave. He is in bondage to Satan and to further acts of sin. For example, Cain felt constrained to lie to God after he had murdered this brother Abel.

Man is blinded and becomes insensitive to God and one's own conscience denying the reality of sin – justifying one's actions.

◆ The extent of sin.

Everyone without exception is a sinner (Kings 8:46; Psalms 130:3 & 143:2 & Romans 3:9-12 & 23). Every individual who has been naturally born is a sinner. Jesus alone is the exception – He was supernaturally born.

“It must be emphasised that not only is every individual involved, but every part of that individual's nature. Together with human characteristics there is transmitted to each new individual a sinful bias, involving liability to endure the consequences of human sin, and the evil principle ('the law of sin') which will uncompromisingly work in antagonism to the requirements of the divine law” – T.C. Hammond, page 83.

◆ God's answer to sin.

The answer to man's predicament is dealt with in a separate study – 'Soteriology.'

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