

How We Got the Bible: Evidences for Biblical Inspiration

Presented by Mark Mayberry
8/7/2016

INTRODUCTION

When affirming his veracity, man swears by God. In contrast, God swears by Himself (Heb. 6:13-14). There is nothing greater than God to which one could appeal for authority. If the Bible is God's Word, then the same principle holds true: it becomes the ultimate and final self-authenticating authority (Heb. 4:12-13).

Hebrews 6:13-14 (NASB95) — 13 For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, 14 saying, "I will surely bless you and I will surely multiply you."

Hebrews 4:12-13 (NASB95) — 12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

We believe the Bible is the Word of God. Yet, what evidence supports this claim? After all, other books, such as the Koran and the Book of Mormon, claim to be the Word of God. However, they contradict the Bible.

John 3:33 (NASB95) — 33 "He who has received His testimony has set his seal to this, that God is true.

John 17:17 (NASB95) — 17 "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

God is true (John 3:33) and His word is truth (John 17:17). God can no more contradict Himself than His word can contradict itself. In his salutation to Titus, Paul refers to his apostleship, designed to instill faith in God and result in the knowledge of the truth, based upon promises made by God, who cannot lie, that are manifested in His word (Titus 1:1-3). The Koran, the Book of Mormon, and the Bible contradict one another; accordingly, all cannot be the true word of God. So, how does one decide which is right and reliable?

*Titus 1:1-3 (NASB95) — 1 Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and **the knowledge of the truth** which is according to*

godliness, 2 in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago, 3 but at the proper time manifested, even His word, in the proclamation with which I was entrusted according to the commandment of God our Savior,

One must offer evidence supporting the claim that the Bible is the Word of God, as opposed to other books that claim religious authority. Since Christians are commanded to obey civil authorities (Rom. 13:1-4), we should heed one who claims to be a police officer, provided he offers evidence that he is really an officer of the law, and not just an imposter posing as an officer. Likewise, any book demanding we submit to it as the Word of God needs to support its claim to be the authentic voice of God. What then, is the evidence that the Bible speaks with divine authority?

Romans 13:1-4 (NASB95) — 1 Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. 3 For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; 4 for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.

It is one thing to claim divine inspiration for a set of writings; it is quite another to provide evidence to confirm that claim. Before considering the supporting evidence for the inspiration of Scripture, let us summarize its claims for inspiration.

SUMMARY OF THE CLAIMS FOR BIBLICAL INSPIRATION

Biblical inspiration is not to be confused with poetic inspiration. A gifted poet has a way with words, an ease of expression making that which is difficult appear easy. However, as applied to the Bible, inspiration refers to the God-given authority of its teaching.

The Biblical Description of Inspiration

The Significance of 2 Timothy 3:16

The Greek word for inspiration (*theopneustos*) means “God-breathed,” but in its broader usage it includes the process by which Sacred Scriptures or writings were invested with divine authority for doctrine and practice (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

The Greek word *theopneustos*, a compound of *theos* [God] and *pneō* [to blow], meaning “God-breathed, i.e. inspired by God” [Thomas & BDAG #2315], occurs once in the NT (2 Tim. 3:16).

*2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NASB95) — 16 All Scripture is ***inspired** by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*

The Significance of 1 Corinthians 2:12-13

Spirit-moved men recorded their messages, putting spiritual thoughts with spiritual words (1 Cor. 2:12-13). Hence, when viewed comprehensively, inspiration is what occurs when Spirit-moved writers recorded God-breathed writings. Paul said, “We speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words” (v. 13).

1 Corinthians 2:6-13 (NASB95) — 6 Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; 7 but we speak God’s wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory; 8 the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; 9 but just as it is written, “Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, And which have not entered the heart of man, All that God has prepared for those who love Him.” 10 For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. 11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, 13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.

The Three Elements in Inspiration

Three elements are contained in the total process of inspiration: the divine causality, the prophetic agency, and the resultant authority.

God’s Causality

The first element in inspiration is *God’s causality*. Jehovah is the Prime Mover by whose promptings the prophets were led to write. The ultimate origin of inspired writings is the desire of God to communicate with man.

In the beginning, God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light...” (Gen. 1:1-3).

Genesis 1:1-3 (NASB95) — 1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. 3 Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light.

During the time of the Judges, as God raised up physical deliverers for Israel, “the Spirit of the Lord came upon” Gideon (Judg. 6:34-35), Jephthah (Judg. 11:29), Samson (Judg. 13:24-25; 14:19), etc. They acted as agents of God.

*Judges 6:34-35 (NASB95) — 34 So **the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon**; and he blew a trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called together to follow him. 35 He sent messengers throughout Manasseh, and they also were called together to follow him; and he sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, and they came up to meet them.*

*Judges 11:29 (NASB95) — 29 Now **the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah**, so that he passed through Gilead and Manasseh; then he passed through Mizpah of Gilead, and from Mizpah of Gilead he went on to the sons of Ammon.*

*Judges 13:24-25 (NASB95) — 24 Then the woman gave birth to a son and named him Samson; and the child grew up and the Lord blessed him. 25 And **the Spirit of the Lord** began to stir him in Mahaneh-dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.*

*Judges 14:19 (NASB95) — 19 Then **the Spirit of the Lord came upon him [Samson] mightily**, and he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty of them and took their spoil and gave the changes of clothes to those who told the riddle. And his anger burned, and he went up to his father’s house.*

When David was anointed as the next king of Israel, “the Spirit of the Lord” departed from Saul, and came mightily upon David (1 Sam. 16:13-14).

*1 Samuel 16:13-14 (NASB95) — 13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and **the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David** from that day forward. And Samuel arose and went to Ramah. 14 Now **the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul**, and an evil spirit from the Lord terrorized him.*

The contrast between Micaiah and Zedekiah illustrates the difference between a true prophet of Jehovah, who courageously foreshadowed the divine judgment, and a false prophet who functioned as a “Yes Man,” telling the wicked king Ahab what he wanted to hear (2 Chron. 18:12-27).

2 Chronicles 18:12-27 (NASB95) — 12 Then the messenger who went to summon Micaiah spoke to him saying, “Behold, the words of the prophets are uniformly favorable to the king. So please let your word be like one of them and speak favorably.” 13 But Micaiah said, “As the Lord lives, what my God says, that I will speak.” 14 When he came to the king, the king said to him, “Micaiah, shall we go to Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I refrain?” He said, “Go up and succeed, for they will be given into your hand.” 15 Then the king said to him, “How many times must I adjure you to speak to me nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord?” 16 So he said, “I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, like sheep which have no shepherd; And the Lord said, ‘These have no

master. Let each of them return to his house in peace.’ ” 17 Then the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “Did I not tell you that he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?” 18 Micaiah said, “Therefore, hear the word of the Lord. I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing on His right and on His left. 19 “The Lord said, ‘Who will entice Ahab king of Israel to go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?’ And one said this while another said that. 20 “Then a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord and said, ‘I will entice him.’ And the Lord said to him, ‘How?’ 21 “He said, ‘I will go and be a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.’ Then He said, ‘You are to entice him and prevail also. Go and do so.’ 22 “Now therefore, behold, the Lord has put a deceiving spirit in the mouth of these your prophets, for the Lord has proclaimed disaster against you.” 23 Then Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah came near and struck Micaiah on the cheek and said, “How did the Spirit of the Lord pass from me to speak to you?” 24 Micaiah said, “Behold, you will see on that day when you enter an inner room to hide yourself.” 25 Then the king of Israel said, “Take Micaiah and return him to Amon the governor of the city and to Joash the king’s son; 26 and say, ‘Thus says the king, “Put this man in prison and feed him sparingly with bread and water until I return safely.” ’ ” 27 Micaiah said, “If you indeed return safely, the Lord has not spoken by me.” And he said, “Listen, all you people.”

Isaiah 11:1-2 (NASB95) — 1 Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit. 2 The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

Isaiah 61:1-2 (NASB95) — 1 The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, Because the Lord has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners; 2 To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn,

Luke 4:16-22 (NASB95) — 16 And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read. 17 And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written, 18 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovery of sight to the blind, To set free those who are oppressed, 19 To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.” 20 And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. 21 And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” 22 And all were speaking well of Him, and wondering at the gracious words which were falling from His lips; and they were saying, “Is this not Joseph’s son?”

Prophetic Agency

The second element of inspiration is *prophetic agency*. The Word of God comes through men of God. Jehovah employs the instrumentality of human personality to convey His message.

Inspired individuals were empowered as divine spokesmen. The Old Testament repeatedly says, “the word of the LORD came to Abram (Gen. 15:1-4), Samuel (1 Sam. 15:10-11), Nathan (2 Sam. 7:4-7), Elijah (1 Kings 18:1-2), etc.

Genesis 15:1-4 (NASB95) — 1 After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great.” 2 Abram said, “O Lord God, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” 3 And Abram said, “Since You have given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir.” 4 Then behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, “This man will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir.”

1 Samuel 15:10-11 (NASB95) — 10 Then the word of the Lord came to Samuel, saying, 11 “I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me and has not carried out My commands.” And Samuel was distressed and cried out to the Lord all night.

2 Samuel 7:4-7 (NASB95) — 4 But in the same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan, saying, 5 “Go and say to My servant David, ‘Thus says the Lord, “Are you the one who should build Me a house to dwell in? 6 “For I have not dwelt in a house since the day I brought up the sons of Israel from Egypt, even to this day; but I have been moving about in a tent, even in a tabernacle. 7 “Wherever I have gone with all the sons of Israel, did I speak a word with one of the tribes of Israel, which I commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying, ‘Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?’ ” ’

1 Kings 18:1-2 (NASB95) — 1 Now it happened after many days that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year, saying, “Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the face of the earth.” 2 So Elijah went to show himself to Ahab. Now the famine was severe in Samaria.

Divine Authority

Finally, the written prophetic utterance is invested with *authority* because of its divine origin. The prophet’s words are, in fact, God’s Words. Prophets who communicated such messages spoke with divine authority, and could thus say, “Hear the word of the Lord...” (1 Kings 22:19-23; Isa. 1:10-15).

1 Kings 22:19-23 (NASB95) — 19 Micaiah said, “Therefore, hear the word of the Lord. I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His

right and on His left. 20 “The Lord said, ‘Who will entice Ahab to go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?’ And one said this while another said that. 21 “Then a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord and said, ‘I will entice him.’ 22 “The Lord said to him, ‘How?’ And he said, ‘I will go out and be a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.’ Then He said, ‘You are to entice him and also prevail. Go and do so.’ 23 “Now therefore, behold, the Lord has put a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets; and the Lord has proclaimed disaster against you.”

Isaiah 1:10-15 (NASB95) — 10 Hear the word of the Lord, You rulers of Sodom; Give ear to the instruction of our God, You people of Gomorrah. 11 “What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?” Says the Lord. “I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams And the fat of fed cattle; And I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs or goats. 12 “When you come to appear before Me, Who requires of you this trampling of My courts? 13 “Bring your worthless offerings no longer, Incense is an abomination to Me. New moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies— I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly. 14 “I hate your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts, They have become a burden to Me; I am weary of bearing them. 15 “So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you; Yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are covered with blood.

The Characteristics of an Inspired Writing

Verbal, i.e., Guided

The first characteristic of inspiration is implied in the fact that it is an inspired writing; namely, starts as a form of *verbal* communication. Sacred Scripture is inspired, i.e., “God-breathed” (2 Tim. 3:16). The words of the prophets were God-given, not by dictation but by the Spirit-directed employment of the prophet’s own vocabulary and style of expression.

Plenary, i.e., Full

Inspiration also claims to be *plenary* (full). Webster says the adjective “plenary” is descriptive of that which is “complete in every respect: absolute, unqualified.” Paul wrote, “All scripture is inspired by God” (2 Tim. 3:16). No part of Sacred Scripture is without divine inspiration.

Inerrancy, i.e., Accurate

In addition, inspiration implies the *inerrancy* of the teaching of the original documents (called autographs). Again, Webster says “inerrancy” signifies “exemption from error: infallibility.” Whatever God utters is true and without error.

Divine Authority, i.e., Profitable

Finally, inspiration results in Sacred Scripture possessing divine *authority*. The teachings of Sacred Scripture is binding on believers as the foundation of faith and practice (Matt. 4:4, 7, 10)

2 Timothy 3:16 (NASB95) — 16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

Matthew 4:4 (NASB95) — 4 But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’ ”

Matthew 4:7 (NASB95) — 7 Jesus said to him, “On the other hand, it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’ ”

Matthew 4:10 (NASB95) — 10 Then Jesus said to him, “Go, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.’ ”

The Biblical Claim to Divine Inspiration

Inspiration is not something merely attributed to the Bible by Christians; it is something the Bible claims for itself. There are literally hundreds of references within the Bible about its divine origin.

Old Testament Claims

The Old Testament claims to be a prophetic writing. The familiar expression, “Thus says the Lord...” fills its pages. Prophecies that proved to be from God were preserved and revered. The growing collection of sacred writings was recognized and even quoted by later prophets as the Word of God.

New Testament Claims

Jesus and the New Testament writers held these writings in the same high esteem; they claimed them to be the unbreakable, authoritative, and inspired Word of God. By numerous references to the Old Testament as a whole, to its basic sections, and to almost every Old Testament book, New Testament writers overwhelmingly support the claim of divine inspiration.

The apostolic writings were boldly described in the same authoritative terms that denoted the Old Testament as the Word of God. They were called “Scripture,” “prophecy,” and so on. Every book in the New Testament contains some claim to divine authority. The apostolic church read, circulated, collected, and quoted the New Testament books along with the inspired Scriptures of the Old Testament.

The contemporaries and immediate successors of the apostolic age recognized the divine origin of the New Testament writings along with the Old. With only heretical exceptions, all the great Fathers of the Christian church from the earliest times held to the divine inspiration of the New Testament. In summary, there are continuous claims for the inspiration of both Old and New Testaments from the time of their composition to the present. In the modern era, that claim has been challenged by many from inside and outside Christendom. How will we respond to this challenge?

SUPPORT FOR THE CLAIMS FOR BIBLICAL INSPIRATION

Defenders of the Christian faith (apologists) have responded to the challenge in various ways. Some have attempted to transform Christianity into a rational system, others have claimed belief in it because it is without reason, but informed Christians through the centuries have avoided either rationalism [reliance on human wisdom] or fideism [reliance on blind faith]. Claiming neither absolute finality nor complete skepticism, Christian apologists have given “an account for the hope that is in” them (1 Pet. 3:13-16, esp. v. 15). The following section offers a summary of evidence for the biblical doctrine of inspiration.

1 Peter 3:13-16 (NASB95) — 13 Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled, 15 but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; 16 and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.

The Prima Facie Evidence for Inspiration

The Bible on its surface seems to be an inspired book. The term “prima facie” refers to that which is “(1) true, valid, or sufficient at first impression: apparent; (2) self-evident; (3) legally sufficient to establish a fact or a case unless disproved” [Webster].

Like Jesus, the Bible speaks with authority (John 7: 40-49, esp. v. 46). It gives every appearance of having come from God. Not only does it claim to have a divine origin, but it appears to have a supernatural character. Although such is not full proof of the Bible’s inspiration, it is at least an indication that merits examination. To rephrase the gospel writer, “never did a book speak the way this Book speaks.” The Bible has the ring of truth. As such there is at least *prima facie* evidence for its inspiration. Such self-evident credentials call for further examination of other evidence.

John 7:40-49 (NASB95) — 40 Some of the people therefore, when they heard these words, were saying, “This certainly is the Prophet.” 41 Others were saying, “This is the

*Christ.” Still others were saying, “Surely the Christ is not going to come from Galilee, is He? 42 “Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the descendants of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?” 43 So a division occurred in the crowd because of Him. 44 Some of them wanted to seize Him, but no one laid hands on Him. 45 The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said to them, “Why did you not bring Him?” 46 **The officers answered, “Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks.”** 47 The Pharisees then answered them, “You have not also been led astray, have you? 48 “No one of the rulers or Pharisees has believed in Him, has he? 49 “But this crowd which does not know the Law is accursed.”*

Evidence from Biblical Miracles

Another support for the inspiration of Scripture comes from miracles. A miracle is an act of God that confirms the Word of God as spoken by a prophet of God (see chap. 13). Nicodemus said to Jesus, “Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs [miracles] that You do unless God is with him” (John 3:1-2). Peter said to the crowd at Pentecost, “Jesus the Nazarene, [was] a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him” (Acts 2:22). The same is true of other spokesmen for God in the Bible. Moses, for example, was given the ability to perform miracles so that Egypt would believe his message was from God (Exod. 4:1-9). So also other prophets, such as Elijah (1 Kings 18) and Elisha (2 Kings 4). In the New Testament the apostles’ message was confirmed by miracles (Heb. 2:3-4).

John 3:1-2 (NASB95) — 1 Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; 2 this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.”

Acts 2:22 (NASB95) — 22 “Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know—

Exodus 4:1-9 (NASB95) — 1 Then Moses said, “What if they will not believe me or listen to what I say? For they may say, ‘The Lord has not appeared to you.’ ” 2 The Lord said to him, “What is that in your hand?” And he said, “A staff.” 3 Then He said, “Throw it on the ground.” So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. 4 But the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand and grasp it by its tail”—so he stretched out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand— 5 “that they may believe that the Lord, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.” 6 The Lord furthermore said to him, “Now put your hand into your bosom.” So he put his hand into his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous like snow. 7 Then He said, “Put your hand into your bosom again.” So he put his hand into his bosom again, and when he took it out of his bosom, behold, it was restored like the rest of his flesh. 8 “If they will not believe you

or heed the witness of the first sign, they may believe the witness of the last sign. 9 “But if they will not believe even these two signs or heed what you say, then you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground; and the water which you take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground.”

Hebrews 2:3-4 (NASB95) — 3 how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, 4 God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

The Bible is a prophetic book. Every book in it was written by a prophet or spokesman for God (see Chapters 3-6). And since there were miracles to confirm the prophetic messages given by authors of Scripture, then the Bible is confirmed to be the Word of God by acts of God (miracles).

Evidence from Biblical Prophecy

Another forceful external testimony to the inspiration of Scripture is fulfilled prophecy. According to Deuteronomy 18, a prophet was false if he made predictions that were never fulfilled. No unconditional prophecy of the Bible about events to the present day has gone unfulfilled. Hundreds of predictions, some of them given hundreds of years in advance, have been literally fulfilled. The time (Dan. 2:44-45), city (Mic. 5:2), and nature (Isa. 7:14) of Christ's birth were foretold in the Old Testament, as were dozens of other things about His life, death, and resurrection (see Isa. 53). Numerous other prophecies have been fulfilled, including the destruction of Edom (Obadiah), the curse on Babylon (Isa. 13), the destruction of Tyre (Ezek. 26) and Nineveh (Nah. 1-3), etc. Other books claim divine inspiration, such as the Koran, the Book of Mormon, and parts of the Veda, but none of those books contain predictive prophecy. Fulfilled predictive prophecy provides undeniable evidence of the unique, divine authority of the Bible.

Daniel 2:44-45 (NASB95) — 44 “In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever. 45 “Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy.”

Micah 5:2 (NASB95) — 2 “But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity.”

Isaiah 7:14 (NASB95) — 14 “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.

Evidence from the Testimony of Jesus Christ

In connection with the evidence of the historicity of the biblical documents is the evidence of the testimony of Christ. Since the New Testament has been documented as historical, and since those same historical documents provide the teaching of Christ about the inspiration of the Bible, one needs only to assume the truthfulness of Christ in order to argue for the inspiration of the Bible. If Christ possesses any kind of authority or integrity as a religious teacher, then the Scriptures are inspired, for He taught that they are God’s Word (Matt. 7:28-29; 22:33; Luke 4:31-32). Jesus appealed to the authority of Sacred Scripture, by repeatedly saying, “It is written...” (Matt. 4:4, 6, 7, 10; 11:10; 21:13; 26:24, 31; etc.). Quoting from Moses and the prophets, Jesus attributed their words to God (Matt. 15:3–6; Luke 11:47–52). To falsify this contention, one must reject the authority of Jesus to make pronouncements on the subject of inspiration. The New Testament conclusively reveals that Jesus held to the full divine authority of Sacred Scripture (see chap.6). Indications from the gospel records, with ample historical backing, show that Jesus was a man of integrity and truth. The argument, then, is this: *If what Jesus taught is true, and Jesus taught that the Bible is inspired, then it follows that it is true that the Bible is inspired of God. In order to deny the authority of Scripture one must reject the integrity of Christ.*

Matthew 7:28-29 (NASB95) — 28 When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching; 29 for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

Matthew 22:33 (NASB95) — 33 When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at His teaching.

Luke 4:31-32 (NASB95) — 31 And He came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and He was teaching them on the Sabbath; 32 and they were amazed at His teaching, for His message was with authority.

Matthew 15:3–6 (NASB95) — 3 And He answered and said to them, “Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? 4 “For God said, ‘Honor your father and mother,’ and, ‘He who speaks evil of father or mother is to be put to death.’ 5 “But you say, ‘Whoever says to his father or mother, “Whatever I have that would help you has been given to God,” 6 he is not to honor his father or his mother.’ And by this you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition.

Luke 11:47–52 (NASB95) — 47 “Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and it was your fathers who killed them. 48 “So you are witnesses and approve the deeds of your fathers; because it was they who killed them, and you build their tombs. 49 “For

this reason also the wisdom of God said, 'I will send to them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and some they will persecute, 50 so that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, 51 from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against this generation.' 52 "Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge; you yourselves did not enter, and you hindered those who were entering."

Evidence from the Unity of the Bible

A more formal evidence of the Bible's inspiration is its unity. Composed as it is of sixty-six books, written over a period of some fifteen hundred years by nearly forty authors using several languages and containing hundreds of topics, it is more than accidental or incidental that the Bible possesses an amazing unity of theme—Jesus Christ. One problem (sin) and one solution (the Savior) unify its pages from Genesis to Revelation. This is an especially valid point because no one individual or group put the Bible together. Books were added as they were written by the prophets. They were then collected because they were considered inspired. Only by subsequent reflection, either by the prophets themselves (cf. 1 Pet. 1:10-12) and subsequent generations, has it been discovered that the Bible is really one book whose "chapters" were written by men who had no explicit knowledge of the overall structure. Their individual roles could be compared to that of different men writing chapters of a novel for which none of them have even an overall outline. Whatever unity the Bible possesses must come from beyond the individual authors. Like a symphony, each individual part of the Bible contributes to an overall unity that is orchestrated by one Master.

1 Peter 1:10-12 (NASB95) — 10 As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, 11 seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. 12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven— things into which angels long to look.

Evidence from the Historicity of the Bible

Much of the Bible is historical and as such is subject to historical investigation. The most significant area of confirmation in this regard has come from the field of archaeology. The renowned archaeologist William F. Albright said, "There can be no doubt that archaeology has confirmed the substantial historicity of the Old Testament tradition." Nelson Glueck adds, "It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference. Scores of archaeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or exact detail historical statements in the Bible." Millar Burrows notes that "more than one

archaeologist has found his respect for the Bible increased by the experience of excavation in Palestine.” Clifford A. Wilson has added still more support to the historical reliability of the Bible. No historical discovery is a direct evidence of any spiritual claim in the Bible; nevertheless the historicity of the Bible does provide indirect verification of the claim of inspiration. Confirmation of the Bible’s accuracy in factual matters lends credibility to its claims when speaking on other subjects. Jesus said, “If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how shall you believe if I tell you heavenly things?” (John 3:9-12).

John 3:9-12 (NASB95) — 9 Nicodemus said to Him, “How can these things be?” 10 Jesus answered and said to him, “Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things? 11 “Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony. 12 “If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?

Evidence from the Integrity of the Human Authors

There are no good reasons to suppose that the authors of Scripture were not honest and sincere men. From all that is known of the disciples’ lives—even their deaths for what they believed—they were utterly convinced that God had spoken to them. What shall be made of those five hundred who claim as evidence that they saw Jesus of Nazareth, crucified under Pontius Pilate, resurrected, alive and well (1 Cor. 15:6)? What shall be made of the claim that they saw Him on about a dozen occasions over a period of a month and a half? That they talked with Him, ate with Him, saw His wounds, and handled Him, and even the most skeptical among them fell at His feet and cried, “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28)? It stretches one’s credulity to believe that the disciples were all drugged or deluded, especially in view of the number and nature of their encounters and the lasting effect on them. But granting their basic integrity, one is confronted with an unusual phenomenon of men facing death with the claim that God had given them the authority to speak and write. When men of sanity and noted integrity claim divine inspiration for their writings and offer as evidence that they have communicated with the resurrected Christ, then men of good will who seek the truth must take notice. In brief, the honesty of the biblical writers vouches for the divine authority of their writings.

1 Corinthians 15:6 (NASB95) — 6 After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep;

John 20:28 (NASB95) — 28 Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!”

Evidence from the Transforming Ability of the Bible

Another so-called internal evidence is the ability of the Bible to convert the unbeliever and to build up the believer in the faith. The writer of Hebrews says, “The word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword” (Heb. 4:12-13). Untold thousands have

experienced this great power. Drug addicts have been cured, derelicts have been transformed, hate has been turned to love by reading the Bible. Believers grow by studying it (1 Pet. 2:1-3; 2 Pet. 3:17-18). The sorrowing are comforted, sinners are rebuked, and the negligent are exhorted by the Scriptures. God's Word possesses the dynamic, transforming power of God. God vindicates the Bible's authority by its evangelistic and edifying powers.

Hebrews 4:12-13 (NASB95) — 12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

1 Peter 2:1-3 (NASB95) — 1 Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, 2 like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, 3 if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.

2 Peter 3:17-18 (NASB95) — 17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

Evidence from the Influence of the Bible

No book has been more widely disseminated and has more broadly influenced the course of world events than the Bible. The Bible has been translated into more languages, been published in more copies, influenced more thought, inspired more art, and motivated more discoveries than any other book in history. The Bible has been translated into over one thousand languages representing more than ninety percent of the world's population. Billions of copies have been printed. There are no close seconds to it on the all-time bestseller list. The influence of the Bible and its teaching in the Western world is clear for all who study history. And the influential role of the West in the course of world events is equally clear. Civilization has been influenced more by the Judeo-Christian Scriptures than by any other book or series of books in the world. Indeed, no great moral or religious work in the world exceeds the depth of morality in the principle of Christian love, and none has a more lofty spiritual concept than the biblical view of God. The Bible presents the highest ideals known to men, ideals that have molded civilization.

Evidence from the Apparent Indestructibility of the Bible

Despite its importance (or perhaps because of it), the Bible has suffered more vicious attacks than would be expected to be made on such a book. But the Bible has withstood all its attackers. Diocletian attempted to exterminate it (c. A.D. 302/3-305), and yet it is the most widely published book in the world today. Biblical critics once regarded much of it as

mythological, but archaeology has established it as historical. Antagonists have attacked its teaching as primitive, but moralists urge that its teaching on love be applied to modern society. Skeptics have cast doubt on its authenticity, and yet men continue to be convinced of its truth. Attacks on the Bible continue to arise from science, psychology, and political movements, but the Bible remains undaunted. Like the wall four-feet high and four-feet wide, attempts to blow it over accomplish nothing. The Bible remains just as strong after the attack. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away" (Mark 13:31; cf. also 1 Pet. 1:23-25).

Mark 13:31 (NASB95) — 31 "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.

1 Peter 1:23-25 (NASB95) — 23 for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. 24 For, "All flesh is like grass, And all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, And the flower falls off, 25 But the word of the Lord endures forever." And this is the word which was preached to you.

The Argument from Alternate Possibility

One of the most interesting arguments for the inspiration of the Bible has been suggested by Charles Wesley: The Bible must be the invention either of good men or angels, bad men or devils, or of God.

- It could not be the invention of good men or angels; for they neither would or could make a book, and tell lies all the time they were writing it, saying "Thus saith the Lord," when it was their own invention.
- It could not be the invention of bad men or devils; for they would not make a book which commands all duty, forbids all sin, and condemns their souls to hell to all eternity.
- Therefore, I draw this conclusion, that the Bible must be given by divine inspiration.

Of course these arguments do not rationally demonstrate the divine origin of Scripture beyond all question. Even if they did objectively *prove* the inspiration of the Bible, it would not necessarily follow that everyone would be *persuaded*. Rather, they are evidences, testimonies, and witnesses. As witnesses they must be cross-examined and evaluated as a whole. Then, in the jury room of one's own soul—a decision must be made—a decision that is based not on rationally inescapable proofs but on evidence that is "beyond reasonable doubt."

Perhaps all that need be added here is that the claim for Biblical inspiration is on trial, and each individual is part of a jury called upon for a verdict. That being the case, based on a comprehensive examination of the claim and alleged credentials of the Bible to be inspired, the

jury would be compelled to vote that the Bible is inspired as it claims. The reader too must decide. For those who tend to be indecisive, one is reminded of the words of Peter: “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” (John 6:66-69). In other words, if the Bible—with its clear-cut claim to be inspired, as well as its incomparable characteristics and multiple credentials—is not inspired, then to what else can one turn? It has the words of eternal life.

John 6:66-69 (NASB95) — 66 As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore. 67 So Jesus said to the twelve, “You do not want to go away also, do you?” 68 Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. 69 “We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.”

CONCLUSION

The Bible claims to be and proves to be the Word of God. There are general claims for the Bible as a whole and more specific claims for sections and even individual books. This is true of both Old and New Testaments.

Support for the Bible’s claim to be the written Word of God comes from many sources. First, there is *prima facie* evidence from the very nature of the Bible itself. Second, the *witness of the Spirit* to the heart of the believer adds further confirmation to the Bible’s inspiration. Third, the *transforming ability* of Scripture is indication of its divine origin. Fourth, the very *unity* of the Bible amid all its diversity of authors, languages, and topics bespeaks of a divine Mind behind it. Fifth, the *historicity* of the Bible as confirmed by multitudinous archaeological discoveries, lends further support to its claim to divine authority. Sixth, the *testimony of Christ* is a clear indication it is the very Word of God. Seventh, uniquely the Bible offers numerous *fulfilled prophecies* as confirmation of its divine character. Eighth, the *influence of the Bible* has been more widespread than any other book in the world. Ninth, the *apparent indestructibility* of the Bible is another indication it is from God. Tenth, the *integrity of the human authors* also lends support to their claims for inspiration. Eleventh, *miracles* confirm the Bible to be the Word of God. Twelfth, there is the argument from *alternate possibility*, suggesting the unlikeliness that it was invented by either good or evil creatures but rather that it truly came from God as claimed.

Some of these arguments alone are indecisive. But when all of them are taken together they form a very persuasive argument that the Bible is indeed the Word of God. In fact, no other book in the world has such widespread and unique support for its claim to be the inspired Word of God.

Source: Geisler, Norman L., & William E. Nix. *A General Introduction to the Bible, Revised and Expanded*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1986, s.v. "Chapter 11: Evidences for the Inspiration of the Bible." Extensively edited and revised.