

4. THE RELIABILITY OF THE BIBLE

1. The Claim of Scripture.

The Scriptures claim to bring its a message from God, not merely to acquaint us with the opinions of the men who wrote them.

2 Timothy 3: 16, 17. "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." (R.S.V.)

The word, "inspiration" in this verse is from the Greek word "theopricustos," meaning God-inspired, or God-breathed. Thus Paul looked upon the Scriptures as containing God's message.

The claim of the Bible to convey the message of God to the world is unique. The Bible stands alone as claiming to record for us what God Himself has said and done.

2 Peter 1:2 1. The prophecies of the Bible did not originate with men but were prompted by the Spirit of God.

Matthew 1:22,23. The things recorded by the prophetic writer were regarded as being spoken by the Lord. See also Luke 1: 70; Acts 1: 16; 3: 18, 21.

2 Samuel 23:2. David was conscious that God spoke through him.

Isaiah 8:1,5,11. Isaiah recorded what God communicated to him.

Jeremiah 1:1,2. The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah.

2. The Attitude of Christ and the Apostles to Scripture.

Christ and the early apostles received the Scriptures of their day as a reliable and safe guide to the truth containing God's message to men.

John 10:35. "The Scripture cannot be set aside." (Goodspeed's translation.)

Mark 14:49. "The Scriptures must be fulfilled."

Matthew 22:29. Acquaint us with true doctrine.

Matthew 22:31,32. Contain what God has spoken.

Mark 7:9-13. Called "the Word of God."

Matthew 24:15. Reliable as a guide to future events.

John 5:39. Testify of Christ.

Matthew 4:1-10. Christ used the Scriptures for His spiritual guidance.

Matthew 5:17-19. Christ came to fulfil the law and the prophets.

2 Timothy 3:15, Paul regarded the Scriptures as holy.

2 Timothy 3:16,17. All Scripture is profitable for spiritual guidance and instruction.

Galatians 3: 8. Paul appealed to Scripture for doctrine. (Galatians 4: 30; Romans 4: 3.)

Christ's attitude to the Scriptures should settle the question of their reliability as a guide to spiritual truth and human conduct so far as the Christian is concerned. "Jesus taught the Scriptures as of unquestionable authority. "Desire of Ages," page 253.

3. Scripture Claims Substantiated.

The Scriptures do not furnish us with lengths, arguments to support their claims to divine inspiration. Their authenticity may be tested by evidence which is easily available to every unprejudiced mind. The claim of the Bible to be the medium through which God speaks to its is substantiated by:

The Evidence of Prophecy.

Isaiah 16: 9, 10. God claims the ability to foretell.

Isaiah 41: 21-23. He challenges false gods to declare the future.

Daniel 2: 28; 10:14 The prophets claimed to receive communications front God revealing future events.

Bible Doctrines

In the Bible there are prophecies which have foretold:

The destiny of nations.	Jeremiah 29: 10-14.
The course of political events.	Daniel 2: 36-45.
Events in the natural world.	Matthew 24: 29.
The future of cities.	Isaiah 13: 19-22; Ezekiel 26.
The experiences of the church.	Revelation 12; 2 Thessalonians 2.
The leading facts concerning Christ.	John 5: 39; Luke 24: 27,44.

“Prophecy is a miracle of knowledge, a declaration, or description, or representation of something future, beyond the power of human sagacity to discern or to calculate. And it is the highest evidence that can be given of supernatural communion with the Deity, and of the truth of a revelation from God.”-Thos. Hartwell Horne, “An Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures,” Vol. 1, pages 272. London: T. Cadell, 1839.

“The prophecies of Daniel stand pre-eminent among all others in their evidential value. It is an outstanding fact, that not only does his brief book give a fore view of twenty-five centuries of Jewish and Gentile history, including the first and the Second Advents of Christ. But that it also fixes the chronology of various episodes of the then unknown future, with a simple certainty which would be audacious if it were not divine. Would any mere man dare to foretell, not only a long succession of events lying far in the remote future, but in addition the periods they would occupy? This Daniel has cleric, and the predictions have come to pas.” Mr. and Mrs. H. Grattan Guinness, “Light for the Last Days,” Preface, pages v-vii. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1893. “The rise and fall -and succession of monarchies and of empires, and the conduct and character of nations, for over two thousand years, are matters altogether too vast to be manipulated by men.” - Ibid.

“There is one kind of writing in the Bible, which no man is able to imitate. No man can tell what will happen five hundred years hence, or five years hence; for no man can tell what will happen on the morrow. No man can tell what will be the result of present political agitation. No man can tell what a day will bring forth. But page after page of the writings both of the Old and of the New Testament are filled up with plain, distinct, definite, and positive statements as to what was to come to pass in future days.”-H. L. Hastings, “Will the Old Book Stand?” page 146. Washington, D.C., Review and Herald.

The Evidence of Personal Experience.

The claims of the Bible to transform human character may be proved by those who meet the conditions. Thousands of individuals know the Bible to be true because they have tested its claims in their own lives.

John 7:17.	Experience will impart assurance.
1 John 5:10.	The believer has the witness in himself.
1 Peter 1:23.	The Word of God transforms the life.
1 Thessalonians 2:13.	The message of the Bible works in us.
Psalms 119:11.	Keeps one from sinning.

4. The Accuracy of the Bible.

The discoveries of archeology have proved the historical and geographical data of the Scriptures to be marvelously accurate and true to fact. Again and again the assertions of the critics have been disproved and the Bible vindicated by scientific discovery.

There were times not far distant when it was denied that Moses could write, that such people as the Hittites existed, that there were such persons as Belshazzar, Sargon, and Mordecai, or such events as the downfall of Jericho. But all these assertions and scores of others have been disproved by the spade. Wellhausen argued that writing was unknown to the Hebrews before the 9th century, BC. it is now clear that writing was common in Mesopotamia before Abraham, also in Crete, Egypt, Cappadocia, Palestine, and many other countries. It was once argued that the Mosaic Code was too advanced for that age, hut this argument was silenced by the discovery of the Code of Hammurabi. For the witness of archeology to the truth of the Bible the student is referred to the following books:

Bible Doctrines

George A. Barton, "Archeology and the Bible." Jack Finegan, "Light from the Ancient Past." W. W. Prescott, "The Spade and the Bible." W. H. Boulton, "Archeology Explains." Frederick Kenyon, "The Bible and Archeology."

MEMORIZE: 2 Timothy 3:16,17.

Questions on the Lesson

1. What claim is made concerning Scripture in 2 Timothy 3:16,17? Explain the meaning of inspiration. How does Peter help us to understand the doctrine of inspiration?
2. How do the New Testament writers regard the Scriptures of the Old Testament?
3. How do Isaiah and Jeremiah show that they were not giving expression merely to their own opinions in their writings?
4. Explain Christ's attitude toward the Scriptures in regard to their reliability, doctrine, prophecies, and spiritual value.
5. Explain Paul's attitude to the Scriptures.
6. Upon what does the Bible rely for proof of its claims?
Give two evidences to support the claim of the Bible to come from God.
7. Give six examples of Bible prophecies that have been fulfilled.
8. What does the Bible claim to do for those who accept its message?
What witness to the truthfulness of the Bible may we have in ourselves?
9. Who is assured of knowing whether the message of Scripture is divine?
10. What was David's personal testimony as to the power of God's Word?
11. What testimony is given to the Bible by the science of archeology?

For Further Study

1. From your reading supply definite archeological facts to substantiate the Bible record.
2. Give an example of the transforming power of the Bible on human conduct.
3. Read, making brief notes: "Counsels to Teachers," pages 421-430.
4. Discuss the question, Is everything in the Bible true?
5. What shall we do when we find verses translated differently in different versions?