

# The Promise of Illumination and Revelation by the Holy Spirit

## John 14:25–26

### John 14:25–26 (NKJV)

<sup>25</sup> “These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. <sup>26</sup> But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

### Introduction

There is currently in the Evangelical Church a huge misunderstanding of the current ministry of the Holy Spirit. Because of the dominance of Charismania though out the world and the reluctance and cowardice of prominent evangelical leaders to refute error, many have come to assume and accept that the Holy Spirit is giving continuous Revelation. If it is true what so many are claiming, that they are receiving personal words from God and that God is speaking to them on a daily basis, then that would mean that millions of people throughout the world are receiving direct, authoritative, inerrant, Words

from God that are just as much the Word of God as the Bible is the Word of God.

Men and women alike are saying that God told them this or Jesus told me that. God told me to take this job, or buy that house, or marry that person, or invest in that stock. It can range from the normal of life to the bazaar.

Many are saying that they are experiencing the Holy Spirit through impressions, impulses, dreams, visions. trips to heaven.

The assumption is that those that do not have these experiences are not in right relationship with God or the that they do not have enough of the Holy Spirit or that they have shut down the ministry of the Holy Spirit through there intellectual snubness.

There is now the haves and the have nots. For us to say that these are not true ministries of the Holy Spirit today is equivalent to committing Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.

This supposed revelation and words from God that many are claiming is very personal and very subjective. It comes to that person alone and is understood and interpreted by that one person. It becomes whatever they believe the Spirit is saying.

If all of this is true, then we have conclude a few things.

1. This is the greatest move of God in the the History of the World. Greater than the direct words of God to Adam and Eve in the Garden, Greater than the giving of the Law at Mt. Sinai. Greater than the Words to the Prophets. Greater than the revelation given by the Son of God. Greater than Pentecost, and Greater than all the teaching of the Apostles combined.

Based on what is being claimed. There is more revelation from God, more words from God being given in one day than in the history of mankind.

2. That the very clear written Word of God is now subject to the personal revelations of millions of men and women. That the clear teaching of what a false prophet is does not matter. That you can claim over and over again to have word from God or a prophecy from God and be completely wrong and yet continue to be affirmed as a man or woman of God.

That the clear teaching on the Biblical use of tongues and order of its use in I Cor 14 can be disregarded as if it had never been written..

That the clear teaching that women cannot be preachers and pastors is now refuted by the very subjective claim that “God called you not Men”

3. We have to conclude that God does not care about error anymore.

That He would give affirmation and credibility to some of the most heretical false teachers of our day. That He would give revelation to the same people who get most of their doctrine wrong.

4. We would have to conclude that the men who are the godliest, committed students of Scripture and greatest preachers and leaders of some of the great moves of God, like Reformation, and Great Awakenings to the contemporary Leaders of the Church. Like RC Sproul, John MacArthur, and Paul Washer are just not close enough to get personal revelation and direct Word from God.

These are serious conclusions.

And based on the notion that the Holy Spirit is doing what is claimed today, then this is what we would have to believe

But what we actually have today is a misinformed church that are not receiving divine revelation.

They are not receiving direct words from God, God is not talking to them

This is a self deception at best or an out right lie of people who just make it up at worst

Their supposed revelation is.

1. highly subjective.
2. Full of error.
3. meaningless in many ways
4. Leads men and women away from obedience to the clear teaching of Scripture.
5. Denies the claims of the completion of the NT. canon.
6. Gives a false sense of spirituality
7. Creates a incorrect hermeneutic to determine truth.
8. Opens the door for demons.

What is so tragic about all of this is the fact that the church and many believers miss the true and meaningful ministry of the Holy Spirit because they are chasing the next fad and experience and new revelation.

Instead of giving themselves over to the objective written and final Word of God and trusting the Holy Spirit to teach and illumine their mind with the things of God in the Bible they miss it and end up accepting a pseudo revelation in place of the true Word of God.

They accept the false instead of the true

They accept subjective instead of objective.

They accept sand of personal revelation instead of the Rock of the Written Word of God.

They accepts the words of men instead of the Words of God.

Review  
and  
Lesson

- 1. The Promise of Residence**
- 2. The Promise of Revelation**

- 1. The Promise of Residence**
2. The Promise of Revelation

<sup>21</sup> He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”

<sup>22</sup> Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?”

<sup>23</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.”

## 2. The Promise of Revelation

**John 14:25–26 (NKJV)**

<sup>25</sup> “These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. <sup>26</sup> But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

## 1. Illumination

**John 14:25–26 (NKJV)**

<sup>25</sup> “These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. <sup>26</sup> But the

Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom  
the Father will send in My name,  
He will teach you all things,

**25** Ταυτα λελαληκα υμιν παρ υμιν μενων  
**26** ο δε παρακλητος το Πνευμα το Αγιον ο  
πεμψει ο πατηρ εν τω ονοματι μου εκεινος  
υμας διδαξει παντα

Newberry, T., & Berry, G. R. (2004). *The interlinear literal translation of the Greek New Testament* (Jn 14:25-26). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

**25** “These things I have spoken to you while being present with you.

John 15:11 (NKJV)

**11** “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and *that* your joy may be full.

John 15:17 (NKJV)

**17** These things I command you, that you love one another.

John 16:1 (NKJV)

**16** “These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble.



John 16:4 (NKJV)

**4 But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them.**

**ταῦτα λελάληκα ὑμῖν.** This is the seventh time that this solemn refrain (see on 15:11) appears in the Last Discourse. Here ταῦτα may embrace all that has been said throughout the evening, and not only the sentences immediately preceding. “These things have I spoken to you, while abiding with you,” sc. in the flesh. But this temporary companionship in the body is now to be replaced by a permanent spiritual abiding, in the Person of the Paraclete.

Bernard, J. H. (1929). [A critical and exegetical commentary on the Gospel according to St. John](#). (A. H. McNeile, Ed.) (p. 552). New York: C. Scribner's Sons.

Clearly a reference to the words of Christ which are the Words of the Father i.e. God  
The immediate Context.

John 14:23–25 (NKJV)

**<sup>23</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. <sup>24</sup> He who does not love Me does not**

keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.

<sup>25</sup> “These things I have spoken to you while being present with you.

I have spoken.

**λελάληκα**

Perfect Act Ind

while being present with you.

παρ υμιν μενων

**μενων**

**menó:** to stay, abide, remain

**Original Word:** μένω

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** menó

**Phonetic Spelling:** (men'-o)

**Definition:** to stay, abide, remain

**Usage:** I remain, abide, stay, wait; with acc: I wait for, await.

I believe that Jesus has in mind not only the things that he has been saying in the upper room but also all the words that have been said and taught by him in His Ministry.

<sup>26</sup> But the  
Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom  
the Father will send in My  
name, He will teach you all  
 things,

**26** ο δε παρακλητος το Πνευμα το Αγιον ο  
 πεμψει ο πατηρ εν τω ονοματι μου

<sup>26</sup> But the  
Helper, the Holy Spirit,

This is the fifth (and last) time that the Paraclete is mentioned (see on 15:26 for the meaning of the word). Here **ὁ παράκλητος** is for the first time identified with **τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον**, an august title familiar to every Jew (cf. Ps. 51:11, Isa. 63:10).  
 Psalm 51:11 (NKJV)

<sup>11</sup> Do not cast me away from Your presence,  
 And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.

Isaiah 63:10 (NKJV)

<sup>10</sup> But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit;  
 So He turned Himself against them as an enemy,  
 And He fought against them.

The complete title does not occur again in Jn. (but cf. 20:22).

Bernard, J. H. (1929). *A critical and exegetical commentary on the Gospel according to St. John*. (A. H. McNeile, Ed.) (p. 552). New York: C. Scribner' Sons.

26 **But the  
Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom  
the Father will send in My  
name,**

ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου. “In my stead” does not convey the meaning adequately. At 5:43 Jesus said that He had come “in the Name” of the Father, and at 10:25 that He wrought His works in the same Name; the meaning in both cases (see notes *in loc.*) being not only that He came as the Father’s representative, but as One to whom “the Name,” *i.e.* the providential power of the Father, had been given, and who was to reveal the Father’s character and purpose. So here it is said that the Spirit will be sent “in the Name” of Christ, to explain His mission and to reveal its consequences. As the Son was sent in the Name of the Father (5:43), so the Holy Spirit will be sent in future “in the Name” of the Son. This does not imply that the Holy Spirit was not operative before the Incarnation, but rather that after the Passion and

Resurrection (see on 16:23; and cf. 7:39) He will come with the more effective quickening power of the new revelation of God in Christ.

Bernard, J. H. (1929). *A critical and exegetical commentary on the Gospel according to St. John*. (A. H. McNeile, Ed.) (pp. 552–553). New York: C. Scribner' Sons.

John 14:16 (NKJV)

<sup>16</sup> **And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever**

John 15:26 (NKJV)

<sup>26</sup> **“But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.**

John 16:13–15 (NKJV)

<sup>13</sup> **However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. <sup>14</sup> He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you. <sup>15</sup> All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare *it* to you.**

Acts 5:29–32 (NKJV)

<sup>29</sup> But Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said: “We ought to obey God rather than men. <sup>30</sup> The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. <sup>31</sup> Him God has exalted to His right hand *to be* Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. <sup>32</sup> And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.”

<sup>26</sup> But the

Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things,

εκεινος υμας διδαξει παντα

that one, you, he will teach all things.

**He** (ἐκεινος [*ekeinos*]). Emphatic demonstrative pronoun and masculine like παρακλητος [*paraklētos*].

Robertson, A. T. (1933). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Jn 14:26). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

**ἐκεῖνος**. It is He, the Spirit, whose twofold work is now described in relation primarily to the listening

apostles, but probably what is said may apply in some measure to all Christian disciples of succeeding generations.

Bernard, J. H. (1929). *A critical and exegetical commentary on the Gospel according to St. John*. (A. H. McNeile, Ed.) (p. 553). New York: C. Scribner' Sons.

One of the Spirit's principal tasks, after Jesus is glorified, is to remind the disciples of Jesus' teaching and thus, in the new situation after the resurrection, to help them grasp its significance and thus to teach them what it meant.

Carson, D. A. (1991). *The Gospel according to John* (p. 505). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

In addition to the promise of his own presence, Jesus reminds the disciples of additional tasks that the Paraclete will accomplish: to “teach you all things” and “call to mind everything that I have said to you.” The Spirit's twofold work looks backward, calling to mind what Jesus said to the disciples while he was with them,

Presumably “all things” include the meaning of Jesus' words and work, done or spoken in the past, but understood only after his death and resurrection and the coming of the Spirit (2:22; 7:37–39; 12:16; 13:7; cf. 1 John 2:27; 4:1–2).

John 2:22 (NKJV)

<sup>22</sup> Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.

John 12:16 (NKJV)

<sup>16</sup> His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and *that* they had done these things to Him.

John 13:7 (NKJV)

<sup>7</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, “**What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this.**”

The understanding that the disciples are said to acquire “later” may be attributed to the work of the Paraclete, the Spirit of truth, even when the Spirit is not explicitly named as the source of such insight. But in order to grasp the teaching of the Spirit granted after Jesus’ departure to the Father, one must turn back to the reality of the Word made flesh, his life, words, death, and resurrection. The Gospel itself is undoubtedly the product of the Spirit’s



guidance to understand the significance of Jesus' person, life, death, and teaching.

Thompson, M. M. (2015). *John: A Commentary* (First edition, p. 316). Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.

## 1 John 2:18–27 (NKJV)

<sup>18</sup> Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. <sup>19</sup> They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but *they went out* that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

<sup>20</sup> But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. <sup>21</sup> I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

<sup>24</sup> Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.

<sup>26</sup> These things I have written to you concerning those who *try to* deceive you. <sup>27</sup> But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you,

and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.

## **1 Corinthians 2:1–16 (NKJV)**

**2** And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God.

**2** For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

**3** I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.

**4** And my speech and my preaching *were* not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

**5** that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

**6** However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.

**7** But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery,

the hidden *wisdom* which God ordained before the ages for our glory,

<sup>8</sup> which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

<sup>9</sup> But as it is written:

*“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,  
Nor have entered into the heart of man  
The things which God has prepared for those  
who love Him.”*

<sup>10</sup> But God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

<sup>11</sup> For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.

<sup>12</sup> Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

<sup>13</sup> These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy

Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

<sup>14</sup> But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

<sup>15</sup> But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is *rightly* judged by no one.

<sup>16</sup> For “*who has known the mind of the Lord* that he may instruct Him?” But we have the mind of Christ.

Psalm 25:8–9 (NKJV)

- <sup>8</sup> Good and upright *is* the Lord;  
Therefore He teaches sinners in the way.  
<sup>9</sup> The humble He guides in justice,  
And the humble He teaches His way.

Psalm 25:12–14 (NKJV)

- <sup>12</sup> Who *is* the man that fears the Lord?  
Him shall He teach in the way He chooses.  
<sup>13</sup> He himself shall dwell in prosperity,  
And his descendants shall inherit the earth.  
<sup>14</sup> The secret of the Lord *is* with those who fear Him,  
And He will show them His covenant.

Jeremiah 31:33–34 (NKJV)

<sup>33</sup> But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. <sup>34</sup> No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”

Calvin referred to giddy men who were not so much under the influence of error as madness. Calvin called an interest in going beyond Scripture as an infatuation with the devil. Luther said of people who pursue these things, they were like swarmers, bees flying around looking for a place to land. But Spurgeon tops everybody. Spurgeon said, "Take care never to impute your vain imaginings of fancy to the Holy Spirit." I've seen the Spirit of God shamefully dishonored by persons. I hope they were insane. He says that because it's better to be insane and irresponsible than to be sane and blasphemous. Then he says, "Every week for years I have been pestered by the revelations of hypocrites or maniacs, semi-lunatics coming with stupid messages. Clear enough. Never dream that events are revealed to you by heaven or you may come to be like those idiots who dare to impute their blatant follies to the Holy Spirit. If you feel your tongue itched to talk nonsense, trace it to the devil, not the Spirit of God. No longer insult the Holy Spirit by saying...or by laying your nonsense at His door.

## 1. Illumination

# 2. Inspiration

<sup>26</sup> But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you

και υπομνησει υμας παντα α ειπον υμιν

Newberry, T., & Berry, G. R. (2004). *The interlinear literal translation of the Greek New Testament* (Jn 14:26). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

## ΥΠΟΜΝΗΣΕΙ

**hypomimnḗskó:** to cause (one) to remember, to remind

**Original Word:** ὑπομιμνήσκω

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** hypomimnḗskó

**Phonetic Spelling:** (hoop-om-im-nace'-ko)

**Definition:** to cause (one) to remember, to remind

**Usage:** I remind; pass: I remember, call to mind.

5279 hypomimnḗskō (from 5259 /hypó, "under" and 3403 /mimnḗskō, "remember") – properly, to remember because prompted.

**1. actively, to cause one to remember, bring to remembrance, recall to mind:** τί (to another), [2 Timothy 2:14](#); τίνα τί, [John 14:26](#) (Thucydides 7, 64; Xenophon, Hier. 1, 3; Plato, Isocrates, Demosthenes); with implied censure, [3 John 1:10](#); τίνα περί τίνος, to put one in remembrance, admonish, of something: [2 Peter 1:12](#) (Plato, Phaedr., p. 275 d.); τίνα, followed by ὅτι, [Jude 1:5](#) (Xenophon, mem. 3, 9, 8; Plato, de rep. 5, p. 452 c.; Aelian v. h. 4, 17); τίνα, followed by an infinitive (indicating what must be done), [Titus 3:1](#) (Xenophon, hipparch. 8, 10).

**καὶ ὑπομνήσει ὑμᾶς πάντα ἃ εἶπον ὑμῖν.** BL add ἐγώ after ὑμῖν, and this would bring out the emphasis well; but it is omitted by most authorities. “And He will bring to your remembrance all that I said to you,” the aor. εἶπον indicating that the personal oral teaching of Jesus was ended. This is the second side of the work of the Spirit, who not only was to reveal what was *new*, but was to recall to the memory of the apostles the *old* truths that Jesus had taught. Cf. 2:22, 12:16, Acts 11:16, for illustrations of the fact that after His Resurrection the apostles entered more fully into the meaning of His words than they had done at the time they were spoken. Here, however, the promise is that their

memory of them shall be stimulated. Bengel says pregnantly, “Exemplum praebet haec ipsa homilia.”

ὑπομνήσει ὑμᾶς πάντα. ὑπομιμνήσκειν does not occur again in Jn.; but cf. Lk. 22:61, where Peter “remembered” the words of Jesus. There is a literary parallel (but no more) in *Jubilees* xxxii. 25, where God says to Jacob after his vision, “I will bring all things to thy remembrance.”

Bernard, J. H. (1929). [\*A critical and exegetical commentary on the Gospel according to St. John\*](#). (A. H. McNeile, Ed.) (pp. 553–554). New York: C. Scribner’ Sons.

### John 2:22 (NKJV)

<sup>22</sup> Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.

### John 12:16 (NKJV)

<sup>16</sup> His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and *that* they had done these things to Him.

### John 16:13–15 (NKJV)

<sup>13</sup> **However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears He will**



14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you. 15 All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare *it* to you.

Acts 11:15–16 (NKJV)

15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. 16 Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, ‘John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’

2 Peter 1:20–21 (NKJV)

20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.

This passage teaches that when you read Scripture, what you are reading does not merely come from a man but also from God. The Bible is the writing of many different men. But it is also far more than that. Yes, men spoke.

They spoke with their own language and style. But Peter mentions two other dimensions of their speaking.

Speaking from God, Moved by the Holy Spirit

*First*, they spoke *from God*. What they have to say is not merely from their own limited perspective. They are not the origin of the truth they speak; they are the channel. The truth is God's truth. Their meaning is God's meaning.

*Second*,

not only is *what* they spoke from God, but *how* they spoke it is controlled by the Holy Spirit. "Men, *moved by the Holy Spirit*, spoke from God." God did not simply reveal truth to the writers of Scripture and then depart in hopes that they might communicate it accurately. Peter says that in the very communicating of it they were carried by the Holy Spirit. The making of the Bible was not left to merely human skills of communication; the Holy Spirit himself carried the process to completion.

One recent book by three former teachers of mine (LaSor, Hubbard, and Bush, *Old Testament Survey*, p. 15) puts it like this,

To assure verbal precision God, in communicating his revelation, must be verbally precise, and inspiration must extend to the very words. This does not mean that God dictated every word. Rather his Spirit so pervaded the mind of the human writer that he chose out of his own vocabulary and experience precisely those words,

thoughts and expressions that conveyed God's message with precision. In this sense the words of the human authors of Scripture can be viewed as the word of God.

Not Just Prophecy, but All Scripture Someone might say that 2 Peter 1:20–21 only has to do with prophecy not with all Old Testament Scripture. But look carefully how he argues. In verse 19 Peter says that a prophetic word has been made more sure to him by his experience with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration. Then in verses 20–21 he undergirds the authority of this prophetic word by saying it is part of Scripture. Verse 20: "No prophecy *of scripture* is a matter of one's own interpretation." Peter is not saying that only prophetic parts of Scripture are inspired by God. He is saying, We know the prophetic word is inspired precisely because it is a "prophecy of Scripture." Peter's assumption is that whatever stands in Scripture is from God, written by men who were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

His teaching is the same as Paul's in 2 Timothy 3:16, "*All scripture* is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness." None of the Old Testament Scriptures came by the impulse of man. All of it is truth from God as men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

The Holy Spirit: Author of Scripture

Resource by John Piper Modal Scripture: [2 Peter 1:20–21](#) Topic: [Inspiration & Inerrancy of the Bible](#)

John's purpose in including this theme and this verse is not to explain how readers at the end of the first century may be taught by the Spirit, but to explain to readers at the end of the first century how the first witnesses, the first disciples, came to an accurate and full understanding of the truth of Jesus Christ. The Spirit's ministry in this respect was not to bring qualitatively new revelation, but to complete, to fill out, the revelation brought by Jesus himself.

Carson, D. A. (1991). [The Gospel according to John](#) (p. 505). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans.

## **Christian Apologetics Study Series: Lesson #4 (Student key)**

### **The Reliability of the Bible**

**Craig B. Esvelt, D.Min**

Introduction: It is not uncommon, when Christians share their faith with unbelievers and quote scripture, that an unbeliever will respond with something like, "You're using the Bible to make a

point, and that's fine for you, but I don't believe the Bible." Much of the criticism that is leveled at Christianity is based on the assumption that a book as old as the Bible is bound to be unreliable, having undergone countless changes, losses, or additions over time. Can believers really know that what they hold in their hands today is what the writers of the Bible actually penned thousands of years ago? In this lesson that focuses on the reliability of the Bible, four witnesses that testify to the remarkable accuracy, transmission, uniqueness, and supernatural imprint of the Scriptures will be investigated.

### **The Testimony of the Manuscripts**

The actual, original documents of the Bible writers no longer exist. However, many manuscripts do exist. Manuscripts (MSS) are hand copies of an original (as opposed to a printed copy). Critics have often asserted that any book which has been transmitted by hand copying over centuries of time must necessarily have lost its original message through human error. How reliable are the biblical manuscripts?

#### **- The Authenticity of the Old Testament -**

The Jewish scribes who hand-copied the manuscripts were painstakingly careful to avoid

errors and used many cross-checking devices to maintain accuracy. For example, the Masoretes (7th to 11th cent. A.D.) who edited and standardized the Hebrew text, followed such guidelines as these:

- Copied not sentences or even words, but letter by letter

- Counted the number of times that each letter of the alphabet occurred in each book

- If more than three discrepancies existed, they destroyed the manuscript

Until 1947, the oldest complete copy of the Old Testament in Hebrew was Codex\* Babylonicus Petropalitanus, dated at 1008 A.D., more than 1400 years after the Old Testament was completed. Had the text been transmitted accurately over that time? Then came the astounding discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls by a shepherd boy in caves near the Dead Sea.

- \ They were written down by a community of Jewish Essenes before the time of Christ and hidden around 70 B.C., and they contained complete copies or parts of every Old Testament book except Esther.

Variations in the texts after a thousand years of hand-copying were minimal; the complete book of

Isaiah was very nearly identical with modern manuscripts (most discrepancies were spelling).

### - **The Authenticity of the New Testament** -

The New Testament was originally written in the Greek language between about 50 A.D. and 90 A.D. In fact, one liberal scholar (John A.T. Robertson) argued that the entire New Testament could have been completed before 70 A.D. Two very significant factors in judging the reliability of ancient works of literature are the number of manuscript copies of the original in existence and the length of time that elapsed from the original work to the first available manuscript. Obviously, the more the manuscripts and the smaller the time elapsed, the more reliable the work.

One early fragment of a manuscript copy (from John's gospel) dates from 120 A.D., with about 50 other fragments dating from 150-200 years from the time of composition. Two major manuscripts, Codex Vaticanus (325 A.D.) and Codex Sinaiticus (350 A.D.) date within 250 years of composition. Otherwise, there are over 5,000 Greek manuscripts dated to within a few hundred years of the originals.

By contrast, other works of antiquity--and the accepted historical knowledge derived from them--are contained on a few manuscript copies written

hundreds of years after the original work! As shown by the following table, the evidence for the reliability of the accuracy of the New Testament compared to other ancient works is astounding--the New Testament is unrivaled among ancient literature!

Besides this, the new Testament documents were also translated into several other languages within a few centuries A.D. The number of copies of such versions is in excess of 18,000. In addition to this, the New Testament could virtually be reconstructed by the quotations given

from it from early church fathers who lived within 300 years after Christ. Origen (200-250 A.D.) quoted so extensively from the New Testament that fully two thirds of it could be reconstructed from him alone!

Conclusion: If one finds the New Testament manuscript evidence unacceptable, there would be greater cause to throw out nearly all other ancient history!

**"It cannot be too strongly asserted that in substance the text of the Bible is certain; especially this is the case with the New Testament. The number of**



manuscripts of the New Testament, of early translations from it, and of quotations from it in the oldest writers of the church, is so large that it is practically certain that the true reading of every doubtful passage is preserved in some one or other of these ancient authorities. This can be said of no other ancient book in the world. . . it is reassuring at the end to find that the general result of all these discoveries and all this study is to strengthened the proof of the authenticity of the Scriptures, and our conviction that we have in our hands, in substantial integrity, the veritable Word of God." - Sir Frederick Kenyon, past director of the British Museum and authority on New Testament textual criticism.

### The Testimony of the Supernatural

The Bible contains hundreds of prophecies concerning people, nations, and events. These prophetic claims and subsequent archaeological or historical examination to verify or falsify those claims not only 1) test the accuracy of Scripture, but also 2) indicate divine foreknowledge. This supernatural aspect of the Scriptures is unique to the Bible alone among world religions.

- **Tests of Prophecy** -

The number of fulfilled prophecies and their detail should rule out coincidence.

The time span from prediction to fulfillment should rule out conspiracy or fraud.

### **- Prophecies of Nations and Persons -**

**The destruction of the city of Tyre in Ezekiel 26, written down around 592-570 B.C., spelled out the following details:**

- o Many nations would come against her in succession
- o The city would be destroyed and the people killed
- o The city's debris would be pushed into the sea, leaving a bare place to spread and dry fishing nets
- o The city would never be rebuilt on the original site

History shows fulfillment in every detail!

- o Babylon, then Persia, and finally Greece (under Alexander the Great) came against Tyre
- o Alexander took the rubble left by the previous armies to build a causeway to the remaining inhabitants on an island and conquered them (332 B.C.)
- o Today, Middle Eastern fishermen dry their nets on the site; the city was never built there despite the existence of freshwater springs!

**The dispersion and restoration of Israel**

o Israel's destruction and the dispersion of the Jews, prophesied in Ezekiel 6, Hosea 9, and Luke 21 was fulfilled in 70 A.D. by the Romans

o The restoration of the Nation of Israel and regathering of the Jews, prophesied in Isaiah 11, Jeremiah 33, and Ezekiel 36 was fulfilled in 1948 by a United Nations decree

### The naming of Cyrus the Great prior to his existence

o This Medo-Persian king was mentioned in Isaiah 44 by name as the one who would give the exiled Jews

permission to return and rebuild Jerusalem

o This prediction (745-695 B.C.) was given 150 years before a king named Cyrus gave the actual edict (539- 529 B.C.) and almost 100 years before the destruction

of Jerusalem by the Babylonians and the Jewish exile

### **- Messianic Prophecies -**

The Old Testament contains over 300 references to the Messiah that were fulfilled in the life of Jesus Christ. The following are some (critic's) objections to these prophecies and a response.

**Objection: The prophecies were actually written after the time of Christ (i.e., it is all a fraud)**

**Answer: The same messianic prophecies are found in the Septuagint, a Greek translation of the**

Hebrew Old Testament completed during the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus about 250 B.C.!

**Objection: The prophecies are vague (i.e., with biased interpretations)**

Answer: Many of the prophecies are so specific that they rule out multiple interpretations

- o The Messiah would come from the tribe of Judah and house of David (Gen. 49:10, Jer. 23:5, fulfilled in Luke 3:23-33, Matt. 1:1)

- o He would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2, fulfilled in Luke 2:4-7)

- o He would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver (Zech. 11:12, fulfilled in Matt. 26:15)

- o He would suffer and die by crucifixion (Psalm 22:12- 18, fulfilled in Luke 23:32-34)

Note that these prophecies rule out another objection-- that Jesus might have deliberately arranged to fulfill the prophecies (e.g., family lineage, birthplace) since many were beyond his control

**Objection: Fulfilled prophecy by Jesus was coincidence**

Answer: British mathematician Peter Stoner showed how coincidence is ruled out by conservatively applying the science of probability to just eight messianic prophecies (Science Speaks, Moody Press, 1963):

"We find that the chance that any man might have lived down to the present time and fulfilled all (eight) prophecies is 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000."

Stoner illustrates this by supposing that "we take (that many) silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They would cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wished, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing these eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man, from their day to the present time, providing they wrote them in their own wisdom."

### **The Testimony of the Bible's Uniqueness**

The fact that something is unique does not prove that it is true. However, it is reasonable to assume that if God were to give His revelation in written form, it would be uniquely set apart from all other

human philosophical, religious, and ethical writings.

### **Unique in its origin and continuity**

The Bible is a collection of 66 independent writings by 40 different authors who wrote over a 1600 year period. It was written in three languages on three continents by men of widely varying backgrounds on hundreds of topics.

Few of the writers were acquainted with any other writer, most were separated by vast periods of time, and none knew that his writing would be combined one day into a single book-- yet they all agree!

### **Unique in its unmatched accuracy**

Although the Scriptures contain hundreds of detailed observations of history, geography, and science, not one has ever been falsified by modern discoveries.

### **Unique in its durability and distribution**

Against all odds, persecutions, and attacks of skeptics, the Bible has survived over 1700 years and is healthier than ever! Available to over 95% of the world's population, it has been written in more than 2,000 languages.

The 18th century French skeptic Voltaire predicted that within 100 years of his death Christianity would be swept from existence and what few Bibles that remained would be seen in museums. Shortly after his death, his house was purchased by the Geneva Bible Society which used his printing press to produce and distribute Bibles worldwide. Voltaire passed into history; the Bible didn't!

**Question: "Is the Bible reliable?"**

**Answer:** Using the same criteria by which we judge other historical works, not only is the Bible reliable, it is more reliable than any other comparable writings. Reliability is a question of truthfulness and accurate copying. Writings that are historically and factually correct and that have been faithfully preserved over time would be considered reliable. Higher levels of historical verification and better confidence in transmission make it easier to determine whether an ancient work is worthy of trust. By those measures, we can consider the Bible reliable.

As is true with any historical work, not every single detail in the Bible can be directly confirmed. The Bible cannot be called unreliable simply because it contains parts which cannot be confirmed or have not yet been confirmed. What's reasonable is to expect it to be accurate where it can be checked. This is the primary test of reliability, and here the Bible has a stellar track record. Not only have many of its historical details been confirmed, but certain portions that were once in doubt have been verified by later [archaeology](#).

For example, archaeological finds in the 1920s confirmed the presence of cities much like Ur, described in [Genesis 11](#), which some skeptics doubted had existed so early. Engravings discovered in an Egyptian tomb depict the installation of a viceroy in a manner that exactly matches the biblical description of the ceremony involving Joseph ([Genesis 41:39-42](#)). Clay tablets dating to 2300 BC have been found in Syria strongly supporting Old Testament stories, vocabulary, and geography. Skeptics doubted the existence of the [Hittites](#) ([Genesis 15:20](#); [23:10](#); [49:29](#)), until a Hittite city, complete with records, was found in Turkey. There are dozens of other Old Testament facts supported by archaeological discovery.



More importantly, no facts presented in the Old or New Testaments have been shown false. This historical reliability is crucial to our trust in other statements made in Scripture.

Even the “miraculous” occurrences of Genesis have evidential basis we can appeal to today. Ancient Babylonian records describe a confusion of language, in accordance with the biblical account of the [Tower of Babel](#) ([Genesis 11:1-9](#)). These same records describe a worldwide flood, an event present in literally hundreds of forms in cultures all over the world. The sites where Sodom and Gomorrah ([Genesis 19](#)) once sat have been found, displaying evidence of fiery and violent destruction. Even the plagues of Egypt and the resulting Exodus ([Exodus 12:40-41](#)) [have archaeological support](#).

This trend continues in the New Testament, where the names of various cities, political officials, and events have been repeatedly confirmed by historians and archaeologists. Luke, the writer of that gospel and the [book of Acts](#), has been described as a first-rate historian for his attention to detail and accurate reporting. In both the Old and New Testament writings, the Bible proves reliable wherever it can be checked.

Accurate copying is also an important factor in the Bible's reliability. New Testament writings were composed within a few decades of the events they describe, far too early for legend or myth to overtake actual history. In fact, the basic framework of the gospel can be dated to a formal creed just a few years after the crucifixion of Jesus, according to Paul's description in [1 Corinthians 15:3-8](#). Historians have access to a tremendous number of manuscripts, proving the New Testament was reliably and quickly copied and distributed. This gives ample confidence that what we read today correctly represents the original writing.

The Old Testament, as well, shows all evidence of being reliably transmitted. When [the Dead Sea Scrolls](#) were discovered in the 1940s, they were 800 years older than any other available manuscripts. Comparing earlier and later manuscripts showed a meticulous approach to transmission, once again adding to our confidence that what we have today represents the original texts.

Those factors all give objective reasons to consider the Bible reliable. At the same time, it's critically important to examine those same factors in other texts we use to write our history books. The Bible has more empirical support, a shorter time between original writing and surviving copies, and a greater

number of source manuscripts than any other ancient work, by far.

For example, there are 251 copies of the works of Julius Caesar, the earliest from 950 years after he wrote, with no way to know how well those copies represent the originals. There are 109 copies of the works of the historian Herodotus, the earliest from 1,400 years after he wrote. Archaeologists have found 1800+ manuscript copies of the works of Homer, allowing us a 95 percent confidence in the original text.

For the New Testament, there are currently more than 5,000 manuscripts, with most early copies anywhere from 200 to 300 years later, and some less than 100 years later. This gives a better than 99 percent confidence in the contents of the original text.

In short, we not only have objective reasons to claim the Bible is reliable, but we cannot call it unreliable without throwing out almost everything else we know of ancient history. If the Scriptures don't pass a test for trustworthiness, no records from that era can. The Bible's reliability is proven in both its historical accuracy and its accurate transmission.