

The Promise of Illumination and Revelation by the Holy Spirit Pt 2

John 14:25–26

John 14:25–26 (NKJV)

²⁵ “These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. ²⁶ 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

In Deuteronomy 8 there is a familiar phrase that is repeated by Jesus in Matt 4 and Luke 4

Deuteronomy 8:1–3 (NKJV)

8 “Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land of which the Lord swore to your fathers. ² And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you *and* test you, to know what *was* in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. ³ So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.

“What kind of living are we talking about? What kind of life is in view? Well this refers to all of life, encompassing the spiritual life as well as the temporal, physical life.

Everything in life, every perception in life, every attitude, every action must be understood in the light of the Word of God. For us who are believers, we understand that our spiritual lives which dominate our physical lives and all aspects of living are fed solely and only by the Word of God. For believers, the only soul food is Scripture. This is laid out for us, repeatedly, throughout the pages of the Bible.” JM

Why We Believe the Bible Is True

- Sermons Selected Scriptures 90-321 Sep 3, 2006

Psalm 1:1–3 (NKJV)

- ¹ Blessed *is* the man
Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor stands in the path of sinners,

- Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;
2 But his delight *is* in the law of the Lord,
And in His law he meditates day and night.
3 He shall be like a tree
Planted by the rivers of water,
That brings forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaf also shall not wither;
And whatever he does shall prosper.

Psalm 19:7–10 (NKJV)

- 7 The law of the Lord *is* perfect, converting the soul;
The testimony of the Lord *is* sure, making wise the simple;
8 The statutes of the Lord *are* right, rejoicing the heart;
The commandment of the Lord *is* pure, enlightening the eyes;
9 The fear of the Lord *is* clean, enduring forever;
The judgments of the Lord *are* true *and* righteous altogether.
10 More to be desired *are they* than gold,
Yea, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

Joshua 1:8 (NKJV)

- 8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

Psalm 119:1–17 (NKJV)

א Aleph

- 1 Blessed *are* the undefiled in the way, Who walk in the law of the Lord!
2 Blessed *are* those who keep His testimonies,
Who seek Him with the whole heart!
3 They also do no iniquity;
They walk in His ways.
4 You have commanded *us*
To keep Your precepts diligently.
5 Oh, that my ways were directed
To keep Your statutes!
6 Then I would not be ashamed,
When I look into all Your commandments.
7 I will praise You with uprightness of heart,
When I learn Your righteous judgments.
8 I will keep Your statutes;
Oh, do not forsake me utterly!

ב Beth

- 9 How can a young man cleanse his way?

- By taking heed according to Your word.
- 10 With my whole heart I have sought You;
Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!
- 11 Your word I have hidden in my heart,
That I might not sin against You.
- 12 Blessed *are* You, O Lord!
Teach me Your statutes.
- 13 With my lips I have declared
All the judgments of Your mouth.
- 14 I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies,
As *much as* in all riches.
- 15 I will meditate on Your precepts,
And contemplate Your ways.
- 16 I will delight myself in Your statutes;
I will not forget Your word.

What is that makes this Word so special. What is it that makes the Bible so different that all other books.

What make the Bible the most published and most sought after books of all time.

What is it about this book that has caused so many to love it with all their hearts, to read it repeatedly, to memorize it, to translate it, to study it, to write about it , to teach it, to preach it. To risk your life for it. To die for it
What about this book causes so much anger, hatred and rejection, to the point that men want to ban it and burn it and to rid the planet of it. Why do so many want it out of our schools and out of our homes and out of our churches.

What about this book causes so much conviction and consternation.

Old Testament writers, for example, refer to what they wrote as the very words of God over 3800 times. New Testament writers quote the Old Testament as the Word of God 320 times and refer to it at least 1000 times. And New Testament writers repeatedly claim divine inspiration as did the Old. Jesus Himself claimed that both the Old Testament and the New Testament are inspired by God.

Martin Luther knew the uniqueness of this Book

“Let the man who would hear God speak, read Holy Scriptures.”

“The Holy Spirit himself and God, the Creator of all things, is the Author of this book.”

“For some years now, I have read through the Bible twice every year. If you picture the Bible to be a mighty tree and every word a little branch, I have shaken every one of these branches because I wanted to know what it was and what it meant.” (LW 54:165).

“The Bible is the proper book for men. There the truth is distinguished from error far more clearly than anywhere else, and one finds something new in it every day. For twenty-eight years, since I became a doctor, I have now constantly read and preached the Bible; and yet I have not exhausted it but find something new in it every day.” (WA TR 5, no. 5193).

“The neglect of Scripture, even by spiritual leaders, is one of the greatest evils in the world.

Review and Lesson

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

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

²¹ 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.”

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

²³ 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)

²⁵ “These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. ²⁶ 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)

²⁵ “These things I have
spoken to you while being
present with you. ²⁶ 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.

26 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 (ἐκεῖνος [*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.

1. Illumination
2. Inspiration

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

hupomimnḗskō: to cause (one) to remember, to remind

Original Word: ὑπομιμνήσκω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: hupomimnḗskō

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; τινα τί, John 14:26 (Thucydides 7, 64; Xenophon, Hier. 1, 3; Plato, Isocrates, Demosthenes); with implied censure, 3 John 1:10; τινα περί τίνοϛ, to put one in remembrance, admonish, of something; 2 Peter 1:12 (Plato, Phaedr., p. 275 d.); τινα, followed by ὅτι, Jude 1:5 (Xenophon, mem. 3, 9, 8; Plato, de rep. 5, p. 452 c.; Aelian v. h. 4, 17); τινα, 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 ἐγὼ 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 praebebat haec ipsa homilia."

ὑπομνήσει ὑμᾶς πάντα. ὑπομνήσκειν 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's Sons.

John 2:22 (NKJV)

²² 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)

¹⁶ 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)

¹³ 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. 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 1:18–21 (NKJV)

¹⁸ And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

¹⁹ And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; 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.

¹⁹ And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;

[New International Version](#)

We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable.

[English Standard Version](#)

And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed.

[Berean Study Bible](#)

We also have the word of the prophets as confirmed beyond doubt.

[Berean Literal Bible](#)

And we have the more certain prophetic word.

[New American Standard Bible](#)

So we have the prophetic word made more sure.

[New King James Version](#)

And so we have the prophetic word confirmed,

[King James Bible](#)

We have also a more sure word of prophecy:

[Christian Standard Bible](#)

We also have the prophetic word strongly confirmed.

[Incorrect paraphrase](#)

[New Living Translation](#)

Because of that experience, we have even greater confidence in the message proclaimed by the prophets. You must pay close attention to what they wrote, for their words are like a lamp shining in a dark place—until the Day dawns, and Christ the Morning Star shines in your hearts.

¹⁹ And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;

Και εχομεν βεβαιοτερον τον προφητικον λογον

εχομεν **P.A.I**

echó: to have, hold

Original Word: ἔχω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: echó

Phonetic Spelling: (ekh'-o)

Definition: to have, hold

Usage: I have, hold, possess.

¹⁹ And so we have the prophetic word **confirmed**,
Και εχομεν **βεβαιοτερον** τον προφητικον λογον

bebaios: firm, secure

Original Word: βέβαιος, α, ον

Part of Speech: Adjective

Transliteration: bebaios

Phonetic Spelling: (beb'-ah-yos)

Definition: firm, secure

Usage: firm, steadfast, enduring, sure, certain.

949 bébaios (an adjective, derived from bainō, "to walk where it is solid") – properly, solid (sure) enough to walk on; hence, firm, unshakable; (figuratively) absolutely dependable, giving guaranteed support (security, surety).

949 /bébaios (literally, "what can be tread upon") then refers to what is fully dependable, i.e. worthy of confidence because on "solid footing." This describes what is fully secure (stable), and therefore can be trusted to give full support.

Hebrews 2:2–4 (NKJV)

² For if the word spoken through angels proved **steadfast**, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, ³ how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was **confirmed** to us by those who heard *Him*, ⁴ God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?

Hebrews 6:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ This *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and **steadfast**, and which enters the *Presence* behind the veil,

Romans 4:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ Therefore *it is* of faith that *it might be* according to grace, so that the promise might be **sure** (*guarantee*) to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all

¹⁹ And so we have **the prophetic word** confirmed,
Και εχομεν βεβαιωτερον **τον προφητικον λογον**

The word of prophecy (τον προφητικον λογον [*ton prophētikon logon*]).
“The prophetic word.” Cf. 1 Pet. 1:10, a reference to all the Messianic prophecies.

Robertson, A. T. (1933). [*Word Pictures in the New Testament*](#) (2 Pe 1:19). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

1 Peter 1:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace *that would come* to you,

“the fact is that the phrase “word of prophecy” or “prophetic word,” when found in Christian writing through the second century, is used only for OT scripture. (Since all of Scripture was considered prophetic in the eyes of many

of the Judaisms of the first century, the equivalence of “word of prophecy” with “Scripture” was quite natural.”

Davids, P. H. (2006). *The letters of 2 Peter and Jude* (p. 207). Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.

Since the context is the revelation of the Son of God in his coming.

2 Peter 1:16–18 (NKJV)

¹⁶ For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. ¹⁷ For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” ¹⁸ And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

Then the argument of Peter is although we have had first hand experience with second coming glory, We have seen it on the Mountain. We do not trust in that alone. We are a More sure word than experience we have the Prophetic Word that is more reliable, steadfast, absolute. The OT is sure. and it is so because of the origin of the Word.

²⁰ knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation.

ΤΟΥΤΟ ΠΡΩΤΟΝ ΓΙΝΩΣΚΟΝΤΕΣ ΟΤΙ ΠΑΣΑ ΠΡΟΦΗΤΕΙΑ ΓΡΑΦΗΣ ΙΔΙΑΣ
ΕΠΙΛΥΣΕΩΣ ΟΥ ΓΙΝΕΤΑΙ

any private

ιδίας

idios: one's own, distinct

Original Word: ἴδιος, α, ν

Part of Speech: Adjective

Transliteration: idios

Phonetic Spelling: (id'-ee-os)

Definition: one's own, distinct

Usage: one's own, belonging to one, private, personal; one's own people, one's own family, home, property.

2398 ἴδιος (a primitive word, NAS dictionary) – properly, uniquely one's own, peculiar to the individual. 2398 /ἴδιος ("uniquely one's own") is "stronger than the simple possessive pronoun ('own'). This emphatic adjective means 'private, personal' " (WS, 222).

²⁰ knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation.

ΤΟΥΤΟ ΠΡΩΤΟΝ ΓΙΝΩΣΚΟΝΤΕΣ ΟΤΙ ΠΑΣΑ ΠΡΟΦΗΤΕΙΑ ΓΡΑΦΗΣ ΙΔΙΑΣ
ΕΠΙΛΥΣΕΩΣ ΟΥ ΓΙΝΕΤΑΙ

ΓΙΝΕΤΑΙ

ginomai: to come into being, to happen, to become

Original Word: γίνομαι

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: ginomai

Phonetic Spelling: (ghin'-om-ahee)

Definition: to come into being, to happen, to become

Usage: I come into being, am born, become, come about, happen.

1096 gínomai – properly, to emerge, become, transitioning from one point (realm, condition) to another. 1096 (gínomai) fundamentally means "become" (becoming, became) so it is not an exact equivalent to the ordinary equative verb "to be" (is, was, will be) as with 1510 /eimí (1511 /eínai, 2258 /ēn).

1096 (ginomai) means "to become, and signifies a change of condition, state or place" (Vine, Unger, White, NT, 109).

M. Vincent, "1096 (gínomai) means to come into being/manifestation implying motion, movement, or growth" (at 2 Pet 1:4). Thus it is used for God's actions as emerging from eternity and becoming (showing themselves) in time (physical space).

Young's Literal Translation

this first knowing, that no prophecy of the Writing doth come of private exposition,

20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation,

ΤΟΥΤΟ ΠΡΩΤΟΝ ΓΙΝΩΣΚΟΝΤΕΣ ΟΤΙ ΠΑΣΑ ΠΡΟΦΗΤΕΙΑ ΓΡΑΦΗΣ ΙΔΙΑΣ
ΕΠΙΛΥΣΕΩΣ ΟΥ ΓΙΝΕΤΑΙ

epilysis: a release, an interpretation use 1 time

Original Word: ἐπίλυσις, εως, ἡ

Part of Speech: Noun, Feminine

Transliteration: epilysis

Phonetic Spelling: (ep-il'-oo-sis)

Definition: a release, an interpretation

Usage: solution, explanation, interpretation; release.

1955 epílysis (from 1909 /epí, "on, fitting" and 3089 /lýō, "to loose") – properly, unloosing (unpacking) in an apt (appropriate) manner, i.e. that builds on sound hermeneutical principles (note the epi, "upon").

1955 /epílysis ("sound interpretation") only occurs in 2 Pet 1:20 and refers to "untying interpretation knots" to discern the true meaning of future Bible prophecy.

[1956 (epilýō) is used throughout antiquity of solving problems, i.e. "getting to the bottom of things," "unraveling" the issue (see DNTT, 1, 156).]

The term for “interpretation” appears only here in all of biblical literature. However the word does appear in nonbiblical Greek literature and means “the solution or explanation for a dream, riddle, parable, omen, vision or the like.”

Davids, P. H. (2006). [*The letters of 2 Peter and Jude*](#) (p. 211). Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.

1 Peter 1:10–11 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace *that would come* to you, ¹¹ searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.

Jeremiah 23:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ Thus says the Lord of hosts:

“Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you.
They make you worthless;
They speak a vision of their own heart,
Not from the mouth of the Lord.

Ezekiel 13:3 (NKJV)

³ Thus says the Lord God: “Woe to the foolish prophets, who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing!

The true prophets of God are not like the false prophets

2 Peter 1:21 (NKJV)

²¹ for prophecy never **came** by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were moved* by the Holy Spirit.

ου γαρ θεληματι ανθρωπου **ηνεχθη** ποτε προφητεια αλλ υπο Πνευματος Αγιου **φερομενοι** ελαλησαν οι αγιοι Θεου ανθρωποι

pheró: to bear, carry, bring forth

Original Word: φέρω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: pheró

Phonetic Spelling: (fer'-o)

Definition: to bear, carry, bring forth

Usage: I carry, bear, bring; I conduct, lead; perhaps: I make publicly known.

5342 phérō ("allied to German fahren, Scotch bairn, 'bear,' " J. Thayer, Curtis) – properly, to bear, carry (bring) along, especially temporarily or to a definite (prescribed) conclusion (defined by the individual context). See also 5409 / phoréō ("habitual bearing").

(1 Pet 1:13) being brought (5342 /phérō) – 1 Pet 1:13 commands us to "completely (5049 /teleiōs) hope on the grace now being brought (present, passive participle of 5342 /phérō) in (en) revelation (no article) of Jesus Christ."

2 Timothy 3:15–16 (NKJV)

¹⁵ and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

¹⁶ All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

2 Tim 3:16: "Each-and-every (3956 /pás, singular) Scripture (Gk, singular) is God-breathed (2315 /theópneustos) and profitable for teaching, for convincing, for correction, for training in righteousness."

The singular (anarthrous) use of 3956 /pás ("all") underlines that each part of speech (every inflected word-form, "reflex") used in the Bible is God-breathed, i.e. inscripturated (written) under divine inspiration.

[G. Archer, "2315 (theópneustos) is better rendered 'breathed out by God' as the emphasis is upon the divine origin of the inscripturated revelation itself" (A Survey of OT Introduction, fn. 7, 29).]

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* Babylonius Petropolitanus, 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, and all persecutions, attempts to burn it ban it and destroy it and not even to mention the 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.