

# THE PROCESS OF GOD'S COMMUNICATION TO MAN

Part 1



Today we begin a series on the Book of Books, a series that will in many ways be like the beginning of a tour, a journey. We will not be able to make all the stops, but every step promises to be exciting and life-changing. As we walk through these lessons, my prayer is that you will go away from our time together with a new love and appreciation for the gift the Lord has given to us.

Famous evangelist Billy Sunday tried to capture his feelings in what might be called a travelogue of his journey through the Scriptures. This is what he said:

Twenty-nine years ago, with the Holy Spirit as my Guide, I entered at the portico of Genesis, walked down the corridor of the Old Testament art galleries, where pictures of Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joseph, Isaac, Jacob, and Daniel hang on the wall.

I passed into the music room of the Psalms where the spirit sweeps the keyboard of nature until it seems that every reed and pipe in God's great organ responds to the harp of David, the sweet singer of Israel.

I entered the chamber of Ecclesiastes, where the voice of the preacher is heard, and into the conservatory of Sharon and the lily of the valley where sweet spices filled and perfumed my life.

I entered the business office of Proverbs and on into the observatory of the prophets where I saw telescopes of various sizes pointing to far off events, concentrating on the bright and morning Star which was to rise above the moonlit hills of Judea for our salvation and redemption.

I entered the audience room of the King of kings, catching a vision written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Then into the correspondence room with Paul, Peter, James and John writing their Epistles.

I stepped into the throne room of Revelation where tower the glittering peaks, where sits the King of kings upon His throne of glory with the healing of the nations in His hand, and I cried out: All hail the power of Jesus' name! Let angels prostrate fall; Bring forth the royal diadem. And crown Him Lord of all."

Isn't that a beautiful description of his journey through the Scriptures?

As we begin *our* journey, I want to start with a big picture of how God communicates with man.



When some tours travel to Israel, they begin by going to the major mountain peaks—the high places, to see the lay of the land and how the geography of the country has influenced some of its events, as well as to see the context in which the stories of the Bible took place. After they have that perspective, the tour visits the cities, streets, and sights of the land.

Let's do the same, go to the top of a mountain that will give us an even higher perspective on the Bible than the geography of the land. Journeying to this vista will give us an overview of the process God used to communicate with us through the Scripture, and will prove a very beneficial and exciting trip. By studying God's

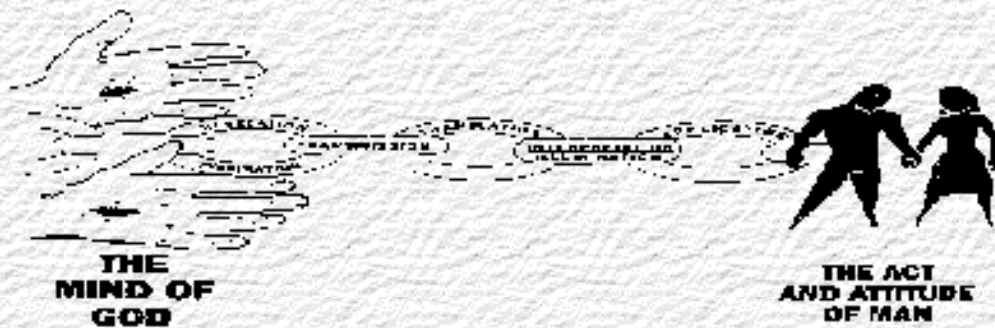
communication with man, we will have an understanding of how the Bible came to us and how we should respond to it.

These are the questions we hope to answer in the first leg of our journey:

1. From what source did we receive our knowledge of God?
2. Why do we believe the Bible is God's communication to man?

As we explore God's communication process to the human race, we will see how God has revealed Himself to us, and how we got the Bible we have in our hands. Let me prepare you, the process is more involved than we might think; in fact, the flow of truth from God to man is no less than a miracle.

The process of God's communication to man involves several definite phases. To get the whole picture, let's view the process as a chain that stretches **from the mind of God, to the act and attitudes of man.**



The process chain and explanation has been designed by Earl Radmacher, the former president of Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, in Portland, Oregon and one of my professors when I received my Doctor of Ministry degree.

This concise explanation also helps answer a lot of questions people ask believers, e.g.;

- How do you know the Bible is God's Word?
- Isn't the Bible full of errors?
- How can we trust that what was originally God's Word hasn't been changed over the years with all the changes and translations that have been made?

These are questions we hope to answer today and next week.

# The Process Previewed

Let me give you the big picture and then gradually walk you through it.

The links of the chain start with God's revelation and end with man's application of that revelation. We will capsulize the process first and then look at each part of the chain in more detail.

## Revelation/Inspiration

A circular process of receiving and recording the Word of God without any error.

## Transmission

Copying, as accurately as possible, the original Hebrew and Greek manuscripts *and* their copies.

## Translation

Seeking the most accurate translation of the original language manuscripts into our own language.

## Interpretation/Illumination

Finding what the author meant by what he said and—by the Spirit—putting the meaning into contemporary expressions.

## Application

Using our varied gifts to make the Word of God relevant to us so that change in behavior results.

With that overview in mind, let's look back at each link/each step of the chain. Some of the terms may be new to you, but don't be discouraged, they will be more clear as we move along. Keep in mind the action at the ends of the chain and that the process moves from left to right. Each link is necessary before we can move to the next.

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## Revelation

is the first link. The big problem is how to get the mind of God into the mind of man so that it will properly alter his attitudes and actions. We know from Scripture that God's "thoughts are not our thoughts and His ways are not our ways" (Is. 55:8). It is so apparent that His wisdom far surpasses that of man. In the words of Rom. 11:35, "Who has known the mind of the Lord?"

We also have the declaration in 1 Cor. 2:9, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him." (*Note*: Some use this at funeral services, as if there is no hope for understanding what God has in mind for us until we reach eternity.)

Our concerns about revelation, however, are resolved in the next verse: "But God has revealed it to us by his spirit..." v. 10. (See also 1 Cor. 2:12 and Deut. 29:29.) We're not in the dark anymore—the truth has been revealed to us, because God has revealed Himself.

What is revelation? We use the word in a lot of ways, but it has a particular meaning when it comes to the Bible. Revelation is simply defined as God's self-disclosure, God telling us something about Himself, things He is doing or has done. It is a translation of the Greek term *apokalupsis*, which means "an uncovering," an "unveiling of God." God in revelation unveils Himself and communicates with us.

Is all revelation the same? No, the Bible speaks of two kinds: **general revelation** and **special revelation**.

**General revelation** is that which God makes known through natural means—the creation. 1) Two Scriptures which describe the revelation are Psalm 19:1-5 and Romans 1:18-20, which reads:

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness 19] since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 20] For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

This revelation is not written down in any formal language system, but is plain to us because God has made it plain. Even His invisible qualities have been clearly seen from what He has made. This form of communication about God, according to Romans 1:20, leaves men without excuse. God didn't stop here, however, in His communication to man. A more specific revelation to all mankind is called

**Special Revelation** It is that act of God by which He discloses Himself or communicates truth to the mind of man which could not be known any other way. This communication of God has come to us in three ways:

- **The Spoken Word.** This is by the prophets and the apostles—2 Pet. 1:21; Heb. 1:1, which says, "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways..." (note "times" and "ways")
- **The Living Word.** This is by His Son, Jesus Christ—John 1:1; Heb. 1:1-2, which says, "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2] but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe."
- **The Written Word** This revelation is recorded in language/in words. Man is told about God, what he is to believe concerning God, and what is required of him, in a written form we call the Bible. This revelation is necessary for salvation.



2 Tim. 3:16-17—16] All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17] so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

This concept could be charted the following way:

<b>General Revelation</b>	<b>Special Revelation</b>
God's self-disclosure	God's self-disclosure
By natural means	By supernatural means
Not written down	Revealed in person and written word
Not sufficient for salvation	Necessary for salvation
Designed to make plain who God is	Designed to make plain who God is and what He wants

That should give us a pretty good understanding of what revelation is all about, but there is an extension of this subject that I think might be helpful to us as well. Sometimes in descriptions about the Bible we find another word attached to the word "revelation" that explains its timing of revelation: "progressive."

What is progressive revelation? Does God keep changing His mind? Simply put, progressive revelation means that God chose not to tell us everything He intended to reveal all at once. He didn't back up the heavenly truck and dump everything we need to know at one time. Revelation became fuller in content and meaning as it progressed, both in amount and in subject matter. It grew both in size and content.

Let me clarify by stating what progressive revelation does not mean:

- Progressive revelation doesn't mean that former truth became untruthful—"Oops, uh...I'm sorry. What I said before... why don't you scratch it ...forget it." It simply means the former truth was made clearer by the addition of more details or information.
- Progressive revelation doesn't mean that this truth was discovered by trial and error. "Oh that sounds good to me, how about you? Well, let's try it and see if it works."
- Progressive revelation does not mean that the revelation of the Bible started out as untrue, but was eventually altered so that it reflected more truth than error. Some actually believe that and thus cast the Old Testament aside, reasoning that it reflects the Old Covenant and that we're under grace, not the Law. They say the Old Testament was the book before the cross, and the New Testament is the book after the cross, so we don't need to read the Old Testament. On the contrary: the Old Testament and the New Testament are both still true.
- Progressive revelation is not that which was improved through the investigative efforts of men.

It means, then, that each truth was made clearer by the addition of more of God's truth. This is very important in interpretation. In the book of Job, for instance, are many comments from the characters of that great drama that weren't complete. They didn't have the full picture, so they misinterpreted the events of Job's life. They needed more of God's revelation, and by the end of the book, God revealed Himself in the storm.

Progressive revelation is why we are not involved in the sacrificial system today. It was a true *picture* of what Jesus came to do for us, and that was made clear when He died on the cross.

You will notice revelation and inspiration are on the same chain link, because this is a circular process with inspiration and revelation interrelated.

## Inspiration

"The doctrine of inspiration has to do with the writers of Scripture receiving and recording God's truth accurately. Many Christians are confused about this doctrine because they don't understand the biblical meaning behind the word inspiration. When people applaud an artist's work as inspired, they're not saying it is without error or the result of some supernatural act of God. But when the same word is used of the scriptures, that's exactly what we mean." Charles Swindoll, *A Look at the Book*, 1995, p. 5.

A definition and comparison can be very helpful; in fact, it is important to see the difference between revelation and inspiration. Revelation is what God has chosen to tell us; *how* He told us is called inspiration. Revelation is the message, and inspiration is the process of accurately recording the revelation.

Several questions accompany a discussion of inspiration.

- How did it happen?

- How were the words of Scripture actually recorded?
- Did the writers of Scripture go into a trance?
- Did they write it and God was the editor, i.e., gave the final approval?
- Was God even involved at all in putting together the Bible?

You can imagine how much controversy exists about this subject with those who don't believe the Scripture. Some have taken the ultimate step and proposed we give up any claim that the Bible is authoritative. One professor has said, "I propose... that we forthrightly give up any claim that the Bible is authoritative... in guidance for contemporary faith and morals. This, I would argue is the inevitable and appropriate final step in a long story of the erosion of biblical authority... the Bible has no 'legal' authority to determine our 'now'" —Robin Scroggs, Professor of New Testament, Interpretation Magazine, Union Theological Seminary, New York, Jan. 1995.

Why would a professor in a seminary come to that conclusion?

Many see this as a logical conclusion because of the constant erosion of biblical authority. Downplaying absolutes in our culture has exaggerated the role of subjectivity. This explains why 53 percent of evangelical Christians believe there are no absolutes, as compared to 66 percent of Americans in general.

Obviously there is a great need for us to understand about the inspiration of Scripture, and how authoritative the Scriptural revelation is, so let's begin with some very basic questions: Who wrote the Bible? Where did Scripture come from? How is man involved in the process?

The origin of Scripture is made quite clear in 2 Pet. 1:20-21:

20] Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. 21] For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

This is a very important passage! A **double negative** makes it very clear we received the Scriptures from God. "... no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation... for prophecy never had its origin in the will of man."

We reject any idea/notion that the Bible is a purely human book which belongs beside other books and is the product of human literary genius. When we put these negative clauses together, we see that no prophecy/scripture originated either in the mind of the prophet, or in the will of the prophet. The initiative for speaking and writing was never the prophets. They didn't think with their minds or decide with their wills what they wanted to say.

To further make the case, a **double positive** in this passage lets us know "... men spoke from God... (by His initiative, His command, His authority) ...as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."



A definition of "carried along" is very helpful at this point; a description of the phrase is found in Acts 27. Paul's boat was caught in a storm and couldn't turn around and head into the wind, so the crew just gave in to it. Luke writes in v. 15, "so we gave way to it and were driven along." In other words, the ship drifted at the mercy of the wind.

An application is obvious: "As the ship was driven to a destination determined by the wind and not by the ship, so the prophets were carried along by the Holy Spirit and inspired to say things determined by Him and not by them." B.B. Warfield: "They were taken up by the Holy Spirit and brought by His power to a goal of His choosing."

It is impossible to miss what Peter is saying here. The double negative and positive statements about Scripture affirm that Scripture did not originate in human minds and human wills, but in God's. As we consider what Peter

wrote, however, it is necessary to add an important qualification, an explanation. We need to talk about the double, or dual authorship of Scripture.

Although no Scripture *originated* in the minds or wills of human beings, that does not mean it *bypassed* the minds and wills of the human authors. Although they were carried along by the Holy Spirit, they were not so overpowered by His Spirit that they were deprived of their own speech.

In verse 21 it says, "...men spoke from God." In comparison, Heb. 1:1 says, "God spoke through the prophets." Is that a contradiction?

This is two ways of saying the same thing with a different emphasis (the subject of the verb "to speak" is different). So how do we answer this dilemma: Is the Bible the Word of God because God spoke it, or is it the word of man because men spoke it? Both answers are right. God spoke through men, and men spoke from God.

The Bible is the Word of God, and the Word of men—the Word of God *through* the words of men. It is very important to preserve the concept of double authorship of the Bible, because that's what the Bible says of itself. We should not affirm either human authorship or God's authorship in such a way as to contradict the other. The process of inspiration is mysterious in that we're not told the precise way it took place, but we do know it was dual (concurrent) authorship. We must keep a balance in what we say about the Scripture and avoid extreme positions.

- We cannot confuse inspiration with dictation. The prophets and apostles who wrote God's Word were not mere passive machines, functioning like tape recorders. The Holy Spirit did not violate their personalities and perspective; He respected them. Consciousness, vocabulary, and personal circumstances were fully preserved. The authors conducted research, e.g., Luke. They had their own literary styles, e.g., Paul, Peter, Matthew. They used their human abilities freely.
- We must remember the Holy Spirit so guided the process that they expressed the truth exactly as God wanted it. The writers were not free to express in whatever words or phrases they pleased. When Paul, Peter, Moses, and David wrote, they conveyed exactly what God wanted to say and their personalities served to cast it in the mood that God wanted it to project.



J.I. Packer—This is the Biblical idea of God's concursive operation: "in, with and through man's own mind, the Holy Spirit carried them forward to say what He wanted to say."

Because God was superintending this process, we have amazing results to praise Him for. He so worked in the process that the authors produced a document totally free from error or omission of any kind. With the dual authorship of all the books of the Bible, a unity throughout the Bible was preserved. The Bible displays a harmony, progression of thought and unity of doctrine which makes evident to all that it is the book of books—the only book of its kind. Think of it: a variety of men from all kinds of locations, times, and personalities developed a wide range of subject matter with different literary styles into a book which displays *unity of doctrine*.

Defining the technical terms may be helpful in fully understanding what was written. Four essential factors in our doctrine of inspiration are:

- **Infallible:** This means freedom from any doctrinal misstatement of any kind.
- **Inerrant:** This means freedom from any error in facts or details.
- **Verbal:** The matter of inerrancy extends to the very words in the "original" Hebrew and Greek manuscripts.
- **Plenary:** The matter of inerrancy extends to every portion of the Bible; all 66 books from Genesis to Revelation. That means each book of the Bible is the product of God speaking through human writers—some 40 men over a period of about 1600 years.

Many hear us say these words and can't believe that intelligent people could come to this conclusion about the Bible. "How can that be?" they say. "Everyone knows the Bible is full of errors and contradictions. How could you possibly believe all 66 books of the Bible are free from misstatements and errors in the facts and details, and that that extends to the very words in the "original" Hebrew and Greek manuscripts?"

The answer to this kind of question is really one word: God. If there is no God, then throw this book away. To believe it is the height of stupidity. If there is a God, however, then He can and did communicate with man in a way fitting with his nature—free from error or misstatement!

You might be asking yourself, what is the practical value of this first link in God's communication process to man? Bible doctrine, to many people, is nothing more than esoteric mumblings of monks, and boring seminary professors. They think it's dead, impractical and ancient history. To show just how wrong they are, let's close this study with a number of implications highlighting the practical side of what we have been studying.

The **dual authorship of Scripture** requires we take the following approach. Because Scripture is the Word of God, we read it like no other book, on our knees, with great humility, crying to the Holy Spirit for His help. Because Scripture is also the word of men, however, we read it as we read every other book, paying attention to its historical, geographical, and cultural background; literary form, grammar, syntax and vocabulary.

We need to keep the two approaches together: the humble, because it is the Word of God; and the thoughtful, because it is the word of men. Paul puts it together in his second letter to Timothy, "Reflect on what I am saying (give your mind to what I am saying) and the Lord will give you understanding in all things."

This process also has a profound impact on our everyday life and should give us great cause for thanksgiving. If God had not given us His revelation, we would be living our lives in spiritual ignorance, with

- no standard
- no knowledge
- no assurance
- no victory over evil

- no direction
- no hope

If God had not protected His revelation from error, the Bible would be an unreliable book, of no greater value than any other written by human beings. Thanks be to God for His revelation and inspiration.

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## Small Group and Personal Reflection Questions

1. Discuss in your group, or reflect personally, why some Christians read the Old Testament infrequently. What passages (commands, promises, warnings) of Scripture in the New Testament did you find illustrated in Old Testament characters' lives?
  2. What is the impact on a culture when there are no absolutes? Does Judges 13:1 give you any insight? What becomes the final authority to a non-Christian who has no biblical absolutes? How has the lack of absolutes affected those around you, e.g., friends, family, fellow workers, students? Why do you believe such a high percentage of Christians do not believe in absolutes either? (According to a recent survey, 53 percent of Evangelical Christians did not believe in any absolutes. In the same survey, 66 percent of non-Christians believed there were no absolutes).
  3. How does the dual authorship of Scripture impact our study of Scripture?
    - First, because Scripture is the Word of God, we read it like no other book, \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in blanks).
    - Second, but because Scripture is also the word of men, we read it as we read every other book, paying attention to \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in blanks).
    - How does 2 Tim. 2:7 help us to keep the balance between the Bible being the Word of God and the word of men?
  4. If you knew the Bible was filled with errors in its facts and contradictions in its teachings, how would it affect your appreciation and study of the Scripture? How would it affect your confidence in God?
  5. Close with your favorite verses about the Bible, e.g., Psalms 119 and 19.
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[Go on to part 2.](#)

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### Give Thanks

If God had not given us His revelation, we would be living our lives in spiritual ignorance, with no standard; no knowledge; no assurance; no victory over evil; no direction; and no hope. If God had not protected His revelation from error, the Bible would be an unreliable book, of no greater value than any other written by a human being.

**Thanks be to God for His revelation and His inspiration!**

# HOME

"Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles..."—Is. 40:31



Click here to see the 15-page resource on Expository Preaching!



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# EXPOSITORY PREACHING

**TEACHER: DR. ROBERT C. STONE**  
**SENIOR PASTOR, HILLCREST CHAPEL**  
**BELLINGHAM, WA USA 98225**



Being *riveted* to Scripture while being *relevant* to our times is the needed balance of expository preaching—i.e., it is essential we learn to accurately exposit the culture and the Scripture and bring the two together in applicable preaching. This seminar will focus on a number of key ingredients central to the expository process which lead to pertinent steps of implementation in people's lives.

**Seminar Members:** Registration is voluntary, but it will be an encouragement to know who is interested in taking these sessions and where you are located.

Included are the following online sessions:

### [Session One: The Introduction to Expository Preaching.](#)

Here we will attempt to answer several questions: What are the ingredients of expository preaching? What is a definition of expository preaching? What are its advantages, goals, difficulties? We'll talk about what expository preaching is *not*. We will conclude with practical suggestions. **Here Now!**

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Future sessions will focus on how to begin expository preaching and/or to sharpen our skills.

### [Session Two: The Preparation and Process of Expository Messages](#)

The main focus will be the 15-step process of preparing an expository message that is true to the text, and leads to specific steps of application. This session will include a discussion of the tools needed, and necessary commitments to expository preaching. We will conclude with some practical ideas on how to develop a balanced preaching schedule, and how to evaluate whether we are preaching too often. **Here Now!**

### **Session Three: The Personal Touch of Expository Preaching**

Several expository styles and approaches will be viewed and compared, e.g., those of Ray Stedman, Charles Swindoll, John Stott, Jerry Cook. Examples of individual sermons, a whole series on a book, and individual topics will be viewed and evaluated. **Coming**

### [Session Four: The Principles of Interpretation](#)

To conduct proper exegesis of a passage, we have to get in touch with some basic rules of interpretation. We are certainly not saying only scholars can understand the Bible; we should continue to emphasize what the 16th-century reformers affirmed (they called it perspicuity)—the way of salvation plainly set forth so that the simplest believer may read and understand it for himself. Yet the Word of God is rich in revelation too. Therefore, if we are to enter more deeply into God's Word, we must understand some

basic rules. The history of the church also confirms the need for such a code to guide our interpretation. For instance, Paul warned the Corinthians against a false approach which corrupts the Word of God (2 Cor. 2:17), and commanded Timothy to handle Scripture accurately (2 Tim. 2:15). A number of resources will be used for this session. **Here Now!**

### [Session Five: A Potpourri of Expository Questions and Tests](#)

The following are some of the questions that will be asked and answered in this session: How can I do topical studies accurately? How do we respond to finicky spiritual tastes? Should we teach others to evaluate our and others' messages biblically? How long into the future should I plan my preaching?

### [Sessions Six to Nine: The Process of God's Communication to Man](#)

[Part One](#): The Process Revealed; Inspiration

[Part Two](#): Transmission, Translation

[Part Three](#): Illumination, Interpretation

[Part Four](#): Application

**All Four Sessions Here Now!** These four sessions will focus on how God has chosen to communicate truth to people. All have a dual use:

- for the pastor/teacher/leader a review of some important information
- presented, along with overheads, as in teaching a series to a local congregation

These sessions will help pastors/leaders to help their audiences/churches answer a lot of questions believers and nonbelievers ask: How do you know the Bible is God's Word? Isn't the Bible full of errors? How can we trust that what was originally God's Word hasn't been altered over the years with all the changes and translations that have been made? We will conclude with a lesson that gives an overview of the inductive process. Unlike the expository focus of this seminar, it is presented in a topical fashion.

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# THE PROCESS OF GOD'S COMMUNICATION TO MAN

Part 2



We all know that God usually works through history to accomplish His will. This is certainly true when it comes to the Bible, which is not only a history of God's action in the world, but God's Book with a history. It is a miraculous history of its own; sometimes violent and controversial.

I want you to understand the history of the Bible, to have confidence that the Book you hold in your hand is truly God's Word to you. I want you to have a sense of awe as you hear how God has preserved His Word through the many twists and turns of history. Because of that, "The Process of God's Communication to Man" is our subject for this series. We could have called it,

- "How did we get our Bible?" "How do we know it's God's Word to us?" "What do we do with it now that we have it?"



Rembrandt once painted his rendering of the Apostle Paul, "Saint Paul in Prison." It's not the way I picture Paul, but nonetheless is a masterpiece of art. In it, Rembrandt pictures Paul, certainly an important person in the whole process of how we got our Bible. As you know, he is the writer of more than one-half of the New Testament, and the painting shows him with his scrolls and an ancient stylus which, with an inkwell, was used in transcribing his letters.

Did Paul really pen all the letters that are credited to him in the New Testament? No. Take a quick look at the closing of Paul's letters to Rome and you will see that Paul did not pen the epistle. I, Tertius, (TER-shius) who wrote down this letter, greet you in the Lord..." (Rom. 16:22).

Romans 1:1 indicates that Paul was the author, so who was Tertius, and what was his role in producing this letter? In Paul's day most letters were written by a professional scribe called an *amanuensis* (a-man-ye-WENT-sis). Sometimes the sender of the letter was illiterate, but generally this amanuensis was used to guarantee letters would be grammatically sound and legible. This

is much like my wife, who types my notes and presentations. You would have no idea what in the world my written materials were saying if you had to read my writing.

Tertius was Paul's "Nancy" (scribe), and he inserted his own greeting at the close of the letter, but occasionally Paul liked to take the pen and close in his own handwriting. At the end of 1 Corinthians, for example, he writes, "I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand"—1 Cor. 16:21. He probably used his handwriting as a signature, since forgeries of letters using Paul's name were known to exist.

In 2 Thessalonians Paul concludes, "I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand, which is the distinguishing mark in all my letters. This is how I write"—2 Thess 3:17. (The preceding notes from Gary Burge, in Christian History magazine, Issue 47, 1995, p. 29.)

This use of a professional scribe would explain why some of Paul's sentences are long and run on. He was speaking, not writing. Ephesians 1, for example, is one long sentence in the Greek.

This whole description of Paul and Tertius is an introduction to the second part in our series on God's Communication to Man. What an amazing book we have in our hands. In a tract entitled, "Why and How to Read the Bible," the author expresses in a clear and concise manner just how amazing it is. He writes:

The Bible is the written record of God's revelation to men. It is one book, and yet is a compilation of 66 books written over a period of almost 2,000 years. The diversity of its contributors ranges from a king to a shepherd, from a doctor to a choirmaster, from a former tax collector to a former fisherman. Yet this diversity contributes to a central unit of purpose: the reconciliation of man to his Creator and God.

The Bible is altogether true and reliable, not just partially trustworthy. As the Bible's history, poetry, proverbs, and personal letters have been read throughout time, they have evoked widely varying responses. Some believed the Bible, and some burned it. Some went to great lengths to preserve every stroke of every letter it contained, and some gained satisfaction in shredding its pages. Some scoffed at it, and some died for it. But still today it remains the most published, the most quoted, the most translated, and the most influential book in the history of mankind.

Because the Bible is God's inspired word, it requires our careful and diligent study. Because God has given His word to us in the Bible, He seeks our heartfelt response."

As we begin our return journey in the Scriptures, let's continue to look at the links of the chain between God's revelation and man's application of that revelation.

Last time we studied **revelation** and **inspiration**, a circular process of receiving and recording the Word of God without any error. God took the initiative and His servants cooperated. There were more links that needed to be connected together, however, for the communication to be complete.

Think of this document as it lay on an ancient writing table. On the writing material rested a God-breathed communication to man. The next link in the chain was to get the message from that single writing surface out to the people. From this point we see that God transferred the initiative to man, and God cooperated with Him. The next link is **transmission**.

## Transmission

The most important thing at this initial point in the link was not to preserve the original writing *material*, but to preserve and pass on, to transmit, the original *text/content*. Transmission involves reproducing the documents as accurately as possible in order to preserve them down through the ages. (This was tough duty!)

We often forget that people living in the early church did not have the printing and copying machines we have today. Manuscripts had to be copied by hand from the time of the first writing, (which some date at 2000

B.C.) until 1470 A.D., the date of the first printing press. Look at your Bible and imagine copying it by hand.

Responsibility for copying the Scripture became extremely important and called for a high degree of discipline by very dedicated men. Copying was a long, tedious process; a scribe would take several months to copy just one gospel. This creates a number of questions in my mind (maybe yours too):



1. What did the earliest scribes copy the Scripture on?



Sometimes papyrus—a fragile paper-like substance made from stalks of water plants native to Egypt—was used. It was a reed that grew in the lakes and rivers of Egypt and Syria, and resembled a stalk of corn. The Greek name for the fibrous outer coat or bark, which was the part actually written on, was *biblios*. The plural form *biblia* came to mean "writings" or "rolls." So now we know how we got the name *Bible*, although that word does not appear in the 66 books of Scripture. As early as the second century A.D., Christians began using *biblia* to refer to the books of the scripture. (Notes from Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press, 1966, pp. 143-144).

Even more durable as a writing material was parchment, made from the skins of antelopes, sheep, calves, and other animals. These were processed and polished, and were very expensive. Some manuscripts were also made of soft clay, which hardened into a permanent but breakable record.

2. How were the early books made from these materials?

The oldest form of the scriptures was made into a scroll. The cut plant was pressed in layers and became as tough as today's paper. The scroll was made by sewing or gluing sheets of papyrus or parchment together until a long strip was secured. The ends were then attached to two dowels of wood, bone, or metal (and rolled up). It was called a volume (from the Latin *volumen*). Such a scroll was 30 to 35 feet long; anything longer became too hard to handle.



The writing was placed in narrow columns, each two or three inches wide, running at right angles to the length of the scroll. Usually only one side of the scroll was utilized, and each scroll contained one book.

The other common form of book was a "leaf book," also called the "codex." This was made from either parchment or papyrus in the format resembling modern books. A certain number of sheets was stacked on top of each other and folded down the middle. Unlike the scroll, the leaf book could conveniently receive writing on both

sides of each sheet. Depending on the dimensions of the leaf book, two or even three or four columns of script were placed on each page. (Notes from Bruce Metzger, Eternity Magazine, June 1960, pp. 9-11.

3. How successful were they in preserving the accuracy of the original writings?

Whenever the ancient copyists did their work, there was always the possibility of human error. A word could have been skipped; a phrase repeated; words and phrases transposed. Because the original manuscripts were produced on these very fragile, perishable materials, the writing could be lost due to fading, defacement, or damage to the scroll or book. Scribes were, in fact, constantly repairing worn and tattered copies, or replacing them with new ones.

4. Do any of the original, very first writings, still exist?

No. We can't go anywhere and see the original books of Moses, or the original letters Paul wrote.

5. How then are we sure we possess an accurate copy of the original manuscripts?

This is a really important question, because it is often asked. The answer, I think, will help us to have an even greater appreciation for the Book we have in our hands. We can make three observations to help put the subject of accuracy and the original manuscripts in perspective.

1. **Because we don't have the very first writings, the potential of book/Bible worship is lesser.**

If we knew we had the original writings of Moses, or David, or Paul, we might be tempted to revere the original more than the content of the Scripture. Can you imagine how people might make pilgrimages to the holy site where they could view the first edition of the Scripture? (i.e., a holy book tour)

People of every religion have had the propensity since the beginning of time to worship original religious artifacts and travel to see them. Christians would probably be no different! I think it's probably a good thing we don't have the original documents. To further answer the question, however, how can we be sure we possess an accurate copy of the original manuscripts? We need to understand how the process of copying the Scripture was carried out, and how successful it was.

2. **The manner of copying the Scripture is unparalleled in history for its careful attention to detail and accuracy. No other text of secular writing has received such careful and detailed attention.**

The ancient copyists (sometimes called "scribes" and later the Masoretes) carried out their responsibility with extreme discipline and care. They thought of their duty to copy the documents flawlessly, as a ministry before God. They apparently dreaded failure so much that they took extraordinary precautions to assure the accuracy of their work. They numbered the letters, words, and sentences, so they could check and re-check their work. When they got to the end of the page, if all the numbers were not identical to the page they were copying from, they would throw the page away and start again!

Studying the transmission of Scripture is one of the more remarkable accounts of transmitting documents. Josh McDowell, in his book *Evidence that Demands A Verdict*, tells of the evidence of this accuracy through the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls.

In 1948, what came to be known as the Dead Sea scrolls were found. One of the scrolls is the Isaiah scroll, that is, the Book of Isaiah. The oldest manuscripts until that time were from 900 A.D., and these scrolls are dated at 100 B.C.! The question is, how can we be sure of an accurate transmission since the time of Christ in 32 A.D.? (The reason for picking the time of Christ is that we accept as being inspired the copy of Scripture in his day.) These scrolls predate the Lord's life on earth as man by 100 years. How accurate was the transmission from 100 B.C. to 900 A.D.?

Of the 163 words used in Isaiah 53, there are only 17 letters in question. Ten of these letters are simply a matter of spelling, which does not affect the sense. Four more are letters of minor stylist changes, such as conjunctions. The remaining three letters comprise the word "light," which is added in verse 11, and does not affect the meaning greatly. Thus, in one chapter of 166 words, there is only one word (three letters) in question after a thousand years of transmission—and this word does not significantly change the meaning of the passage!

Gleason Archer observed that the Isaiah scrolls "proved to be word for word identical with our standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95 percent of the text. The 5 percent of variation consisted chiefly of obvious slips of the pen and variations in spelling."

Here's an example of the strict manner in which the Scriptures were copied. This is the strict code followed by the Talmudists (A.D. 100-500) for translating the synagogue scrolls and would be very similar to the process adhered to by all who copied the Scripture.

1] A synagogue roll must be written on the skins of clean animals, 2] prepared for the particular use of the synagogue by a Jew. 3] These must be fastened together with strings taken from clean animals. 4] Every skin must contain a certain number of columns, equal throughout the entire codex. 5] The length of each column must not extend over less than 48 or more than 60 lines; and the breadth must consist of 30 letters. 6] The whole copy must be first-lined; and if three words be written without a line, it is worthless. 7] The ink should be black, neither red, green, nor any other colour, and be prepared according to a definite recipe. 8] An authentic copy must be the exemplar, from which the transcriber ought not in the least deviate. 9] No word or letter, not even a yod, must be written from memory, the scribe not having looked at the codex before him... 10] Between every consonant the space of a hair or thread must intervene; 11] between every new parashah, or section, the breadth of nine consonants; 12] between every book, three lines. 13] The fifth book of Moses must terminate exactly with a line; but the rest need not do so. 14] Besides this, the copyist must sit in full Jewish dress, 15] wash his whole body, 16] not begin to write the name of God with a pen newly dipped in ink, 17] and should a king address him while writing that name, he must take no notice of him—Charles Swindoll, *A Look at the Book, Insight for Living*, 1994, pp. 14-15.

Even with all that care, there are variant readings among many of the copies of manuscripts we have today. Undoubtedly this means we have errors in those copies because of human mistakes. Again, among the differences in the text (more in the New Testament than the Old), "the great majority of them involve inconsequential details, such as alternative spellings, order of words, and interchange of synonyms. Among the relatively few instances of variants involving the substance of the record, modern scholars are usually able to determine... what the original text was"—Bruce Metzger, *Ibid*.

3. **It is a fair statement on the basis of the evidence that no crucial doctrine of the Christian faith is under any attack or discredited because of errors in copying.** We can say with confidence that the Holy Spirit, who inspired the original writers, also guided and supervised the transmission and preservation of the Word. What we possess is sufficiently accurate and credible so that we can, with

assurance, rely upon it as God's Word to us.

For further reading, an excellent source is: *The New Testament Documents, Are They Reliable?* by F.F. Bruce.

How do we know the scribes had the best manuscripts to copy from? The translators of the 1611 King James version used Greek and Hebrew manuscripts from the 12th and 13th centuries. Today's Bible translators have access to Greek manuscripts from the third and fourth centuries and Hebrew manuscripts from the era of Jesus.

"We have the Rylands papyrus, just a torn page with a few verses from John 18 that we can date between AD 100-150. So today we have access to a text of the Old and New Testaments that is more basic, more fundamental, less open to charges of scribal error or change"—Bruce Metzger, interview for *Christian History* magazine, 1994.

How does the number of transcripts we have compare to some of the other ancient writings like Plato or Homer? This is very interesting! (*See Appendix.*) Their copies are often many hundreds of years later than the originals. Sir Fredric Kenyon, one of the greatest authorities in the field of New Testament textual criticism, adds: "Scholars are satisfied that they possess substantially the true text of the principle Greek and Roman writers whose works have come down to us of Sophocles, of Thucydides, or Cicero, or Virgil; yet our knowledge of their writings depends on a mere handful of manuscripts, whereas the manuscripts of the New Testament are counted by hundreds, and even thousands"—Sir Fredric Kenyon, as quoted by Charles Swindoll, *Ibid*, p. 15.

The New Testament has 5,300 known Greek manuscripts available. There are over 10,000 Latin Vulgate and at least 9,300 other early versions. Josh McDowell writes, "We have 24,000 manuscript copies of portions of the N.T. in existence today"—*Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, p. 39.

Let me repeat it again. We can say with confidence that the Holy Spirit, who inspired the original writers, also guided and supervised the transmission and preservation of the Word. What we possess today is sufficiently accurate and credible so that we can, with assurance, rely upon it as God's Word to us. With that in mind, let's go back and review our process. Thus far we have seen:

**A-B. Revelation & Inspiration**, a circular process of receiving and recording the Word of God without any error.

**C. Transmission**, copying as accurately as possible the original Hebrew and Greek manuscripts and their copies.

Now, how can we get the Scripture out to the largest possible audience? The next link is the amazing process we know as:

## Translation

This is a vital link in the process of God's communication to the acts and attitudes of man. Think about the language of the Bible. As we know, its original manuscripts were written in three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. Since the average person knows little of these languages, most of us are dependent upon a translation. Great skill and diligence is needed to carry out the enormous task of translating the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts into a modern language.

The challenge of this process is to get the real meaning and force of the words from the original text transferred to the grammar and syntax of the other languages. It is especially difficult and complicated—for a

number of reasons—for the translator to move from an ancient language into a modern one.

**First, the languages are not the same in vocabulary or sentence structure, therefore, the exact words or phrases may not always be transferable.** Did you know only 6,000 words were used to translate the 11,280 words of the original Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic? They fit 11,000 words into 6,000 by translating several different original language words into one English word.

In the New Testament, for example, the English word *servant* translates seven different Greek words, each of which had a slightly different shade of meaning for a servant. Our language then is unable to completely convey the full meanings of the original biblical languages, because word equivalents between the languages do not always exist. We see the need, then, for the work of a skilled translator.

Another reason it is difficult and complicated for the translator is that **there are shades of meaning in the original language that may not appear in the translation.** That often means additional words must be added to make the text clear. Think for a moment of the great contribution the various translations have made by putting the Word of God into the languages of the world. Now the Bible is not reserved for a few language experts, but is available to almost every person to read, interpret and apply.

This process of translation is a long, yet interesting study. Here's an overview:

## **The Septuagint**

Written about 260 B.C. when the Old Testament was translated into Greek. During the captivity of the Jews, many of them lost the use of the Hebrew language, so it was essential that the Scriptures be translated into Greek. This translation was called the Septuagint. Supposedly, the name means that 70 scholars worked on the project: specifically, the Jews of Alexandria, Egypt.

## **The Latin Vulgate**

As Greek and Hebrew began to be replaced by the Latin language, the Bible was translated into Latin. In 382 A.D., the great scholar Jerome was appointed by the Bishop of Rome to make a new Latin version from the original languages. His exceptional translation was called the Latin Vulgate.

## **Other Older Translations**

People in Syriac and Coptic speaking areas also wanted to read the Scriptures in their native tongues. The same became true later of the Bulgarians and other Slavic peoples, Germanic tribes, and others. Wherever the early missionaries went, they endeavored to give the people the Scriptures in their own languages.

Let's go back and see how the Bible was first translated into English.

## **The Early English Translations**

The Bible was first brought to the British Isles in an early Latin version by Roman conquerors. The Reformation, however, was marked by the introduction of the Scripture into the languages of the day. These first Bibles were not well received, so many of the translators were killed. Familiar names like [Wycliffe](#), Tyndale and Luther are those who produced English translations.

Finally the King James version, the collaboration of a group of scholars commissioned by King James, appeared in 1611.

## The Modern Translations

Still the process goes on today. New translations were produced very slowly at first; by the year 600, the gospels had been translated into only eight languages. By the time of the Reformation, there were Bibles or portions of it translated into only 33 languages, out of a total of about 6,000. It is discouraging to see how slow the church was in providing translations of the Scriptures, yet new translations were expanded considerably in the 19th & 20th centuries. The expansion came with the Protestant missionary movement.

Of the world's 6,528 languages, at least 925 and possibly 2,000 still need New Testament translation work—Operation World, Zondervan Publication House, 1993, page 607.

According to the American Bible Society, at the end of 1993 the entire Bible was translated into 329 languages. At least one book of it has been translated into 2,009 languages. But that means, of course, that a good many languages still lack even one book of the Bible. On the other hand, since 85 percent of the world speaks one of 2009 languages, the vast majority of people have access to at least one book.

The Wycliffe Bible translators and others have done wonderful work in reducing many languages to written form and then translating the Bible into them" —Bruce Metzger, interview for Christian History magazine, 1994.

The number of Bibles available today is remarkable. Worldwide distribution in 1992 was 17 million Bibles, 14 million New Testaments and 618 million portions of Scripture. Let's say that the total number of Bibles, New Testaments, and individual Scripture portions in the world is about three billion. That's a lot of Bibles!

Josh McDowell states in his book "Evidence Growth Guide,"

From the Bible societies alone, more than 2 1/2 billion Bibles, New Testaments, or individual Scripture portions have been printed. (There are more than that today but that is the latest figure I can get ahold of.) To understand how many Bibles that is, let's imagine that the task was given to one printer to produce over 2 1/2 billion Bibles. To print every Bible, New Testament and individual Scripture portion published up to today one printer would have to produce:

- 1 copy every 3 seconds
- 20 copies every minutes
- 1,200 copies every hour
- 28,800 copies every day
- 10-1/2 million copies every year
- Non-stop 24 hours a day
- For an amazing 245 years!



The Bible continues to be the number one all time best seller; i.e., more Bibles have been sold, overall, than any other book in history. Some would argue that in any given month or year, more of a certain book was sold, and that is so. However, no book has sustained the consistent number of sales the Bible has. The circulation and sales life of most books is extremely short, almost never more than a generation. No book has spanned the centuries, retaining its popularity, like the Bible.

That is all the more amazing when one considers the competition. To maintain a constant superiority of sales over all the classics, both ancient and modern, is truly amazing. The Bible must compete against works of ancient masters like Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Homer and Thucydides. It must outdistance the classic literary

giants Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Browning, Wadsworth and Poe. It must rise above the contemporary popularity of C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, James Michener, and numerous other best-selling authors whose works line our bookstore shelves.

Consider too the stream of commentaries, sermons, Bible dictionaries, Bible encyclopedias, novels, theologies, biographies, church histories, lexicons, atlases and geographies sparked into existence by the Bible. Those are all books *about* the Bible, yet it outsells them all.

In summary, note these comparisons:

- Few books are ever translated into another language
- Fewer yet are translated into multiple languages.
- Very seldom do you hear of a book's being translated into as many as 30 languages.
- To date, however, the Bible is now available in the languages and dialects of 85 percent of the people of the world.
- And yet much more needs to be done.

(Josh McDowell, Evidence Growth Guide, 1982, pp. 41-42.)

Even though the English had a translation as early as 1382, it was necessary to update the earliest English translations because:

- *Our own language is changing and no longer conveys the same meanings as it once did.* Example, "prevent": 1 Thess. 4:15 (KJV). In this passage is the word "prevent." To us it has an entirely different meaning than it did in the 1600s. We define the word as "hindered," but to the man living in King James' time, the word meaning was "to precede."
- *The words have changed so they nearly mean the opposite today.* The NIV translates it: "According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep."
- In the last 200 years, there has been a wealth of manuscript finds which have clarified many points in the translations.

In order to make a good decision about the translation you use, you should be aware of the differences between them. A helpful division of the various translations has been compiled by R.C. Sproul. He divides them into three categories:

1. **Verbal accuracy.** The first method employed is that which seeks to follow the Greek (or Hebrew) text as closely as possible in a word-by-word pattern. Here strict fidelity to the ancient language is stressed in a verbal way. The strength of such a method is obviously found in its verbal accuracy. The weakness is its inevitable cumbersome and awkward literary style. To translate any document from one language to another in this manner makes for difficult reading.

An example of this method of translation may be seen in the New American Standard Bible. Such translations are very useful for study purposes, but somewhat awkward for normal reading.

2. **Concept Accuracy.** This method, which is the predominant method for modern translations, seeks a maximum of fluid reading style with a minimum of verbal distortion. Since words put together produce thoughts or concepts, the goal is to produce an accurate rendition of the thoughts or concepts of Scripture. Examples of this type may be seen in the Revised Standard Version, the New English Bible, and the New International Version.

3. **The paraphrase.** This is an expansion of the concept method. Here the concept is extended and elaborated to insure that it is well communicated. There are various kinds of paraphrases. The J.B. Phillips "translation" exhibits the classic form of paraphrase. Ironically, Phillips himself did not consider his work paraphrase and was quite annoyed by this designation. But a paraphrase it certainly was.

A more recent phenomenon is the "modernized" paraphrase seen in such editions as the Living Bible and Good News for Modern Man. Here the premium is on readability and relevance to modern thought patterns. A warning: the more a translation moves in the direction of paraphrase, the more manifest is the danger of distortion. Though many paraphrases have been helpful introductions to Bible reading, they are not recommended for serious study. In my opinion, the weakest edition following this method is the Living Bible.—R.C. Sproul, *Knowing Scripture*, pp. 114-115.

## Conclusion

Let's look at 2 Chronicles 34.



Josiah became king at 8 years old, and over a period of years without benefit of the Scripture (only with the modeling and stories of his grandfather David), he began an amazing purge of Judah and Jerusalem of all their idols and images of false gods. In his 18th year, Josiah began to purify the temple. He gave Hilkiyah the high priest the amount of money needed to repair and restore the Lord's temple. While they were repairing the temple (v. 14), Hilkiyah the priest found the book of the law that had been given through Moses.

At once the king had the words of the law read to him. He tore his clothes and said, "Great is the Lord's anger that is poured out on us because our fathers have not kept the word of the Lord; they have not acted in accordance with all that is written in this book," v. 21.

After inquiring of the prophetess Huldah and hearing from the Lord through her (vv. 23-28), the king called together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. (Read vv. 30-33.) What we see in this section is what happens when people hear the Word of God for the first time. For many, the Word is lost to their awareness and hearing even though they may have many copies of the Scriptures in their home.

Let me ask these questions:

1. Are you spending your life mimicking other Christians without a first-hand knowledge of what the Word of God says? (That's okay, but there's so much more for you to know.)
2. What would happen if you took this precious Book and began to read it in large segments at one time? What drastic changes might take place in your life? What idols might be discarded, what sins might be repented of, and what practices might be changed or added?
3. Why not make a commitment today to read a book this week. The book of Genesis? One of the gospels? The book of Acts? The book of Romans? For the fanatical, how about all four of these in one week?

# Small Group and Personal Reflection Questions



As it was in Elijah's day on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:1-46) and Paul's experience on Mars Hill (Acts 17:16-34), the Scripture (Truth) is becoming increasingly offensive to many in our culture today. In a recent issue of Christianity Today, October 23, 1995, Timothy George stated: "The historical claims of the Christian... must therefore be acknowledged as true, and true not just 'for me,' but for all persons everywhere." He continues, "admittedly this (Scripture) is an offensive message for our culture that magnifies local consensus above any notion of objective public truth, and that prizes pluralism and relativism as the reigning orthodoxy of the day."

1. First try to decipher the Timothy George quote above, and then answer, in the face of pluralism and relativism, what personally gives you the confidence that the Bible is the Word of God for people everywhere?
2. In what ways does the Scripture itself prove (to you) it is from God and has authority? Give/write personal responses and Scriptures.
3. In what way is the Spirit of God necessary to help us discern the Scriptures are from God, can be trusted, and can be understood? (Read John 14:25-26 and 1 Cor. 3:9-16, especially verse 14, to help you formulate your answer.)
4. If someone in your group were to take a T.V. fast for the next week and choose instead to read the Scripture, what advice would you give them to assure the Scripture reading for the next week would have maximum impact? Appoint a scribe and make a list of your suggestions. Is anyone up for the challenge to fast T.V. and dine on the Word for a week?
5. In King Josiah's experience in 2 Chronicles 34, reading the Scripture changed the course of the whole country. Can you remember a time when just reading or hearing the Word of God changed your life in a major and continuing way? Share/write the specifics of that change and the Scripture that was read or being taught.

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What an amazing book we have in our hands. In a tract entitled, "Why and How to Read the Bible," the author expresses in a clear and concise manner just how amazing it is. He writes:

"The Bible is the written record of God's revelation to men. It is one book, and yet is a compilation of 66 books written over a period of almost 2,000 years. The diversity of its contributors ranges from a king to a shepherd, from a doctor to a choirmaster, from a former tax collector to a former fisherman. Yet this diversity contributes to a central unit of purpose: the reconciliation of man to his Creator and God. The Bible is altogether true and reliable, not just partially trustworthy. As the Bible's history, poetry, proverbs, and personal letters have been read throughout time, they have evoked widely varying responses. Some believed the Bible, and some burned it. Some went to great lengths to preserve every stroke of every letter it contained, and some gained satisfaction in shredding its pages. Some scoffed at it, and some died for it. But still today it remains the most published, the most quoted, the most translated, and the most influential book in the history of mankind. Because the Bible is God's inspired word, it requires our careful and diligent study. Because God has given His word to us in the Bible, He seeks our heartfelt response."

A.J. Fowler, Jr. said,

"Christ is the crimson thread that holds all the Scriptures together."

- In Genesis, He is the Seed of the woman.
- In Exodus, He's the Passover Lamb.
- In Leviticus, He is the atoning Sacrifice.
- In Numbers, He is the bronze Serpent.
- In Deuteronomy, He's the promised Prophet.
- In Joshua, He is the unseen Captain.
- In Judges, He is my Deliverer.
- In Ruth, He's my heavenly Kinsman.
- In Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, He is the promised King.
- In Ezra and Nehemiah, He's the Restorer of the nation.
- In Esther, He is my Advocate.
- In Job, my Redeemer.
- In Psalms, He is my All in All.
- In Proverbs, my Pattern.
- In Ecclesiastes, my Goal.
- In Song of Solomon, my Beloved.
- In the prophets, He is the coming Prince of Peace.
- In Matthew, He is the King.
- In Mark, the Servant.
- In Luke, the Son of Man.
- In John, the Son of God.
- In Acts, He is risen, seated, and sending.
- In the letters, He is indwelling and filling.
- And in Revelation, He is returning and reigning.

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Go on to [Part 3](#), where we'll look into interpretation...

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## Appendix

### Number of Surviving Manuscripts of Ancient Books

Plato (Tetralogies)	7
Caesar (Gallic Wars)	10
Tacitus (Annals)	20

Aristotle	49
Sophocles	193
Demosthenes	200
Homer (Iliad)	643
New Testament	24,633

"Writings of many ancient classical authors have survived in only a few copies, or even in only one, and usually they date from the later Middle Ages and thus are separated from the time of the composition of the original work by more than a thousand years. In the case of the New Testament, however, we have nearly 5,000 papyri and parchment codices, several of which date from the second and third centuries" —Bruce Metzger, Eternity Magazine, June 1960.

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We affirm the divine inspiration, truthfulness and authority of both Old and New Testament Scriptures in their entirety as the only written Word of God, without error in all that it affirms, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice. We also affirm the power of God's Word to accomplish His purpose of salvation. The message of the Bible is addressed to all mankind. For God's revelation in Christ and in Scripture is interchangeable. Through it the Holy Spirit still speaks today. He illumines the minds of God's people in every culture to preserve its truth freshly through their own eyes and thus discloses to the whole church evermore of the many-colored wisdom of God."

Article 2: Lausanne Covenant (1974)