

BIBLIOLOGY
THE DOCTRINE OF THE SCRIPTURES

BY: WILLIAM G. ARVAN

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INTRODUCTION

*"We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the **verbally inspired Word of God**, the Bible is **without error** in the original writings, the **complete revelation** of His will for salvation, and the **ultimate authority** by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be **believed** in all that it teaches, **obeyed** in all that it requires, and **trusted** in all that it promises."*

The Evangelical Free Church of America – Statement of Faith (Beliefs) **about the Scriptures**

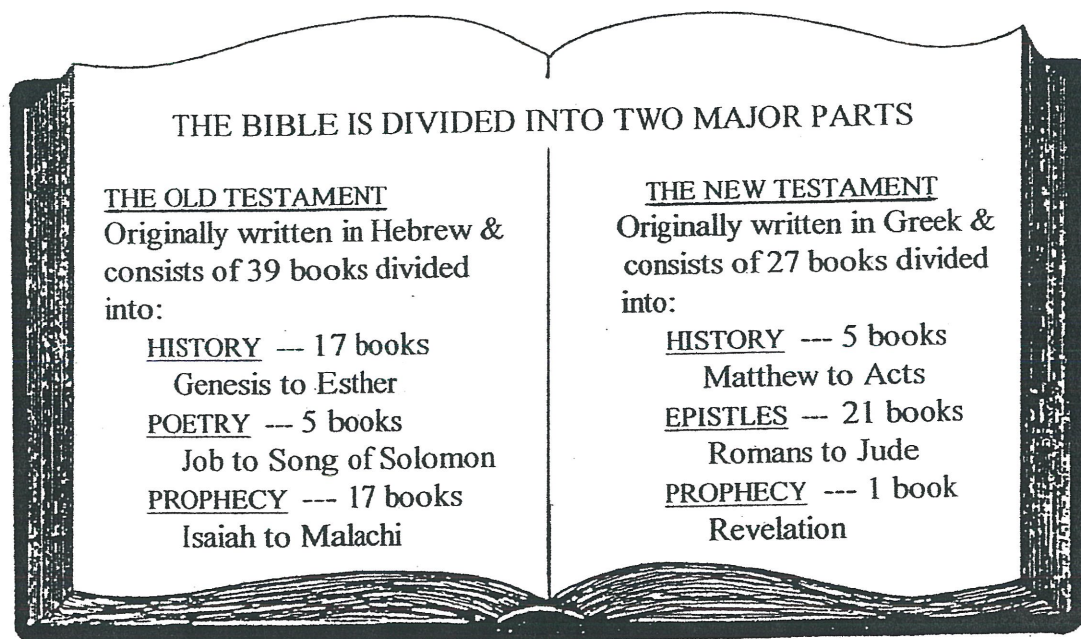
The word **Scripture** or **Scriptures** means, "a **writing** or **collection** of writings." A similar term is the word **Bible**, which is derived from a Greek word meaning "**book**" or "**scroll**." Another expression frequently used is "**The Word of God**", which indicates that the Bible contains God's **written word** or **message** to mankind. Today all these titles refer to the **66 books** or the Old and New Testaments.

The Holy Scriptures are the **very foundation** of the Christian faith (saving faith). As the Word of God, the Scriptures express His **unchangeable counsel** or **will** since they come from God, **who cannot lie** (numbers 23:19; Titus 1:2), **nor change** (Hebrews 6:17-18), and **who always does as He promises** (II Corinthians 1:18-20). It would be well for you to **memorize** Numbers 23:19.

Our Lord Jesus Christ declared that the Scriptures "*cannot be broken*" (John 10:35), that is, they will **always be binding** and "*will never pass away*" (Matthew 24:35). Christ further stated that even the **smallest letter** (yod or iota) and the **least stroke of a pen** (tittle), used in the composition of the Bible, will remain **in effect** until all Scripture is fulfilled (Matthew 5:18). Thus, **not a single item** of the Word of God will "**pass away**" or remain "**unfulfilled**".

As Bible Christians, **our hope rests** upon these **Holy Scriptures**.

"For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." Romans 15:4



THE OLD TESTAMENT

The word testament means “**covenant** or **agreement**.” It is a term by which God designates **the relationship** that exists between **Himself** and **His people**. The Old Testament records the **calling and history** of the nation of Israel and is also referred to as **the Old Covenant**.

The first **17 books** of the Old Testament are **historical**.

The first five were written **by Moses** about 1440 B.C. (Before Christ). These are called **the Pentateuch** (five Books of Moses) or **the Torah** (Book of The Law). **List them below** in the **order** you find them in your Bible. To the right is a **brief description** of each one.

1. _____ The book of beginnings (creation, man, sin, redemption, God’s nation, etc.).
2. _____ God delivers His people, Israel, from Egypt and gives them The Law.
3. _____ Priestly laws concerning holiness, worship, sacrifices, and purification.
4. _____ Disobedience to the Law results in a 40 year wandering in the wilderness.
5. _____ Moses’ sermons preparing the people of Israel to enter the Promised Land.

The **remaining historical books** were written by various authors about 1100 -1600 B.C. They describe God’s dealings with His chosen people Israel - the Hebrew nation. **List them below** in their biblical order.

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 6. _____ | 10. _____ | 14. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 11. _____ | 15. _____ |
| 8. _____ | 12. _____ | 16. _____ |
| 9. _____ | 13. _____ | 17. _____ |

The next **five books** are **poetical**. They describe in poetry and song God’s greatness and His dealings with men. **List them** in the order you find them in your Bible and **note the theme** of each on the right.

1. _____ The suffering and loyal trust of a man who loved God.
2. _____ Songs of praise and instruction.
3. _____ God’s practical wisdom for successful living.
4. _____ The emptiness of earthly life without God.
5. _____ A portrait of God’s love for His people.

The **final 17 books** of the Old Testament are **prophetical**. A prophet is one who is commissioned by God to deliver His message to men.

The first five prophetical books are called the **Major Prophets** because of their length. These were written about 750-550 B. C. **List them below**.

- | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 3. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 4. _____ | |

The last 12 **prophetical** books are known as the **Minor Prophets** and were written around 800-400 B. C. **List these books below** in the **order** you find them in the Bible.

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 6. _____ | 10. _____ | 14. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 11. _____ | 15. _____ |
| 8. _____ | 12. _____ | 16. _____ |
| 9. _____ | 13. _____ | 17. _____ |

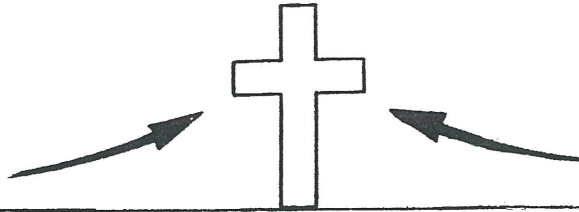
THE NEW TESTAMENT

There are about 400 years between the Old and New Testaments. It can be said that:

The New Testament is in the Old Testament "concealed".

The Old Testament is in the New Testament "revealed".

The Old Testament looked **forward** to the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.



The New Testament is based on the **finished work of Christ** on the cross.

The New Testament, or New Covenant, deals with **the redemption provided by the Lord Jesus Christ**. It is sometimes called the **covenant of grace**, and is God's new agreement with **Israel** (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:7-13) as well as with **all mankind** (Romans 3:21-31; I Corinthians 11:23-26). In the New Testament we find the life of Christ, the way of salvation, the beginning of the New Testament Church, instructions in Christian living, and God's plan for the future.

The **first five books** of the New Testament are **historical**. As you list them below, study their descriptions on the right.

1. _____ The life of Christ, written especially for the Jews and revealing Christ as the long awaited **Messiah and King**.
2. _____ The life of Christ, depicting Him as the **obedient servant** of God.
3. _____ The life of Christ, showing Him as the **perfect man** and stressing His humanity.
4. _____ The life of Christ, presenting Him as the **Son of God** and emphasizing **His Deity**.
5. _____ The **beginning and spread** of the Christian Church.

The next **21 books** are called **Epistles** or **Letters**. These were written to individuals, churches and believers in general. These Letters deal with every aspect of Christian faith and the believers responsibility. The **first 13 Epistles** were written by the Apostle Paul whereas the others had various authors. List these Epistles **below** in their proper order.

Paul's Epistles

- | | | |
|----------|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ | 10. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ | 11. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ | 12. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ | 13. _____ |
| 5. _____ | | |

The General Epistles

- | | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 14. _____ | 17. _____ | 20. _____ |
| 15. _____ | 18. _____ | 21. _____ |
| 16. _____ | 19. _____ | |

The **last book** of the New Testament is a book of **prophecy**. It tells of future events including the return, reign and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ and the future state of believers and unbelievers.

This book is called _____

To aid your spiritual growth, memorize the names of these 66 books as listed on pages 2-3.

REVELATION

Every person has a **basis of authority** on which he or she thinks and acts. For the Christian this authority is **the Bible** which claims to be **God's revelation to man**. Let's examine this claim.

Revelation means "to unveil; to make known a truth." The two **basic ways** by which God reveals Himself to us are called **General** and **Special Revelation**.

GENERAL REVELATION

In General Revelation, **God's existence is made known** to man through God's works of creation – both in the **nature** of the **universe** (psalm 19:1-3; Romans 1:20) as well as in **man's moral nature** which is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). However, General Revelation is **not sufficient** to give that knowledge of God which is necessary for man's **salvation**. General Revelation **only reveals** to us that there is a God, but **not how** to personally know Him.



SPECIAL REVELATION

Special or Biblical Revelation is the act of God **directly communicating truths** which were **previously unknown & undiscoverable** in any other way by the mind of man (Galatians 1:11-12; Ephesians 3:2-6). Through Special Revelation God makes known those things which are **necessary** for man's **salvation, faith, and life**. It is **only through this Special Revelation** that we can come to **personally know** and **enter into fellowship** with the God of the universe.



- When did this Special Revelation begin? Hebrews 1:1a _____
- Through whom did it begin? Hebrews 1:1b _____
- Through whom did it end? Hebrews 1:2 _____

SPECIAL REVELATION --- 1600 years

<p>Began through the O.T. Prophets <i>"At many times - In various ways."</i> Hebrews 1:1</p> <p>Moses 1500 B.C.</p>	<p>400 Silent Years</p> <p>Malachi 400 B.C.</p>	<p>And ended <i>"In His Son"</i>, in the New Testament. Hebrews 1:2</p> <p>Christ</p> <p>The Apostle John 100 A.D.</p>
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INSPIRATION

Inspiration means “**God breathed.**”

NON-BIBLICAL VIEWS OF INSPIRATION

Not everyone **agrees** with the above definition of inspiration and its implications. Charles C. Ryrie in his book *A Survey of Bible Doctrine*, page 38-39, **cites five alternative non-biblical views.**

- Natural Inspiration – Men of great genius wrote the Scriptures without supernatural direction.
- Mystical or Illumination Inspiration – Spirit filled and guided believers wrote the Scriptures but they were not necessarily supernaturally controlled.
- The Dictation Theory – God simply dictated the Scriptures to completely passive writers.
- Partial Inspiration – Only parts of the Bible are supernaturally inspired.
- The Concept Theory – Only the concepts but not the words are inspired.

What **arguments** could you use to **refute** these Non-Biblical Views of Inspiration? **What makes** them **unacceptable**?

THE BIBLICAL VIEW OF INSPIRATION

“*All Scripture is God breathed*” or inspired by God (II Timothy 3:16). This refers to the **supernatural control** or **superintending** which God exerted over the human authors or the Old and New Testaments so that the words and thoughts they recorded were **true** and **accurate**.

Alan Kent Scholes in his book, *What Is Christianity All About* (page 70-71), gives this excellent definition of Inspiration.

“God the Holy Spirit worked in partnership with His chosen human authors, using their thoughts, words, and writing styles to express what He desired.”

GOD

SUPERNATURALLY
SUPERINTENDING
OR CONTROLLING

THE WRITERS

- **With whom** did the Scriptures originate? II Peter 1:20-21
- **How were they** communicated to man? II Peter 1:21
- **How much** of the Scripture is inspired?
II Timothy 3:16 _____
I Corinthians 2:13 _____



The Word of God is both **plenarily** (full, complete, extending to every part) and **verbally** (pertaining to the actual words) **inspired**.

Since **all Scripture is inspired by God**, the Bible is **infallible** and **inerrant**, meaning, that as **originally** given by God, it is **incapable** of **mistakes** or **errors**.

PROOFS OF INSPIRATION

The fact that Scripture is inspired is **demonstrated** in the following ways:

- **BY CHRIST'S TESTIMONY**

The Old Testament Scriptures were sectioned into Law, Prophets, and Psalms (Writings). **Twelve times** Jesus recognized these Old Testament sections of Scripture: The Law and the Law of Moses; The Prophets; and The Psalms (Matthew 5:17; Luke 24:44-45; John 5:39).

Jesus **frequently quoted** the Old Testament Scriptures while teaching His followers (Luke 24:17), scolding the religious leaders (Mark 7:5-10), and when resisting Satan (Matthew 4:4, 6, 7, 10).

- **BY THE TESTIMONY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS**

The New Testament writers **quote** the Old Testament approximately **240 times**. Two of these writers, **Paul** and **Peter**, declare that **all Scripture** (referring to the Old Testament) is inspired by God (II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:20-21). Peter also states that the Apostle Paul's writings **are inspired** when he comments that some people twist Paul's writings "*as they do the other Scriptures*" (II Peter 3:15-16).

- **BY THE TESTIMONY OF PROPHECY**

Bible prophecy is "**the predicting of future events** under the influence of divine guidance."

There are **33 fulfilled prophecies** concerning Christ's life.

Three examples are:



Writer	When Prophesied	Prophecy	Fulfillment
Isaiah	742 B. C.	Virgin Birth Isaiah 7:14	Matthew 1:18-25 Luke 1:26-35
David	About 1000 B. C.	Crucifixion Psalm 22:16, 18	John 19:23-24 John 20:19-27
David	About 1000 B. C.	Resurrection Psalm 16:10	Matthew 27:62 – 28:9

- **BY THE UNITY OF THE BIBLE**

God used about **40 different men** in writing the Holy Scriptures. Most of these men had **never seen** each other. Some spoke **different** languages & some lived in **different** countries. Some were shepherds, others kings. One made tents, another was a doctor. Yet all wrote concerning **God's one divine plan of redemption** in such a fashion that every part of the Bible **agrees with** and **supplements** all the other parts. **There are no contradictions**. The first books were written about 1500 B.C. and the last ones about 100 A.D. - a total of 1600 years. **What a testimony to its inspiration!**

- **BY THE TESTIMONY OF ARCHAEOLOGY**

Archaeology is "the **scientific study** of the life and culture of ancient peoples, as by excavation of ancient cities, relics and artifacts."

According to renowned American archaeologist Dr. W. F. Albright, "There can be no doubt that archaeology **has confirmed** the substantial history of the Old Testament." This means that history revealed in the Scriptures **has been proved to be true** by archaeological discoveries.

Nelson Glueck, a famous Jewish archaeologist, stated, "It may be stated **categorically** that no archaeological discovery **has ever contradicted a Bible reference**."

CANONIZATION

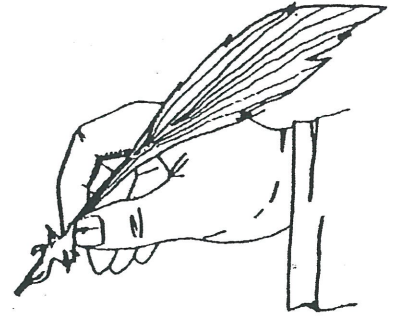
MANUSCRIPTS

A manuscript is a **hand written** document. There are **two types** of biblical manuscripts.

AUTOGRAPHS or ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS

The word autograph comes from **autos**, meaning “self,” and **graphein**, meaning “to write.” When referring to the Bible, autographs mean the **original, hand-written, God-inspired manuscripts** of the writers of Scripture.

Until now **no autographs or original manuscripts** have been **discovered**. However, **we can be sure** of what those autographs say because of the **numerous copied manuscripts** available to us today.



COPIED MANUSCRIPTS

Copied manuscripts are **hand-written** copies **originating from or raised up from** the original writings. There are more than 5000 portions of these copied manuscripts. They are listed in **four classifications**.

- **Uncial Manuscripts**

Uncial means “inch high.” The Uncial Manuscripts were copied in **large capital letters** on skins of animals called **vellum** (calfskin) and **parchment** (sheepskin).

The Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered in 1947, are the **most ancient** Old Testament uncial manuscripts. They date back to 100 -200 B. C. and contain the whole book of Isaiah, some 20 Psalms, and commentaries on the books of Genesis and Habakkuk.

The **most famous** New Testament uncial manuscripts are known as **Sinaiticus**, having been discovered in a monastery near Mount Sinai, and **Vaticanus**. Both are kept in the Vatican library in Rome and are dated between 325 and 350 A. D..

- **Minuscule Manuscripts**

The definition of minuscule is “**small**.” Minuscule manuscripts were copied in **small flowing or joined together letters** rather than large capital letters.

- **Lectionaries**

Lectionaries are “Lists of selected readings.” These refer to **selected scripture readings** used in the early churches much like responsive readings used in our churches today.

- **Papyrus Fragments**

Papyrus was a **thin writing paper** made from the papyrus water plant. Some of the earliest copied manuscripts were written on papyrus and then rolled **into scrolls**.

The **Chester Beatty Papyri**, named after its discoverer, dates back to the second or third century A. D. and is one of the oldest New Testament fragments discovered. It contains the Gospels and parts of Paul’s epistles.

THE SCRIBES / COPYISTS

Making hand written copies of the Scriptures from the autographs or other had copied manuscripts was a very exacting work carried on by Scribes or Copyists.

“Since, **in the Hebrew**, there were no vowels, no distinction between capital letters and others, no punctuation, and practically no greater space between words than between letters, the sentence which you are now reading would, if printed according to the ancient Hebrew fashion, appear as follows:




SNCTHRWSLSNDSTNCTNBTWNCPTLLTTRSNDTHRSNPNCCTTNNDPRCTCLLYNGRTRSPCB
TWNWRDSTHNBWNLTRSTHSNTNCWHCHYRNWRDNGWLDPRNTDCCRDNGTTHNCNT
HBRWFSHNPPRSFLLWS.” The Bible In The Making, by Geddes MacGregor – pages 48-49

It is no wonder that a Rabbi Ishmael, in the Talmud, counseled a prospective copyist in these words:

“My son, be careful in thy work, for it is a heavenly work, lest thou err in omitting or in adding **one jot**, and so cause the destruction of the whole world.”

Jesus himself said, that “*not the smallest letter* (a “**jot**”), *nor the least stroke of a pen* (a “**tittle**), *will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.*” Matthew 5:18

This reference to the “jot” and the “tittle” becomes more meaningful if we know to what it refers in the Hebrew alphabet. All that **distinguishes** the Hebrew letter **beth** from the Hebrew letter **kaph** is **the minuteness of the “tittle”** - which may be seen in the following transcription of these two Hebrew letters along with the “**yodh**”, the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet.

Beth >>  <<< the “**tittle**” is the minute stroke of the pen that puts a “**tail**” on the Hebrew letter **beth**.
Kaph >>  has no “**tail**” or stroke of the pen. The “**jot**” or “**yodh**” >>  is the **smallest letter** in the Hebrew alphabet.

“**In the earlier ages of the Church**, Biblical manuscripts were copied by individual Christians who wished to provide one or more books of the New Testament for local congregations. As a result, speed of production sometimes outran accuracy of execution.”

“However, **in the fourth century**, when Christianity received official sanction from the State, it became more usual for commercial book manufacturers, or scriptoria, to produce copies of the books of the New Testament. Sitting in the workroom of a scriptorium, several trained scribes would write a copy of the book being reproduced as the reader, or lector, slowly read aloud the text. In this way as many copies could be produced simultaneously as scribes were working in the scriptorium. In order to insure greater accuracy, books produced in scriptoria were commonly checked over by a corrector specially trained to rectify mistakes in copying. His annotations in the manuscript can usually be detected today from differences in styles of handwriting or tints of ink.”

“Later, **during the Byzantine period**, copies of books were produced by monks in monasteries. In order to secure a high degree of efficiency and accuracy, certain rules pertaining to the work of scribes were developed and enforced in monastic scriptoria. The following are examples carried out in the monastery of the Studium at Constantinople. ‘A diet of bread and water was the penalty set for the scribe who became so much interested in the subject-matter of what he was copying that he neglected his task of copying’ and ‘Monks who did not keep their parchment leaves neat and clean were given 130 penances’.

In order to insure accuracy in transcription, authors would sometimes add at the close of their work an adjuration directed to future copyists. Irenaeus added the following at the close of his treatise *On the Ogdoad*. ‘I adjure you **who shall copy out this book**, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by his glorious advent when he comes to judge the living and the dead, that you compare what you transcribe, and correct it carefully against this manuscript from which you copy; **and also** that you transcribe this adjuration **and insert it in the copy**’”. The Text of the New Testament, by Bruce M. Metzger – pages 14-21

THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE

In Latin, canon means “A rule or measuring line; In Greek, “A reed or rod.” In time the word canon came to mean “**a standard** by which something **is measured** or by which **a judgment** of something **can be formed**.”

When **applied** to the **Scriptures**, it refers to the **critical standards** by which each writing or book, **claiming to be inspired** by God, **was tested**. Those writings found to be **authentic** or **genuine** were admitted as part of the **Canon of Holy Scripture**.

The following are some categories **defining standards** by which writings **claiming to be “inspired” by God** were tested or judged.

- **Divine Authorship**

Do the writings claim to be of **divine origin**?

Do they show inspiration and the **proofs of inspiration**?

Do they agree with **previously accepted revelation**?

Are they **referred to** or **authenticated** within other Scriptures?

- **Human Authorship**

The Old Testament --- Was it written, edited, or endorsed by **a prophet or spokesman** for God, i.e., an Israelite?

The New Testament – Was it written by **The Apostles** or the **companions** of the apostles such as Mark or Luke?

- **Genuineness**

Can the writing be traced back to the **time** and to the **writer** from whom it professes to have come?

- **Authenticity**

Is the writing **factual**? Is it historically, geographically, and chronologically **accurate**?

- **Testimony**

Were the writings **universally recognized** as authentic by **the people** to whom they were sent?

THE COMPLETION OF THE CANON

The Old Testament Hebrew Canon was completed **by 424 B. C.** and consisted of the same **39 books** as in our present Old Testament. The translation of the Hebrew Scriptures (our 39 books) into Greek (the Septuagint) was begun about 280 B. C. **and is proof** that the Old Testament Scriptures were intact as **one book** by that time.

The New Testament Canon was completed **by the fourth century** (300-400 A. D.). This is evidenced by the early Church Fathers and Church Councils. Origen (186-254 A. D.), Athanasius (296-373 A. D.), Jerome (340-420 A. D.), and Augustine (354-430 A. D.) **all testify** that the 27 books of our present New Testament were **already accepted** as the inspired Word of God **in their day**. The Church Council of Carthage in 397 A. D. was the **first church council** to list all 27 books of our present New Testament as canonical.

Question – Could any other writings be **added** to the Old or New Testament Canons of Scripture today? Why or why not? _____

What can we **conclude** about this from Deuteronomy 4:2, 12:32; Proverbs 30:5-6; Revelation 22:18-19? _____

THE APOCRYPHAL BOOKS

The word apocryphal originally meant “**hidden or concealed**” but later came to refer to writings of **doubtful authorship** and / or **authenticity**. There are 15 apocryphal books. These were written during the 400-year period **between** the Old and New Testaments.

Eleven of these apocryphal books appear in the Roman Catholic Latin Vulgate and Douay **translations** of the Bible as well as modern versions of Catholic Bibles. **Seven** are complete books --- Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, and I and II Maccabees. **Four are attached** to other Old Testament books. The “Rest of Esther” **is added** to the book of **Esther**. The “Three Holy Children”, “Susanna”, and “Bel and the Dragon” **are added** to the book of **Daniel**.

The apocryphal books were **never recognized** as **inspired** and **authoritative** by the Jews and were declared **non-genuine** by the early Church Fathers and early Church Councils.

These books were and are not accepted as inspired for the following reasons.

- None of these books **claim** to be **inspired by God**.
- Only one of the books **names an author**. Therefore they cannot be tested for **genuineness**.
- None were originally written in **Hebrew**, yet God chose to give the Old Testament Scriptures through the **Hebrew people**.
- The books **contain** many historical, geographical, and chronological **errors**.
- They teach doctrines and practices which **are contrary** to the Canonical Scriptures. For example: Prayers and offerings **for the dead** (II Maccabees 12:41-46); atonement and salvation **by works** (Tobit 4:11; Ecclesiasticus 3:33).
- They are **never quoted** in the New Testament either by Christ, the Apostles, or any writer.
- They were written **after** the Old Testament Hebrew Canon **was completed** and are never listed as **genuine** in any New Testament Canon in the first four centuries A. D. In fact, the 11 apocryphal books which appear in the Roman Catholic translations of the Old Testament were **only approved as canonical** by the Roman Catholic Church Council of Trent in **1546 A. D.**

The Westminster Confession of Faith (1646 A. D.) states: “The Books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are not part of the canon of Scripture; and are therefore of no authority in the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings.”

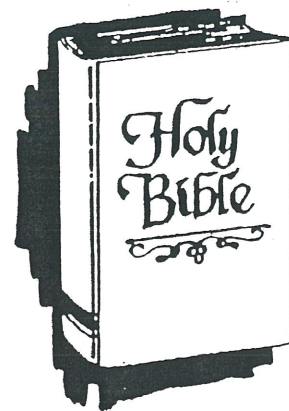
TRANSLATIONS

Because most people do not know Hebrew and Greek (the original languages the Bible was written in), the Scriptures have been **translated** into many other languages. In 1600 A.D. there were only **40** translations of the Bible. Today, the Bible or portions of it have been translated into more than **1,634** languages.

When we speak of **versions** of the Bible, we mean **particular translations**. These include the King James Version (1611 A.D.) and the New International Version (1978 A.D.) which are two of the **English translations** of the Bible.

A **paraphrase** is “a re-wording of the thought or meaning expressed in something that has been said or written before.”

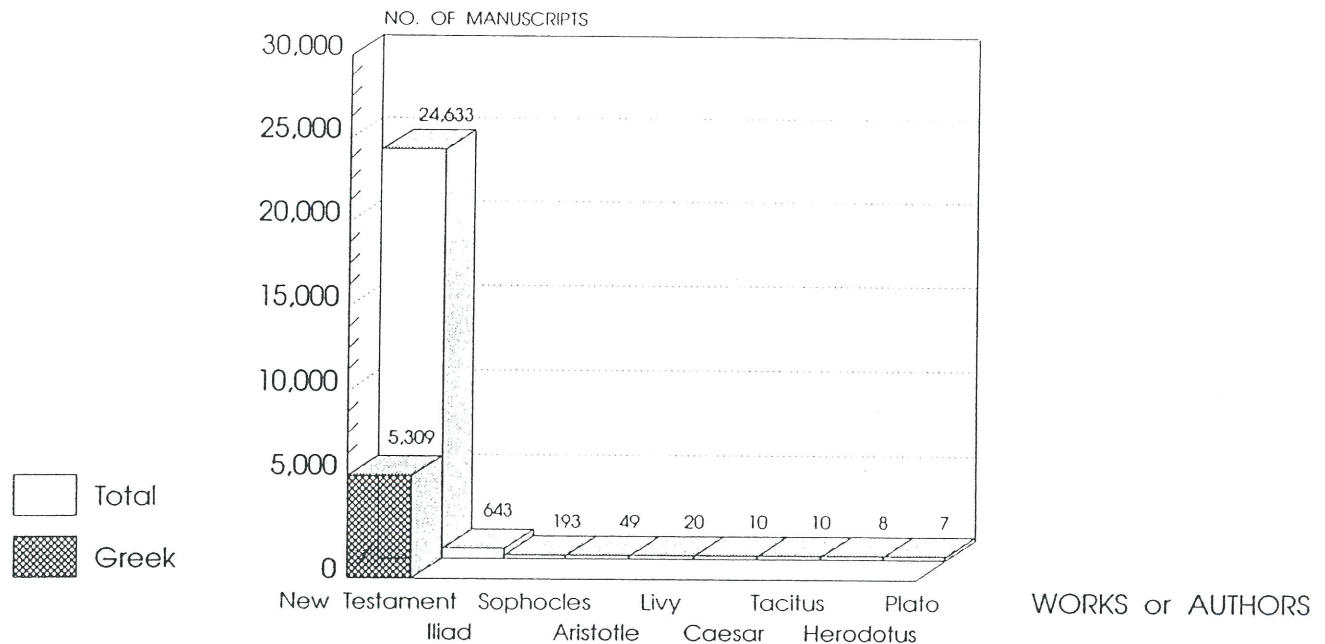
The Living Bible (1971 A.D.) is a **modern example** of a **paraphrased translation**.



TESTING THE NEW TESTAMENTS AUTHENTICITY - COMPARED TO OTHER ANCIENT WORKS.

BY: Dr. Don Bierle in "SURPRISED BY FAITH", pages 27-36

1. THE NUMBER OF NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS COMPARED TO OTHER ANCIENT WORKS.



How many New Testament manuscripts have been discovered - compared to other ancient works?

The above chart shows the **extreme contrast** between the **manuscript evidence** for the **New Testament** and that of **other ancient writings**.

The **643** manuscript copies that exist of Homer's **Iliad** - **is the most** of any ancient work.

There are only **20 manuscripts** of **Livy's** "History of Rome", **10 manuscripts** of **Caesar's** "War Commentaries", **7** of **Plato's** "Tetralogies", and only a couple of **Tacitus'** minor works.

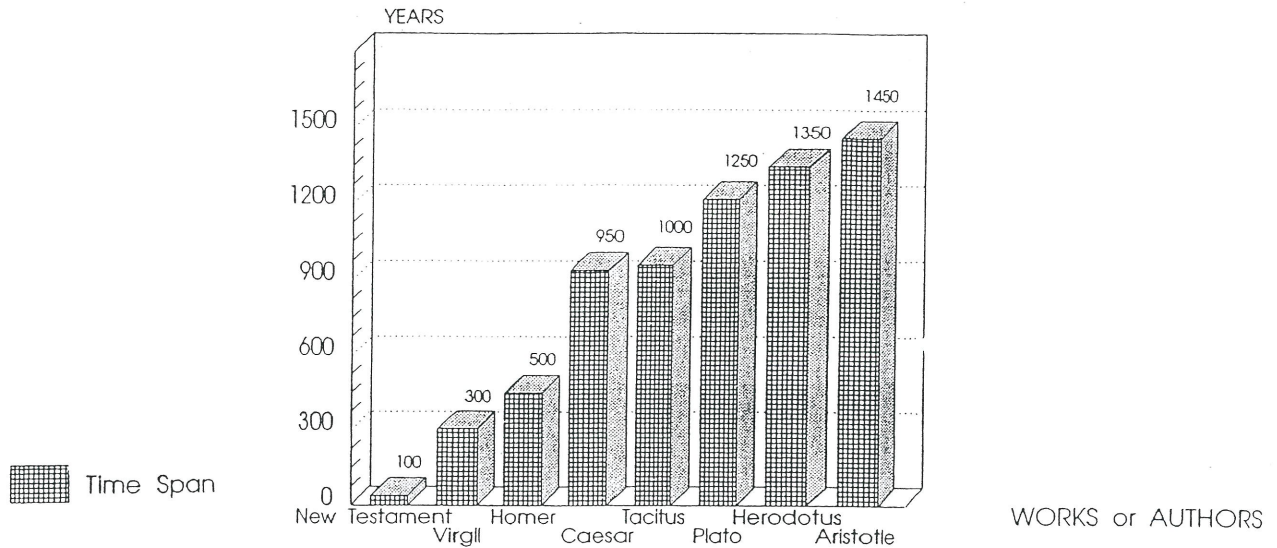
What about the New Testament?

There are more than **5,300 known manuscripts** in the original Greek language.

There are **in addition**, more than **19,000 ancient New Testament manuscripts** in Latin, Syriac, Armenian and other languages. **More than 24,000 hand written copies of the New Testament have survived.**

"The authenticity of the New Testament far outweighs the authenticity of other ancient writings. The comparison is not even close." Dr. Don Bierle

2. THE TIME INTERVAL BETWEEN THE DATE OF WRITING & THE EARLIEST KNOWN MANUSCRIPT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT - COMPARED TO OTHER ANCIENT WORKS.



“Time wise, how close are the Biblical Manuscripts to their Autographs (date they were originally written) compared to **other ancient works**?

Obviously, **the further removed** that these copies were from the **originals in time**, the **more likely** to include errors, additions, deletions, i.e., **be less authentic**.

The **shortest span** of any **ancient work** is probably that of the Roman Poet Virgil (70-19 B.C.) author of the **“Aeneid”**, a Latin epic poem about Aemeas and his adventures. There is about **300 years** between this writing and **the oldest known copy**.

Caesar’s **War Commentaries** was written about 50 B.C., yet we have **no manuscripts available for study today** - which were written before the 9th century - a gap of over **900 years**. The **range** for these ancient manuscripts is from **300 to 1500 years**.

The New Testament writings were penned over a 50 year period, beginning at approximately A. D. 47. What is the **earliest copy ever found**?

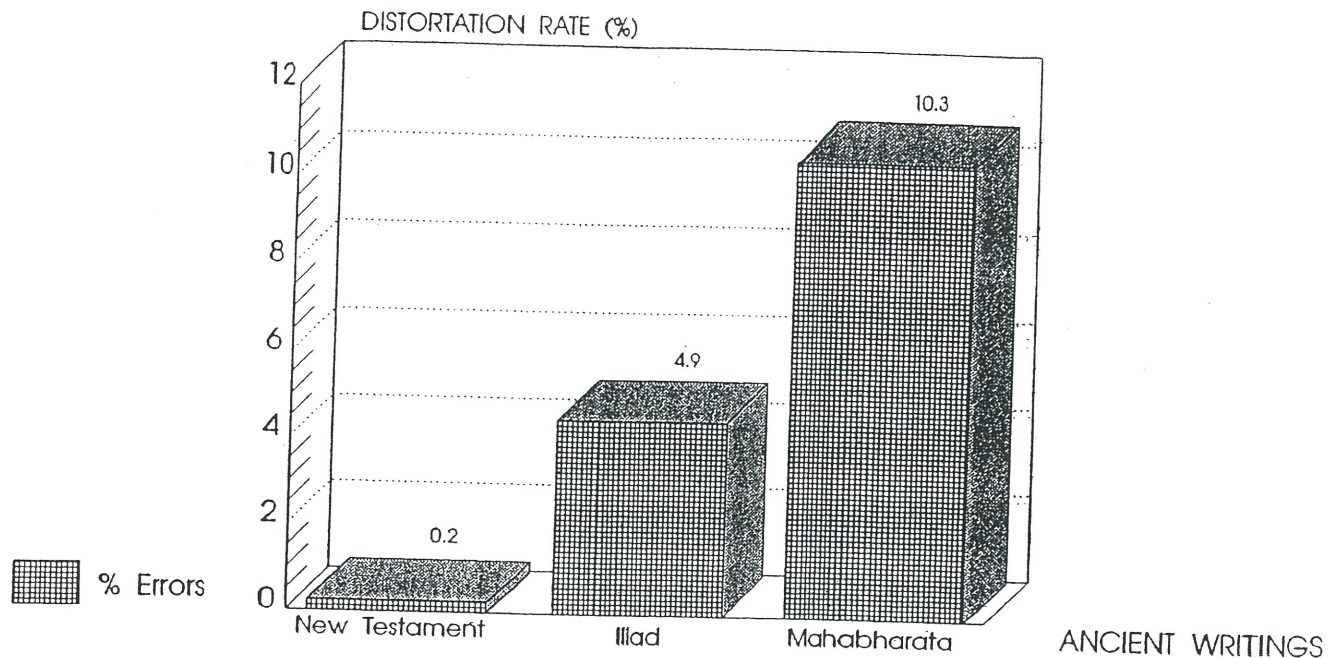
The John Rylands papyrus, **dating about A. D. 125**, is a fragment containing **a few verses** of the New Testament Gospel of John.

The Bodmer and Chester Beatty Papyri, **date from about A. D. 175-250**. Here are **major copies** within **100-150 years** of the originals.” Dr. Don Bierle

“No other ancient book has anything like such early and plentiful testimony to its text.”

Frederic Kenyon - The Bible and Archaeology - page 279

3. A COMPARISON OF THE RATE OF DISTORTION OF MANUSCRIPTS DUE TO COPYING ERRORS.



How accurately were the Biblical Manuscripts copied - compared to other ancient works?

“Interestingly, Dr. Bruce Metzger, professor of New Testament languages and literature at Princeton, has published the results of his research **on this very question**.

He **compared** the many manuscripts of **three ancient works**: a religious work of the ancient Greeks, “Homer’s Iliad”, a religious book of Hinduism, the “Mahabharata”, and the Christian New Testament.

The copies of the **three books** were divided into lines of **ten words each** to make the comparison **easier**. The works varied in length from 15,600 lines for the **Iliad**, 20,000 for the **New Testament**, and 250,000 for the **Mahabharata**. Variations such as spelling differences, word order, etc. that **did not affect** the meaning of the text, **were ignored**. All **differences** in the manuscripts affecting the **reader’s understanding** were counted.

How much distortion did he find?

Dr. Metzger reported that **764 lines** of the **Iliad** were corrupted, a **distortion rate of about 5%**.

The **Mahabharata** was even worse with at least **26,000 lines corrupted**, somewhat more than a **10% distortion rate**.

The data for the New Testament is **incredible**. Only **40 lines**, or **1/5th of 1% (0.2)**, are distorted. This is twenty-five times **more accurately copied** than the Iliad, which is considered good.” Dr. Don Bierle

Frederic Kenyon concludes: “--- the last foundation **for any doubt** that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now **been removed**. Both the **authenticity** and the **general integrity** of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as **finally established**.”

Frederic Kenyon – The Bible and Archaeology - page 288

ILLUMINATION

Illumination refers to **the process of understanding** whereby the Holy Spirit, working through the Word of God, informs, instructs, and enlightens the individual.

“Man’s natural ability to **grasp** and **embrace** the information in the Bible is limited. Much of it is spiritual information that man does not **readily understand** or **accept**. To overcome this fact, the Holy Spirit gradually **illuminates the receptive mind** to understand and embrace more and more of the Bible, as the Christian **matures** in his or her **spiritual walk**.”

Max Anders - 30 Days To Understand What Christians believe in 15 Minutes A Day - page 15

The Holy Spirit Helps Us Understand Truth Already Revealed By God.

- What does I Corinthians 2:14 say about **an unbeliever**, a person **not having** the Holy Spirit?

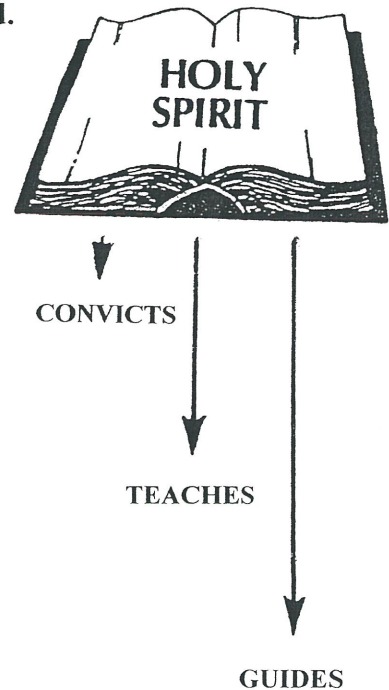
- In what way **does** the Holy Spirit illuminate **an unbeliever** according to John 16:8-11?

- What does I Corinthians 2:12 say about a person **who is a believer**, One who has the **Holy Spirit**?

- In what way **does** the Holy Spirit **illuminate a believer**?

In John 14:26 _____

In John 16:13 _____



INTERPRETATION

Interpretation is an **individual's understanding** or **explanation** of the Scriptures.

To interpret Scripture **correctly**, a believer must **be guided by the Holy Spirit** who **alone knows** the mind of God. I Corinthians 2:10-11

"Gaining a deeper grasp of the Bible is a **two-way street**. It is true that **it will not happen** unless the Holy Spirit illuminates the mind of the Christian, but **neither will it happen** unless the Christian is diligent in pursuing biblical knowledge. The more the Christian **reads** and **studies** the Bible, the more the Holy Spirit **will illumine** his or her mind, which encourages the student to read and study further." Max Anders – 30 Days To Understanding What Christians Believe In 15 Minutes A Day – page 16

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF BIBLE INTERPRETATION



The word hermeneutics comes from Hermes, the Greek name of the pagan god Mercury, who was regarded as a messenger of the gods. **Hermeneutics is the science of interpretation.** The word means, "To make clear; To interpret; To explain."

Anointing (*Chrisma*), as found in I John 2:20 and 2:27, is used metaphorically of the Holy Spirit's ministry which enables an individual believer to come to or to possess a **knowledge** of biblical / spiritual truth. (See also John 16:12-15). In other words, through the "anointing" from the Holy Spirit, a believer has the **ability** and **right** of private judgment. However, as God is a God of order (I Corinthians 14:33), there must be **an orderly** way by which individual believers and churches can make **right judgments** or **interpretations** of Scripture. A **sound hermeneutic is such a way**. To accomplish a sound hermeneutic the following principles, **taken from** "Basics of Bible Interpretation" by Bob Smith, **will aid us**.

- **Listen To Your Teacher!**
Approach your study with a teachable, expectant attitude, desiring **to be taught** of God.
- **Discover The Writer's Intent**
Put yourself in the writer's sandals, and setting aside your preconceptions, aim to recover the writers **intent** --- including the intent of the ultimate Author, which sometimes goes beyond even the understanding of the **human writer**. (See I Peter 1:10-12 on the prophets.)
Discover the **theme** or **purpose** of the book.
- **Interpret Literally**
Accept the **usual, literal sense** of the words unless you have reason to believe they are **figurative** or **allegorical**. Interpret figurative language in the same way we use it in normal speech.
 - Allegory** ---- The description of one thing under the **image** of another. A story, in which people, things, and happenings have **other meanings**. (See Galatians 4:21-31 concerning "Sarah" and "Hagar".)
 - Figure** ----- Representing by means of a **figure, symbol, or likeness**. (See John 15:1-8 concerning the "Vine and Branches".)
 - Metaphor** -- Implied comparison, in which a word or phrase ordinarily and primarily used for one thing is **applied** to another. (See I John 2:20, 27 concerning "Anointing".)

- **Observe The Context**

Interpret in the light of **the setting**. Harmonize with the **local** and **larger context**, also the total context of biblical truth.

Let the writer say what he has to say. Don't force the meaning or force your meaning into the context.

- **Relate To The Historical / Cultural Setting**

Interpret with the **historical** and **cultural setting** in mind. It can make a great difference as to how we understand what is being said.

Research and absorb some of the data that will make your thoughts conform to the time and culture of the writer. This can be accomplished through Bible Dictionaries, books on history and archaeology, and Old and New Testament introductions.

- **Consider The Literary Mold**

The literary mold in which **the language is cast** is often crucial to our interpretation. Is it poetry? If so, that makes a difference, e.g., the Psalms. **On the other hand**, when we read II Timothy 1:13-14 we see that **it is not poetry**, but a strong charge from Paul to Timothy. **Again**, we easily recognize the story-form narrative style of the Gospels and receive them as eye witness accounts.

- **Observe The Author's Scope And Plan**

Every portion of the Scripture does not cover every subject, so we must interpret in accord with the author's **scope and plan**, being consistent with the aim of God's total revelation.

For instance, **the scope of John's Gospel** is clearly the presenting of Jesus Christ as the Messiah, the Son of God, and to lead his hearers to faith in Christ that they might have the eternal life He offers (John 20:31). Paul's scope in Romans is **Justification by faith, apart from works** (Romans 1:1-5, 3:10-25).

- **Compare Scripture With Scripture**

View corollary passages alongside the passage you are studying. Clear up problem areas with the **clear teaching of other passages** related to the subject. The interpreter must read them all to gain the composite picture.

- **Study Word Meanings And Grammar**

Our normal tendency is to assume more than we really understand, thus arriving at a superficial view. We must observe **word meanings** and **grammatical relationships carefully**.

- **Remember, God Speaks In Human Terms**

Recognize God's gracious accommodation of our limited, finite understanding by the use of human language in terms that men can grasp. Many interpretive problems **can be avoided** if we remember that God has scaled down His communication of truth to man's level. The Bible is Anthropomorphic, i. e., God's eternal truth is brought down to human level and expressed in human terms.

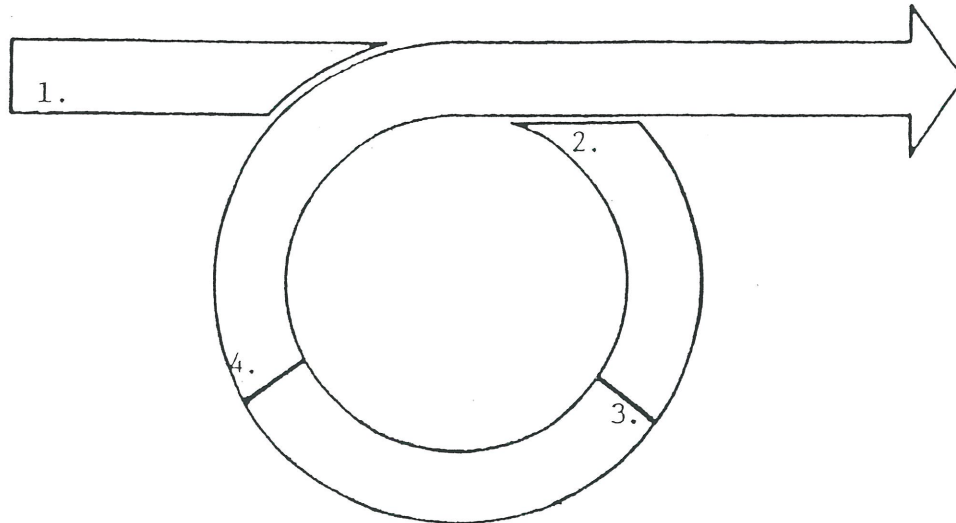
- **Use The Original Languages**

In difficult interpretive problems, check the **original languages** as the final authority. Many times (though not always), this will give the added light we need. Many interpretive difficulties will be readily resolved by investigating the words behind the English text. For the **unskilled** in biblical Greek or Hebrew, Strong's Concordance, Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words and Pink's Dictionary of the Old Testament Words For English Readers are veritable gold mines of information.

APPLICATION

Application means “to apply; to put to use.”

II Timothy 3:16 states **four ways** that the Scriptures should be **applied** in the life of a believer. **Write them** in the **diagram** provided below **in the order** in which they appear.



CREEDS

A creed is “a **confession of faith**, a **statement of beliefs**.”

On page 1 we read the The Evangelical Free Church of America - Statement of Faith (Belief) **about the Scriptures**. The following are **additional creeds** which, **in slightly different terms**, also express the evangelical teaching concerning **the Scriptures**.

I believe: “The Bible in its **entirety** (66 books) is God’s written word to man, **free from error** in its original autographs, **wholly reliable** in history and doctrine. Its Divine Inspiration has rendered the Book **infallible** (incapable of teaching deception) and **inerrant** (not liable to be proven false or mistaken). Its inspiration is **plenary** (extending to all parts alike), **verbal** (including the actual language form) and **confluent** (the product of two free agents, human and divine).”

Clark Pinnock, Theologian

From “A Defense of Biblical Infallibility”

I believe: “That the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments **comprise** the Holy Scripture, which was given by God (II Timothy 3:16) **without error** in its original autographs through divinely inspired men (II Peter 1:20-21); that the Scripture is the **complete revelation** of God to man to which nothing at any time is to be **added** or **deducted** whether by new revelations or traditions of men (Deuteronomy 4:2, 12:32; Proverbs 30:6; Revelation 22:18-19); that the Scripture is to be **received**, **believed**, and **obeyed** not because of what any man or church says but because it is in truth **the very Word of God** (I Thessalonians 2:13); that the Scripture reveals the **principles** by which God will **judge mankind** (Romans 2:16), and therefore **is** and **shall remain** to be the **supreme standard** and **final authority** by which all matters of **faith**, **conduct**, and **opinion** should be tried (I Timothy 3:14-15).”

William G. Arvan, Bible Teacher

