

**Xenos Christian Fellowship**  
**Christian Ministry 2**  
**Week 7 - Inspiration of the Bible**

## **Introduction**

**Definition of verbal plenary inspiration:** God so moved the human authors of scripture that the resulting product was the Word of God written, totally \_\_\_\_\_ in all that it affirms in the \_\_\_\_\_, in every area including \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

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

**(2 Pet. 1:20,21\*)** Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. 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.

### **What is problematic with these statements?**

- "The Bible is inspired because it claims it to be inspired."
- "I believe the Bible is inspired by God because its contents resonate with me."

## **Evidence for Inspiration**

The nature of evidence and investigation:

Outline of the argument we will make:

1. Historical Reliability: There is sufficient evidence that the Gospels accurately record what Jesus said and did.
2. Fulfilled Prophecy shows that Jesus is the Messiah. Long before Jesus lived, many detailed predictions were made about the Messiah. Jesus fulfilled all of them, demonstrating that he was the Messiah, the son of God.
3. Jesus' view of scripture: Jesus viewed scripture as inspired by God.

By successfully arguing each of these points, we can show that our belief in inspiration is anchored in persuasive and abundant evidence.

**1. Historical Reliability: There is sufficient evidence that the gospels accurately record what Jesus said and did.**

**Investigators subject *all* historical source documents to three tests to determine their reliability.**

- a. Bibliographical
- b. Internal
- c. External

**A. Bibliographical Test:**

Do we have sufficient *number* of copies and copies close enough in time to the originals to be reasonably confident in the reliability of our present text?

New Testament

AUTHOR	WRITTEN	EARLIEST COMPLETE COPIES	TIME SPAN	NUMBER OF COPIES
Caesar ( <i>Gaellic Wars</i> )	58-50 B.C.	A.D. 900	950 years	10
Tacitus ( <i>Annals</i> )	100 A.D.	A.D. 1100	1,000 years	20
Aristotle	384-322 B.C.	A.D. 1100	1,400 years	49
Homer ( <i>Illiad</i> )	900 B.C.	400 B.C.	500 years	643
New Testament	40-100 A.D.	A.D. 350	250 years	5,500+*

(Lee Strobel) “In addition to the 5500+ Greek documents... there are thousands of other ancient New Testament manuscripts in other languages. There are 8,000 to 10,000 Latin Vulgate manuscripts, plus a total of 8,000 in Ethiopic, Slavic, and Armenian. In all, there are about 24,000 documents in existence.”<sup>1</sup>

(Sir Frederick Kenyon) “The interval between the dates of original composition (of the New Testament) and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and 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.”<sup>2</sup>

Old Testament

<sup>1</sup> Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christ, A Journalist's Personal Investigation of the Evidence for Jesus* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1998) p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Frederick Kenyon, cited in J. A. Thompson, *The Bible and Archaeology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1982) pp. 288-289.

The Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) were discovered in 1947. These scrolls are important for two reasons:

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How close is our text to the inspired original?

### **B. Internal Test:**

Are the authors sufficiently close to the events they record (eyewitness or hearsay)?

Do their accounts contain internal internal contradictions?

New Testament authors claim to be eyewitnesses:

**(Luke 1:1-3)** Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus . . .

**(2 Peter 1:16)** We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

**(1 John 1:1,3)** That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched--this we proclaim concerning the Word of life . . . We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

**(John 19:35; 21:24)** The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe . . . This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true.

**(F. F. Bruce)** “The earliest preachers of the gospel knew the value of . . . first-hand testimony, and appealed to it time and again. ‘We are witnesses of these things,’ was their constant and confident assertion. And it can have been by no means so easy as some writers seem to think to invent words and deeds of Jesus in those early years when so many of His disciples were about who could remember what had and had not happened (and been said). And it was not only friendly eyewitnesses that the early preachers had to reckon with; there were others less well disposed who were also conversant with the main facts of the ministry and death of Jesus. The disciples could not afford to risk inaccuracies (not to speak of

willful manipulation of the facts), which would at once be exposed by those who would be only too glad to do so. On the contrary, one of the strong points in the original apostolic preaching is the confident appeal to the knowledge of the hearers; they not only said, 'We are witness of these things,' but also, 'As you yourselves also know' (Acts 2:22). Had there been any tendency to depart from the facts in any material respect, the possible presence of hostile witnesses in the audience would have served as a further corrective."<sup>3</sup>

The accounts of the New Testament authors are consistent.

"Doesn't the Bible contradict itself?"

"Contradictions" are usually resolved in one of two ways:

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(Gleason Archer) "As I have dealt with one apparent discrepancy after another and have studied the alleged contradictions between the biblical record and the evidence of linguistics, archaeology, or science, my confidence in the trustworthiness of Scripture has been repeatedly verified and strengthened by the discovery that almost every problem in Scripture that has ever been discovered by man, from ancient times until now, has been dealt with in a completely satisfactory manner by the biblical text itself--or else by objective archaeological information."<sup>4</sup>

### C. External Test:

Early extra-biblical records:

**(Tacitus, a Roman historian)** ". . . Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for the abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus . . ." <sup>5</sup>

**The Early Church Fathers**, who wrote from the end of the first century through the second century, confirm the highest regard for the apostles and the inspiration of the letters they had written. They viewed them as "Sacred Scriptures," "Holy

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<sup>3</sup> Bruce, F.F. *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, (1987). pp. 45-46.

<sup>4</sup> Gleason Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1982) p. 12. To get a look at some of the more common contradictions cited and cogent explanations, see R.L. Harris, *Inspiration and Canonicity of the Scriptures: An Exegetical and Historical Study* (Greenville, South Carolina: Acorn Press, 1995) pp. 94-122.

<sup>5</sup> Tacitus, *Annals* xv, 44. The Oxford Translation, Revised (New York: Harper & Bros., Publishers, 1858), p. 428.

Word." Between them, they quote and name all the books of the New Testament canon.

Archaeology has confirmed the Bible's historical reliability and resolved many apparent discrepancies.

### **Old Testament**

Critics used to say:

- During the time of Moses and his alleged writings, humans did not yet write. Such detailed legislation, they alleged, wasn't recorded until the Persian period (about 538 B.C. or about 900 years after Moses).
- Many of the cities and people of the Old Testament were fictitious.

Recent discoveries:

Ebla Tablets:

- They confirm the biblical description of the people, customs, and laws of this time which modern scholars were trying to deny.
- Their economic records include references to biblical sites such as Hazier, Gaze, Megiddo, and Jerusalem. Their commercial texts mention the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah..
- They also mention Chedorloamer and the other city-kings mentioned in Gen. 14 who were long considered fictitious by critics. They also describe the wealth and affluence of their society before the calamity described in Gen. 14, which supports the biblical account.

King David: Several discoveries including evidence for King David's existence are summarized in a [US News and World Report Article](#) (October 25, 1999) titled, *Is the Bible True? King David was identified by an inscription in stone found in excavation at Dan in 1993.*

“It may be stated categorically that no archeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical passage. Scores of archeological

findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or exact detail historical statements in the Bible.”<sup>6</sup>

## New Testament

(Sir William Ramsay) “Luke's historicity is unsurpassed in respect to its trustworthiness... Luke is a historian of the first rank; not merely are his statements of fact trustworthy... this author should be placed along with the very greatest of historians.”<sup>7</sup>

(J.P. Free) “We pointed out that numerous passages of the Bible which long puzzled the commentators have readily yielded up their meaning when new light from archaeological discoveries has been focused on them. In other words, archaeology illuminates the text of the Scriptures and so makes valuable contribution to the fields of Biblical interpretation and exegesis. In addition to illuminating the Bible, archaeology has confirmed countless passages which have been rejected by the critics as unhistorical or contradictory to known facts.”<sup>8</sup>

Other scriptures:

- Eastern religions:
- The Quran:
- The Book of Mormon:

Conclusion:

## 2. Fulfilled prophecy shows that Jesus is the Messiah.

God uses fulfilled prophecy to validate scripture.

**(Isaiah 41:21-29)** "Present your case," says the LORD. "Set forth your arguments," says Jacob's King. "Bring in your idols to tell us what is going to happen. *Tell us what the former things were, so that we may consider them and know their final outcome. Or declare to us the things to come, tell us what the future holds, so we may know that you are gods.* Do something, whether good or bad, so that we will be dismayed and filled with fear. But you are less than nothing and your works are utterly worthless; he who chooses you is detestable. "I have stirred up one from the north, and he comes--one from the rising sun who calls on my name. He treads on rulers as if they were mortar, as if he

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<sup>6</sup> Nelson Glueck, *Rivers in the Desert* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1969), p. 31.

<sup>7</sup> W. Ramsay, *The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1953) p. 222.

<sup>8</sup> J.P. Free, *Archaeology and Bible History* (Wheaton, Illinois: Scripture Press Publication, Inc., 1973)

were a potter treading the clay. *Who told of this from the beginning, so we could know, or beforehand, so we could say, 'He was right'?* No one told of this, no one foretold it, no one heard any words from you. I was the first to tell Zion, 'Look, here they are!' I gave to Jerusalem a messenger of good tidings. I look but there is no one-- no one among them to give counsel, no one to give answer when I ask them. See, they are all false! Their deeds amount to nothing; their images are but wind and confusion.

**(Isaiah 48:3-5)** I foretold the former things long ago, my mouth announced them and I made them known; then suddenly I acted, and they came to pass. For I knew how stubborn you were; the sinews of your neck were iron, your forehead was bronze. Therefore I told you these things long ago; before they happened I announced them to you so that you could not say, 'My idols did them; my wooden image and metal god ordained them.'

**Isaiah 42:8,9; 44:7,24,25; 45:21; 46:8-10**

Jesus fulfilled prophecies about the Messiah. Jesus and the apostles considered these prophecies to be sufficient evidence for believing in his Messiahship.

**(Luke 24:44-46)** He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day . . . "

**(Acts 17:2-4)** As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ," he said. Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women.

**(1 Cor. 15:3-4)** For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance : that Christ died for our sins *according to the Scriptures*, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day *according to the Scriptures* . . .

Many of these predictions could not be deliberately fulfilled:

- Place of birth: Micah 5:2
- Lineage: Matthew 1 and Luke 3<sup>9</sup>
- Time of his death: Daniel 9:24-26
- Manner of his death: Psalm 22 (both crucifixion and people gambling for his clothes)
- Purpose of his death and manner of burial: Isaiah 53

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<sup>9</sup> For more on the differences in these genealogies, see Gary DeLashmutt's teaching notes on Luke 3 at <http://www.xenos.org/teachings/nt/luke/gary/luke3-2.htm>.

## Daniel 9:24-26 (Time of his death)<sup>10</sup>

- How long is a week?

**(Gen. 29:27-28)** "Complete the week ("shabua") of this one, and we will give you the other also for the service which you shall serve with me for another seven years." And Jacob did so and completed her week, and he gave him his daughter Rachel as his wife.

Reasons why in Daniel 9, "shabua" means a set of seven years:

**Common sense:** 69 weeks of days would only be a little over one year. This was nowhere near enough to rebuild the city. It took them over 46 years just to rebuild the Temple (Jn. 2:20).

**Following context:** In Dan. 10:2, Daniel says literally "(I) had been mourning three entire weeks of days." Why would Daniel go out of his way to notify his audience of such an obvious thing, unless he had been using "week" in a different way in chapter 9?

**Historical setting:** Israel's 70 year exile (Dan. 9:2) was God's punishment for their neglect of the sabbath land rest (Lev. 25:1-7; 26:34,35,43). God removed them from their land one year for every seven years they violated this law (2 Chron. 36:20,21)-490 years or 70 "weeks" of years. Therefore as Daniel looks ahead to 70 future "sevens" they would most likely be sevens of years and not days.

**(Lev. 25 1:-4)** The LORD then spoke to Moses at Mount Sinai, saying,<sup>2</sup> "Speak to the sons of Israel, and say to them, `When you come into the land which I shall give you, then the land shall have a Sabbath to the LORD.<sup>3</sup> `Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its crop,<sup>4</sup> but during the seventh year the land shall have a sabbath rest, a sabbath to the LORD; you shall not sow your field nor prune your vineyard.

**(2 Chron. 36:20,21)** And those who had escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon; and they were servants to him and to his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths. All the days of its desolation it kept sabbath until seventy years were complete.

Therefore we conclude that in Daniel 9, "week" refers to a set of seven years. 69 weeks = 483 years. The 70th week = 7 years.

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<sup>10</sup> For an easy to follow discussion of Daniel 9 and other fulfilled prophecies, see Dennis McCallum, *Christianity: The Faith That Makes Sense* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 1992). For more depth on Daniel 9, see H. W. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1977).

- What kind of year?
- When was the decree year?
- Fulfillment

Additional resources: Xenos Central Teaching t07348; Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ by Harold Hoehner; Gary DeLashmutt's paper on "Sejanus" on the Xenos web site, [www.xenos.org](http://www.xenos.org).

### **Psalm 22:1-18 (Manner of his death)**

- David is not talking about himself.
- David is describing crucifixion.
- Jesus couldn't purposefully fulfill key elements of the prophecy (vs. 6-8,12,16,18)

Additional resources: William D. Edwards, M.D. on the physical death of Jesus Christ. JAMA, March 21, 1986-Vol. 255, No. 11, pp. 1455-1463. Xenos Central Teaching t07566.

### **Isaiah 53:1-12 (Purpose of his death)**

- Jesus couldn't purposefully fulfill vs. 9.
- Why is this not about the nation of Israel?
- God's chosen Person would fulfill the sacrificial system.

Additional resources: See Xenos Central Teaching t07396.

### **Conclusion:**

### **3. Jesus' view of scripture: Jesus viewed scripture as inspired by God.**

#### A. What was Jesus' view of the Old Testament?

**(Matthew 5:17,18\*)** "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and

earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.

**(John 10:35,36)** If he called them 'gods,' to whom the word of God came--and the Scripture cannot be broken...

**(Mark 7:5-13)** You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men . . . Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that."

See also Matthew 12:38-40 [Jonah]; Matthew 19:4-5 [creation of Adam and Eve]; Luke 17:26-32 [Noah]; Luke 20:37 [call of Moses]; John 3:14 [Moses/serpent in wilderness]. Jesus affirms the historicity of these events.

Conclusion:

#### B. What was Jesus' view of his own words?

**(Matthew 24:35\*)** Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

**(Matthew 7:24-27)** "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

**(John 12:48)** There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day.

**(John 8:31,32)** To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Conclusion:

#### C. What was Jesus' view of his apostles' writings?

**(Matthew 10:40\*)** "He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me . . . "

Jesus promised the Apostles that the Holy Spirit would inspire their words.

**(John 14:26)** But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

**(John 16:13)** But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

Who were the Apostles? Jesus' original twelve disciples, minus Judas, plus Matthias (Acts 1:26), plus Paul (Gal. 1:1) and James the Lord's brother (Gal. 1:19), were given this Apostolic authority.

Passages that corroborate Jesus' teaching about the authority of the apostles' writings:

Authors claiming that that their own writings are inspired and authoritative:

**(1 Corinthians 14:37)** If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command.

**(1 Thessalonians 2:13)** And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.

**(1 John 4:4-6)** **You** (his Christian audience), dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. **They** (the false teachers) are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. **We** (the apostles) are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

Authors recognizing each other's writings as inspired and authoritative:

**(2 Peter 3:15,16)** Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

Conclusion:

### **Other reasons to believe that the Bible is inspired by God**

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### **Conclusion**

### **Memory Verses**

Matthew 5:17,18\* – The Old Testament is completely accepted by Jesus.

Matthew 24:35\* – Jesus' own words are authoritative.

Matthew 10:40\* – Jesus pre-authenticates the Apostles' words.

### **Assignment**

Read chapter 3 of *The Case for Christ* (see handout) and write one-paragraph summary of the chapter.

Read chapters 7 and 9 of *From God to Us* (see handout) and write a one-paragraph summary of each chapter.