

The Scriptures

I. The Bible is a Unique book

A. Webster's Definition of the word "unique"

1. One and only; single; sole
2. Different from all others; having no like or equal

B. Unique in its circulation

1. First major book to be printed on the Gutenberg press – Latin Vulgate
2. The #1 best-seller of all time – the Bible has been read by more people and published in more languages than any other book.
3. By the early 1940's, for the *British and Foreign Bible Society* to meet it's demands, it had to print one copy every three seconds day and night – that is, 22 every minute, 1369 every hour, and 32,876 every day.

*** This doesn't prove that the Bible is the word of God, but it does prove it is unique. Therefore, it deserves further investigation.**

C. Unique in its teachings

1. The Old Testament contains over three hundred prophecies about Jesus' life, written down hundreds of years before He was born.
2. Archaeological findings have only supported the historical reliability of the scripture.
3. The stories of its characters are candid – doesn't bend the truth to idolize men.

D. Unique in its continuity

1. Written over a 1500 year span.
2. Written over 40 generations
3. Written by over 40 authors from every walk of life:
 - Moses, a political leader who was trained in Egyptian Universities
 - Peter, a fisherman
 - Amos, a herdsman
 - Joshua, a military general
 - Nehemiah, a cupbearer
 - Daniel, a prime minister
 - Luke, a doctor
 - Solomon, a king
 - Matthew, a tax-collector
 - Paul, a rabbi
4. Written in different places: Moses in a wilderness; Jeremiah in a dungeon; Paul inside a prison cell; Luke while traveling; John on the Island of Patmos; and much more...
5. Written in different times – war, peace, joy, sorrow
6. Written on three continents – Asia, Africa, and Europe
7. Written in three languages:
 - Hebrew – language of Old Testament
 - Aramaic – some part of Old Testament
 - Greek – New Testament, the international language at the time of Christ

E. Its subject matter includes hundreds of controversial subjects, which is defined as a subject that creates opposing opinions. Yet, the entire book from Genesis to Revelation speaks with harmony and continuity.

F. There is one unfolding story – “Restoring relationship between God and man through Christ.” ALL THE SCRIPTURES ARE CENTERED IN ONE PERSON – JESUS.

II. What is the *Scripture*?

A. A Definition of Terms

1. *Scripture*

1124 – Greek graphe (graf-ay')

a document, i.e. holy Writ (or its contents or a statement in it):--scripture.

The Scripture is God's word and will, inscribed or written down. It represents the real thing, but is not that thing itself. It's a picture of something, but it is not the reality.

E.g. a photograph

2. What the *Scripture* was to the Apostolic writers of the New Testament:

The New Testament denotes the Scriptures as being that definite collection of sacred books, regarded as given by inspiration of God, which we usually call the Old Testament. The Old Testament canon in the time of Jesus was precisely the same as that which we now have. He placed the seal of his own authority on this collection of writings, as all equally given by inspiration (Mat 5:17; Mat 7:12; Mat 22:40; Luk 16:29, Luk 16:31).

The sacred books of the Old Testament:

The Law or Pentateuch (first five books of Moses)

The Historical Narratives (Joshua through to Esther)

The Wisdom Books (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of S)

The Major Prophets (Isaiah to Daniel)

The Minor Prophets (Hosea to Malachi)

3. *The Law and the Prophets*

Often Jesus and the New Testament writers refer to the Hebrew Scriptures as “the Law and the Prophets”. The Law is the five books of Moses called the Pentateuch (meaning “five scrolls”). The Prophets are the remaining 34 books, including the historical narrative books. The Hebrews viewed history as being ‘prophetic’.

Through actions and events, history reveals the nature, heart and purpose of God. God is at work in history.

4. *The boundaries of the Scripture are increased to the epistles in the N.T.*
“And think of the long-suffering of our Lord as salvation (as our beloved brother Paul also has written to you according to the wisdom given to him as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable pervert, as also they do the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction).” 2Pe 3:15, 16

5. *The Bible*

Bible, the English form of the Greek name 'Biblia', meaning "books," the name which in the fifth century began to be given to the entire collection of sacred books, the "Library of Divine Revelation." The name Bible was adopted by Wickliffe, and came gradually into use in our English language. It is The Book, with a capital "B".

6. *The Word of God*

The Bible is often called the "word of God" because the writers of its several books were God's organs in communicating his will to men. It is his "word," because he speaks to us in its sacred pages. Whatever the inspired writers here declare to be true and binding upon us, God declares to be true and binding. This word is infallible, because written under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and therefore is free from all error of fact or doctrine or precept.

However, we must remember that Jesus Himself is called the Word of God. (Rev. 19:13) The Bible is the Word of God written down. It is a photograph or a snapshot of Jesus, who is the Word (John 1:1). The Word is a person and the bible tells us about that person.

III. How did the Bible Come to Us?

A. The Hebrew Bible – The Old Testament

1. Began many centuries before Christ – scribes, priests, prophets, kings, and poets of the Hebrew people kept a record of their history, and God's relationship with them
2. These writings became an important part of their life, copied and recopied from generation to generation.
3. Canonized by Jewish scholars in 95 AD – recognized what was already established.
4. the Dead Sea Scrolls

B. The Old Testament in Greek (the Septuagint)

1. By third century BC, Greek was the most widely used language.
2. Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek.

C. The Greek New Testament

1. After Christ's ascension, the church was birthed and the apostles started writing letters to the churches they planted.
2. Paul wrote over half of these books.
3. The early churches cherished and preserved them.
4. The need to teach new converts the things that Jesus taught led to the writings of the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.
5. 27 New Testament Books:
 - The Gospels
 - The Book of Acts
 - Pauline Epistles
 - The other Apostolic epistles
 - The Book of Revelation

D. The New Testament Canon

1. Why determine a New Testament Canon?
2. Edict of Diocletian (AD 303) – declared that all sacred books were to be destroyed. Who would want to die for just another religious book? They needed to know what was authentic God-inspired Scripture and what was counterfeit.
3. Chief Test – “apostolicity”: apostolic authority and approval was the primary test for canonicity.
4. The Synod of Hippo in AD 393 listed the 27 books of the NT.
5. This declaration did not confer upon these books any authority, which they did not already possess. They simply acknowledged what was already established as canonicity.
6. The early church fathers quote and allude to all these 27 books as being Scripture: including Polycarp (AD115), Justin Martyr (AD 100-165), Irenaeus (AD 180), and Ignatius (50-115)

IV. The Reliability of the New Testament

(taken from 'Evidence that Demands a Verdict', by Josh McDowell)

A. Biographical Test

1. This is an examination of the textual transmission by which documents reach us. In other words, since we do not have the original documents, how reliable are the copies we have in regard to:

- the number of manuscripts
- the time interval between the original and earliest copies

2. Compare other works of antiquity

Author	When Written	Earliest copy	Time span	# of Copies
Caesar	100-44 BC	900 AD	1000 yrs	10
Plato (Tetralogies)	427-347 BC	900 AD	1200 yrs	7
Tacitus (Annals)	100 AD	1100 AD	1000 yrs	20
Pliny the Younger (History)	61-113 AD	850 AD	750 yrs	7
Sophocles	496-406 BC	1000 AD	1400 yrs	193
Aristotle	384-322 BC	1100 AD	1400 yrs	49
Aristophanes	450-385 BC	900 AD	1200 yrs	10
Demosthenes	383-322 BC	1100 AD	1300 yrs	200
Homer (Iliad)	900 BC	400 BC	500 yrs	643
The New Testament	40-100 AD	125 AD	25 yrs	24,600

3. New Testament Manuscripts

- Greek – 5,300
- Latin – 10,000
- Other – 9,300 Total – more than 24,000

4. No other document of antiquity even begins to approach such numbers and attestation

5. Quote by John Warwick Montgomery

“to be skeptical of the resultant text of the New Testament books is to allow all of classical antiquity to slip into obscurity, for no documents of the ancient period are as well attested bibliographically as the New Testament.”

B. Manuscript reliability is also supported by various versions:

1. For the most part, ancient literature was rarely ever translated into other languages, but the New Testament was translated into other languages due to the mission focus of the early church.
2. Syriac and Latin translations
3. 150 AD – near the time of the originals
4. Egyptian, Armenian, Gothic, Georgian, Ethiopic, and Nubian translations
5. They all coincide with each other.

C. Manuscript reliability supported by early church fathers:

1. The early church fathers had writings in which they often quoted the books of the New Testament.
2. Quote from J. Harold Greenlee; says that the quotations of the early Christian writers “are so extensive that the New Testament could virtually be reconstructed from them without the use of New Testament manuscripts.”
3. Sir David Dalrymple – tried to find the entire New Testament just in early church father writings, and he found all but eleven verses.

V. **The Inspiration of The Scripture** – teaches its own inspiration. It is an article of faith.

A. **All Scripture is God-Breathed** (we will come back to this passage)

2Ti 3:16 All Scripture *is* **God-breathed**, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

2315 – Greek theopneustos (teh-op'-nyoo-stos)

from 2316 (theos” which means God), and a presumed derivative of 4154 (to breath hard, to blow); divinely breathed in:--given by inspiration of God.

Picture – Gen. 2:7 God breathing into the human experience of the sacred writers, bringing life to their writings, being inspired of God.

All Scripture – the whole book is inspired, not just parts

B. **Carried along by the Holy Spirit** (we will come back to this passage)

“knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For prophecy never came by *the* will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” 2Pe 1:20,21

The word ‘interpretation’ can also be translated ‘origin’. The Scriptures do not come from human origin and are not simply the thoughts and opinions of men. Men did not create the Bible, but spoke and wrote down these prophetic words, as the Holy Spirit carried them along. They did not operate on their own steam. They were carried. The Holy Spirit is the master author and editor.

VI. All Scripture points to Jesus.

The Bible is not an end, but the means to an end.

A. “they speak of me” John 5:39, 40

1. Context:

- Jesus calls God his Father, making Himself equal with God. Some of the Jews present sought to kill him for this “blasphemy”.
- Jesus goes on to affirm His connection to the Father, and that the Father has given Him authority to bring judgement.
- Jesus also talks about how the Father is the Witness to who Jesus is.
- He tells them that they have not heard God’s voice and that God’s word does not abide in them, because they do not believe in Jesus.

2. These people were experts in what the Scriptures said. They studied them with diligence. They thought that the words themselves contained the life.

3. The Scriptures testify of Jesus. It is a menu to tell us what there is to eat. It is a map, to guide us through the city. It is not edible itself. It is not the city.

4. Without Jesus, the Scriptures mean nothing.

5. Jesus told the Pharisees that they were in error, because they did not understand the scriptures, nor the power of God (Mt. 22:29/Mark 12:24)

6. It’s not “knowing about God”, it’s knowing God. Relationship is what this whole thing is about. Jesus will say to many on that day “Depart from me, I never knew you”. God too wants more than just to know about us, He desires relationship with us.

B. John 1:45

“Philip found Nathanael and said to him, We have found Him of whom Moses *wrote in the Law and the Prophets*, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

C. Foreseeing, Foretelling, and Foreshadowing

* Jesus' life on earth is ground zero of history, just as our calendars tell us, BC and AD. Both Old Testament and New Testament are mapped out from Jesus. The content of the Old Testament was determined by the fact that Jesus was slain "before the foundations of the world". (Rev. 13:8/1Pet. 1:19, 20) For example, why did God accept Abel's animal sacrifice and not Cain's grain offering? The answer is because Abel's blood offering points to God's acceptance of Jesus' offering of blood.

* To us who are stuck in time and space, the things being said in the Old Testament are pointing ahead into the future to Christ. However, from the point of view of eternity, the things being revealed in the Old Testament are being said because of Christ. He is the cause. Christ is in both Testaments, but each Testament approaches Christ from a different perspective. The Old Testament appears to foresee, foretell, and foreshadow Jesus, while the New Testament confirms what was spoken of Christ in the Old Testament and expounds on who Jesus is.

1. Foreseeing

- The Scriptures of the Old Testament make provision for New Testament realities. They foresee times that are to come. The best example of this is Abraham.
- Gal. 3:6-9 – "to see before", Abraham was a man out of his own time period in history. He was a New Testament believer, justified by faith, but back in the Old Testament.
- Matthew 11:13

2. Foretelling

- Many of the details of Jesus' life was foretold in the writings of the Law and Prophets.
- The Gospel of Matthew records 53 Old Testament quotes, confirming that Jesus was the one that the Scripture spoke of.
- Most of the verses in the New Testament that use the word "Scripture", are stating a fulfillment of an Old Testament prophecy concerning the coming Messiah.

- Here is a list of some examples:
 - Mar 12:10 And have you not read this **scripture** "The Stone which the builders rejected has become the Head of *the* corner:" (Matt. 21:42/1Pet. 2:6)
 - Mar 15:28 And the **Scripture** was fulfilled which said, "And he was numbered with *the* lawless."
 - Luk 4:21 And He began to say to them, Today this **Scripture** is fulfilled in your ears.
 - Joh 7:42 Has the **Scripture** not said that Christ comes from the seed of David and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?
 - Joh 13:18 I do not speak of you all; I know whom I have chosen; but that the **Scripture** might be fulfilled, "He who eats bread with me has lifted up his heel against me."
 - Joh 17:12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those that You have given Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the **Scripture** might be fulfilled. (Acts 1:16)
 - Joh 19:24 Therefore they said among themselves, Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to find whose it shall be (that the **Scripture** might be fulfilled which says, "They parted my garments among them, and *for* my garment they cast lots"). Therefore the soldiers did these things.
 - Joh 19:28 After this, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the **Scripture** might be fulfilled, Jesus said, I thirst.
 - Joh 19:36 For these things were done so that the **Scripture** might be fulfilled, "Not a bone of Him shall be broken."
 - Joh 19:37 And again another **Scripture** says, "They shall look upon *Him* whom they pierced."
 - Joh 20:9 For as yet they did not know the **Scripture** that He must rise again from *the* dead.

- Jesus was aware of his course in fulfilling the Scriptures - Matt. 26:51-56

- I Corinthians 15: 3, 4 (Rom. 16:26 also)

"For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures;"

3. Foreshadowing

- Col. 2:17 – Jesus casting a shadow into the Old Testament times
- Heb. 8:1-6 - the sanctuary and Levitical priesthood is a shadow of the realities in Jesus
- Heb. 10:1

D. The Light of the New Testament

1. 2 Peter 1:16-21

- Not “cunningly devised fables” but rooted in historical reliability – eyewitness account
- “we heard this voice which came from heaven”
- “so we have the prophetic word (the Scriptures) confirmed”
- “as a light that shines in a dark place”
- The Old Testament is a dark room full of treasures to be discovered by the shining light of the New Testament.

The New Testament is the Old Testament concealed. The Old Testament is the New Testament revealed. The Old Testament is the picture book of the New Testament.

2. John's Testimony – 1 John 1:1-4

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of Life, (for the Life was revealed, and we have seen it and bear witness, and show to you the everlasting Life, who was with the Father and was revealed to us), that which we have seen and heard we declare unto you, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And we write these things to you so that your joy may be full.”

E. Apostolic Teaching

1. Foundation and Revelation

- Jesus is the foundation – 1 Corinthians 3:11

- The foundation is laid through revelation – Mat. 16:13-20

2. The early church devoted themselves to the Apostles' teaching - Acts 2:42

(Acts 4:2/5:20,21/8:14-25/5:42/11:26/15:35/18:9-11/20:7-12 /20:20)

'proskartereo' – to be earnest towards, be constantly diligent, to adhere closely to,
attend continually, wait on continually

3. Preaching Jesus from the Scriptures in Acts: Acts 8:32,35/17:2/18:28/28:23,30,31

4. Luke 24:13-35, 44, 45 – Jesus' apostolic teaching to 2 disciples

5. Romans 16:25, 26 – revealing the mystery of Christ by the Scriptures (Eph. 3:1-11)

6. The Old Testament is the Bible that Jesus and the early apostles preached from. Both Testaments reveal Christ, from two perspectives.

VII. How to use the Scriptures

2 Timothy 3:14-16

Context: Paul is writing to his son in the Lord, Timothy. He is writing from prison and he knows his time on earth is coming to an end. He is concerned about the truth of the Gospel being perverted by “evil men and imposters”. He wants to insure that the Gospel of Jesus continues on after he is gone. He reaffirms Timothy, his disciple, in the faith and example that he had passed on to him. He charges Timothy to carry on the work.

Important points:

- (1) “knowing from whom you have learned them” – organic transmission of the truth
- (2) “able to make you wise for salvation through faith, which is in Christ”
- (3) “God-breathed”

A. Scripture is profitable for “**teaching the truth**”

1. Greek - didaskalia (did-as-kal-ee'-ah) *Strong's 1319*
from 1320; instruction (the function or the information):--doctrine, learning, teaching.
2. The Scripture will teach us the things we need to know about God, man, and the relationship between the two. This type of teaching involves understanding the truth. It is the “why” behind what God and man does. This is the foundational, non-negotiable, and unchanging knowledge of God.
3. Doctrine is the word used in the NKJV, and conveys the idea of truth that remains unshakeable. It is the theory that determines the practice. For example, when natural laws like gravity and aerodynamics are understood, something like flight can become possible. The practice is based on solid truth. Many of the epistles found in the New Testament are organized by having the theory written in the first half of the letter, and then the practical outworking of that theory is described in the last half.
4. Examples of “teaching” (doctrine) in the Scriptures are: the character and nature of God, the nature and depravity of man, the nature of sin, the promised Messiah, the person and work of Christ, justification by faith, sanctification of the Holy Spirit, Baptisms, the church, eternal judgement, the resurrection of the dead, and more.

B. Scripture is profitable for “reproof”

1. Greek - 1650 “elegchos” - from 1651; proof, conviction:--evidence, reproof.

2. convict, convince, tell a fault, rebuke
 - Titus 1:9
 - Jude 15

3. Paul in the synagogues
 - Acts 17:1-4
 - Acts 17:10-12 / “searched” – scrutinize, investigate, question, examine
 - Acts 17:17
 - Acts 18:4, 19
 - Acts 19:8-10

4. This use of scripture is about gathering evidence from the scripture to bring legitimacy to an experience or to refute error. Sometimes we read the scripture and it leads to an experience or encounter. However, often we experience something in God first, and then look to the scripture to understand what was experienced. There are times that we don’t really understand the scripture until we see it in our experience first hand.
 - John 2:22
 - Other examples: Pentecost, Tabernacle of David (Acts 15)

C. Scripture is profitable for **“correction”**

1. Greek - 882 “epanorthosis” – a straightening up again, to rectify, reform
2. Idea – started good but now has gone off the path...needs to be led back
3. another similar word – “katartizo’ means to arrange, set in order, equip, complete was is lacking, make fully ready, repair, prepare
 - Hebrews 13:21
 - Galatians 6:1
 - 1 Thess. 3:10

D. Scripture is profitable for **“instruction”** (in righteousness)

1. Education, training, including chastening and nurture
2. 1 Corinthians 10:1-13 – learning from the failure in the wilderness
3. Romans 15:4
4. Practical instruction in living a life of love:
 - Matthew 7:12
 - Matthew 22:40
 - James 2:8

VIII. CLUES to interpreting Scripture

A. Exegesis and Hermeneutics

1. Exegesis: 'ex' – out of
 'gesis' – to draw
 - what does the passage mean for the people it was written to?
 - Then & there
 - objective

2. Hermeneutics:
 - Interpretation, application
 - What is the passage saying to me now? What is the relevance to me today?
 - Here and now
 - subjective

3. Fundamental Principle:
 - The true (primary) meaning of the text is what the author intended it to mean and what the recipient
 - It can not mean something now that it didn't mean then.
 - Eg. Blood transfusion

B. A New Apostolic Hermeneutic

1. Limitations to traditional hermeneutics
 - Man-made rules (science)
 - Lack of emphasis on "illumination"
 - Doesn't take into account multiple layers of meaning, even meaning unknown to the author.

2. The Apostles broke rules of hermeneutics
 - Matthew 2:15 – Hosea 11:1 (Ex. 4:22, 23)

3. An apostolic pattern of interpreting scripture

C. C.L.U.E.S.

Context

Layers of meaning

Understanding from the Spirit

Enlightenment of the New Testament

Style of literature

1. Context

➤ Historical Context

- ❖ events, people, place, cultural environment
- ❖ familiarity with Biblical history and culture
- ❖ “culture” is the vehicle of revelation
- ❖ the greater the distance from Biblical culture, the more difficult it is to understand scripture
- ❖ ***Determining the historical context is always the first step in seeking understanding of the text*** and a clear application for us today.

➤ Literary Context

- ❖ What is written in the immediate paragraph, chapter, and book
- ❖ The whole Bible – ***let scripture interpret scripture***
- ❖ Style of literature: gospels, apostolic letters, history, poetry, law, prophecy, and apocalyptic

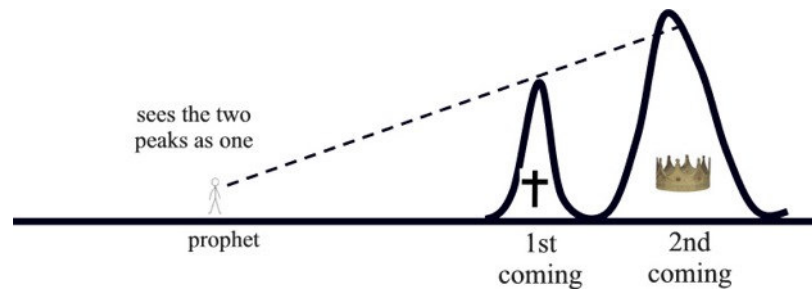
2. Layers of Meaning

- Typology – the study of O.T. people, institutions, objects, and some events in relation to what they represent of Christ, His ministry, and of His first and Second Coming.

- Prophetic Periods of Time
 - (1) primary – contemporary with prophets
 - (2) universal – relevancy to every generation
 - (3) eschatological – final fulfillment in the end times

Illustration: skipping a flat stone on a body of water

- Two 'comings' as one



- Personal and temporary meaning
- Important note: ***When looking at a passage for deeper layers of meaning, always partner it with other scriptures where the primary meaning agrees.***

3. Understanding from the Holy Spirit

- Read and study scripture with prayer and the fellowship of the Spirit
- Ephesians 1:15-19
- 1 Corinthians 2
- the Spirit of Truth – John 14:17 / 15:26 / 16:13

4. Enlightenment of the New Testament

- remember 2 Peter 1:16-21
- The natural first, then the spiritual – 1 Corinthians 15:44-46
- Natural and Spiritual Israel – (Romans 11:21 / Galatians 3:29 / 6:16)

- ***Always study the Old Testament with the light (revelation) of the New Testament.***

5. Style of Literature

- Gospels

- Apostolic letters

- Apocalyptic – Revelation

- The Law

- Historical narratives

- The Prophets

- Books of Wisdom