

A Prosecutor Looks at the Bible



by [Robert C. Veil, J.D.](#)

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The Bible is the most unusual and remarkable book we have ever encountered. It is unusual in that it claims to be the product of divine inspiration. And this book has had a remarkable influence, felt around the world for centuries. The book is morally good and pure, but upon examination we see that it is much more than a good book. Surviving countless attacks and criticisms, continuing as the world's best seller, the Bible has been examined and cross-examined far more than any other book ever written.

As a prosecutor, I was required to examine cases with a critical eye, preparing them for presentation to a jury. All cases had their strengths and weaknesses. They had to be examined carefully and a decision had to be made concerning their prosecution. It had to be decided whether each case had merit, and whether there was a reasonable likelihood of success in proving it to a jury if necessary. If the case lacked merit, it was not proper to proceed. And this decision had to be made based upon the strength of the evidence, not upon personal preferences, political considerations, or even the level of certainty or commitment of the police officer who initiated the charges.

When I look at the Bible, I see a strong case for its inspiration. The evidence is not only compelling, it is overwhelming. The fact that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, as opposed to merely a work of man, can be established in several ways. It can be established from a philosophical standpoint inasmuch as the derivation of truth and knowledge from God Himself is consistent with an inspired revelation of His will. It can be established from a logical or rational series of arguments, or an historical study, or a survey of nature itself—which reveals God as well. But as a prosecutor, I am also impressed with the evidence of inspiration within the Bible itself. When I look at the Bible carefully, I notice several things which strongly argue for its inspiration by God:

1. When I examine the Bible, I see that the Bible claims to be inspired by God. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16). The literal meaning of the Greek word translated "inspiration of God" is breathed out by God or God-breathed. This claim is unique and sets the Bible apart from the vast body of world literature. Except for a few later imitations, other books basically account for their own origin through purely natural means. But throughout the Bible, it claims to be from God.

I recognize that critics will object that the Bible's own claim of inspiration cannot be considered on the ground that "you can't use the Bible to prove the Bible." But such an objection would be overruled, for it ignores standard and accepted practice in other proceedings. We routinely allow the accused in criminal cases to speak for himself, although in this country he is not required to do so. Even in civil cases, where the burden of proof is much lower, we allow the defendant to speak in his own behalf when his character is called into question. If the Bible is to be accorded a fair trial, its own claims of inspiration must be carefully considered along with all other evidence.

The Bible claims its own inspiration forthrightly. It makes no apology, and shows no hesitation in stating that it and its central figure, Jesus Christ, are from God. "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death.... This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses" (Acts 2:22-23,32). So as a starting point, we note that the Bible claims to be of divine origin.

Sometimes people will deny that the Bible is from God, arguing that it is merely a "good book." I recall one of my early school teachers telling the class that the Bible was written by "a good man" long ago. On the contrary, if the Bible is not truly the product of divine inspiration, it is not good, and it was not written by good people, because they steadfastly contended that it is. They would be more accurately

described as deceivers or liars, because their amazing claims were false. It is also noteworthy that even the most radical Bible scholars do not argue that the book was composed by a single author. Although there is considerable debate about specifically when and by whom some of the various books of the Bible were written, it is universally admitted to be the product of a number of writers over many years, a point to be developed further below.

2. When I examine the Bible, I observe that, the critics' claims notwithstanding, the Bible is amazingly consistent with itself. There is a grand procession throughout. This fact is actually very compelling when it is recognized that the Bible consists of 66 separate books written by approximately 40 different writers with varying and diverse backgrounds. These writers included fishermen, a tent maker, a tax collector, a shepherd, kings, prophets, historians, social activists, statesmen, etc. Most of these writers never knew each other personally, making collusion in the composition of the Bible impossible. They could not "get their story straight" before writing. Further, each of the books were originally written in one of three different languages, from three different continents around the world. It was written over a period of approximately 1,600 years, yet consistently develops one main story—a central theme, without contradiction or inconsistency.

The development of a grand theme, with contributions made thereto in the earliest books of the Bible, gradually unfolded, and completed throughout the latter books, is an amazing accomplishment, and unexplainable without divine intervention. For example, in the earliest books of the Bible, the Pentateuch, the writer introduces the concept of the Passover lamb, with its many similarities to Jesus Christ. The male lamb was to be spotless and without blemish, a perfect specimen. It was to be killed by the shedding of blood, and the blood was to be applied to the dwelling houses of those to be saved from the final plague (Exodus 11 ff.). The Passover feast itself contained remarkable similarities to the Lord's Supper, though instituted hundreds of years earlier. These attributes are interwoven with the manner in which the lamb was to be killed, the actual shedding of blood, and the application of it to the houses of a selected people. How could these characteristics have been devised without a knowledge of what was to come? That is, how could the invention and detailed description of the Passover appurtenances have been accomplished by someone completely unaware of how these details would later align with the sacrifice of Christ for the sins of the world?

Bible students call this phenomenon "typology." It involves the pre-figuring of places, things, and events by Old Testament "shadows," which look forward to and foretell future fulfillment. The Old Testament "types" are sometimes extremely detailed, and they have astonishingly appropriate applications in the New Testament "antitypes." From an evidentiary standpoint, they are unexplainable without divine guidance of the Bible writers. No human author, without assistance, could have foreseen the application and fulfillment of the detailed types they described. The operation of random chance can no more explain this occurrence than the dropping of the pieces of a complex jigsaw puzzle from its box onto a table could yield the completed result. The finished picture becomes visible upon examination of the various New Testament writings. Added to this is the fact that these New Testament writers had no control over the work of the Old Testament writers who foretold these matters. How is this explainable absent divine intervention?

3. When I examine the Bible I see objectivity. Although perhaps not totally inconceivable, this is surprising if the writing of the book was not superintended by God. The Bible relates both the good and the bad concerning its heroes. That is not typical of human works, although it can sometimes be accomplished with concerted, strained effort. But given the multiplicity of Bible writers, it would be difficult to explain how all of them succeeded in such objectivity.

The Bible often includes information which seems, at first, to argue against its point. It includes "challenging" passages, which might have been easily omitted. For example, in Job 2:3 the Bible quotes God as saying to Satan, "And still he holds fast to his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause." It is not surprising that Bible critics have seized upon this passage in an effort to disparage the God of the Bible, and to deny its inspiration. They claim the verse teaches that God personally set Job up for failure. Indeed, the verse on the surface seems to say this, and it is only upon deeper study of the verse with its immediate and more remote context that the true meaning appears. But why was the verse included in the first place? It would have been easy, had the work been of mere human origin, to avoid this and other difficult statements. Had we, in our limited wisdom, been composing the Bible in an effort to palm it off as the work of God, would we have included such statements? The fact that these difficult passages appear in the text is strong evidence that it was not written by humans unconstrained by a higher influence. There is an over-arching hand which gives to the text a higher meaning, understandable only upon a reading of the work as a whole. The ancient Bible

writers, who were not always privy to these other, clarifying passages, would not have written this way, but for the control of inspiration. In other words, since most of the Bible writers did not have access to the other portions of the Bible as they wrote, it is not likely that they would have inserted statements understandable only upon comparison with those other portions. If they were writing with only their own uninspired wisdom, they would have omitted such passages altogether.

Further, it is a mark of authenticity to include negative or undesirable traits about the people held out as heroes. It is not typical for human witnesses to volunteer weaknesses or undesirable concessions about themselves in their own case. If the Bible writers were liars trying to convince us to follow them, it is inconceivable that they would contradict that aim by making themselves look bad. Most people want to bolster their position, and we generally tend to minimize or omit information which detracts from our message or makes us look bad. But the Bible does not do this. It delivers both the positive and the negative, the good and the bad about the characters used to tell its story. Peter, for example, is presented as the strong right hand of the Lord Himself, a pillar in the early church. Yet, in other passages he is presented with the most embarrassing of human foibles. We are given his impetuous nature, his lack of faith or conviction, his racial bias, and even his denial of Jesus Christ. David, an undisputed hero of God and his people throughout the history of Israel, and a forefather to Jesus Himself, is described as indulging in the most humiliating of sins, including sexual perversity and murder. Would these salacious facts be included had the writing of the book not been superintended by God?

4. Upon examination of the Bible, I notice what J.W. McGarvey called the “restraint” of inspiration.^[1] There are many examples; it is a fascinating characteristic of the Bible and unexplainable if it is the work of mere man. Essentially, we have people and momentous events, of great interest to our human curiosity, disposed of in brief sentences leaving us longing for more. This, too, is unlike the work of uninspired men, who tend to run on and on about matters in which they have a great interest. One would think, for example, that the biblical character of Samson, whose exploits have been of keen and thrilling interest to millions, would have been accorded more than three chapters (Judges 14-16). Or, to use McGarvey’s example, the death of James, one of the apostles, would have been described in great detail, instead of only 11 words (Acts 12:2).

How are we to account for this circumstance? The matters which seem less interesting, and yet in the grand scheme of the book as a whole have greater significance, are given more attention. Whereas the matters which appeal to our human curiosity, but in reality have minor import in the overall story, are passed over quickly. Does this not show the guiding force of a superior wisdom in the composition of the entire Bible?

Those new to Bible study are often confounded by the insertion of genealogical records. The names are sometimes difficult to pronounce, and one at first wonders why they are included at all. The Bible contains about 24 genealogical lists, strategically distributed throughout its pages. Many of them include supplemental historical information in addition to the names themselves. Taken together, they amount to a progression of generations leading to the Messiah. Further, they place Him into a human history or framework. Surely, the original writers could not have foreseen the significance of these records. It is only upon closure of the final pages of the New Testament that their significance begins to dawn upon us. Their evidentiary value in connecting the Messiah to human events is meticulously established. No other person in all of human history is so carefully documented from a genealogical perspective. And while the individual writers of the Bible may not have seen the importance of including such laborious and tedious details, the God who inspired the overall work obviously did.

5. Upon examination of the Bible, I see that it is uncanny in its accuracy. Like the old anvil which withstands the blows of countless hammers, it proves to be correct time and time again. I recently watched as a nationally known atheist and Bible critic debated the existence of God. Although referring to the many embarrassing errors within the Bible, he produced none. I suspect he knew that such alleged “errors” have been put forth time and time again, only to be capably answered upon closer examination. No other book has been subjected to such treatment and withstood such attacks.

6. I see in the Bible the most enduring of books. It has long outsold all others, and has been treasured and preserved through the centuries as a priceless work of wisdom and guidance. Countless generations have largely ordered their lives from its principles. It has been translated and proclaimed at great personal risk. Men have given their lives in its proclamation. Even in our own country, the Bible provides support for our founding principles, continues to be revered by many, and is made readily available upon demand. In our transient and disposable culture, this is no small feat.



What do I see when I examine the Bible? I see a book that I would not hesitate to take before any reasonable trier of fact. I would be willing to submit it in a fair comparison against all others. I would not shrink from relying upon it. I am confident in its power and dependability. I see the marks of inspiration upon it and

the hand of God within it. I see consistency, objectivity, restraint, accuracy, and endurance. In short, I see the inspired Word of God.

REFERENCE

¹ John W. McGarvey (1892), *New Commentary on Acts of the Apostles*, (Cincinnati: Standard), pp. 232-233.

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