

History and Authenticity of the Bible
Lesson 1
Introduction – Part One

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The course description says that we are going to talk about how the Bible came into existence, the manuscript evidence behind the Bible, and the problems relating to the English translations of the Bible and leading the student to a position of complete confidence and dependency upon the Bible as the inspired, inerrant word of God. Now if you don't think that is an issue, you are not up to date.

In the paper there was an article from Canada in which there was a television talk show where a fundamentalist preacher, who said he knew the Bible, went on with some of the guys from that Jesus Seminar. They [verbally] slaughtered him. He not only did not know the Bible—he didn't know what he was talking about. The result was the program concluded that if you are educated and you know the evidence behind the Bible, you know that it is not the word of God. It can be appreciated, but it is not the Bible, for sure. This had quite an impact; in fact, there were more callers than ever before. And this so-called “fundamentalist” was laughed at and mocked at. He didn't know what he was talking about. He didn't know one thing about what we are going to teach you in this course. Yes, it is important to know what you believe and why.

When I was in Sunday school, we used to sing the little chorus: “The B-I-B-L-E, yes, that's the book for me. I stand alone on the word of God the B-I-B-L-E.” So, if this is not in your heart, then hopefully by the end of the semester there will not be any doubt in your mind.

Course Objectives

- 1) Learn facts about the existence of the Bible and the accuracy of the Bible
- 2) Explain the problem of manuscript evidence and the reliability of the recorded word
- 3) Build confidence in the inspiration and authority of the Bible
- 4) Answer objections to the inspiration and authority of the Bible
- 5) Learn to trust the power of the Bible to change the hearts and lives of people

Now, our course objectives, we have five of them. One is to inform you as to the facts behind the Bible's existence and accuracy. Two is to explain the problem of manuscript evidence and the reliability of the written record of the Bible. Three is to build your confidence in the inspiration, authority, and accuracy of the Bible. And four is to help you answer objections to the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible. And five is to encourage you to trust the power of the Bible itself to change the hearts and lives of people.

What makes this study more distinct is the systematic teaching of the Bible in which our pastors, though maybe not as educated as some, yet were educated in the Bible. And we learn the Bible. And we teach that this is the word of God. We tell you why it is. But we believe it is the word of God and we are going to show you why in this course. So that when you leave, you will always proclaim the word of God in its power and in its authority. So, it is a very important thing.

Now the textbook is Don Stewart's, *What Everyone Needs to Know about the Bible*. You have to read it in its entirety. It's an important book because it was organized on this subject. Now some of the material in there needs to be updated which you will get in this course. For instance, I taught this before under a bibliology theme and we now have—this whole thing is brand new. That's how fast things change in terms of manuscript evidence. So we will update it. I recommend it highly and of course want you to read it.

Now on your general outline, to show you where we're going with the course on the History and Authenticity of the Bible, we are going to hit five subjects. First, we are going to talk about "The Importance of this Study" as it relates to three different issues concerning the Bible. One would be the reliability of the Bible. Two, what we call revelation—which we will describe what that means—and the results that you can expect by trusting the Bible. So that is kind of the initial deal called, "The Importance of the Study."

Secondly, we give you information about the Bible: the Old Testament, the New Testament, as well as the Apocrypha. You will know all of the basic information regarding that, so you are able to give an answer to those who ask a reason for the hope that is in you.

A third issue is the inspiration of the Bible. Now that becomes a little detailed. We give you a definition that we will want you to know. And we will also present the difficulties. We do not run away from them here. We do not put our head in the sand and act like it will all go away. We don't do that. We deal with the problems here. And when there are problems, serious problems, we will admit them. We will talk about them and I

will give you a multitude of problems related to “inspiration.” Not to shake up your confidence—on the contrary—but to build it so that you are able to give an answer to critics.

The cults love to tear evangelical Christians apart on the authority of the Bible. They do it over and over again. And many Christians are not prepared to answer a thing because they have never studied it. Hopefully you will have enough material to be ready.

The fourth issue is a tough one. It is called “inerrancy.” The majority of evangelicals, unfortunately, no longer believe in inerrancy. We are sorry to hear that. We do. We believe that. What does that mean? That means we believe the Bible in its original autographs is totally without error. Well, today that is just being ripped everywhere. Even among good people who say they love the Bible and believe in inspiration. But as you will learn in this course, you’ve got to watch people. Because they say they believe the Bible is inspired does not mean they believe what they should. We will tell you all the differences relative to “inspiration.” Inerrancy is another subject, although sometimes they are put together and that becomes deceiving.

Many seminaries now are no longer having a statement on inerrancy. They are pulling it out. They have had it for years but are pulling it out because they do not want to deal with the problem. So they think that if you take a stand you aren’t going to get many people. Well, I can tell you right now, we are not interested in large numbers here. We really aren’t. We are not trying to have the biggest school ever in America. We are going to stand for what is right no matter what. We know what we believe. We are standing for that and there is no compromise here. The truth of the matter is, what’s important is the word of God. That’s what is important. It’s the heart and soul of this ministry.

We are going to give you what I call the twelve basic principles of the interpretation of the Bible. That's to help you get started so you know how to interpret, know how to deal with the problems of interpretation. Because you and I both know that even in the average church there are people saying, "Well there are many ways to interpret the Bible." We will talk about that before we're done in this course. So that is where we're headed and we'll start with the importance of this study.

Homiletics deals with preaching. Hermeneutics deals with the art of interpretation. Hermeneutics is a biblical word, for instance, the spiritual gift of interpretation is the word hermeneutic. It is a Greek word set into English and it simply means the art of interpretation. We will be giving you twelve principles relating to it that are basic to take what we have studied in the course and be able to apply it.

Also for your library, especially you pastor-types, you will want to pick up a number of books on inspiration and inerrancy. There are a lot of them. The textbook is Don Stewart's. That is the only one and I personally still like Josh McDowell's. They are kind of standards, *New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, Volumes One and Two. That is where it gets into the details of manuscript evidence. And it is still very, very good, that two-volume set by Josh McDowell.

All right class, if you have your outline it's "The Importance of This Study." And considering the importance of the study, we are going to start right away with reliability. Probably the most important thing about this whole subject because people will say right off the bat: "Well, that's just like any other book. Men wrote that like any other book." Actually, they don't even believe that. How do I know? Well, they believe in George Washington but that's just in a book. So you understand, the attack which the enemy has

made against the Bible and infiltrated the secular mind (who does not even know about the Bible) is worse than, “Oh, that’s just a book.”

See, as an apologist, I could very definitely deal with that if you would just treat it like a normal book. If we could just apply those simple principles of a normal book to the Bible, we would still come out fine. But they don’t do that. It is not just another book to them, it’s worse than that. They believe it’s a book of myths and fables that they don’t agree with, or that contradicts their lifestyle. They don’t want anything to do with it. There is an attack mode. Have you ever noticed it? You see, the enemy is out to destroy your confidence in the Bible. He started in the Garden of Eden. He said, “Hath God said, you shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, or you’ll surely die?” Eve added that little phrase “touch it.” God didn’t say “don’t touch it.” He said “don’t eat it.” And he started planting doubts into Eve’s mind about the authority and reliability of what God says.

Reliability is extremely important. In fact, there are two issues that you should know about reliability. How reliable is the Bible? How trustworthy is it? Two things: First we’ve got to know how accurate its statements are. You cannot have reliability without accuracy. And secondly, we have to know how authoritative is its message? Why do I have to listen to it? I don’t care if it is accurate. It could be accurate and be stupid, foolish, ridiculous message. And it may be accurately reported. So those two issues are a part of reliability.

Why should you build your whole life on the Bible? Why should you trust the Bible to guide you in everything that you do and say until Jesus comes again? One issue is accuracy. The other issue is authority.

Now how accurate are its statements? Let's go to Matthew 5. Behind the issue of accuracy is the veracity of Jesus Himself. We try to give you in the notes a lot of space so you can write different things in. But behind accuracy is the veracity of Christ. Meaning He's either saying the truth here or He's not. We are basing what we believe about accuracy on a statement Jesus said in [Matthew 5:18](#).

For verily I say to you, [Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount] 'til heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, til all be fulfilled. (KJV)

That sounds pretty reliable to me. That is a very, very strong statement dealing with the accuracy of the Bible. Everything that it predicts will be fulfilled. And not one jot or one tittle will pass away until it does. So you can count on the Bible doing everything it says.

Now the word jot is the smallest letter in the Hebrew language. Technically it's the *yodh*. You write it in English Y-O-D-H. It is called a *jot*. It is like the English apostrophe, it looks just like that. It's the smallest of the 22 letters in the Hebrew language. So, how interesting that Jesus would say, not one letter, the very smallest letter will ever pass away. Now right away you are getting a view of inspiration and inerrancy that is a little deeper than the average evangelical church believes. It isn't just the thoughts of the Bible. It isn't just the words of the Bible. It's the letters also.

Do you understand that just slight mistakes here, changes the meaning of words? Now He also said, "not one tittle." What is a tittle? A tittle is a marking on a Hebrew

letter that distinguishes it from another letter when the two look alike. For instance the letter that is like our English D, *daled*, looks very much like the R, the *resh*. It looks very much like the same. It's just kind of at a right angle. But on the *daled*, the D, the line at the top goes out just a small tad beyond the line that goes perpendicular to it. The little extension is called a tittle. A tittle is simply a marking on one letter to distinguish it from another letter when the two letters look alike. So talk about a view of inspiration. Jesus said, "not one *yodh*—not one smallest letter in the Hebrew language, and not one marking on those letters will ever pass away until all be fulfilled. That is a pretty detailed view of inspiration.

Go to Revelation 19. Every time I turn to this book, I always think in my heart, "Wouldn't it be great to be looking at this when He comes!" [Revelation 19:9](#). "He saith unto me..." John is being told to write.

Write. "Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And He saith unto me, 'These are the true sayings [of Whom?] of God.'"

Now that is either true or it is not true. Either these are the true sayings of God or they are not the true sayings of God. The Bible says they are absolutely what God said, accurately reported.

People say to me, "Well, there are lies in the Bible." Well, of course there are because every time Satan speaks, it is usually a lie. And by the way, men are recorded and they speak lies. But inspiration does not refer to whether there is a lie in the Bible.

Inspiration refers to whether it is accurately reported as it was told. Whenever God speaks, it is the truth of course. But it is all accurately reported—that's what it means—true, genuine, totally dependable and reliable sayings of God.

Look at [Revelation 21:5](#). I like to use these in Revelation because Revelation is a much debated book as to whether to take it literally or not. [Revelation 21:5](#).

He that sat upon the throne said, "Behold I make all things new." And He said unto me, [He's reporting what was said to him by God the Father on the throne.] 'Write, for these words are true [they're genuine] and faithful [totally reliable].'"

You say, "Well, how do I know that the guy accurately reported that?" That is part of the problem that is discussed in this course. [Revelation 22:6](#). I just want you to understand the importance of this study at this point and what the Bible actually says. You may not agree with what the Bible says but at least be honest enough to admit that this is what it says. In [chapter 22, verse 6](#), "He said unto me these sayings are faithful and true." There it is again. We have a totally reliable record given to us.

Now we are going to deal with that issue in a moment before we are done. We are simply just starting out. What is reliability? What does that mean? How trustworthy is the Bible? It deals with the accuracy of its statements. Are they reliable? Are they genuine? The Bible says they are. You say, "That is the Bible talking about itself." And that is a funny thing to me about people. In their attacks on the Bible, they are scared of internal testimony. They are scared of it. They say, "Oh, the Bible is saying that about itself. How

do you know that's true?" Oh well then, we can't apply internal evidence to any book can we, under those terms? If that is so, then we have to apply external evidences to the accuracy of the Bible. Would you like to know what the external evidences are to the accuracy of the Bible? The answer is "no," they don't want to know it. Why? Because there is no book in the entire world that can stand the test that the Bible can on external evidences. And we will show that to you before we are done with this course.

So you see, the very testimony of the Bible itself is clear. It is telling you "this is totally reliable." It reports God saying it. The veracity of Jesus is here. He said that none of it will pass away. It will all be fulfilled. In Matthew 24, He said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away" ([Matthew 24:35](#)).

Now, how authoritative is its message? I was witnessing to a guy on the Bible and he was so hostile I said to him, "You know I'm learning in old age to be a little more relaxed, but I do get uptight. I love this Book."

So anyway, he is just telling me all that is wrong with it and I said, "Can I ask you a personal question?"

He said, "Sure. What?"

I said, "What have you got against this Book?" I mean he was waxing so eloquently about what he thought was wrong with the Book. You know, I had not done that tactic before, but I was just kind of frustrated. I didn't want to get any angrier than I already was. So I just said to him, "What is it that you have against this Book?"

He thought for a minute and he said, "I have read it."

I said, "I'm glad you have, but you are certainly against it."

He says, "It is the way the Book writes."

I said, “What do you mean the way?”

He says, “It acts like it is the authority, like you’ve got to do what it says.”

And I smiled at him and I said, “You know I cannot find a finer testimony for the authority of the Bible than what you just gave. I want to thank you for that.”

“I don’t want to give any testimony,” he said.

I said, “Well, you just did.”

Yeah, I can understand that very, very much. The Bible tells you what to do and acts like it is the authority and you are not. And you see the carnal nature that we have, the depravity that we have, we fight that, man. “I don’t want anybody telling me what to do.” But just to emphasize that for you, when it [the Bible] says: “Thus saith the Lord.” Now some book I read had [listed] five thousand times that this was said. Please be accurate. Don’t say that to people. Anybody can get the trusty computer out and find what it is. It actually says it [415 times](#).

You see how we lose credibility when we do not say what is true. We are quoting somebody and all this business of what the Bible is or it isn’t. Please quote accurately and don’t quote something from somebody that you haven’t also seen the evidence for. This is very important.

All I am trying to say is that these are phrases that are used in the Bible to indicate its authority. In other words, God said this, you do this. “The word of the Lord said...it is spoken...it is written.” That is how authority is developed.

What I want you to understand is *be accurate*. Don’t quote those figures that you read in some books on this. And it is done constantly. Look it up yourself. You do not

need to trust the notes in the syllabus, look it up yourself. And who cares whether it is one or two off, but just do not say “five thousand.” Bad mistake!

Now when you talk about authority, authority in this Book, why is it authoritative and therefore totally reliable? And the answer is: “because it is the word of God.” Flat out. Do you know that if it is the word of God and God is who He is, according to this word, then He would not make a mistake? He could not. It would be impossible for Him to do so. The next argument is: “Well, but the guys who wrote it down could make mistakes.” And do you know something? That is true. So in our course, we have to look at all of that.

There is not a book that is extant, which means it was not printed or published before we had the printing press. Those extant copies of other manuscripts are far more error-filled than the Bible ever was by hand copying it. Some people quote things like, “Oh there’s over 500,000 variations of the original text of the New Testament.” No, there is not. But people say that. I had a guy throw that up to me and he listed them all. So I went back and looked them all up myself. First of all, half of what he put down was not true at all and the other half were simply repeating the same error in multiple copies of the same passage. So you understand that if a guy made a mistake—wrote down one letter different than another letter—and all the copies that were made off of his copy, that would repeat the same error, wouldn’t it? If there were 50 copies, so are there 50 errors? No, there is just one. Are you following me? So the total number of those things is so ridiculously low, there is no document in all of ancient history that can even compare with the accuracy of the Bible. And it is amusing to me how we allow this argument to go on and on. It is like, “Oh boy, yeah, he’s into that human author thing. I don’t know what

to say now.” “Well, they were unusual men, you know.” No they weren’t. They were just as crummy as you are. You know, they are fallible. They can make mistakes. And so we have to deal with that. We have to deal with the transcribing of the documents. You know, that is very important.

I hear people say, “Well, the Jews did not make any mistakes.” Yes they did. They made fewer mistakes than Gentiles because they had a reverence for the Bible that maybe the Gentile did not have and the Jew had a fear of making a mistake. But they still made some mistakes. In the manuscripts there are some differences. Not many. But there are some.

Now I don’t know whether you are getting shaky or not right now. But I have found something in my life: “the truth will set you free.” Don’t hide from the truth. We are going to expose probably a lot of myths that you have heard from preachers. All well-meaning, but we are going to have to deal with them because they are not always the truth. So, if I ask you, “what’s the key to the reliability of the Bible?” There are really two issues: The accuracy of its statements and the authority of its message. There is no book that has ever been written—and I have read a lot of religious statements, I’ve read cult books too—but there is no book that talks like the Bible. You talk about authority. There aren’t any options here. There aren’t creative alternatives and suggestions. He just says, “Do it. This is My word, now do it.” The Bible expects us to obey it. Why?—because it is God’s word!

Now, listen carefully. I don’t make it the word of God. It already is the word of God. It doesn’t become the word of God by the way I teach it. It already is the word of God. You can shout and scream and yell and say “I really believe this with all my heart.”

Well, we are glad you do, but that has nothing to do with whether it is the word of God.

“But I believe it and that settles it.” No, it doesn’t. The guy who believes in Buddha could say the same thing. “I believe that Buddha lives. He lives within my heart.” Well, I am glad you feel that way, but I don’t believe he does. I may believe you believe it, but I don’t believe what you believe.

Is everybody following that? Okay, you understand this? This is a very important issue. We will not run away from the problems and the details of this. It is no threat at all, none whatsoever. But it is to a lot of Christians because they do not know how to handle it. One thing is for sure: the Bible claims to be accurate in its statements. One thing is for sure: the Bible claims to be authoritative in everything it says. This is God’s word and you better shape up!

The carnal man does not want to hear that. We want to do what we want to do. We don’t want anybody telling us what to do. Well, the Bible sure tells us what to do. And that is the reliability issue. I trust it because it is the word of God. If I did not believe this was the word of God I would not be sitting here teaching this course. I’ll tell you that right now, I would not waste the time with it. I would not want to preach anymore either. I would not want to go into the pulpit doubting that this is the infallible word of God. That is the key to biblical preaching and teaching—what a man believes that Book is really all about. I believe it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes. I do not make it powerful. It already is the power of God. That is a wonderful Book, isn’t it? I love that Book. And it is so important that we get this straight.

Let’s Pray,

Father I thank You for Your word. I thank You that we can have confidence in this Book. It is the word of God that liveth and abideth forever. And I pray that You will help us as we go through this course. Lord, it breaks our hearts to see how the enemy in his strategy has blinded the minds of them that believe not. It breaks our hearts to see friends and relatives and loved ones who simply will not open their minds to the truth. God You must do that. You opened the heart of Lydia long ago ([Acts 16:14](#)). You can open anybody's heart. You have the power Lord. We need You. Salvation is of God and not of man. We are born of the Spirit of the living God and Lord I pray that You would teach us throughout this course to trust You to break the bondage of blindness that is on the unbelieving heart. Thank You, Lord, in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.