A HERMENEUTICAL PROOF OF THE BIBLE

ARTHUR H. GARRISON*

Associate Professor of Criminal Justice
Kutztown University
garrison@kutztown.edu

Abstract: This article makes two propositions. First, through the scientific method of hermeneutics, the authenticity of the Bible can be established. Second, after academic and objective study of the Bible, the utilization of faith that the Bible is the inspired living word of God completes the full understanding of the Bible and its authenticity. It will be asserted these two propositions can be supported by the utilization of literal, grammatical, historical, and contextual hermeneutic principles applied to the biblical text.

INTRODUCTION

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” 1 Thus the Bible has utility for scholarship and defining human behavior, and as such the Bible should be read literally. Read literally means unless a passage is clearly allegorical or hyperbolical (symbolically or figuratively),

*Arthur H. Garrison, Associate Professor of Criminal Justice at Kutztown University. Dr. Garrison received a B.A. political science from Kutztown University, a M.S. criminal justice from West Chester University, and a Doctor of Law and Policy from Northeastern University. Dr. Garrison is the author of Supreme Court Jurisprudence in Times of National Crisis, Terrorism, and War: A Historical Perspective (2011) and Race and Criminal Justice History: Rhetoric, Politics and Policy (2018).

1 2 Timothy 3:16. All cited Scripture is NKJV unless stated. As Solomon wrote, the word of God could be known and it provided a source of all knowledge, wisdom, and understanding (Prov 1:1-7). The Scriptures assert Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived; “I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you” (1 Kings 3:12 and 1 Kings 4:29-31).
the text should be read with the assumption the words used are used in their ordinary sense and meaning and are intended to assert a specific and single idea, thought, principle, and/or concept. The application of hermeneutic principles requires the reading of the words of a particular text, in context, to determine the specific and singular meaning of those words. Hermeneutic principles provides a method which allows for the objective determination of those specific and singular meanings through an analysis of the literal, grammatical, historical, and contextual use of words in the text. The science of hermeneutics defines a text by its comparison to other parts of the same text being studied. Thus the meaning of one verse of the Bible is defined by the context of the chapter and book where it is located as well as by the nature and structure of the Bible itself as a whole. This scientific utilization of hermeneutics supplements a primary assumption regarding the Bible – that the Bible is the Word of God.

The Bible is Inspired by the Holy Spirit

The hermeneutical truth of the Bible, although written through the hands of multiple people in different times, places, cultures, and languages, is established by its internal continuity and coherent message and purpose through all sixty-six books. From the beginning, the Bible makes clear it is the word of God not of men, but it was relayed through men. As God said, through Moses, in the beginning of Scripture,

Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers is giving you. You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. Your eyes have seen what the LORD did at Baal Peor; for the LORD your God has destroyed from among you all the men who followed Baal of Peor. But you who held fast to the LORD your God are alive today, every one of you.

Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess. (Deut 4:1-5)

God also said, through John, at the end of the Bible:

For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of
this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book (Rev 22: 18-19)

The Bible is timeless (Rev 22: 18-19) and is not the work of men. Paul wrote in his defense of the gospel and his assurance to the church that the gospel could be relied upon exclusively through faith:

But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. (Gal 1:11-12)

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles—if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power. (Eph 3:1-7)

Peter, testifying as a first person eyewitness regarding the truth of the gospel of Jesus, wrote to the church regarding the truth of the Bible:

For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. . . . For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed . . . . (2 Peter 1:12-19)

John the Baptist, testifying as a first person eyewitness regarding the presence of Jesus at the Jordan river, said:

Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! . . . . I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God. (John 1:29, 32-34. Cf., John 3)
The author of the Bible is the Holy Spirit. The Bible, inspired by the Holy Spirit, was written through the hands of men. It was written over a period of 1500 years (from 1400 B.C. beginning with Moses and ending in 90 A.D. with John) in three languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek) spanning over multiple generations of empires and kingdoms. The Bible says regarding its origin: “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets” (Heb 1:1) the “gospel of God which He promised before through His prophets [resulted] in the Holy Scriptures” (Rom 1:1). In explaining the gospel, Peter wrote as

an apostle of Jesus Christ . . . in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ… (1 Peter 1:1)

…knowing this first, that no prophecy of 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. (1 Peter 1:21)

Paul wrote:

But we speak the wisdom of God . . . which none of the rulers of this age knew . . . . [For] eyes have not seen, nor ears heard, nor entered into the hearts of man, the things God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit [for] no one knows the things of God except [by] the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. (1 Cor 2:7-8, 10-13, emphasis added)

2 Compare 2 Samuel 23:22 (“The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue.'”), Jer 1:7, 9 (“And whatever I command you, you shall speak. . . . Then the Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me: ‘Behold, I have put My words in your mouth.’”), Exodus 4:14-15 (“He said . . . And I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and I will teach you what you shall do.), Isaiah 51:16 (“And I have put My words in your mouth.), and Deut 18:18 (“I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.”)

3 Cf., 1 Corinthians 14:37 “If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.” The writings of Paul are considered equal with the Scriptures; “as also our beloved brother Paul . . .as also in all his epistles . . . which untaught and unstable people twist . . . as they do also the rest of the Scriptures” (2 Peter 3:15-16).
For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. (1 Cor 1:17-18)

Paul wrote that he being “an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead)” (Gal 1:1) was sent to bring the word of God to both the Gentiles and the Jews (Acts 9:10-17), and that word is not open to change, not even by himself. ⁴ Paul wrote:

But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed. (Gal 1:8-9)

I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. (Gal 1:11-12)

Now concerning the things which I write to you, indeed, before God, I do not lie. (Gal 1:20)

The Holy Spirit, the hand and spirit of God, made clear to the writers of Scripture what was from him and what was not. As Paul wrote to the Corinthian church, “Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord . . . But to the rest I, not the Lord, say . . .” (1 Cor 7:10, 12). The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God who brings perfect wisdom and understanding ⁵ as well as

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⁴ “Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision . . . ‘Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.’ . . . And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.’’” Acts 9:10, 15, 17.

⁵ For example see the story of David and the temple of God (1 Chron 28:12). David, upon giving his son Solomon the plans for the building, said “the plans for all that he had by the Spirit” were so perfect as to the measurements and specifications of “the temple, when it was being built, was built with stone finished at the quarry, so that no hammer or chisel or any iron tool was heard in the temple while it was being built” (1 Kings 6:7). On the power of God to bring wisdom and understanding to men, it is written of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, “God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature
testifies of the truth of God. For those who accept salvation through Jesus, the Holy Spirit “makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God” (Rom 8:27) and the knowledge provided by the Spirit makes up for the human “weaknesses” and ignorance of those He works through. Paul, the other apostles, and the prophets before them understood what words were and were not of the Lord (2 Peter 3:15-16) and that provides the consistency and authenticity of the Bible.

The Scriptures, the Bible, are “revealed by the Spirit to his Holy apostles and prophets” (Eph 3:5). Nothing God wanted in the Bible was lost, because the apostles and before them the prophets had a helper, of whom Jesus said, is “the Spirit of truth . . . the Holy Spirit . . . [and] he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you” (John 14:16-17, 26). As Jeremiah wrote, “The Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth and the Lord said to me ‘Behold I have put My words in your mouth’” (Jer 1:9). For “you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall witness . . . to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). The writings of the apostles, in aggregate, under the leading of the Holy Spirit became the New Testament which when matched with the writings of Moses and the prophets forms The Bible.

Hermeneutic Principles and Understanding the Authenticity of the Bible

1. The Bible is the Product of the Holy Spirit: God Works in Affairs of Men

As to the historically correct observation men decided what Scriptures would and would not be included in the Bible, they were all aware of the Scripture, “you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, nor

and wisdom . . . [and] the king interviewed them, and among them all none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah [Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego]; therefore they served before the king. And in all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm.” (Dan 1:17, 19-20).

6 John 14:16-17, 26 See also Acts 1:4, 8. See the manifestation of this promise in Acts 2:3-4 (“Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”)
to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith” (1 Tim 1:3-4). They also knew the warning of teaching false doctrine to believers, for as Jesus admonished, “whoever causes one of these little ones who believes in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea . . . woe to that man by whom the offense comes!” (Matt 18:6-7). The point being that when the books of the Bible were compiled, the goal was to select the true writings from false traditions and other writings which occurred after the rise of Christianity. The Holy Spirit worked through the decisions of men to make sure the selections were correct. The problem of separating the wheat from the chaff is not new, for as discussed in First and Corinthians, Galatians, and Second Peter, the problem of false teaching and apostates were present in the days of Peter and Paul. In the days of Jesus, he himself warned of false teaching and that it would exist next to true teaching and in the order of time the truth would be separated from false teachings. This is the meaning of the parable of the wheat and the tares.

So the servants of the owner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’ He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The servants said to him, ‘Do you want us then to go and gather them up?’ But he said, ‘No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.”

He answered and said to them: “He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. (Matt 13:27-30, 37-41)

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7 See also Galatians 1:8-9 (false teachings of God brings a curse) and Deuteronomy 18:20 “But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.”
Although the modern construction of the Bible as we have it today is reflective of the ecclesiological desires of the politics of King James (1611) and before him the politics of the Roman Emperor; nonetheless the Bible is authentic because it is the result of the Holy Spirit working in the affairs of men to secure the result He desired. The proof that the selection of the various Scriptures available during the assemblage of the Bible is correct and it is as the Holy Spirit required it to be, lay in the consistency of the Bible from Genesis through Revelation. The authenticity of the Bible is in the objective hermeneutical examination of what was excluded in toto and what was included in toto.

The authenticity of the Bible is found in the consistency of stories and principles of the Bible which is written over 1500 years. In other words, its authenticity is in the commonality among the stories of the Bible in relation to God and His relationship with mankind and how He acts within the affairs of men to secure His purposes. As God told Elijah that He had seven thousand men who would serve Him in the face of an evil king (1 Kings 19:18). The Scriptures make clear that the Holy Spirit works in the hearts, affairs, and politics of men to get the result on earth that He desires. Consider some other famous examples: God used the treachery of Joseph’s brothers to make him Chief Minister over Egypt to rescue the Jews from famine (Gen 37, 39-45); God used a famine and the tragedy of the deaths of Naomi’s husband and two sons to put a Moabite woman in the maternal line of David, Solomon and Jesus (Ruth); God used the weakness of King Saul to give David the opportunity to destroy Goliath and later elevate him to the thrown of Israel (1 Samuel 16-17); God used the arrogance of a drunk king and the assassination conspiracy towards the same King to elevate Esther to the position of Queen and Mordecai to Prime Minster of the Persian empire resulting in the rescue of the Jewish people from the holocaust plans of Haman (Esther); God used the arrogance of King Nebuchadnezzar and the statue of himself to elevate Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego to high administrative office over the his kingdom in Babylon (Daniel 3); God used the treachery and politics of the royal court of King Darius to elevate Daniel over all of the governors of Persia (Daniel 6); and God used the criminal justice system of Rome to make sure that of all the possible condemned criminals in Judea, the one next to Jesus would use his dying breath to testify that Jesus was crucified unjustly (Luke 23: 41-42).
The book of Acts is replete with stories of God working through men to achieve His objectives. For example, God sent Ananias to Paul to free him from blindness and baptize him so that Paul could bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to both Gentiles and the Jews (Acts 9:10, 15, 17); God sent an angel to send Philip to the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:26-40); God sent Peter to the home of Cornelius, after telling Cornelius to send for Peter, to prove to the Jews that the Gentiles can receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 10); and God used the plots of Jewish mobs and assassins in Jerusalem, and the Roman criminal justice system to get Paul to Rome (Acts 22-23, 23:11, 25:9-12, 26:30-32). These examples, and others, give meaning to the observation of Paul, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Rom 8:28).

As King Solomon observed, “The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes” (Prov 21:1). As Joseph proclaimed to his brothers who sold him into slavery, “you planned evil against me, but God planned it for good, in order to do this—to keep many people alive—as it is today” (Gen 50:20 LEB). As in the book of Esther it was argued to Queen Esther, herself a Jew, regarding the plans of Haman to cause a holocaust of the Jews, that the Lord allowed “you [to] have come to a royal position for a time such as this” (Esther 4:14, LEB). As the Holy Spirit worked through the politics and treachery around the lives of David, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abed-Nego, Joseph, and Queen Esther to achieve his desired end, the Holy Spirit worked through the politics and decisions of the men who constructed the Bible to make sure the right decisions were made, that myths and fables which created falsehoods were not included, and only those doctrines that fostered the administration of faith remained. As reflected in 1 John, the anointing of the Holy Spirit brings knowledge (1 John 2:20) and “the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you [and] teaches you concerning all things [that are] true, and is not a lie . . . .” (1 John 2: 27). When the Bible was constructed, the Holy Spirit made sure through the works of men, any stories or writings (2 Peter 1:16-18) that did not reflect that Jesus was the Christ were seen as not authentic and were not included in the Bible.

With regard to understanding the resistance to the Bible, both as to its authenticity and that it is the actual word of God, the Bible itself explains
the resistance. When his disciples asked Jesus why he taught in parables, “He answered and said to them, ‘Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given’” (Matt 13:11). The giving of understanding comes from the Holy Spirit through the desire to understand. As Jesus said to Peter, “Blessed [happy, spiritually secure, favored by God] are you, Simon son of Jonah, because flesh and blood (mortal man) did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven” (Matt 16:17 AMP). The Bible makes sense as the word of God through the decision to want it to make sense. That desire provides room for the Holy Spirit to open the understanding of the reader. The wisdom of the Bible will be magnified upon acceptance of its truths and the rejection of the truths of the Bible will magnify ignorance to its truths. It’s a choice. The truth of the Bible is eternally settled without repentance (Rom 11:29) or change (Heb13:8) but the understanding the Bible comes through a choice to seek its truths and gain its understanding.

It is God’s intent for all to understand him through the Bible, but the experience and physical manifestation of understanding him is the sole result of individual choice. As Jesus said to his disciples, “For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him” (Matt 13:12). In other words, whoever has the desire for understanding, more understanding will be given; but whoever does not have desire, the little understanding he has will be of no utility. “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” (Prov 9:10; cf., Ps 111:10; Prov 1:7)

The wisdom and understanding of the Scriptures, as well as the authenticity, comes through the Holy Spirit. As Paul wrote regarding the truths of the gospel,

God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor
can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned (1 Cor 2:10-14).

Spiritual understanding of the Bible requires spiritual faith while simple cognitive understanding requires only an approach of scholarly reading. Cognitive reading without more allows for skepticism of the authenticity of the Bible or regulating it to the moral equivalence of Shakespeare. “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” (1 Cor 1:18). “For since . . . the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe” (1 Cor 1:21).

And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? (Heb 5:12)

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. (1 Cor 3:1-3)

Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby . . . (1 Peter 2:1-2)

For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things . . . the weak things . . . that no flesh should glory in His presence. (1 Cor 1:26-27, 29)

The flesh he refers to is the carnal wisdom and nature of mankind. When asked by religious leaders to show them a sign to prove himself, Jesus said, “A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no

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8 Romans 8:1-8, Galatians 5:19, and 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. As Paul wrote, “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled” (2 Cor 10:3-6).
sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah” (Matt 16:4). The carnal mind is directed by the physical senses not faith, and as such, the carnal mind requires physical proof and cannot accept truth by faith. As Jesus said to the religious scholars of his day who possessed scholarly command of the Scriptures but did not honor its meaning and elevated secondary sources to be equal with the Scriptures themselves in order to give meaning to the Scriptures, 

Rightly did Isaiah prophesy about you . . . As it is written [in Scripture], ‘These people honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. . . Teaching the precepts of men as doctrines [giving their traditions equal weight with Scriptures].’ You disregard and neglect the commandment of God, and cling [faithfully] to the tradition of men . . . . You are experts at setting aside and nullifying the commandment of God in order to keep your [man-made] tradition and regulations (Mark 7:6-9 AMP).⁹

Consider the utility of scholars who know all Scripture and the history thereof, even to know and opine on the original Hebrew and the Greek, yet question its eternal authenticity. Of such God asks, “Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge” (Job 38:2). As Stephen said to a religious mob holding stones as an answer to his assertions that the Scriptures are true and were fulfilled in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus:

You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it. Acts 7:51-53)

As Jude wrote to the church that suffered from false teachers:

For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ… But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit. (Jude 4, 17)

As John warned regarding how to test teachers (“spirits”) regarding

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⁹ Cf., Matthew 23 and Luke 13 (Woe to the Scribes and Pharisees) and Acts 7 (Stephen’s Address).
Scripture and what they teach:

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world. (1 John 4:1-3)

We [who teach God’s word] are from God [energized by the Holy Spirit], and whoever knows God [through personal experience] listens to us [and has a deeper understanding of Him]. Whoever is not of God does not listen to us. By this we know [without any doubt] the spirit of truth [motivated by God] and the spirit of error [motivated by Satan]. (1 John 4:6, AMP)

As discussed below, a full understanding of the Bible, after objective and academic hermeneutical study, requires faith that it is from the Holy Spirit who provides understanding through the “comparing spiritual things with spiritual . . . because” the higher and deeper truths of the Bible “are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor 2:14). As Paul observed:

For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. (1 Cor 1:22-25)

The foolishness of God begins, as it is written in the Psalms, with the observation “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God’” (Ps 14:1). Put simply, the truth of the Bible (“the message of the cross”) is supposed to be “foolishness to those who are perishing” because they view the Bible with a carnal mind (. . . and not with the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him . . .) (John 14:17, emphasis added) and not with a mind led by or open to the Holy Spirit. As Paul wrote:

However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory . . . But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. . . . Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. . . . These things we also speak, not in words
which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Cor 2:6-14).

A mind led by the Holy Spirit is what the Bible refers to as discernment (Rom 12:2). Discernment is the ability, through the Holy Spirit, to recognize the meanings of the Bible beyond the mere historical text. It is to understand the rhema word of God which undergirds but begins with the logos word of God. The logos is what is written, the rhema is what it means and why.

2. The Full Understanding of the Bible, after Scholarly Review, Does Require a Spiritual Act of Faith

“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a reawner of those who diligently seek Him” (Heb 11:6) and “whatever is not from faith is sin” (Rom 14:23). Admittedly, there is level of understanding of the Scriptures which requires what the Bible describes as a child-like acceptance (Matt 18:1-4), a faith and confidence, that the Bible is true and is from the Holy Spirit, the mouth of God (Rom 1:1-6, Heb 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-3; 2:1-4).

I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation [from His wrath and punishment] to everyone who believes [in Christ as Savior], to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed, both springing from faith and leading to faith [disclosed in a way that awakens more faith]. As it is written and forever remains written, ‘The just and upright shall live by faith.’ (Rom 1:16-17 AMP)

Accepting the authenticity of the Bible requires at a certain point, after academic study, simple faith the Bible is from God not from man (1 Cor 14:37). It requires faith that “the Scripture . . . which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David” (Acts 1:16) was fulfilled in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. As Jesus said, “search the Scriptures . . . which testify of Me” (John 5:39). A successful (full and complete) understanding of the Bible requires faith in God and the singular redeeming power of Jesus

\[10\] “By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.” Hebrews 11:3. Cf., Luke 19:9, John 8:39, Romans 4:16, Galatians 3:9, and Galatians 3:7.
Christ, His Son,\textsuperscript{11} who as the Son of Man (1 John 4:2) defeated the devil as a man so all mankind could have salvation (Col 2:13-15, Rom 6:8-10).

The authenticity and coherence of the New Testament is in the understanding of who Jesus was (Matt 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13) by his life, death (Gen 3:15), and resurrection (Luke 24:46-52; Rev 1:18).

\textbf{3. The Bible Can Be Supported by Modern Science and Logic}

Paul wrote that the Bible is foolishness to those who seek to apply earthly wisdom to the Bible \emph{exclusively}. It is foolish to those who seek wisdom without God. Why did David write it is foolishness to say there is no God? Because “[e]ven the demons believe—and tremble” (James 2:19) at the knowledge and presence of God (Job 1:6). For “[t]he heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork” (Ps 19:1). As God said to Job, “\emph{who} shut in the sea with doors . . . I fixed my limit for it, and set bars and doors; When I said, ‘This far you may come, but no farther, and here your proud waves must stop!’” (Job 38:8, 10-11). David and Paul were asserting that existence itself, viewed honestly, proves there is a God. Consider how the science of biological chemistry confirms his handiwork. The Laminin protein, a \emph{cross shaped structure}, is:

\begin{quote}
\text{a glycoprotein localized specifically in basement membranes [and] has diverse biological activities which include stimulating adhesion, migration, growth, and differentiation of various cells . . . induces neurite outgrowth and \ldots binds cells through cell surface receptors and interacts with other components of basement membranes. . . . \textit{Laminin is one of the key extracellular matrix components which influence tissue development and function}.\textsuperscript{12}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{11}Twice, God Himself identified and claimed Jesus as His Son. First when Jesus was baptized (“When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”) Mat 3:16-17, Mark 1:11, and Luke 3:22. CF., Matt 12:18. Secondly, when Jesus was on a mountain (“Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. . . . And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. . . . And a cloud came and overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!” Suddenly, when they had looked around, they saw no one anymore, but only Jesus with themselves.”) Mark 9: 2,4,7-8. CF., 2 Peter 1:16-18, Matt 16:16-17.

\textsuperscript{12}Makoto Sasaki, Hynda K. Kleinman, Hans Huber S, Rainer Deutzmann
Laminin, the major glycoprotein component of basement membranes, is a potent modulator of cell function. The extensive list of its functions includes the ability to alter cell growth and motility, promote epithelial differentiation, modify leukocyte function, and stimulate neurite outgrowth. The common denominator of these functions is that they are initiated by the interaction of laminin with specific cell surface receptors. [The] diversity in the structure of laminin itself, as well as an array of receptors, contribute to this multitude of laminin-regulated cell functions.\(^\text{13}\)

Laminin is the protein which holds all other cells in the body together. As John wrote:

In the beginning [before all-time] was the Word (Christ), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God Himself. He was [continually existing] in the beginning [co-eternally] with God. All things were made and came into existence through Him; and without Him not even one thing was made that has come into being. In Him was life [and the power to bestow life], and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines on in the darkness, and the darkness did not understand it or overpower it or appropriate it or absorb it [and is unreceptive to it]. (John 1:1-5 AMP)

In Colossians Paul explains, “He Himself existed and is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. [His is the controlling, cohesive force of the universe]” (Col 1:17 AMP). This truth is reflected in one protein that modulates and holds every cell of the human body together. “For ever since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through His workmanship [all His creation, the wonderful things that He has made], so that they [who fail to believe and trust in Him] are without excuse and without defense” (Rom 1:20 AMP).

Consider the authenticity of the Bible in light of the assertions of the Big Bang theory and evolution. Both are supported by a logical syllogism. The Bible can be supported by the same logic. As an academic and scholarly matter, it is neither new nor novel to assert an explanatory proposition which requires acceptance of a singular proposition for that explanatory proposition to be accepted and then allow that explanatory proposition to support other scientific assertions. For example, evolution is an explanatory-
ry proposition which is used to prove almost everything in the natural sciences. In turn, evolution requires the acceptance of the singular proposition of the Big Bang theory to explain the formation of the universe.\textsuperscript{14}

\textbf{Comparison of Two Syllogisms of Asserted Truth}

\textbf{Explanatory Proposition:} Authenticity of Evolution – proved by science
- Earth evolved as a result of the Big Bang – Evolution is true

\textbf{Singular Proposition:} Big Bang Theory began the evolutionary process of the origin of the universe and Earth

\textbf{Explanatory Proposition:} Authenticity of the Bible – inspired word of God
- The Holy Spirit wrote the Bible through hands and actions of men – The Bible is true

\textbf{Singular Proposition:} Faith that the Holy Spirit works through the hands and actions of men to achieve His goals

\textsuperscript{14} For example, it has been asserted that “the Big Bang theory has gained general acceptance . . . . The theory states that the expansion of the universe began at a finite time in the past, in a state of enormous density and pressure. As the universe grew older it cooled and various physical processes came into play which produced the complex world of stars and galaxies we see around us.” George Rhee, \textit{Cosmic Dawn: The Search for the First Stars and Galaxies} (Springer, 2013), 37. “The path to the origin of life on Earth commenced with a dense, compact hot universe that with a Big Bang event expanded, forming elements heavier than hydrogen at a high temperature, followed by gradual cooling of the universe. At this point it is hypothesized that a singular force was present that separated into the four known forces: gravity, electro-magnetism, strong nuclear and weak nuclear.” J. T. Trevors, “The Big Bang, Superstring Theory and the origin of life on the Earth” 124 \textit{Theories in Biosciences} 403, 403-404 (2006). See also, Andrew Parker, \textit{In The Blink Of An Eye: How Vision Sparked The Big Bang Of Evolution} (2004) and P. V. Sukumaran, “Cambrian Explosion of Life: the Big Bang in Metazoan Evolution”, September \textit{Resonance} 38-50. Sukumaran at 43 (emphasis in original).
The same syllogism can be used for the Bible. The explanatory proposition the Bible is the authentic, inspired written word of God (by analogy the explanatory proposition evolution) requires acceptance of the singular proposition the Holy Spirit wrote the Bible through the hands of men and that he works through the affairs of men to achieve his goals (by analogy the singular proposition of the Big Bang theory).

As shown by the chart above, just as the singular proposition of the Big Bang theory upholds the explanatory proposition of evolution which is the proposition used to uphold all other natural scientific truth and knowledge; faith in the fact the Holy Spirit works through the hands of men is the singular proposition that upholds the explanatory proposition that the Bible is the authentic and inspired word of God which is used to uphold all knowledge and understanding about life and the will of God.

4. The Bible is Applicable to the Rules of Hermeneutical Analysis

Although a complete understanding of the Bible concludes with spiritual acceptance that it is from the mouth of God, it does not have to begin with that acceptance. Luke, being a doctor and a student of the various letters, writings, and accounts which would become the New Testament, wrote to a friend:

> 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. With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught. (Luke 1:1-4 NIV)

The Gospel of Luke is important in the validity of the Bible because he summarizes and details the stories of what would become the New Testament after serious investigation of firsthand accounts as well as research of those stories to affirm those stories are congruent with the Old Testament.

Biblical understanding is based on the assertion that it is historically accurate. Secondary sources should support interpretation of the Bible not define it. This classical principle of biblical interpretation is asserted by the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy (ICBI). As professor Nor-

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15 This is known as the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, originally
man L. Geisler explains, the ICBI document spoke favorably of “taking account of its literary forms and devices” in interpreting the Bible (CSBI, Article XVIII), it made two important distinction: First, such genre should not be used to “dehistoricize” biblical narratives. Indeed, they declared at the end of their summit: “We deny the legitimacy of any treatment of the text or quest behind it that leads to relativizing, dehistoricizing, or discounting its teaching, or rejecting its claim to authorship” (CSBI, article XVIII, emphasis added in these citations).

Second, the genre the ICBI framers spoke of was internal to the Bible (like, parables, poetry, and symbols), not external. Indeed, they insisted the “Scripture is to be interpreted by grammatico-historical exegesis . . . and that Scripture is to interpret Scripture.” Indeed, they said emphatically, “We deny that generic categories which negate historicity may rightly be imposed on biblical narratives which present themselves as factual” (Article XIII). The official ICBI commentary on this article declares “The denial is directed at an illegitimate us of genre criticism by some who deny the truth of passages which are presented as factual.” It adds, “Some, for instance, take Adam to be a myth, whereas in Scripture he is presented as a real person. Others take Jonah to be an allegory when he is presented as a historical person and so referred to by Christ (Mt. 12:40-42). This denial is an appropriate and timely warning not to use genre criticism as a cloak for rejecting the truth of Scripture” (CCSBI, Article XIII). ICBI did refer to the legitimate use of literary forms in understanding of genre in the interpretation of a text (CSBI, Article XVIII). Nonetheless, it opposed the misuse of genre to deny the historicity of biblical narratives or in allowing contradictions.16

The assumption the Bible is historically accurate and is to be taken literally, meaning the words in the Bible have a meaning asserted by the writer, is centuries old; dating back to the third century.17 The abandonment of “the old way”18 of reading the Bible, writes Donald Williams, in which its

17 Ibid, 11-12.
18 Donald T. Williams, “Discerning the Times: Why we Lost the Culture
meaning is not derived from the author is the belief that “readers create meaning in, rather than receiving it from, the text.” In other words, not believing the Bible is from the Holy Spirit and the meaning of the Bible is derived from what he wants the words to mean – the Bible becomes whatever the reader wants it to mean. Utilizing this “epistemological skepticism of Post-Modern hermeneutics” approach, Williams explains, “Readers, not authors, are the source of meaning. Authors have no authority.” The Bible has a completely different utility if the Holy Spirit’s authorship has no authority as to meaning or is disputed in the first place.

The acceptance of the Bible as the Word of God does not prohibit the application of academic and scholarly techniques to test its veracity and utility, as the reaction of the scholars of Berea to the teachings of Paul demonstrated. “They were entirely ready and accepted and welcomed the message [concerning the attainment through Christ of eternal salvation in the kingdom of God] with inclination of mind and eagerness, searching and examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. Many of them therefore became believers, together with not a few prominent Greeks” (Acts 17:11-12 AMP). The scholars of Berea retained an open mind and subjected the teaching of Paul to a known truth, the Scriptures, to determine if what he said was objectively accurate and in concordance with the Scriptures. The same method is used in understanding the Bible as a whole. As discussed above, through the scientific method of hermeneutics (the science of interpretation of written texts), the Scriptures are compared and defined by other Scriptures to (1) establish meaning, textual harmony, and context, (2) to test for consistency and confirmation, and (3) develop theological doctrine. As Paul wrote, “Study and be eager” in the word of God, “correctly analyzing and accurately dividing [rightly handling and skillfully teaching] the Word of Truth” (2 Tim 2:15 AMP).

The authenticity of a document is determined by the consistency of its specific texts compared to other texts and the entirety of the document. The Bible has a logical construction in which the sixty-six books provide the reader with various contexts in understanding the relationship between

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19 Ibid, 6.
20 Ibid.
mankind and God. The Old Testament broadly provides a history of the relationship between God and mankind and specifically his relationship with the Jewish people. The books of the Old Testament can be divided into five genres: (1) The Law - Genesis through Deuteronomy, (2) the historical accounts - Joshua through Esther, (3) poetry and wisdom - Job through the Song of Solomon, (4) the Major Prophets - Isaiah through Daniel, and (5) the Minor Prophets - Hosea through Malachi. A Christological hermeneutic approach to the Bible interprets these five genres as a reflection of the ultimate plan of salvation through Jesus Christ. The Old Testament provides a context for the New Testament. The New Testament is made up of (1) the four gospels, Matthew through John, (2) the history of the early Christian Church, Acts, (3) the Epistles, Romans through Jude and (4) the apocalypse, Revelation. The four gospels which are about the life and ministry of Jesus each have a different perspective and purpose. Matthew was written to the Jewish people to prove that Jesus was the Messiah that the Old Testament promised. Mark chronicles the ministry of Jesus. Luke provides a detailed chronological summary of the ministry and humanity of Jesus. John was written to show the divinity of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. All sixty-six books, although with different context and purpose, share the combined harmony of the presence of God in the history of mankind and the need for salvation from sin. In the Old Testament salvation came through obedience to the written Law of Moses and teachings of the Major and Minor Prophets. In the New Testament salvation came through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (John 1:17). Through the application of Christological hermeneutics, all of the books of the Bible written over a period of 1500 years have a congruency and continuity that authenticates the Bible in toto.

The authenticity of the Bible is also proven by the universality of its basic principles. For example, Colossians asserts all truth regarding God is known by the nature of things itself without formal teaching. This truth was confirmed when Paul visited Greece. When Paul went to Athens, he noted they were religious for they were known to worship various gods. The Greeks were unschooled in the word of God – the Old Testament. Although the Greeks did not have the Old Testament, they had a sense of right and wrong which mirrored the Law of Moses as given to the Jews.
As Paul observed:

For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them. (Rom 2:14-15)

To the Jews God gave the law. To the Gentiles God gave an internal nature of knowing there was a God who ordered the universe with universal rules that defined right from wrong before the advent of government. This is what in western philosophical and legal tradition is called natural law.\footnote{21} The end result of both the law and the internal nature was God giving both Jews and Gentiles a foundation that would allow both to accept the truth of the message of redemption through Jesus. This is confirmed by the writings of Isaiah, Hosea, and Paul.

I was sought by those who did not ask for Me; I was found by those who did not seek Me. I said, ‘Here I am, here I am,’ to a nation that was not called by My name. (Isa 65:1)

And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious. (Isa 1:10)

Surely you shall call a nation you do not know, and nations who do not know you shall run to you, Because of the LORD your God, And the Holy One of Israel; For He has glorified you. (Isa 55:5)

I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth. (Isa 49:6)

Then I will say to those who were not My people, ‘You are My people!’ And they shall say, ‘You are my God!’” (Hos 2:23)

Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, ‘It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles.’ (Acts 13:46)

When Paul visited Athens he saw an altar with the inscription, “to the unknown God”, Paul said to them:

The One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. . . . And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord. . . . for in Him we live and move and have our being . . . [W]e ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man’s devising. Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead. (Acts 17:23-24, 26-27,29-31)

Mankind is without excuse in the decision not to acknowledge God because the existence, operation, and nature of world, in addition to the resurrection of his Son, prove there is a God. The significance of acknowledging God is not the acknowledgement itself, but what the acknowledgement means. If there is a God, then who is he? How does he act and why? These questions lead to the question why did he create man and earth? Which leads to the question what is the nature of man, the creation of God, and what is the relationship between man and God? These questions lead to his Son Jesus.

The Bible reflects Jesus in the Old Testament and testifies of him directly in the New Testament. It is this hermeneutical contextual dynamic that authenticates the Bible. The Bible has a coherency and consistency through all sixty-six books written over thousands of years when viewed through the understanding the Bible is about God reconciling himself with man through his Son Jesus.
5. **Bible Hermeneutical Understanding through the Lens of Jesus as the Son of God**

Paul Timothy to “study and be eager” in the word of God, “correctly analyzing and accurately dividing [rightly handling and skillfully teaching] the Word of Truth” (2 Tim 2:15 AMP). The Christological hermeneutic\(^{22}\) approach to interpretation of the Bible includes (1) a pre- and post- Jesus on the cross perspective, (2) understanding the distinction between the Old and New Testaments and (3) an understanding of purpose of both the Old and New Testaments in relation to God’s plan for relationship with mankind.

The Old and New Testament together explains that God sees individual human failure and establishes restoration for it. Both the Old and New Testaments share the redemption of mankind from sin; redemption in the Old Testament came through the Law of Moses and in the New it came through grace and mercy through Jesus (John 1:17). In Exodus when redemption, through the law, fell upon mankind, three thousand died (Exod 32:28). In the book of Acts when redemption, through grace after the resurrection of Jesus, fell upon mankind through the Holy Spirit, three thousand were added (Acts 2:41). This symmetry of meaning regarding both events is symbolically confirmed by the fact that both the period between the resurrection of Jesus and Pentecost (a New Testament story), and the period between Israel reaching Mount Sinai and Moses returning from the mountain with the two tablets and writings (an Old Testament story) is both fifty days.\(^{23}\) Consider the symmetry of the Old and New Testaments regarding the Great Commandment. Deuteronomy says,

> Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. [Y]ou shall love your neighbor as yourself. (Deut 6:4-5)


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\(^{22}\) For additional discussion see, Steven B. Cowan, “Is the Bible the Word of God?” pages 429-463 in *In Defense of the Bible: A Comprehensive Apologetic for the Authority of Scripture* (Steven B. Cowan and Terry L. Wilder; Nashville: B&H Academic, 2013).

ment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another” (John 13:34). Both the Old and New Testaments share the desire of God for mankind: peace and love towards each other.

The meaning and promises of the Old Testament are manifested in the New Testament. As it is written in the New Testament regarding the stories in the Old Testament, “Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come” (1 Cor 10:11). “For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope” (Rom 15:4). The Old Testament is the foreshadowing of the promises and nature of God which are fulfilled in the New Testament. For example, see how the writings of Isaiah are given full context by the writings of Peter regarding the significance of Jesus on the cross, the dividing line in the Bible between the types of relationships God has with mankind. The cross represents Jesus being the perfect sacrifice for man and the atonement for sin. Isaiah wrote:

Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. (Isa 53: 4-5)

And Peter wrote:

. . . . because Christ also suffered for us . . . who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls. (1 Peter 2: 21, 24)

John wrote:

Jesus answered and said to him . . . “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil
hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.” (John 3:10, 16-21)

The condemnation of man is not for individual sin, but the individual rejection of Jesus who atoned for all sin in order to reconcile the relationship between man and God. The correct interpretation of the Scriptures involves understanding the distinction between the relationship between man and God under the law (pre-cross)\(^\text{24}\) and then under grace (post-cross).\(^\text{25}\) The cross gave God legal authority to exercise justice over the law through mercy and grace.\(^\text{26}\) The pre-post cross interpretation is reflected in how mankind reacts to God and how he relates to mankind. Consider when in Exodus when God spoke from the mountain and gave the Ten Commandments:

Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flash-

\(^{24}\) After the book of Exodus, the relationship between God and mankind, based on grace alone, did not return until coming of Jesus and his resurrection (“For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ, John 1:17). Compare this to Exodus 32:28 (God’s law falls on the heads of men); Acts 2:41 (when God’s spirit falls on the heads of men); Numbers 14:18 (“The LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He by no means clears the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation”); Exodus 20:5 (“For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me”). But in Acts 16:16-34 Paul simply says “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.” (Acts 16:31).

\(^{25}\) The significance of the law vs. grace is shown by the treatment of the children of Israel after they were brought from Egypt. From the time of Exodus 12 (Passover) through the travel through the desert and arrival at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19) God provided for them and never punished them for any unbelief or act of disobedience. Grace abounded. But when the children of Israel, in pride, said to God that they were able to meet God’s commandments by their own abilities (Exodus 19:8), the law of requirements and death for failure to obey the law came between God and His people (“You shall set boundaries for the people. . . whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death. Not a hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned or shot with an arrow; whether man or beast, he shall not live.” Paul explained the purpose of the Law in Galatians 3:19.

es, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off. Then they said to Moses, ‘You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.’ And Moses said to the people, ‘Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin.’ So the people stood afar off, but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was. (Exodus 20:18-21)

In the story of the transfiguration reported in Matthew God again came down and spoke directly through a bright cloud and said:

‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!’ And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. But Jesus came and touched them and said, ‘Arise, and do not be afraid.’ (Matthew 17:5-6)

Consider the story of when a town saw Jesus condemn the evil spirit Legion and ordered them out of a man and into a herd of pigs and upon entering them the pigs panicked and drowned themselves in the sea. When the town saw this they only focused on Jesus as the “Son of the Most High God” and they were afraid. Because they were afraid “they began to plead with Him to depart from their region” (Mark 5:1-17). When John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, saw Jesus in His full glory as God, “I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, ‘Do not be afraid’” (Rev 1:12-17). In the Old Testament there was no relief from the physical fear of the power of God and his voice, but under the New Testament, the touch of Jesus is all that was required to relieve men of the fear of power of God’s presence.

The Christological hermeneutic approach also provides a context for the nature of sin and how God seeks to address it. Consider how post-cross interpretation of the Bible answers the following proposition: The Bible makes clear there is a hierarchy of sin in the eyes of God and some sins will prevent entrance into heaven.

There are five books in the New Testament which discuss sin before God. First, in 2 Corinthians Paul says, “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God” (2 Cor 6:9-10).
Second, in Galatians it says, “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh . . . Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal 5:16, 19-21).

Third, in Romans the list continues, “all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents . . . . covenant breakers . . . . implacable, unmerciful” (Rom 1:29-31).

Fourth, in Ephesians we are told to put away, “lying . . . do not let the sun go down on your wrath . . . Let him who stole steal no longer . . . Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth . . . Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you” (Eph 4:25-32).

Lastly, in 1 Timothy 1:8-10 Paul tells his protégé that, “we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for slayers, for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.” Paul concludes the matter when he wrote regarding the power of grace through faith in Jesus regarding the nature of sin:

And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved). (Ephesians 2:1-5)
It is clear from these five lists no one is perfect and all sins are equal as being abominations before the face of a perfect God. As James explains, “For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. For He who said, ‘Do not commit adultery,’ also said, ‘Do not murder.’ Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law” (James 2:10-13). He admonishes that obedience to the law was an all or nothing proposition, “If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself,’ you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.” (James 2:8-9). The proposition that there is a hierarchy of sin is false when the proposition is assessed by comparing Scripture to Scripture within context. As reflected in the gospels it is written in the epistles that all are guilty under the law.

As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.” But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident . . . . But the Scripture has confined all under sin . . . . we were kept under guard by the law . . . Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor (Gal 3:10-11; 22-25).

As Jesus said, “But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matt 5:28). According to Jesus, harsh words towards another, unjust dislikes of people or failure to settle unpaid debts are all sins before God (Matt 5:21-26).

The Bible makes clear the purpose of the Law is to prove that no one is perfect. “There is none righteous [none that meets God’s standard], not even one. . . . Now we know that . . . all the world may be held accountable to God [and subject to His judgment]. For no person will be justified [freed of guilt and declared righteous] in His sight by [trying to do] the works of the Law” (Rom 3:10; 19-20 AMP). In God’s economy and judgment of sin, God looks to the heart of person (1 Sam16:17) and not to his actions alone. Because sin is a heart issue God told the children of Israel, “Now, therefore, says the Lord, ‘Turn to Me with all your heart . . . rend your heart, and not your garments’” (Joel 2:12-13).

The Bible makes clear no one can walk into heaven and stand in the face of God and say, “I sinned not before you all the days of my life, thus let me
in, I deserve it.” As John wrote of the vision of heaven that he received at Patmos, “But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life” (Rev 21:27). All sins are equal before God at the gate of heaven because no sin, no matter how big or small we may think it is, is acceptable to enter heaven and thus all need the redemption of Jesus. It is this understanding that provides a consistent reading for all New Testament Scripture, including the dynamics and significance of sin. Jesus is the perfect and only door into heaven, “I AM THE LIVING GOD, the Way and the Truth and the Life; no man comes to my Father but by me alone” (John 14:6 ABPE). This also explains why Old Testament Scripture is based on redemption through obedience while the New Testament is based on redemption through faith. The New Testament, post cross, is God’s better answer for salvation and dealing with the sinful nature of mankind. No one can stand perfect before a perfect God and any imperfection will prevent entrance into heaven is the point of the lists. The Bible warns all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23) and in regard to sin, the Bible makes clear that God says, “And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor 6:11).

The Christological hermeneutic approach makes clear Christianity is not about condemnation of sinners. Christianity, under the Bible, is about redemption and God seeking a way to deal with all sins not just special types of sins. When Jesus was confronted with a person who committed a sexual sin, he faced down a rock wielding religious mob and said, those of you without sin may cast the first stone and then he said to the target of the mobs arrogance your sins are forgiven you, go and sin no more (John 8:1-12). When another person of sexual immorality fell at his feet and cried for forgiveness with so much passion she did not utter a word; Jesus publically rebuked the arrogance of the condemning religious priest for all to hear and then said to the sinner at his feet, again for all to hear, – your sins which are many are forgiven (Luke 7:43-50). When Jesus was confronted with a group of friends who lowered their crippled companion through the roof for healing, he saw their faith and said to the crippled man – your sins are forgiven. When the religious priest said in their hearts this was blasphemy, Jesus said:
'Why are you reasoning in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, “Your sins are forgiven you,” or to say, “Rise up and walk”? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins’—He said to the man who was paralyzed, ‘I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.’ Immediately he rose up before them. (Luke 5:14-25).

In understanding sin, Jesus throughout the gospels was concerned with the sinner who begged mercy – and to them they received it – but to the arrogance of those who placed themselves above others who sinned by claiming holiness under the Law of Moses – for them Jesus said, Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! (Matt 23).

When Jesus was confronted with those “who trusted in themselves and were confident they were righteous [posing outwardly as upright and in right standing with God], and who viewed others with contempt” Jesus told them a parable of two men who entered a church and prayed before God. The first was a man who obeyed the Law and he “prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector’” but rather I obey the Law in tithes and fasting. The second man “standing at a distance, would not even raise his eyes toward heaven, but was striking his chest [in humility and repentance], saying, ‘God, be merciful and gracious to me, the [especially wicked] sinner [that I am]!’” And Jesus ended the parable saying, “I tell you, this man went to his home justified [forgiven of the guilt of sin and placed in right standing with God] rather than the other man; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself [forsaking self-righteous pride] will be exalted” (Luke 18:9-14 AMP) When Jesus told the famous story of the Great Samaritan, the backdrop to the telling of the story was when Jesus was confronted with a lawyer “wishing to justify himself” (Luke 10:29) for obeying the Great Commandment (Deut 6:4-5 and Lev 19:18).

As John wrote, Jesus himself said, “For I did not come to condemn the world, but to save the world” (John 12:47). When Satan demanded the soul of Peter because of his past sins and for what he knew Peter would do for the church of Jerusalem after the resurrection of Jesus, Jesus prayed for Peter and prophesied to him after he had sinned and repented he would be restored (Luke 22:32). Jesus prayed Peter’s faith would not fail as he knew Peter would. While both Peter and Judas both betrayed Jesus, Peter’s faith
in Jesus did not fail and he repented and was restored. When Judas knew he had betrayed innocent blood, he committed suicide because he did not have faith. He did not have the faith to believe Jesus would stand between him (and his sin) and God and leave him room to repent. Job prayed for a mediator who could stand between God and himself (Job 9:33; 16:21), and in the New Testament that prayer was answered in the person of Jesus (1 Tim 2:5). The Bible records, “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23), and because of this the Bible also records, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). As Paul summarized:

The kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Titus 3:4-7)

This is why salvation in the name of Jesus comes through a simple act. “That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Rom 10:9-10).

This Christological hermeneutic approach provides support for the conclusion that in the biblical Christian message there is no hierarchy of sin in which some sins are disqualifying while others are only bad judgment. The only sin that is “unpardonable” is the rejection of Jesus witnessed by the Holy Spirit. As is explained in Hebrews:

For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment. . . . Anyone who has rejected Moses’ law dies without mercy . . . . [W]orse punishment . . . will he [receive] who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood . . . a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord. And again, ‘The Lord will judge His people.’ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb 10:26-31).

The context of the unpardonable sin in Matthew 12:31-32, Mark 3:28-29 and Luke 12:10 is the rejection of the truth of Jesus as the Son of God given by the Holy Spirit. All other sins can be forgiven because they are covered by the acceptance, belief, and faith in redemption through Jesus. But sin not covered by the grace and redemptive blood of Jesus has only one alternative, adjudication under the law of Moses and the vengeance of God. There are no multiple ways to reconciliation with God. As Jesus explained, the road to reconciliation with God is narrow because its exclusive, and all other roads lead to destruction (Matthew 7:13-14).

The biblical Christian message is all have sinned and justification before God does not occur through works and entrance into heaven is not a reward earned by human activity, it’s a gift (Eph 2:8-9). It is a gift made available to mankind because the heart of God is one of love and reconciliation with mankind.

The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, Slow to anger and great in mercy. The Lord is good to all, And His tender mercies are over all His works. . . . The Lord upholds all who fall, And raises up all who are bowed down. . . . The Lord is near to all who call upon Him . . . He also will hear their cry and save them. (Ps 145:8, 15, 18-19)

CONCLUSION

The Bible can be considered true because it was written over 1500 years, in multiple languages, in multiple and separated locations, with one coherent theme. It’s the coherence of the text that proves its authenticity. The Bible, subjected to the objective science of textual interpretation, maintains historical accuracy.

The authenticity of the Bible is also proven by the lives of those who died defending it. Those who defended what they saw and taught in the first century after the death and resurrection of Jesus all died for doing so, and the Scriptures and writings of their lives and testimony became the New Testament in the Bible. When Peter and John faced down the Sanhedrin, under pain of being beaten, and were commanded not to speak of Jesus “Peter and John answered and said to them, ‘Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard’” (Acts 4:19-20). When Stephen, a deacon in the church of Jerusalem, was falsely accused of blas-
phemy before a religious council, he testified on the meaning of Scriptures dating back to Abraham and how they were fulfilled in Jesus. After telling the council the truth of the Old Testament Scriptures, he condemned their rejection of them (Acts 7:51).

After Stephen spoke he was dragged outside by a religious mob led by Saul, who later would become Paul and the writer of majority of the epistles of the New Testament, and was stoned to death. As Paul repentant for his actions would later write regarding the gospel he once persecuted,

> For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘the just shall live by faith.’ (Rom 1:16-17)

The original twelve disciples and Paul and the generations who followed did not risk their lives and freedom and go to their deaths\(^\text{28}\) in defense of religious fables.\(^\text{29}\)

Like evolution, the Bible is built on a singular proposition from which all other premises for explaining all creation and existence are premised. As evolution is not rejected because it is built on a singular proposition (the Big Bang theory) neither can the Bible be rejected for being supported by a singular proposition (the authorship of the Holy Spirit).

This tradition includes freedom of religion, the freedom to believe and the freedom to believe nothing. As the Supreme Court held in 1944:

> [T]he question of the truth of the representations concerning respondent’s religious doctrines or beliefs should have been submitted to the jury . . . we do not agree that the truth or verity of respondents’ religious doctrines or beliefs should have been submitted to the jury. . . [T]he First Amendment precludes such a course . . . The First

\(^{28}\) According to Christian tradition all of the disciples, the exception being John, were killed for proclaiming the birth, death, resurrection and deity of Jesus. See also Acts 12:1-2 (“Herod the king stretched out his hand to harass some from the church. Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword.”) See also the story of Peter’s arrest and beating in Acts 5, Peter’s imprisonment and release by an angel of God in Acts 12, and Paul’s arrest and his multiple trials for sedition before Jewish mobs, the Sanhedrin, King Agrippa, Governor Felix, and being sent for his final trial in Rome (Acts 21:28 through Acts 26).

\(^{29}\) “For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty” (2 Peter 1:16).
Amendment has a dual aspect. It not only forestalls compulsion by law of the acceptance of any creed or the practice of any form of worship, but also safeguards the free exercise of the chosen form of religion.

Thus, the Amendment embraces two concepts: the freedom to believe and freedom to act. The first is absolute but, in the nature of things, the second cannot be. Freedom of thought, which includes freedom of religious belief, is basic in a society of free men. It embraces the right to maintain theories of life and of death and of the hereafter which are rank heresy to followers of the orthodox faiths. Heresy trials are foreign to our Constitution. *Men may believe what they cannot prove.* They may not be put to the proof of their religious doctrines or beliefs. . . .

Many take their gospel from the New Testament. But it would hardly be supposed that they could be tried before a jury charged with the duty of determining whether those teachings contained false representations. The miracles of the New Testament, the Divinity of Christ, life after death, the power of prayer are deep in the religious convictions of many. If one could be sent to jail because a jury in a hostile environment found those teachings false, little indeed would be left of religious freedom. The Fathers of the Constitution . . . fashioned a charter of government which envisaged the widest possible toleration of conflicting views. Man’s relation to his God was made no concern of the state. He was granted the right to worship as he pleased, and to answer to no man for the verity of his religious views. . . .

With man’s relations to his maker and the obligations he may think they impose, and the manner in which an expression shall be made by him of his belief on those subjects, no interference can be permitted, provided always the laws of society, designed to secure its peace and prosperity, and the morals of its people, are not interfered with. So we conclude that the District Court ruled properly when it withheld from the jury all questions concerning the truth or falsity of the religious beliefs or doctrines of respondents.\(^{30}\)

Modern traditions of Christian faith establishes that the state has no authority to regulate or adjudicate the meaning of religious faith. Nor can issues of faith be litigated in criminal trials. That is why the trials of Stephen, Paul, Peter, and Silas and the later persecutions of Christians in the Roman colosseum could not occur under American law.

\(^{30}\) *United States v Ballard*, 322 U.S. 78, 85-88 (1944) (internal quotation marks and citation omitted; emphasis added).
Finally, the authenticity of the Bible can be found in its historical acceptance and in the vehemence of its opposition. No other book is so hated by some and reverenced by so many. If the Bible had no power of absolute truth, the disputers of it would not be so committed in its opposition. If it were not true, who cares if people believe it? The Bible answers this question by saying of itself, its purpose is “for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor 10:4-5). “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph 6:12 KJV). The resistance to the Bible also lays in its asserted exclusivity in which it says, “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).