PHILOSOPHY AND METHODOLOGY
BIBLE-BASED HERMENEUTICS

Written by J. Richard Fugate
Director of the

Foundation for
Biblical Research
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- Logos Bible Software, Original Languages Library, Series X, used for technical language research in exegesis,
- GRAMCORD Greek New Testament with Bible Companion, which was utilized for dynamic searches of Greek and Hebrew words that have been tagged morphologically and lemmatized, and
- Bible.com for providing access to a broad variety of Conservative Evangelical Theological Doctrines.
PHILOSOPHY AND METHODOLOGY

BIBLE-BASED HERMENEUTICS

A RESOURCE DESIGNED TO ASSIST IN THE ANALYTICAL,
WORD-BY-WORD INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE

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J. Richard Fugate

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NOTE: This author has chosen the literary license to use capitalization for every grammatical reference to the Bible or the Scriptures not ordinarily capitalized in modern literature. Please do not think that this author means to question or judge any other believer's not using a similar use of capitalization. It is the internal attitude of the believer toward God and His Word that is the measure of his respect and awe of God, not any external observance that counts.

I am not the originator of so honoring the Word of God by capitalization. As late as the middle 1900's, many Christian writers still capitalized all grammatical references to the Bible. Some examples are Dana and Mantey in their grammar published in 1955 (see page 13, where Dana and Mantey and Moulton, who is quoted, each capitalized the adjective, "Biblical"). A. T. Robertson also capitalized the names of doctrines in his popular Word Pictures in the New Testament and Roland Chafer's articles on hermeneutics, published in 1934-1937 in Dallas Theological Seminary's Bibliotheca Sacra, utilized the adjectives, Biblically, Scripturally, and even the word, Scripturalness. Perhaps it was these scholars' extreme respect for God's Word, as is mine, which caused their making a point of not observing the standards of academic opinions of the day. These scholars also capitalized all personal pronoun references to God.

For ready identification purposes, and in reverence to our Lord, all pronouns referring to God will be capitalized in this work. Also, specific aspects of God's Character (Love, Omniscience, etc.) and His unique Works (Creation, Revelation, Inspiration, Illumination, etc.) will be capitalized when pertinent to emphasize from Whom they originate. Likewise, the Word, Will, Plan, and Thoughts of God will be capitalized when helpful to emphasize the contrast of those things which also can be common products of humanity. This is done so that the distinction is made clear to the reader (for example, My Thoughts are not your thoughts and My Ways are not your ways). When this book refers to Spiritual maturity as God's Purpose and Goal for every believer, I want the reader to pause for a second to reflect on the fact that ONLY God can enable this type of maturity to occur. This practice may be considered extreme (and not at all compatible with secularly-influenced grammar), but I believe it has a vital purpose for today's readers.
INTRODUCTION

I believe Satan’s present-day tactical attack in obscuring God’s communication to man is directed at nullifying the reality of Supernatural Inspiration and need for Spiritual Illumination as a requirement in enabling full comprehension of Scripture. The 17th and 18th Century attacks by literary, historical, and scientific critics against the Authority, Inerrancy, Revelation, and Inspiration of God’s Word’s were devastating. (Please see Section Seven for a discussion of this period in History.) Conservative Evangelical Theologians have stood their ground and vigorously defended the Authority of God’s Revelation and Inerrancy against the overwhelming “evidence” of alleged errors in Scripture. Wherever God’s Word is challenged by those who reject the facts of historical events and the recorded Miracles of Creation and Christ’s Virgin Birth, Sinless Life, Death, Burial, and Resurrection, these men simply responded by their faith in the Bible’s teaching concerning these issues.

Sadly, however, when it came to attacks against the Divine Authorship of all Scripture, many Theologians failed to stand on faith alone. They apparently were intimidated by German higher criticism and, therefore, attempted to develop an apologetic based upon human reason to defend God’s direct Inspiration of Scripture through human instruments. This approach (reason instead of faith) left an opening for a gradual descent away from a believer’s absolute acceptance of what the Bible provides as information by which he can and must live his life. The most common response today to anything being taught from the Bible is generally, “It does not mean that to me; that is just your interpretation.” The apologetics originally developed to recognize the reality of different writers’ unique styles and personalities has now degenerated into giving equal credit to these writers as actual authors of Scripture. Bible-Based Hermeneutics necessarily rejects any portion of a verbal, plenary position which attributes the creative choice of words or grammar to the human writers independent of God’s Influence. Bible-Based Hermeneutics specifically rejects the terms: dual-authorship, confluence, concursus, human authorship, or inspiration by a supposed hypostasis of God and Man. Of course, God’s Authorship (responsibility for overall content) incorporates the writers’ subjective interactions (like their mental and emotional responses to life issues).

Throughout this text the technical distinction between “author” and “writer” will be emphasized. When the term author is used, it means: “the one that creates, founds or originates; or the architect, creator, entrepreneur, father, founder, inventor, maker, originator, parent, or patriarch;” or, “as originator or creator, as of a theory or a plan,” or, “to assume responsibility for the content of a published text.” When the term writer is used, it means: “one who writes, especially as an occupation;” or, a scribe, “one who forms letters, characters, or words on a surface with an instrument;” or, recorder, “one who sets down for preservation in writing or other permanent form.”

1 By Conservative Evangelicals, I refer to those who hold to a Biblically-based Theology, a high view of Inspiration and Inerrancy of all Scripture, and in the necessity of a personal Salvation through faith alone, by grace alone, in Christ alone.
4 Ibid. s.v. “writer.”
will be designated by the term Author/Originator, and the human writer will be designated by the term writer/recorder where appropriate to indicate these distinctions.

The unique characteristic of this position is that it presents an intensified view on the "verbal" portion of the approach to interpreting Scripture called "verbal, plenary Inspiration." One pastor and graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary said, "I think this work is a clarification or advancement on the existing positions of verbal, plenary inspiration. It is truly a word-by-word approach in comprehending the most precise meaning of the Word of God." Bible-Based Hermeneutics establishes and substantiates the position that EVERY word used in EVERY passage of Scripture must be studied

- First, for its most distinct characteristics as it is utilized within Scripture,
- Second, to discover each word's most specific meaning in comparison to all other words within that word's semantic domain,
- Third, defined with proper consideration given for its complete grammar within the specific passage where it is located. The grammatical form of every word is considered and analyzed in relationship to its interpretation within any passage where utilized,
- Fourth, by its use in prior or contemporary literature--while observing a warily conscious understanding that none of these other writings were God Inspired.

I believe this procedure is an essential component of the also imperative position of performing competent grammatical exegesis of the original language prior to concluding the interpretation and exposition of ANY passage of Scripture. This approach in determining word meanings results in a three-dimensional view of God's Word that helps correct and avoid error and brings out the dogmatic depths of God's Revelation to man. Without using the approach that the Spiritually Inspired words and the grammar of Scripture should be defined primarily by means of Scripture itself, we lose an important Divine standard of control. In the resulting vacuum most conscientious exegetes believe they must search for word meanings from various extra-Biblical sources and human logic. As a consequence, the meanings of words used in Scripture have often been determined by their use primarily 1) in the writings of only the writer of the text being exegeted, 2) in non-inspired literature and lexicons, 3) from the opinions of commentaries, or 4) by imposing a vague synonymic or theological meaning as will be demonstrated later in this course.

This presentation is not meant to enable one to understand Scripture by means of his native language in the way a Bible study methods course would. Instead, it presents in-depth procedures for studying the original languages of Scripture—Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. It accepts the premise that proper exegesis of the original languages is

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5 *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language*, 4th Edition (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), s.v. "Grammar, n: The study of how words and their component parts combine to form sentences; The study of structural relationships in language or in a language, sometimes including pronunciation, meaning, and linguistic history; The system of inflections, syntax, and word formation of a language; The system of rules implicit in a language, viewed as a mechanism for generating all sentences possible in that language."

6 The influence every part of speech has on the meaning of each word in its context is considered based on the case of the noun or pronoun; the function of a preposition; the class of a pronoun; the use (or absence of use) of the article; voice, person, and number of a verbal form; and the function of an infinitive, participle, adverb, conjunction, particle, or clause.
essential for comprehending God's unique Message. (See Appendix A for an excellent examination of this issue.) A student's understanding and competent implementation of Bible-Based Hermeneutics will be proportional to his knowledge of these tools (especially the Koine Greek). However, the most important element for interpreting Scripture is that a student is truly committed to learn what Scripture actually means by what It says. Our objective is learning how to reach accurate conclusions and substantiate them solely from Scripture by relying totally on God's Spiritual provisions—the Word of God and the Inspiration and Illumination of the Holy Spirit. It is acknowledged in principle and in practice that it absolutely must be a Spiritual undertaking to interpret God's Message to man as precisely as possible. (The principles by which this may be accomplished are described later in Sections Two and Three.)

A serious student can begin his progressive journey to know God's Word by first learning the Greek alphabet and then by learning how to use 1) an analytical Greek lexicon (Zondervan or Friberg), a basic Greek grammar (Summers, Dana & Mantey, or Wallace), (an interlinear Greek/English text is also helpful in the beginning) and/or 2) The Original Languages Library (LOGOS Bible Software by Libronix), which contains all of these tools and many more synchronously displayed.

Bible-Based Hermeneutics is the foundational tool produced by the Foundation for Biblical Research, whose Statement of Purpose is provided in Appendix B of this text. A chart of all tools to be developed is shown below:

![Figure 1](image_url)

**BIBLE-BASED THEOLOGY**
A systematically developed Theology based on exhaustive, inductive research resulting in doctrines that are verified by Scriptural substantiation.

**EXEGETICAL BIBLE, PHASE II**
**STRUCTURAL/SEMANTICAL ANALYSIS**
An interpretation of the original texts based on the Grammatical/Lexical Analysis and the Dictionary of Bible-Based Word Meanings. Texts critically and structurally analyzed with continued careful observance of Bible-Based Hermeneutics.

**BIBLE-BASED HERMENEUTICS**
A literal–logical–historical–grammatical hermeneutic that provides for consistent verification by Scripture. The overriding emphasis is on the Spiritual nature of God's Word (Revelation, Inspiration, and Illumination) and its being specifically intended for comprehension by Spiritually alive and Spiritually energized members of the human race.
As in any language, a word in Scripture may be used either in its general or in its most-specific sense. The inherent characteristic of a particular word in the mind of the true Author/Originator of all of Scripture is never nullified by its use in varying contexts; although, this characteristic is not always meant to be emphasized. (The fact that I may have a red-headed son does not negate the fact that he can be referred to as my son without reference to his being red-headed.) Paul, the erudite writer/recorder of Ephesians, might use a word in its most-specific sense to communicate an important concept or point of Church doctrine. (This most-specific sense is sometimes referred to as its technical sense.) John, the more passionate writer/recorder of the Gospel of John as well as 1st, 2nd, and 3rd John was God's logical choice for conveying the exalted aspect of the Spiritual nature of God and a believer's personal love relationship with Him. It should be no surprise for John's writings to reflect a more general and subjective use of God's vocabulary. The Apocalypse also utilized a writer/recorder such as John to express symbols and visions in majestic, pictorial language.

The following chart displays an example of the type of results that were obtained from a study of one family of words, "Children." A complete explanation of the procedure used to achieve these results is described in Appendix E of this text. This procedure attempts to determine each word's most distinct characteristics as utilized in Scripture alone and as compared with all other words within its family.

### CORRELATION BETWEEN GREEK WORDS (Transliterated)
**RELATING TO THE SEMANTIC DOMAIN OF CHILDREN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationships</th>
<th>Teknon</th>
<th>Children (Progeny)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Huios</td>
<td>Son (Heir)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ages</th>
<th>Pais</th>
<th>Aner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td></td>
<td>Man</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birth</th>
<th>12/13</th>
<th>19/20</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Death</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ages</th>
<th>Brephos</th>
<th>Paidion</th>
<th>Neanskos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infant</td>
<td>Child</td>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>Young Man</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Teleios</th>
<th>Maturity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Adultness, Full Grown)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Nēpios</th>
<th>either/or</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Immaturity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Childishness)  

**FIGURE 2**

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7 This word describes the time of life from embryo throughout the months a baby is totally dependent on caregivers.
When this word study procedure is utilized to determine the most-specific meanings of the Hebrew and Greek Words God used to communicate Scripture, Its interpretation can be more comprehensive. An example in English might help illustrate this concept. We might want to describe a room full of furniture. We could just say, "The room had eleven pieces of furniture," and simply stop there. However, each piece has its most-specific name and function distinct and different from the other pieces. The pieces could include a sofa, two occasional chairs, two end tables, two table lamps, a floor lamp, a TV, a coffee table, and a curio case. If someone wants to communicate that a person sat on one of the pieces of furniture, he could just say, "He sat on the furniture." The reader would then need to interpret that as being one of the chairs, the sofa, or even the TV or one of the tables. However, if the communicator uses the word "sofa," he provides a better picture. As a good Bible expositor once said, "Words are simply the clothes that dress one's thoughts for others to see." Words index one's precise thinking. The interpretation of God's precise Thinking requires that we honor His Thinking.

One practical value of the above study was its use in the book, What the Bible Says About Child Training, to describe different stages of human growth in Biblical terms. Much more important was the clear conclusion that teleiōs and nēpios do not refer to stages of human growth, but instead to characteristics of Spiritual maturity and immaturity. A more accurate interpretation of several key passages of Scripture is possible after understanding those two words' most-specific meanings.

1 Corinthians 3:1b, And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes (nēpios) in Christ. (NKJV) The most-specific interpretation of this passage is that nēpios refers to these believers' state of Spiritual immaturity, not to their chronological age.

1 Corinthians 13:11, When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. Each reference in this verse to "child," and the adjective correctly translated "childish," are all from the Greek word nēpios. The more general definition of "babe, or baby" might legitimately describe the contrast to man (anēr) for an adult; however, the characteristic of Spiritual immaturity should not be overlooked in interpreting this discourse.

Ephesians 4:13-14, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect (teleiōs) man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children (nēpios), tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting. This text is a key passage that defines the contrast between the two absolute states of Spiritual maturity and Spiritual immaturity of a believer. It reveals the importance that God assigns to becoming Spiritually mature and the danger He warns of to those who do not. Here these words are used in their most-specific (or technical sense) to communicate Spiritual truth. (See also, Colossians 1:28; 4:12; and James 1:4.)

9 All translations throughout this book are from the New King James Version unless noted.
Hebrews 5:13-14, *For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe (nēpios). But solid food belongs to those who are of full age (teleiōs).* In this passage, the contrast is again made between the "babe," and "full age" (a misleading translation for teleiōs.) An accurate interpretation of these passages would be that Spiritual immaturity is being contrasted to Spiritual maturity. "Teleiōs" is later translated in Hebrews 6:1 as "perfection," although the absolute state and end result of "Spiritual maturity" is the more correct sense.

Knowledge of the most specific nature of other related words in the "Children" domain will also assist in more accurately interpreting each of those passages where God the Holy Spirit caused them to be used.

- When the most-specific meaning of teknon is substituted in all of the passages where it is used, its significance can be appreciated. Even when it is being used in its general sense of progeny, the knowledge obtained from the study of all passages where it is used identifies it as a word that emphasizes family relationship and endearment. This understanding colors every verse with deeper understanding. (See especially John 1:12; Romans 8:16,17; 2 Corinthians 6:13; Ephesians 2:3, 5:1; Philippians 2:15; 1 Thessalonians 2:7, 11; 1 Timothy 1:2; Titus 1:4; 1 Peter 3:6; 1 John 3:1-2 and 10; 3 John 4; and most of its occurrences in the Gospels.)

- When the most technical meaning of huios is considered in its uses, the specific nature of a legitimate heir is clearly understood. See all, but especially Galatians 4:6, 7; Ephesians 2:2; 5:6; Hebrews 1:5 and 8; 5:8; James 2:21; and most of its uses in the Gospels. This word's most specific meaning should indicate that the interpreter should consider what is to be inherited by the heir in context.

Obviously, all of these words should often be translated in their most-specific sense. Nevertheless, if we desire to comprehend God's Word in depth, we need to attempt to discover what was in the mind of the Author/Originator as accurately and as completely as possible. That is exactly what this book intends to provide; the methods to achieve that goal. An exhaustive study of words used in the Greek New Testament for prayer and worship resulted in a clearer understanding of several important passages as shown below:

- The Greek word aiteō, normally translated "ask," means most-specifically "petition," as in making a request to one in authority or to one who is respected for having sufficient truth to respond accurately. Knowing this one word's most-specific meaning helps to interpret 1 Peter 3:15. Now, instead of a believer falsely thinking he should defend his faith to everyone who challenges him based upon their unbelief, he finds his responsibility is to be always prepared to provide sufficient answers from the Word to those who request it respectfully.

- The word erōtaō, translated "pray" in Christ's many prayers to the Father on behalf of believers, most-specifically means to ask for something from an equal and attests to the very Deity of Jesus Christ (John 14:16, 17;9, 15, 20, etc.).

- Only one Greek word, proskuneō, out of the ten words normally translated worship, actually describes the attitude of true worship. We can also determine what the other nine words mean most-specifically.

Many other key words in Scripture reveal a similar depth of meaning, leading to a more complete understanding of God's Word. Many young men have approached this
author after one of his Child Training Seminars was presented in their Churches over the past thirty years. They each have eagerly desired to know exactly how I had discovered the specific word meanings taught during the seminar. They were excited to find that the Bible could be the true source of the stages and characteristics of child development instead of Christians’ being dependent on the theories of secular psychology. They were also fascinated with Scripture’s carefully defining the differences between disobedience (being the unconscious and/or not willful breaking of a standard) and rebellion (the knowing and willful act of disobedience). They also saw the importance of parents’ knowing the Bible’s teaching about the use of appropriate penalties for disobedience, compared to the requirement of chastisement (corporal punishment properly administered) needed to overcome active rebellion.

This reference book sets forth the philosophy and methodology that answers the questions these young men, and I believe many others, would like to know. I, therefore, dedicate this book to all believers who truly desire that they

may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:18-19)

And, so that the Church might eventually

all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; (Ephesians 4:13)

A student study guide/workbook is planned to follow the publication of this reference book. It will provide a structured course of study to accompany this Philosophical and Methodology Bible-Based Hermeneutics text with work assignments and supplemental reading recommendations for Bible College or entering seminary-level students and current pastors who are interested in utilizing the original languages of Scripture.

A Personal Challenge

At this point, there are those who may be challenged by this advanced concept of an intensified word-by–word approach on the “verbal” portion of verbal, plenary Inspiration. Some pastors and professors who are just being introduced to this possibility may have already quit exegeting Scripture from the original languages, use various commentaries to attempt to determine Bible interpretations, or simply think this procedure would be an unnecessary use of their time. My challenge to them is this: Immediately after completing this Introduction, read Appendix E carefully and perform an exhaustive word study on the words for prayer (or worship) exactly as per the procedures given there. If you have not gained much insight into the meaning of the many Scriptures you cover, please return this text to me personally for a full refund of your cost of its purchase and your postage. The rest will continue to receive benefits.

Many reputed scholars in even Conservative Evangelical Theological circles today tend not to rely upon, and even to disregard, the Supernatural/Spiritual aspects of God's Inspiration and Illumination of Scripture. They often seek to understand Scripture by cognitive means (intellectual mastery of human language) rather than Spiritual means. This author's contrary position is that without totally relying on the Supernaturally Inspired Word of God and the Illuminating Ministry of the Holy Spirit, it is IMPOSSIBLE to comprehend the Spiritual message of Scripture. Even the disciples who walked with Jesus daily for three years could not understand the full significance of His words prior
to their receiving the Holy Spirit to open their understanding to the Spiritual meaning. (See Luke 24:25-32, 45; cf. Luke 9:45; 18:34; 19:42; John 20:24-27; 2 Corinthians 4:3, 4; Ephesians 3:9; etc.)

No amount of linguistic knowledge can replace the need for the Spiritual means of comprehension. Conversely, no amount of Spiritual insight will substitute entirely for a competent knowledge of the original languages, application of sound logic, and adherence to a sound Bible-based hermeneutic. The serious student of Scripture must develop great skill in logical reasoning if he intends to interpret God’s Word most accurately. I recommend that any student who is committed to completing this Bible-Based Hermeneutics course also begin to master the subject of logic. A good starting point would be Dr. Geisler’s introductory book on logic. I suggest initially reading his

- Preface through Chapter 1, pp. 7-20
- Introduction to Induction, Chapter 8, pp. 132-148
- Scientific Thinking, Chapter 9, pp. 149-165
- Fallacies, Chapter 10, pp. 166-179
- Truth Tables, Appendix, pp. 181-186

May God our Father, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit strengthen you, encourage you, and uphold your commitment to learn how to interpret God’s perfect Meaning of His perfect Word.

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Bible-Based Hermeneutics will first establish the philosophical basis for a more intense investigation of God’s Word than has been utilized historically. Each aspect will then be developed in a spiral, layer-by-layer fashion. The book will then set forth the methodology for determining the most-precise meaning of God's Word and provide examples of how to use those methods. The author’s premises for this book follow.

1. God has Supernaturally provided communication to man by means of Spiritual Revelation, Spiritual Inspiration, and Spiritual Illumination. God's Revelation was recorded in human languages that were known to mankind at the time. However, the words and grammar were utilized by the Holy Spirit in unique arrangements during the Miracle of Inspiration so that God's meaning is extremely precise.

2. God’s Word (as it was given to man in the original manuscripts in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek) is indisputable truth. As such, It is foundational for every philosophical position this book’s author holds concerning the correct interpretation and understanding of the entire Old and New Testament Scriptures. The Scriptures are accepted without apology as being inerrant, harmonious, reasonable, absolutely authoritative, and intended as the basis for a believer’s faith and life. Nothing—no codified Theology, human philosophy, or supposed new revelation—is accepted as being above Scripture. Humbly accepting Scripture as the absolute Authority is based on the concept that the fear of the Lord is the starting point for being instructed by God and for receiving the knowledge and understanding of His Wisdom (Proverbs 1:7; 2:5; 9:10; 15:33; 22:4).

3. God Intends that all of His Children (all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ) might comprehend (understand fully) what He means by
   a. Interpreting every word as it is used within each context,
   b. Evaluating every phrase, sentence, paragraph, and discourse linguistically through proficient grammatical exegesis of the original languages of the Bible, and
   c. Substantiating every Theological position only by the use of those words and sound exegesis in harmony with all of Scripture.

4. God’s Word is a Spiritual creation:
   a. Revelation to man was given progressively throughout history and is now complete;
   b. Inspiration for all Scripture as recorded in the original manuscripts was verbally specific (each and every word), plenary (complete and whole), inerrant (without error), and absolutely true in its recording; and
   c. Illumination of the meaning of what has been written has also occurred progressively throughout Old and New Testament history. The Old Testament Prophets attempted to understand their own writings about the

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11 The American Heritage Dictionary, 4th ed., s.v. “Philosophy. By ’philosophical’ is meant: pertaining to the ’investigation of the nature, causes, or principles of reality, knowledge, or values, based on logical reasoning rather than empirical methods.”
Salvation to come through Christ, but were unable until the Gospel arrived in history (I Peter 1:10). This illustrates the principle of Isaiah 28:10 (precept upon precept). Illumination is also understood to be progressive to each individual believer based on his own Spiritual maturity.

Note: It must be understood that, although God used human languages to record His Message, His Word can be fully comprehended only by a Spiritually alive and Spiritually energized believer and as taught through the Illuminating Ministry of God the Holy Spirit. An unbeliever or carnal believer relying solely on his own understanding of human linguistics, period literature, or historical data cannot understand Scripture's Spiritual message. Unless God the Holy Spirit overrides the "natural" man's blindness, Spiritual truth is not available to him.

5. Man is held accountable to God for understanding and living by (obeying) whatever communication he has received.

6. All rules of hermeneutics MUST be consistent with sound logic and principles that are derived directly from Scripture. These rules must be substantiated as being Biblical by a literal methodology (a normal, ordinary, customary, grammatical, historical, and critical logic). This meaning for "literal methodology" is to be understood whenever the term "literal interpretation" is used throughout this book. Literal methodology includes the normal interpretation of all idioms and figures of speech as such.

7. These fully substantiated rules of hermeneutics must be consistently and honestly applied to every discipline in the interpretation of Scripture. (By discipline, I am referring to word studies, grammatical exegesis in the original languages, and development or verification of all Theological positions.) This approach is to be followed unless it becomes clear that a particular hermeneutical rule must be altered in order to be in total agreement with all Scripture.

Before beginning this course of study, please consider the following questions.

- Do you truly desire to know what God Intends for man to know?
- Do you believe God has communicated through the Holy Scriptures?
- Do you really believe you can come to know God's Communication?
- Are you willing to submit yourself solely to the Authority of God's Word?

If your answer is yes to all of the above, you should be ready to pursue and benefit greatly by this study.

The following is a personal challenge to those who are already teaching or who are studying in preparation for teaching, Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching (2 Timothy 4:2). Most people today have an incorrect and almost antagonistic understanding of preaching, probably due primarily to their experiences with modern-day “preachers.” English dictionaries define to preach as “to deliver a religious message publicly.” 12

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However, the Greek word *kērussō* \(^{13}\) is defined in Greek lexicons as “to announce or make known publicly by a herald.” \(^{14}\) (See Matthew 10:27; 11:1; Mark 1:38; 16:15; et al.) The following passages provide us with a picture of the activity of a herald and define what it means to *preach the word* (see Daniel 3:4; Jonah 3:2; and Matthew 12:41). Biblically, preaching describes the public declaration of the Word of God.

In the ancient world, a herald (*kērux*) had the duty to proclaim publicly an official message (*kērugma*) from the king. A herald did not choose his own message. He did not embellish the message with his own opinions or philosophies. He did not add to, subtract from, or alter the king’s message in any way. The task of a herald was to proclaim the message EXACTLY as it had been given to him, *word-for-word*. If you are, or intend to be, a herald of our King, your message must also display this *word-for-word* accuracy. Therefore, you must first learn how to interpret the Word of God as accurately as possible. Only then will you be prepared to follow the charge God presented to Timothy through the writer/recorder Paul:

> This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare. (1 Timothy 1:18)

Timothy was then commanded to pass on this charge to other men. Faithful elders have continued passing on this responsibility for almost 2000 years.

> And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. (2 Timothy 2:2)

If you are to pursue the task of being a herald for our King, you must first learn exactly what God has said and what His Word means. Only then can you proclaim His Message EXACTLY as He has given it and avoid the awesome judgment facing those communicators of God’s Holy Word who “trip up” in their teaching:

> My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. (James 3:1, 2)

Of course, a believer does not have to be called to preach in order to desire to learn how to interpret the Scriptures correctly. Some may actually discover and/or confirm their calling through the study of this book. I believe that innate human ability is not an issue for learning the original languages, hermeneutics, history, Theology, or any other intellectual discipline required for the study of God’s Word. God can overcome any human deficiencies for those who are truly committed to His Calling.

**Is It Wrong to Worship the Word of God?**

If the reader thinks my devotion to God’s Word is obsessive or that I hold It in too high esteem, the following description of the Bible is for your consideration. The question that must be answered is this: Is the Holy Word of God—The Bible—just another piece of literature, or is It Divine?

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\(^{13}\) The author will provide the transliteration (corresponding English letter for the Greek letter) for the words from the Greek text.

\(^{14}\) See Abbott-Smith, Arndt and Gingrich, or any standard lexicon.
Jesus Christ, the living Word of God, is identified with the written Word of God.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. (John 1:1-2)

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

As such, the Word takes on the very Characteristics of God:

- God’s Word is Holy and must never be adulterated by any alteration or debasement by men or angels.
- God’s Word is Ultimate Authority.
- God’s Word is Love, Grace, and Mercy.
- God’s Word is Righteous.
- God’s Word is Just.
- God’s Word is Truth.
- God’s Word is Timeless.

In other words, the Word of God is worthy of praise and honor. As God says, through David

I will worship toward Your holy temple, And praise Your name For Your lovingkindness and Your truth; For You have magnified Your word above all Your name. (Psalm 138:2)

God’s Word preexisted all Creation and will exist forever

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." (Revelation 1:8)

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.” (Luke 21:33)

How can lowly man even suggest that God's Word be subjected to the humanistic linguistic critics who do not accept God’s Authority and the fact of the Supernatural Revelation, Inspiration, and Illumination of Scripture? Why should humanly-contrived lexicons be considered above the words chosen and defined by the Author-Originator? How can man’s arrogance impose human philosophies against the Divine origin of Scripture and Its literal interpretation? Satan is not the only creature to question God’s exact words by saying, “Has God not said?” I for one do not!
Why Do We Need "Bible-Based Hermeneutics"?

The most viable answer to this question is because the Holy Word of God was given to humanity in the original manuscripts of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek—not in English or any other human language. God’s Word did not arrive in any of the human translations, be it the Latin Vulgate, the Wycliffe’s Bible (the first complete translation from the Latin into English), the Tyndale Bible (the first translation into English from the original languages), the King James Version (KJV), the New American Standard Bible (NASB), the New International Version (NIV), the New King James Version (NKJV), or any other translation. The very fact that there are so many translations might indicate the frustration man has experienced in attempting to transfer God’s original communication into a “foreign” language.

Every attempted translation of the original languages of Scripture has been a human interpretation of God’s Thinking as it was originally recorded in His choice of three specific languages. Each translation of the Bible then attempts to transfer the Author/Originator’s original Thoughts into the languages of the audience—Latin, German, English, Swahili, or any other language. An interpretation can be attempted by utilizing either of two academic methods:

- The first method is “formal equivalence,” in which the selection of each SINGLE WORD in the target language is what the translator subjectively believes is the closest to the intended meaning of each SINGLE word in the original language. I met several times with the late Dr. John Beekman, who was the Head Translation Coordinator of Wycliffe Bible Translators/Summer Institute of Linguistics for over twenty-five years. Wycliffe is a ministry that has been responsible for translating the Bible into thousands of languages and dialects to the glory of God. Dr. Beekman agreed that the very rules of formal equivalence work against the possibility of conveying the most accurate meaning from one language to another. At best, this method is an attempt at producing a literal, word for word, translation. The major problem is that thoughts from either the originating language or the target language often require more than a single word to convey exact meanings.

  Note: I would recommend reading the now out-of-print book, Translating the Word of God, by Drs. John Beekman and John Callow (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974), to help in grasping the extreme challenges of translating any writing from one language to another.

- The second and more modern method of Bible interpretation is called “dynamic equivalence.” In this approach, the translator attempts to interpret an author’s words into words or phrases which he believes most accurately communicate the author’s intended meaning into today’s vernacular of the targeted language (The Living Bible and the NIV are examples of this type of translation). This method can tempt even the most honest interpreter to eisegete 15 (read into the

15 Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed., s.v. “Eisegesis: the interpretation of a text by reading into it one’s own ideas.”
text) whatever subjective thoughts or philosophical positions he may hold. There
indeed should be legitimate observance of linguistic discourse (contextual
considerations), but only as governed by the strict laws of a Bible-based
hermeneutic, which includes both accurate grammatical exegesis 16 (reading the
meaning out of the text) and confirmed Scriptural agreement.

The bottom line is this: There is no current translation of the Word of God (and
there may never be one) that is able to convey exactly what God has said or interpret
precisely what He meant. This fact does not mean that a believer cannot understand
anything that God has said in Scripture through existing translations. As will be
illustrated throughout this study, understanding Scripture is similar to the peeling of an
onion. We each can receive Illumination by the Holy Spirit to understand it layer by
layer, depending on our own Spiritual condition and personal readiness. Certainly, God
does communicate the Gospel to an unbeliever who is searching to know Him (cf.
Jeremiah 29:13; Mathew 7:7; 16:25; Acts 17:27; and Romans 2:7; 10:13, 17). Consider
how many souls have been brought to Christ through any one of the many translations.
Also, even an infant believer can understand the basic teachings of God’s Word. I have
personally witnessed believers being taught by the Holy Spirit through a pastor who at
the time was totally missing the most-specific meaning of a particular passage (even
though he may have been teaching from the original languages). We can trust that, in
the Justice and Love of His Character, God will communicate to those who are willing to
receive His Word, even if by means of stones (Luke 19:40), a donkey (2 Peter 2:16), or
a deficient translation.

If you are one whose soul “pants” (Psalm 42:1-2) to really know God—what He has
said and means—you will desire to seek Him in the depths of His Word (Psalm 119:97-
104). Allow me to give you a personal example of how this intense desire took control of
my life. After 27 years of living in rebellion against the teaching of my parents and the
God I knew existed, I was introduced to the Person of Jesus Christ and God’s Plan of
Salvation. After suffering with my pride and my unworthiness for many months, I finally
submitted my will to God by accepting Christ by faith. I received the gift of salvation,
eternal life, and a new Spiritual life through grace and the Holy Spirit. At the time, my
wife and I were attending a fundamental Bible church where the teaching was
consistently based on the original languages of Scripture. Within one week, I told my
wife (who had accepted Christ several months before) that I believed God was calling
me to public Christian service. I told her that the call might be as an evangelist (an
important one, of course, since I still had plenty of pride left in “the old man”). Almost
immediately, I fell in love with the Bible and desired to learn everything I could about
God and His Plan. I attended every class, devoured hours of Bible instruction, and
became convinced that one could actually know everything the God of all Creation
meant by what He had communicated for man to know. For the next five years I was a
part-time student of the languages and systematic Theology and then finally committed
myself to serve God totally, doing whatever and going wherever He might call me. I
taught myself the Greek alphabet and began utilizing an English concordance, an
interlinear text, and a basic Greek grammar for my almost daily Bible studies. Several
years later (1977), I founded the Foundation for Biblical Research (see Appendix B) to

16 The American Heritage Dictionary, 4th ed., s.v. “Exegesis: Critical explanation or analysis,
especially of a text.”
• Perform technical research in the original languages of Scripture,
• Develop, publish, and promote the technical tools produced by that research, and
• Perform Bible research on specific practical topics and publish books for use by all believers (and even a number of known unbelievers who were drawn to Christ through them).

Some of the results of FBR have been

• The Standard Writer’s Guide for Greek and Hebrew Exegesis, which has been endorsed by many seminary professors as an extremely competent and thorough guide for grammatical exegesis (See Appendix B),
• The Exegetical Bible, which is incomplete at this time (Several seminary graduates accomplished approximately 800 of the 8,000 hours necessary for this project before FBR was no longer able to fund the project. This project is planned for resumption in 2010.),
• Bible-Based Hermeneutics is being completed in 2007,
• The Dictionary of Bible-Based Word Meanings (Currently, about 10% of the research required to complete this project is in rough-draft form. Much of that research will be included in Bible-Based Hermeneutics. I intend to dedicate the rest of my life in completing this project, along with the help from others who grasp the vision. Volunteers are encouraged to apply, after they have completed the Bible-Based Hermeneutics course.)

Also, these non-technical books for all believers were written based on the above research, both to demonstrate the kind of practical results that can be derived from exacting research and to fund the completion of FBR’s other planned projects:

What the Bible Says about Child Training, book and workbook
What the Bible Says About Being a Man
What the Bible Says About Suffering
Successful Home Schooling
Will Early Education Ruin Your Child
No Place like Home…School

And my wife’s books

On the Other Side of the Garden, book and workbook
Victorious Women

If you also hunger to know God beyond the translations (the outer layer of His Revelation to man), you can study this course to begin your journey. Your search will require that you first learn and then consistently utilize this Bible-Based Hermeneutics text. Even before you become competent to exegete Scripture for yourself from the original languages, you can begin to apply the rules of hermeneutics presented in this course. These rules, combined with the many technical language tools available today, can enable you to begin discovering layer upon layer of His Word revealed to you. These introductory sections have been designed primarily to present the philosophy behind a thoroughly inductive, Bible-based method for obtaining the most accurate interpretation of Scripture possible. Future sections will acquaint you with the tools by which you can experience the depth of God’s Communication beneath the surface layer of your native language. The unique point of this philosophy is simply this,
WE CAN KNOW WHAT GOD HAS SAID AND WHAT HE ACTUALLY MEANS BY WHAT HE HAS SAID. AS A RESULT, WE CAN BETTER UNDERSTAND HOW HIS WORD SHOULD APPLY TO OUR OWN LIVES.

Sadly, many young men have attended Bible colleges and/or seminaries with a sincere desire to learn about God, just to leave more confused and discouraged than they began. A common response from these graduating students is that they often became convinced no one could ever really know what God’s Word means. The scholarly pursuit of academic data and the multitude of contradictory opinions of man often usurp a simple reliance on the Holy Spirit’s Illuminating Ministry. Why is it that students cannot merely attend a “good” institution, simply learn its stated Theology, and accept it unquestionably? They could do that and many have. They learn certain Theological positions, repeat them as truth, and often become defensive when anyone asks an analytical question that their Theology does not answer logically from Scripture. The Sadducees faced this problem when Jesus confronted them with the correct interpretation of Scripture. The Catholic Church reacted violently when Martin Luther posted his Ninety-five Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg. John Calvin was known to become very aggressive against those who challenged his personal interpretations of Scripture. Some present-day Reformed Theologians can be driven to fits of anger when their doctrine of TULIP ¹⁷ is challenged with the Scriptural passages to which they refuse to submit their positions. (In fact, it seems that those who are the most capable of understanding their positions are incorrect often put up the most vehement fight against providing sound proof from Scripture. They are the ones who should be the most accountable due to their advanced academic knowledge of the original languages, but they often refuse to accept that accountability.) Just the fact that a Theological position can be stated, learned, and accepted by its religious hierarchy does not make it correct. Every Theological position must be subject to a Bible-based hermeneutics, not popular opinion or secularly influenced scholarship.

The only Theology that is fitting for man to learn and base his teaching on is one that can be totally substantiated by Scripture. This is not to suggest that all existing Theologies are incorrect. It only means that any systematic Theology or fragment thereof a student accepts as truth must be able to stand up to honest evaluation based on a hermeneutically correct Scriptural analysis. Am I insinuating that man does not know anything about God’s Word at this time? Absolutely not! However, every humanly

¹⁷ T.U.L.I.P. is an acronym that represents the five points of Calvinism: T = total depravity (meaning that man cannot do anything to deserve or earn acceptance by God and that man has no ability even to respond positively to God); U = unconditional election (meaning that each member of the human race is in an unconditional state of either being elect or non-elect by God’s decree); L = limited atonement (meaning that Christ died to save a certain portion of mankind, namely “the elect,” and that He died only for these and that they alone can be saved); I = irresistible grace (meaning that only “the elect” for whom Christ died will have their eyes opened to their sinful state and need for salvation, and will, without fail or choice, come to Christ) and; P = perseverance of the saints (meaning that the life of the true believer will be marked by holiness and increasing sanctification; not perfection, but, over the course of a lifetime, be a life lived in constant pursuit of God. Thus, it is believed that a true saint, by virtue of the power of God, will never completely fall away from true faith into ultimate and final apostasy). (There are many ways to word this definition; this is just this author’s rendition.)
developed Theology has sprung forth, at least partially, from the mind of man and therefore has potentially been tainted by man’s fallen nature. It may even have been developed as a response to challenges from unbelievers or from apostate, heretical, or misguided Christians. The challenges of Gnosticism, Arminianism, and other heresies have been the impetus for much Theological research. Sadly, some Theologies are more anti-positions than positions developed by an objective attempt to research and rightly discern “the mind of Christ.” What I am saying is that NO doctrinal position can be blindly accepted as truth, especially by those who are called to preach to others. God commended the Bereans because, as Acts 17:11 states (based on this author’s interpretation from the Greek), “they welcomed [Paul’s teaching] with all eagerness, carefully examining the Scriptures daily, [wishing] to find those things [the things that were said] were so [in the degree or manner stated].” These were not those Jews who were negative to Paul’s teaching and challenged what he said; they sought the Truth and readily anticipated its being proven out of Scripture. Every doctrine should be so investigated before it is accepted, and especially before it is taught to others.

A simple procedure that might help restrict man’s desire to promote any doctrine beyond the extent of Scriptural support would be to categorize doctrines as absolute, probable, or possible.

- Absolute doctrines would be those that have been proved and accepted with no known Scriptural conflict.
- Probable positions would be those that are apparently correct and can be accepted as a working thesis, but having incomplete evidence in Scripture to answer all unresolved disputes.
- Possible suppositions would be for logical deductions based on probable positions or absolute doctrines as defined above.

Many important categories of Theology have already been developed solely from Scripture and are generally accepted as absolute doctrine by most informed believers. The Spiritual source and Authority of the Bible, sin, the fallen nature of man, angels, the Work and Person of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, and many other foundational topics are some of these categories. Sound exegesis and reasonable categorization have been accomplished on these key doctrines in harmony with all Scripture and substantiated by a literal, historical, and logical hermeneutic. Nevertheless, there is still need for improvement in substantiating a complete Bible-based, systematic Theology. Every systematic Theology—from the Institutes of Calvin to the standard texts of Darby, Hodge, or Chafer—states dogmas, which need to be classified and substantiated thoroughly by Scripture. Some of these dogmas concern the source and interpretation of Scripture, the way man becomes saved, eschatology, eternal security and perseverance, covenants and dispensations, determinism versus human volition.

18 This verse contains an excellent example of how God’s choice of even the mood of a verb is important in determining the most accurate interpretation of Scripture. In this Greek text, the particle εἰ is used with the optative mood of (ἐχθά) indicating the conditional phrase: “if it is true, as in a remote possibility.” In this context it is clear that these Bereans truly desired to find that those things Paul taught were actually verifiable by Scripture. They welcomed Paul’s teaching eagerly; they examined the Scriptures diligently (daily); and they searched to find if what he taught could possibly be true (wishing to find it so). This interpretation corrects the false concept that a teacher’s students should challenge his teaching with a critical attitude.
church government, and similar categories. Also, doctrinal positions concerning personal Spirituality, maturity, worship, prayer, parenting, marriage, and many practical aspects of Christian living are currently a matter mostly of personal opinions or various ecclesiological decrees.

Do you believe you might be one who possesses the integrity and logical approach necessary to help ferret out this worthy objective? Are you interested in determining ONLY the truth, above attempting to support anyone’s preconceived opinions? I have learned over the past 30 years of studying Scripture exclusively in the original languages that God will reveal WHATEVER a believer needs to know about His Person, His Plan, and His Ways when Scripture is approached in the correct manner and with the correct attitude of submission to the Holy Spirit and the Word.

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. (Matthew 7:7-8)

For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ. (1 Corinthians 2:16)

...as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue. (2 Peter 1:3)

The following are a few examples of the types of important results you can immediately begin to see from the use of Bible-Based Hermeneutics, 

- Why we need to determine who is speaking to whom about what, when, where, and why in every passage of Scripture,
- How knowing the morphology of each single word in Scripture can prevent incorrect interpretations and might even lead to doctrinal unity in the Church,
- Why defending the faith against the objections or attacks from unbelievers, heretics, or apostates is not what Scripture teaches as the correct meaning of apologetics,
- Why Matthew 18:19-20 is not a verse on group prayer, but the final part of a local church's judgment of a sinning believer as well as the practical means for resolution of disputes between believers,
- Which one of the multiple words used in any translation for prayer and worship actually means what God desires from believers (and what those other incorrectly translated words really mean), and
- The difference between disobedience and rebellion; punishment and chastisement.

Does the prospect of learning these things inspire you to want to learn more of how to interpret God’s Word more accurately? May our God encourage you to apply yourself to the study of this book with all diligence for His Glory and the sake of Christ our Savior, Amen!
SECTION ONE
Philosophical Presuppositions

1. The Two Greatest Rules of Hermeneutics—Honesty and Humility

   Every student of God’s Word must consciously strive for absolute honesty in his attempt to understand the meaning God Intended by each jot and tittle of His Word. This requires the honesty to eliminate presuppositions and personal biases from one's study. Humility is also a prerequisite for anyone endeavoring to learn God’s Word. One must totally submit to the Authority of God, respect His awesome Character, and recognize the responsibility of accurately interpreting His Word. This fact is taught under the concept of “the fear of the Lord,” which is described in about two-dozen passages in Scripture. The following verses specifically speak of this “fear” as a prerequisite mental attitude for being instructed by God in the knowledge and understanding of His Wisdom (underlining is added for emphasis).

   *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge,*
   *But fools despise wisdom and instruction.* (Proverbs 1:7)

   *Then you will understand the fear of the LORD,*
   *And find the knowledge of God.* (Proverbs 2:5)

   *The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom,*
   *And before honor is humility.* (Proverbs 15:33)

   *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom,*
   *And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.* (Proverbs 9:10)

   What exactly is this “fear” that a believer should have when he approaches God’s Word? Are believers really supposed to fear their God? The Hebrew and Greek words translated “fear” can mean “terror” (Luke 2:9, 8:37; John 21:19), “respect” (Romans 13:7), “reverence” (2 Corinthians 7:1, 11, 15; Ephesians 5:21), or “awe” (Mark 4:41). Believers are even commanded to have a fear of God rather than of Satan (Matthew 10:28). The Bible records historical events that must have been (or will be) awesome to their viewers: the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:24-28); Moses in the presence of God (Exodus 3:6); each of the ten plagues against Egypt (Exodus 7-14); King Nebuchadnezzar seeing the Son of God walking in the fiery furnace with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego (Daniel 3:23); and all of the final judgments described in the Apocalypse (Revelation 11-19).

   Biblically, “fear” is defined as the *rational* warning of danger, such as the physical discomfort or pain that is an *empirical* warning from the senses. Fear originates in the heart of man—the seat of rational thinking and planning (see Deuteronomy 4:10; 10:12; 20:3; Psalm 27:3; Jeremiah 32:40; 51:46; Ephesians 6:5; Colossians 3:22).

   The term “the fear of the Lord” is best understood as the awe of man when facing the Almighty God of the universe. “Awe” could be described as the mental and emotional expression of an encounter with superior power, strength, intelligence, size, and possibly unknown intentions. It is the rational realization of one’s insignificance when experiencing the overwhelming Power of God face to face. This dreadful fear is
similar to the mental apprehension a person might sense when he faces a vastly superior power whose character may be unknown.

A student’s humility before God requires him to exercise the self-discipline needed to re-evaluate any presuppositions or personal conclusions regarding his interpretation of the Bible. Humility is also required when a student’s pride is challenged by his study in the Scriptures and when his personal biases, presuppositions, or research is challenged by the Word or questioned by his peers.

Scripture alone must be allowed to interpret Scripture. No man-made rules of interpretation can be allowed to exist above the literal and fully substantiated interpretation of the Spiritually Illuminated Word of God. No man-made dogma, creed, category of doctrine, systematic theology, or catechism can be allowed to be in authority above the true and verifiable interpretation of Scripture. Man-made rules of logic can only be guidelines opening a finite window into the infinite Wisdom of God.

Consistent monitoring of the researcher by others who are qualified in proven character and expertise in Biblical interpretation can assist in keeping man-made influences to a minimum. “Iron sharpening iron” (a principle from Proverbs 27:17 is the external control required to bind men to a verifiable interpretation. Even grammatical mastery of the original languages, isagógics, and logic should be recognized as only tools by which a scholar might best interpret God’s Holy Communication. These tools can suggest possibilities or even probabilities that must be substantiated by the whole of Scripture as seen both vertically (contextually—grammatically and linguistically) and horizontally (categorically—in harmony with all Scripture). The purpose of this course of study is the explanation and demonstration of what correct interpretation means and how Scripture should be used to interpret Scripture.

2. What “Bible-Based Hermeneutics” Means

The dictionary definition of hermeneutics is: “The theory and methodology of interpretation, especially of scriptural text.”

Or more precisely: “Belonging to or concerned with interpretation; especially as distinguished from exegesis or practical exposition.”

The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives the most probable etymology for the word *hermeneutic* as having been derived from Hermes, the name of the mythological Greek god who was considered to be the tutelary (guardian or protector) deity of speech, writing, and traffic. Hermes was referred to in the book of Acts: *And Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker* (Acts 14:12). In Greek mythology, Hermes served as a herald and messenger of the gods. Consequently, the science of hermeneutics can be understood as the interpretation of the true God’s Message to man. The early Church’s title for a person employed to interpret the service to worshipers who used a different language was “Hermeneut.”

The purpose of the science of hermeneutics and the skillful use of its rules is to produce the most accurate determination of precisely what God means by what He says in Scripture. Of course, this is only possible by a believer who is totally dependent on

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Spiritual Illumination from God due to man’s limited and sinful ability. This course will be concerned primarily with what happens after grammatical exegesis \(^{21}\) (i.e., what the text says) and prior to determining its application to man (i.e., the exposition of how man is to understand or utilize the information). Bible-based hermeneutics is a system of rules developed from Scripture and non-contradicting logic that endeavors to determine each text’s primary meaning (i.e., exactly what God meant by what He said). The science of hermeneutics (interpretation) combines with literal grammatical exegesis in actual practice to produce the best understanding possible of what God has communicated to man for observance in his intellectual and Spiritual life.

Much of the incorrect interpretation of Scripture over the centuries has resulted from reading a biased meaning into a text (eisegesis)\(^{22}\) or by someone performing grammatical exegesis without utilizing sound rules of hermeneutics. Every word in every text must be analyzed grammatically, literally, and historically within its context, as well as by comparison with all related Scripture. A strict, Bible-based hermeneutic is needed to interpret Scripture accurately and verifiably. Next, that hermeneutic must be utilized honestly and consistently to determine what God actually means by what He says in each and every verse. It is not enough to know the rules; it is also essential to apply them consistently, without bias or dishonesty, in our interpretations. Only after knowing God’s meaning can one know how each passage is to be understood. As we study the following sections, we will begin to develop a system of Bible-based rules and methodology to assist us in interpreting what God meant, as much as humanly possible, by every word, every passage, and every category of doctrine.

A set of rules that are verifiable by Scripture is necessary in order to overcome obstacles in the understanding of God’s Word as accurately as possible. Five of the obstacles to spontaneous, accurate, or precise comprehension of the Scriptures are the language barrier, the cultural barrier, the historical barrier, the geographical/time barrier, and the philosophical barrier. Let us briefly consider each of these obstacles.

- The language barrier is due to the fact that the Word of God was written in three ancient languages, each having its own unique forms, syntax, idioms, figures of speech, and vocabulary. Imagine the misunderstanding that might occur if someone translated the following English sentences into another language without understanding their idiomatic or figurative sense: “When our ship comes in, we’ll be on top of the world,” or “The officer threw the book at the reckless driver, and he was right as rain to do so.” A strictly literal translation of these sentences would not communicate the intended meaning of their author. The same thing can happen when one tries to interpret what God had recorded in Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek.

- The historical and cultural barriers represent two more obstacles. The historical barrier results from the wide time gap between the writers and original recipients of the various portions of Scripture and today’s readers. The cultural barrier is obviously due to the vast differences between the ancient cultures and our own.


\(^{22}\) Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed., s.v. “Eisegesis, the interpretation of a text by reading into it one’s own ideas.”
Ruth’s request of Boaz provides us with an example of both of these obstacles to an accurate and precise interpretation of God’s Word. The KJV translates Ruth 3:9, *And he said, Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman.* The Hebrew word for skirt is normally translated “wings” as it is in Ruth 2:12. The spreading of the skirt was a cultural practice among the peoples of the ancient Middle East indicating a proposal of marriage and was used figuratively to denote the protection of a husband. This same metaphor is used of God in relationship to His people in Ezekiel 16:8, *"When I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed your time was the time of love; so I spread My wing over you and covered your nakedness. Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine," says the Lord GOD.* If the rules of hermeneutics were not applied correctly to Ruth 3:9 and Ezekiel 16:8, today’s reader would not be able to bridge the gap caused by the historical/cultural differences.

- The geographical/time barrier is particularly relevant when it comes to unfulfilled prophecy. Many of the interpretations of prophecy, which have been postulated in the past only to be proven wrong later, could have been avoided if the interpretation of the prophetic events had been consistent with their historical settings. For example, the Scripture clearly teaches that
  1. there is a gap in Israel’s history in which the Church came into being and will exist *until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in* (Romans 11:11-31);
  2. the Church will be taken away: *Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord* (1 Thessalonians 4:17); and
  3. then Israel’s final seven years of earthly history will resume as they are re-grafted into the root and all of the currently unfulfilled prophecies to them are completed (Mathew 11:23-25). [Comment: Any differing interpretation of these passages (and others that speak to the subject) would have to be allegorical in nature, rather than natural, normal, logical, and literal. Please see Appendix D for a more complete presentation of this position.]

The philosophical barrier can be overcome by understanding the similarities and differences between the general beliefs, values, attitudes, and mores of the writers of Scripture and their original audience. Some accuse the Bible of being sexist or racist because they fail to take into account the philosophical beliefs of the people of ancient times. Another example is the general attitude in the New Testament toward Cretans—that they were always liars and dangerous gluttonous people (1 Timothy 1:12).

Note: Chapters 4-6 of Dr. Roy Zuck’s excellent book, *Basic Bible Interpretation*, more completely addresses "Bridging the Gaps" in the interpretation of Scripture.


3. Epistemology (How Can Man Know?)

The stated *epistemological* \(^{25}\) approach of this course will be developed and substantiated from Scripture. The basic tenet of this approach is that man is MEANT to know, CAN know, and CAN KNOW that he knows all that God has Intended for man to understand. The Bible repeatedly declares the fact that every man (at least every believer) is meant to know and understand what God has revealed in His Word.

Note: I suggest that you read Dr. Schaeffer’s book, *He Is There and He Is Not Silent*.\(^{26}\) This short but deeply insightful book deals with the philosophical problems man has faced over the past 200 or more years concerning the vital issue of epistemology.

*Then the LORD said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and be there; and I will give you tablets of stone, and the law and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them." (Exodus 24:12) [Comment: Moses had to know what he was to teach.]*

*If you do not carefully observe all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, THE LORD YOUR GOD, then the LORD will bring upon you and your descendants extraordinary plagues—great and prolonged plagues—and serious and prolonged sicknesses. (Deuteronomy 28:58-59) [Comment: They had to understand exactly what God expected them to observe, or else.]*

*The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law. (Deuteronomy 29:29) [Comment: The Infinite God surely knows things He chooses not to reveal, but what He does choose to reveal in finite terms demands human accountability.]*

*This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. (Joshua 1:8) [Comment: Lack of knowledge of God’s revealed Law results in inability to live it and receive the resulting blessing.]*

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\(^{26}\) Francis A. Schaeffer, *He is There and He is Not Silent* (Carol Stream, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001). [Comments: This book can be purchased for $9.01 from Amazon, but it is recommended that you buy, *The Francis A. Schaeffer Trilogy* (Wheaton, Illinois: Cross Way Books, a division of GoodNews Publishing, 1990), which includes that title in a hardback printing for $15.75 (this book is also from Amazon). Please note that *HTHS* was intended by Dr. Schaeffer to be read after *The God Who is There*; a book that lays the ground work, establishes the terminology, and sets out the basic thesis for his philosophical apologetic. If you have difficulty comprehending *HTHS*, I would recommend that you read *GWIT* first. Nevertheless, reading through *HTHS* very carefully should provide you with a basic understanding of false views about epistemology, by which philosophies modern man has been heavily influenced. This 104-page book may help to provide you with a sound foundation for your own philosophical viewpoint.*
And keep the charge of the LORD your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn. (1 Kings 2:3) [Comment: Knowing and obeying God’s Law was an obvious prerequisite to national and personal prosperity for Israel's people.]

For the LORD gives wisdom;
   From His mouth come knowledge and understanding;
   He stores up sound wisdom for the upright. (Proverbs 2:6-7)

Get wisdom! Get understanding!
Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth. (Proverbs 4:5) [Comment: One cannot forget or turn away from what one does not first know.]

So that your trust may be in the LORD;
   I have instructed you today, even you.
Have I not written to you excellent things
   Of counsels and knowledge,
That I may make you know the certainty of the words of truth,
   That you may answer words of truth
To those who send to you? (Proverbs 22:19-21)

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts,
 Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD.
"For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
   So are My ways higher than your ways,
And My thoughts than your thoughts.
For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven,
   And do not return there,
But water the earth,
   And make it bring forth and bud,
That it may give seed to the sower
   And bread to the eater;
So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth;
   It shall not return to Me void,
But it shall accomplish what I please,
   And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it." (Isaiah 55:8-11) [Comment: Obviously, the Infinite God Thinks and Acts in ways that are beyond human understanding, but His Words are sent for finite comprehension.]

But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" (Matthew 4:4) [Comment: To live by every one of God’s Words (the Greek word here translated “word” is rhema, and most-specifically means “the thing spoken, like a saying, a series of words, a legal matter, or a discourse.”), one would need to know and understand every word of every discourse that originates from God!]

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:31-32) [Comment: Jesus makes it clear that knowing and living by His Word is the means for realizing Truth. The specific Truth He was referring to in this
context was the believers’ freedom from personal enslavement to the sin nature—a freedom that the Mosaic Law could never provide (see John 8:34-36].

4. Conclusion

The unique position of this course’s presentation is that a believer in fellowship and submitted to God’s Spirit for Illumination will be encouraged to determine with certainty what God has said and what He meant by what He has said in every passage of Scripture! There would be no reason to perform word studies or exegete passages from the original languages unless one could actually reach verifiable conclusions about God’s Plan and Instructions for man. Obviously, God Intended to communicate to man and His Word is of the utmost importance for each member of the human race. We are each meant to love It, learn It, understand It, believe It, and to live by Its every Word.

I will worship toward Your holy temple, And praise Your name For Your lovingkindness and Your truth; For You have magnified Your word above all Your name. (Psalm 138:2; emphasis mine)

But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’” (Matthew 4:4)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1)

If you have understood this Section, you are well on your way to learning how you can eventually interpret God’s Holy Word with great accuracy. The philosophical presuppositions behind any concept are usually the most difficult to grasp. It is significantly easier to teach a system of rules than the reasons for their existence. NASA engineers working on the Minuteman III guided-missile project once asked me—as a printed circuit board designer—which, if any, of the military specifications for the design of a particular type of electronic circuitry could be altered. I could help them determine the answer because of my understanding of the theory behind the rules.

You should now at least partly understand the thinking behind this course of study. The next Section should help to establish your understanding of how God has assured that man may be able to interpret His Spiritual communication with a great deal of confidence.
SECTION TWO

Spiritual Means by Which God Provided His Communication to Man

1. Revelation

God has revealed general and universally known information about His Existence, Works, and Character to all mankind—rationally through men’s conscious minds and empirically through the Miracles men can clearly observe in His Creation.

*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.* (Romans 1:18-20)

Note: God has revealed a great amount of information that can, at least partially, be understood by the natural (non-spiritual) man. (By non-spiritual is meant: without possessing a Divine, Spiritual life.) Examples of this information are creation, law, definitions of sin and justice, and limited information about God’s Character, Works, and long-suffering Mercy. God has also provided general information about history, geology, farming, husbandry, military operations, marriage, parenting, government, human relationships, man’s soul and nature, and about many other areas. These general truths do not contain Spiritual content and therefore do not require Spiritual perception for understanding or even for application—as humans have done selectively for thousands of years. Most of what has been considered human wisdom throughout history originated from this type of information with which God graciously blessed mankind. Although not all of the general information pertaining to man is provided in Scripture, whatever information is given is absolutely true: *Your word is truth* (John 17:17b).

*The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.* (Deuteronomy 29:29)

*He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, And light dwells with Him.* (Daniel 2:22)

God as an Infinite being is obviously beyond full description, comprehension, or knowledge by means of any finite ability.

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD. *For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.* (Isaiah 55:8-9)

*Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!* For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor? Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him? (Romans 11:33-35)
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 Corinthians 2:14)

Man can only imagine who and what God is—apart from His Initiation in communicating to man via dreams, visions, thoughts, or written and spoken words.

At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes." (Matthew 11:25)

For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, (1 Corinthians 1:21a)

But as it is written:
"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,
Nor have entered into the heart of man
The things which God has prepared for those who love Him." (1 Corinthians 2:9)

Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. (1 Corinthians 2:11b)

These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches. (1 Corinthians 2:13a)

But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. (2 Corinthians 4:3-4)

Yet, God has chosen to communicate to man today through His Word, Jesus Christ, and the Third Person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit. When it comes to things of a Spiritual nature, God has communicated absolutely everything the believer needs for Spiritual life:

As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue. (2 Peter 1:3)

And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory. (Romans 9:23)

It pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. (1 Corinthians 1:21b)

But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. (1 Corinthians 2:10)

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 ... but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. (1 Corinthians 2:11, 13b)

This book will deal with information that goes beyond any human ability to imagine or discover. This information has been given to man by Supernatural means (Revelation and Inspiration). There are portions of Scripture that can only be comprehended by the Supernatural means of God’s Illumination and only by those who are alive Spiritually.
An important concept about God’s Revelation is that it has been given progressively throughout man’s history. For example, all Revelation given by God to Adam is still as accurate and valid today as it was when it was originally given. That Revelation was later recorded by Inspiration through Moses in the Pentateuch; therefore, it has remained part of God’s communication throughout history. At the beginning of time, however, God did not disclose the entire historical development of His Plan for man, angels, Satan, Jesus Christ, Israel and the Church, the end of time, eternity, or other “mysteries.” Today, Revelation is as complete as God intended for it to be until the end of human history (1 Corinthians 13:10; Revelation 22:18-19).

2. Inspiration

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. (2 Timothy 3:16)

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. (2 Peter 1:20-21) (See also John 16:13-15; 1 Corinthians 2:11b.)

Key words and phrases in these passages make it abundantly clear that God was in total control of His communication to mankind. Even though human hands were used to pen the words, God Authored/Originated every Old and New Testament word, phrase, and discourse in the original manuscripts. The following notes (included in brackets) on the next two passages attempt to illustrate some of the formation of God’s Word.

2 Timothy 3:16 states:
- All Scripture ["all" means every single word that was recorded in the original manuscripts]
- is given by inspiration of God. [Comments: The English words, "is given by" and "of" have all been supplied by the translators. The grammar of the Greek used here makes it clear that it is Scripture Itself that received the breath of God, not the writers motivated or impassioned with a message. Therefore, the phrase simply reads appositionally, "All Scripture—God-breathed"]

2 Peter 1:20-21 states:
- Knowing this first (superior to the eyewitness testimony of Peter’s experience as recorded in verses 15-19; “we have a more sure [stable] word [testimony]” and we are to know this fact)
- that no ("no" = absolutely none)
- prophecy of Scripture (The Old Testament Revelation to man, in this context)
- is of any private (originating from oneself)
- interpretation (an explanation or unraveling of the enigmatical)

27 A “mystery” in Scripture is a truth not revealed before New Testament times, but which has now been revealed through the Apostles (Romans 11:25; 16:25, 26; 1 Corinthians 2:7,8; 15:51-54; Ephesians 1:9, 10; 3:3, 4; 5:22; Colossians 1:24-27; 1 Timothy 3:16; Revelation 1:20; 10:7; 17:7).
for prophecy never (at no time)  
came by the will of man (was brought forth by the intentional purpose of human beings)  
but holy men of God ('but" = but instead) (men set apart for service by God)  
spoke (said the words)  
as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (as they were being moved, or carried along, under the Influence of the Holy Spirit)

In vv. 15-19, which precede the above quotation, God tells us through Peter that the eyewitness evidence (referring to the Transfiguration seen by Peter, James, and John and recorded in Matthew 17:1-5) is not as creditable a testimony as is Scripture. No existential happening to oneself or observed in others is ever to be considered more creditable than Scripture (see also Luke 16:19-31 and John 20:29).

The New Testament Canon became incorporated as part of the Holy Scriptures as it was written and confirmed by the Apostles.

For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. (Matthew 5:18)

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds. (Hebrews 1:1-2) (See also, Hebrews 13:8; 1 Corinthians 2:13, 16.)

And consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures. (2 Peter 3:15-16)

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. (Revelation 22:18-19)

The Scriptures were "God-breathed" and Supernaturally recorded through human conduits with the result that God’s intended Message is found in Scripture without error, omission, or embellishment. Even the lies of Satan and the false opinions of men are God-breathed into Scripture. The fact that every Word of Scripture is God-breathed does not mean that the lies and incorrect statements of men and Satan originated from God. It does mean that they became a part of the overall message God makes available to man. The Inspiration of Scripture includes the private thoughts, emotional initiations, and responses of man and Satan accurately recorded by the precise words and grammatical constructions in which God chose for them to be preserved.

God (as the Creator of the minds of men and all languages) so utilized the languages of Hebrew and Greek as to communicate His Thoughts, Plans, and other needed information to man. The precise role human writers/recorders played in Scripture will be covered in Section Seven. The following points suggest some of
the known forms by which God's Communication came through these chosen vessels.

- In some cases, God dictated each word, often going beyond the present knowledge or vision of the writer/recorder. (See Exodus 20:1; Matthew 1:22; 2:15; 4:4,7,10; 15:4; 21:13; 22:43; 26:31; 27:9; Luke 1:70; John 12:49-50; 14:10; 1 Corinthians 14:37.) [Comments: Note that the human writers/recorders of these verses are seldom credited by name. The human writer of the book of Hebrews (and other Old Testament texts) has remained unknown to man. Also note that even Jesus states that He was told what to say by His Father. Whenever the human writers/recorders are mentioned, it is not to give him credit, but to associate with the audience through their recognition and identification of that particular writer. (See Matthew 19:8; Mark 7:10, 10:3; Luke 2:22, 5:14, 16:29, 31.)]

- In other cases, God Miraculously allowed the education, experience, style, and personality of a human writer/recorder to be observable as He expressed His Message through him.

- In other cases, God even allowed a writer of Scripture to express his opinion, which by the acceptance of it in the completed canon of Scripture ordained its validity (example: all or portions of 1 Corinthians 7).

Many passages in Job, the Psalms, and other books of Scripture allow the writer to express his subjective responses to the Character or Works of God as they relate to his thinking or emotions. As in the interpretation of any literature, the context must be considered paramount as to who is speaking to whom about what, when, and where. When a writer of Scripture subjectively refers to his thoughts or feelings concerning the topic being addressed, it is not a "thus says the Lord" statement. It is only realistic to interpret what is being said as the subjective interaction of that writer. Nevertheless, the words of that human writer only become a part of God's Message when they are God-breathed by the Holy Spirit into Scripture. This concept will be further addressed in Section Seven.

- In a few cases, as one given below, God literally required the vessels of His Truth to say exactly what He desired, even when it was not those vessels' intention to do so.

Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. (Jude 3) [Comment: The phrase "I found it necessary" is stronger in the original Greek. Jude says that he was actually "held back or constrained" from writing on the subject he "diligently intended" to say or write about (see also Numbers 22-23; Jonah 3:2; and John 11:51-52.).]

The next Section will explain how God has made provision for man, not only to know what He has Revealed, but also to be able to comprehend it. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know . . . (1 John 5:13a).

Praise Him, we can know!
SECTION THREE

Spiritual Prerequisites for Comprehension of Scripture

This Section considers the Spiritual prerequisites God has established for man's being able to comprehend the exact meaning of God's Word. Man has sought communication from God throughout history in a variety of strange ways. He has attempted to receive communication by inducing a state of euphoria through fasting, sleep deprivation, drug use, and meditation—often in some secluded location and/or under self-induced pain. Actually, obtaining God's Communication is impossible by human means of any kind. The student must understand and be aware of the fact that his competence in the grammar (word meaning, morphology, syntax, and linguistics) of the original languages of Scripture does not guarantee that he can “hear” God. Even the utilization of the best possible system of hermeneutics is not sufficient in itself for understanding the Supernaturally designed Message God has provided. These are merely mechanical tools that are necessary to utilize in the search. Each student must first submit himself totally to all of the Spiritual conditions for receiving and understanding God's Communication. We studied God's Revelation and Inspiration in Section Two; now we will study God's Illumination and the need for personal Spiritual receptiveness. The student must also exhibit all of the personal attitudes listed in Section Four before he will be able to comprehend the Divine meaning of God’s Word. The Bible is not just another piece of human literature; it is the living WORD of GOD (Matthew 5:18; John 1:1, 2, 14; Revelation 1:8; Hebrews 4:12a).

1. Illumination

Illumination is the Spiritual means by which God has enabled man to understand His Revelation. Revelation, as it has been previously defined in this course, is the means by which God has provided communication to man and it has been recorded for all time in the Holy Scriptures. God's Illumination is not synonymous with God's Revelation. However, these two terms are often confused or overlapped in human thinking. God the Holy Spirit does “reveal” (unveil) specific information to an individual when He enables him to understand (to receive Illumination of) the meaning of any passage of Scripture. However, God’s progressive Act of Revelation was accomplished fact when it was recorded as Scripture (even when the human writers may not have immediately understood His Message). Illumination is the temporal "unveiling" of that Revelation to an individual who is studying God’s Word. Illumination provides for the reader's understanding of the specific meaning behind each one of the words or concepts being studied. Spiritual Illumination is not to be confused with any application of Neoorthodoxy. This is the false viewpoint that the Bible can be interpreted in terms of whatever the reader imagines it to mean to him personally. 28

28 The Neoorthodox view (the existential Theology popularized by the late philosopher, Karl Barth) holds that the subjective experience one has with the Bible is what is really important, not what the words of the Bible literally say. Valuable information explaining the danger of this philosophy can be found in Dr. Schaeffer's book, The God Who Is There: Section One, Chapter 1 and 2; Section Two, Chapter 1, 2, 5; and Section Three, Chapter 2. (See the citation in Section One of this book.)
To emphasize the difference: Illumination is the Spiritual means by which God allows believers the ability to understand His Revelation. For example, the Salvation of the Gentiles was Revealed in the Old Testament (see Isaiah 42:1-7; 49:6; Hosea 2:23), but not understood to be "the Church" until God provided that Illumination to Paul.

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. (Ephesians 3:1-6)

Of course, much of the narrative, historical, and general information passages of Scripture are not obscured from human understanding, but a non-spiritual man cannot understand their Spiritual significance apart from God opening his mind. The serious student of God's Word should be aware that accurate interpretation of Scripture is impossible by merely using the human knowledge of language, hermeneutics, or Theology apart from God's Illumination. It must be accepted that every believer must also be in a state of total dependence on God's Illumination before he will be able to comprehend correctly what His Word means.

So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading. (Nehemiah 8:8)

And He changes the times and the seasons;
He removes kings and raises up kings;
He gives wisdom to the wise;
And knowledge to those who have understanding.
He reveals deep and secret things;
He knows what is in the darkness,
And light dwells with Him.
"I thank You and praise You, O God of my fathers;
You have given me wisdom and might,
And have now made known to me what we asked of You,
For You have made known to us the king's demand." (Daniel 2:21-23)

And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. (Luke 24:45)

However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. (John 16:13)

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power. (Ephesians 1:17-19) [Comment: The Greek word translated "enlightened" in this grammatical construction more specifically means "having been Illuminated."]
That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:16-19)

For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. (Colossians 1:9, 10)

For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe. (1 Thessalonians 2:13)

Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:4) [Comment: God’s stated Plan (mental desire) and Purpose is that all men receive Salvation (aorist, passive, infinitive) and come (aorist, active, infinitive) to the point of faith-acquired knowledge of God’s Truth. The active voice of the Greek language here states that a believer must initiate the process of gaining this knowledge. Just as not all men actually receive the Grace Gift of Salvation; not all believers pursue the faith-acquired knowledge of God’s Truth that has been revealed by God.]

God has definite and practical objectives for a believer’s being able to comprehend His Word. Add to the following verses the fact that a believer could not grow into Spiritual maturity without being enabled to comprehend the Word of God.

For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, (Romans 15:4a). [Comment: “learning” is actually “instruction.”]

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 Corinthians 10:11)

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, (1 Timothy 3:16)

Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into. (1 Peter 1:10-12) [Comments: Here we see the progressive nature of Inspiration. The prophets who forecasted the coming of the Messiah and His Sufferings diligently searched and inquired as to the exact meaning of their own and the other prophets’ writings concerning what this Prophesy meant. But, we have no indication they ever understood when, what, or how this would come about. The Holy Spirit now Illuminates these Scriptures through the Gospel message to believers and to the angels who had also been longing to know.]
These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God. (1 John 5:13—the underlined section is a textual variant, an example of the .05% non-agreement between the various Greek texts, which competent textual criticism can easily resolve under the ministry of the Holy Spirit.)

[Comment: The phrase "you may know" (perfect, active, subjunctive of the Greek word οίδα) means to know with certainty, i.e. possessing absolute knowledge for oneself. This level of knowing is acquired when a believer has been taught specific knowledge directly by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:12), or has come to that sure knowledge through observation or reason (Romans 8:17, 22).]

Illumination of Scripture is impossible for the non-believer, who is without a Spiritual life necessary to receive the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

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 Corinthians 2:14) (See also 1 Corinthians 2: 9, 11b.)

But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. (2 Corinthians 4:3-4) [Comment: God allows Satan to obscure the Gospel for those who have already rejected the sure knowledge of God (Romans 1:19-21) or who have rejected the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit (John 16: 8-11; cf. Matthew 12:31-32).]

God’s Grace does provide a special Illumination of the Gospel to the unbeliever at the point in time he is ready to hear that portion of God’s Word.

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Romans 10:17) [Comment: Underlining in the above and next two verses is my emphasis. Note that the natural order of God’s Communication to the unbeliever (vv.14-16) is through his hearing the Word of the Gospel as declared through a preacher. Interestingly, no passage states that an unbeliever comes to Christ through reading Scriptures for himself. Of course a preacher can be anyone who “heralds” the Gospel.]

This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? (Galatians 3:2)

In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. (Ephesians 1:13)

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, (Titus 3:5) [Comment: The Greek word here translated renewing specifically means “invigorating.” This verse is not suggesting that the "dead" human spirit of the "old man" is being brought to life, but that a new spirit (the one which is born from above) is made alive at the point of the soul’s Salvation (the washing of regeneration) through the engendering ministry of the Holy Spirit.

A Compassionate Challenge

I must stop here to address a grievous situation that has snared many of conservative Christianity’s most learned Theologians, some of whom are my friends.

Accepting the reality of God the Holy Spirit’s Illumination of Scripture is the critical point in Theology today. One either accepts the fact that the meaning of Scripture can
only be known by Supernatural means or not! Obviously, the unbeliever will not accept what God's Word teaches about Illumination, even ridiculing those who believe in Supernatural perception. Sadly, a Christian can be deceived by this philosophy as well. What follows suggests how this deception might be embraced.

Some dedicated believers who truly thirst to discover God's Message may become frustrated in their inability to discover His Truths. After repeated attempts to understand the precise meaning of Scripture result in their failure, these believers reach a point of decision. They will either

1. pray and continue to rely on Spiritual Illumination by comparing other Scriptures that may parallel their difficult passage and by performing all word studies on key words; (They may legitimately look into sound language commentaries, lexicons, grammars, or other technical tools for clues to a word's seemingly elusive meaning.) or,

2. deny the Illuminating Ministry of the Holy Spirit and begin viewing Scripture as if it were just another piece of literature. Instead of trusting in God's Illumination, they decide that God has been unable to communicate clearly through His Word alone. They may believe that God has given man a puzzle that can only be unveiled through human ingenuity. Turning to the wisdom of man, they begin to depend on secular literature for the means of interpreting God's Holy Word. Instead of relying on Spiritual Illumination and allowing Scripture to be the lens through which all human knowledge is viewed, they begin viewing Scripture through the lens of human knowledge. They seek insight by acquiring more and more human knowledge of the Biblical languages, literature, and linguistics. Of course, the more a student masters these subjects, the more competent his research could become. However, even an unbeliever can become expert in these subjects and yet never be able to interpret the Bible correctly without the benefit of God's Illumination.

One may utilize extra-Biblical information for locating possible clues in determining the meaning of difficult passages (where Scripture may not provide easy comparisons). Nevertheless, when believers reject dependence on Divine Inspiration, they tend to look to an ever-increasing volume of period literature for decisions on how to interpret God's Word. Their search accumulates an abundance of secular information and knowledge about varying opinions and philosophies. They learn the vocabulary of the naysayer and are thus welcomed into the halls of the academic elite. They lose the objectivity to realize that their positions have no, or only "proof-text," support from Scripture. The result is that Satan has effectively discouraged and neutralized those most capable by commitment and education to expose his lies and plan. The bottom line is that they choose to trust man rather than God.

Finally, these men allow themselves to choose which information will be accepted as truth, thereby making themselves the ultimate authority, rather than allowing God's

29 "Proof-text" is a technical term utilized primarily in Theology to describe the selecting of any text out of its context and using it in an attempt to prove a position for which it was not intended. This is often a result of superficial exegesis and/or lack of Scriptural comparison. Proof-texts are also utilized dishonestly to support a personal or Theological position for which there is little or no Biblical substantiation. Obviously, God intends for His "Texts" to be utilized as absolute "proof" of His Principles. Scripture often states, as it is written.
Word to be the final Authority. They may still desire to know God’s Word, but they are now trapped by a plethora of academic knowledge. As God Said through Paul concerning certain female believers, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth (2 Timothy 3:7b). Eventually, they may arrive at the hopeless epistemological conclusion that man cannot know for sure what God has written to him. After all, this futile position confirms their own experiences. In the end, they must, like Solomon, conclude: Vanity of vanities, all is vanity (Ecclesiastes 1:2b). Vanity aptly describes the epistemology of inscrutability that one must reach when one refuses the concept of God’s Illumination of Scripture as the only avenue by which to discover His Truth. Eventually, the position of inscrutability can lead one to the allegorizing of Scripture.

I pray that the above comments will be accepted as a loving challenge to these men for them to return to God’s Word alone for their answers. If they wish to challenge the positions that this course makes, let them do so with the Scriptures alone, not...through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world (Colossians 2:8). Instead, I pray that they would consider these thoughts as an exhortation from God's Word to them in 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 Corinthians 10:5).

And you, dear reader, must learn thoroughly what Scripture declares about this most-crucial of Biblical issues: that God has provided every believer with the Spirit of Christ, by which he can receive with meekness the implanted Word (James 1:21), of which every Word has been Inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16) and which can be comprehended only through the Illuminating Ministry of God the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:45; John 16:13; Ephesians 1:17-19; 3:16-19; Colossians 1:9, 10). Accept this position, and you may be ridiculed by those who worship at the worldly throne of pedantic scholarship. Nevertheless, never abandon the reality that God’s Word is meant to be understood. Of course, the ability to gain that understanding means you will have to continue meeting the Spiritual and personal prerequisites given below and in the next Section of this book.

2. Personal Spiritual Prerequisites.

Two personal and absolute Spiritual prerequisites for each believer’s success in performing accurate interpretation of the Bible are as follows.

A. Being a legitimate, Spiritually alive, born-again child of God is the first Spiritual prerequisite for comprehending God’s Word. The Bible can only be understood by a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ (one who has accepted the Gift of Eternal Life through grace alone, by faith alone, in Christ alone). The exception to this truth is that anyone can understand the general information that applies to all of mankind in Scripture. Prior to being born again (more accurately, born from above), a human being is in a state of spiritual death (Ephesians 2:1-5). A person is either Spiritually alive or spiritually dead!

That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, “You must be born again.” (John 3:6-7) [Comments: Before rebirth, the soul (the immaterial/natural man) and the flesh (the material physical man of flesh and blood) are alive; however, the flesh is dying daily and the always living soul (1 Corinthians 15:45) is facing the judgment of the second death (Hebrews 9:27; Revelation 20:14-15).]
At the point of Salvation, the soul is eternally saved (John 5:24; 1 Corinthians 15:22) and God promises physical resurrection into a heavenly body (1 Corinthians 15:42-44). But, the most important thing for our earthly life is that the new believer is Spiritually born with the Spirit of Christ, analogous in development to a physical infant.

_But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His._ (Romans 8:9; see also Romans 8:15; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 2:20; 4:6; 4:19; Ephesians 3:17a; and Colossians 1:27.)

**B. Being Spiritually alive is the eternal position of every believer.** Human ability to interpret the Word of God correctly during one’s earthly life requires that God also controls the Spirit of the believer. This requirement means the believer who is born from above must also be “in fellowship” with God during his study of Scripture and/or when forming any conclusions based on that study. My pastor of 25 years, from his own word studies, expresses fellowship (κοινωνία) as being "in joint-participation with." The Bible can only be understood by a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ at the time he is in "joint-participation with" God (i.e. without having any known, unconfessed sin in his life). Biblically, a believer is either considered to be “carnal/fleshly” or “Spiritual” as far as his earthly condition is concerned at any point in time. These two conditions are mutually exclusive; a believer is either "as one dead" or "as one alive" Spiritually at any moment.

_Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? (2 Corinthians 6:14) [Comment: Darkness (analogous to sin or evil) cannot have ongoing "joint-participation with" Light (analogous to righteousness) (1 John 1:5-8).]

_Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God._ (Romans 8:7-8)

_For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish._ (Galatians 5:17)

_And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ._ (1 Corinthians 3:1)

As the only sacrifice that is acceptable to God for the sin of a nonbeliever is the death of Jesus Christ on the cross; the only sacrifice satisfactory to cleanse the sins of a believer after salvation is to return to that same sacrifice and confess them (agree about them) with God.

_If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness._ (1 John 1:9) (See also Leviticus 3 and 4; Psalms 32 and 51.)

**Summary**

Revelation has to do with God providing His Word to man. It includes all written information contained in the original manuscripts of both the Old and New Testaments. Inspiration has to do with men accurately recording God’s every Word; Illumination has
to do with believers being able to understand God’s Word. Illumination is the unveiling of God's Revelation as recorded within the Inspired Words of Scripture but not comprehended by its readers until they receive Spiritual Illumination. The following chart depicts this process graphically:

So, let us now assume that you are a born-again believer, in joint-participation with God at the moment, and sincerely desiring to learn His Word. Should you expect God to open up the Spirit of Christ living in you and pour in the knowledge to make you able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge. (Eph. 3:18-19a) It does not work quite like that; you may be Spiritually ready, but what are you willing to bring to the task?

God has made it possible through the Spiritual provision of Illumination for all believers to comprehend what He has communicated to them; however, the following verses state that a believer is only potentially able to possess a full understanding of Scripture. There are several blocks a believer can erect that will prevent him from comprehending the width and length and depth and height of meaning that exceeds simply having basic knowledge. We will discover these blocks and discuss how you can avoid them in the next Section. It will discuss the attitude you will need to maintain
during your study in order to posses the Mind of Christ for yourself. You must be willing to submit your very will to the absolute Authority of God’s Will. You must continue to sacrifice your personal opinions to what Scripture says. You must also continually strive to reach Spiritual maturity through your knowledge of Scripture and the acceptance of that knowledge as Truth. Understanding builds on understanding. One cannot learn calculus without first obtaining an acquired knowledge (epignōsis) of algebra. The Spiritually prepared student of God’s Word must dedicate himself to *Get wisdom! Get understanding!* (Proverbs 4:5a) It is a process of building one block upon another.

*Whom will he teach knowledge?*
*And whom will he make to understand the message?*
*Those just weaned from the milk?*
*Those just drawn from the breasts?*
*For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept,*
*Line upon line, line upon line,*
*Here a little, there a little.* (Isaiah 28:9-10)
SECTION FOUR

Personal Prerequisites

This Section discusses the personal prerequisites required for any believer to be able to interpret the Bible accurately. God has done His part by supplying all of the Spiritual resources man needs for interpreting the Scriptures.

- He has completed His Revelation of all things He Intended for man to know.
- He has communicated that Revelation through human writers/recorders by means of Divine Inspiration.
- He has provided Divine Illumination to enable a Spiritually born-again believer to comprehend exactly what He has written, provided that believer is also under Spiritual control while he is studying the Scriptures.

The only element remaining before a student will be able to understand what God has Revealed by His Inspiration is to bring his personal attitude and commitment in line with God’s requirements. This element has five facets: 1) submitting to the absolute Authority of God, 2) sacrificing all personal pride, 3) diligently progressing toward personal Spiritual maturity, 4) recognizing and mitigating the influence of any hindrances that might block your study of God’s Word, and 5) applying consistently and honestly all rules of sound hermeneutics as determined and confirmed by Scripture.

ONE: Submitting to the Absolute Authority of God

True submission begins with the concept of having the fear of the Lord, as discussed in Section One. This means that a believer willingly places himself under the Authority of God’s Word and the Illuminating Ministry of the Holy Spirit, even when what the Word means runs counter to his personal opinions or desires.

Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
And lean not on your own understanding;
In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He shall direct your paths.
Do not be wise in your own eyes;
Fear the LORD and depart from evil. (Proverbs 3:5-7)

Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. (James 1:21) [Comments: One of the points in this passage is that some believers react in “filthiness” (anger, wrath, and blasphemy) and also aggressively challenge God’s Word when it speaks about things they do not want to accept (Colossians 3:8). A believer is commanded instead to accept in humility the Word that was rooted in him at his salvation and then to live accordingly. With this attitude, a believer can avoid being divided between his human opinion and Divine truth; being double-minded, doubting, and unstable (James 1: 6-8). James continues to explain that the result of this attitude is for the believer to be better able to 1) reject temptation (verses 12-15), 2) proceed toward personal Spiritual maturity (verses 2-5), and 3) apply God’s Word in his life (verses 22-25). (These comments only partially explain this verse. Interpreting Scripture is like peeling an onion; it reveals itself one layer at a time on your way to its core.)]
Note: The double-minded (literally, "split-soul") man cannot receive God's Wisdom because he constantly doubts and challenges the Authority of God's Word based on his own opinions and worldly knowledge. Worldly knowledge includes the philosophical and false doctrinal positions one has accepted without question prior to verifying them by a "Berean-type" study.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:1-2) [Comments: God considers it a reasonable sacrifice for a believer to dedicate himself to wholehearted Spiritual service. The only way this can be accomplished is for him "to stop being conformed outwardly to the here-and-now age, but instead, being transformed by the renewal of his mind." This renewal (most-specified, "invigorating") is accomplished by proving out the good (agathos; that type of good acceptable to God), and acceptable (euarestos; fitting and proper), and perfect (teleios; mature) Will of God (thelēma; a decision made prior to action.).]

Note: The word meanings suggested throughout this book are based on studies by the Foundation for Biblical Research and as such have been subjected to verification by the hermeneutical rules developed by Bible-Based Hermeneutics. Of course, they remain continually subject to peer evaluation and substantiation from Scripture.

TWO: Sacrificing All Personal Pride

The next prerequisite to interpreting God's Holy Word is one's being able and willing to sacrifice all facets of personal pride. This yielding includes both the pride in what one assumes he already knows and the desire for praise for what he thinks he has discovered by his own intellect. It also includes the character to handle graciously any challenge from his peers for more Scriptural proof concerning a conclusion the interpreter has already determined to be correct. Being unwilling to have one's opinion challenged may be due to prideful fear or insecurity. An honest interpreter of God's Word must be concerned solely with discovering Spiritual truth. This truth can only be ascertained by one who possesses the sincere desire to know what is true, even if that truth forces a change in his opinion.

A scoffer seeks wisdom and does not find it,
But knowledge is easy to him who understands. (Proverbs 14:6)

For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. (Romans 12:3)

Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other. For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it? (1 Corinthians 4:6-7)

Not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. (1 Timothy 3:6) [Comment: Chronological age or even abundant exposure
to the Word does not guarantee understanding of the Word, Spiritual maturity, or leadership qualities.]

_But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.” Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you._ (James 4:6-7)

Note: Pride is the easiest opening Satan has to disqualify a believer. This is particularly true when a believer begins to grasp the fact that he actually can discover what the God of the universe has said to man and even now says to him personally. It is similar to Paul's being caught up to the third heaven or Peter's experience at the Transfiguration. When a student experiences face-to-face Illumination from God through his own study of the Word, he can easily be tempted to become proud; however, the believer who realizes he must **depend** on God's Illumination instead of his own personal opinion should be humbled by his discoveries. (It dawned on me one day, when I thought I had discovered some deep truth in God's Word all by myself, that I was really brilliant. Almost immediately, I became painfully aware that I was not brilliant; I had just uncovered God's Brilliance.) A believer today must utilize the same source of protection from pride and Satan's influence that the Apostles claimed:

_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._ (2 Corinthians 10:4-5)

_You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world._ (1 John 4:4)

Note: A subtle trap for the pride of even a sincere student of Scripture can be his impatience to find answers for practical problems or his desire to answer questions from others who respect his apparent Bible knowledge. The motivation to have an answer "right now" can result in reaching a false conclusion. A prideful person finds it difficult just to say, "I don't know; I will check it out." He also might easily arrive at a wrong answer when he attempts to search for a Scripture that supports his predetermined assumptions or leaps to a conclusion about Scripture before determining its true meaning. Once a person states his opinion concerning an issue, it becomes part of his subjective position. He must then vigorously defend it or admit to being wrong; thus, the issue of pride. Always keep in mind that your objective is to discover God's Truth, not to prove yourself right. In the light of this danger, one should wait to volunteer his opinions until he has thoroughly studied what God has said and really means about a subject.

_So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath._ (James 1:19)

_My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. For we all stumble in many things._ (James 3:1-2b)

**THREE: Diligently Progressing Toward Personal Spiritual Maturity**

The third personal attitude that is required for performing competent Bible interpretation is moving actively toward Spiritual maturity by personal acquisition of "the faith" (doctrine) through faith-acquired (accepted) knowledge of the Word. Please understand that determining God’s meaning of Scripture is not for the indolent person. It is tedious, difficult work, which requires considerable concentration and diligence.
Since Spiritual things are taught by comparing Spiritual knowledge with Spiritual knowledge, a student must be progressing toward Spiritual maturity in order to attain his maximum personal comprehension of Scripture. Before we had the tremendous advantages of computer research, it took about ten hours of tedious study to exegete a single verse of Scripture or to perform each single word study within a semantic domain of words. Now, it still takes the same ten hours, but we know more precisely and confidently what the word or verse means after we have finished.

Whom will he teach knowledge?
And whom will he make to understand the message?
Those just weaned from milk?
Those just drawn from the breasts?
For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept,
Line upon line, line upon line,
Here a little, there a little. (Isaiah 28:9-10)

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 Corinthians 2:12-13)

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15) [Comment: “Be diligent” (eager) is a command given specifically to Timothy and by application to others who will follow in his footsteps as communicators of God’s Word. Elders are often referred to in Scripture by the technical term “fellow-workers.”]

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17) [Comment: “the man of God” is a technical phrase that refers specifically to a man who is, or is being trained to be, a communicator of God’s Word (DBWM).]

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 3:18) [Comment: Peter is addressing baby believers and is commanding them to increase their basic knowledge about Christ. The word used for knowledge is gnōsis, the most basic of the words for mental cognizance or recognition. It is used to describe Spiritual milk that the infants of 1 Peter 2:2 were commanded to crave. It is also used to describe what the Spiritually immature believers of Hebrews 5:13 would not progress beyond in order to graduate to the meat of the Word that could produce their Spiritual maturity. There is nothing wrong with learning the knowledge (gnōsis) of God—just with stopping there. It is clear that God desires believers to progress beyond the basic knowledge of His Christ and His Plan.]

That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge (gnōsis). (Ephesians 3:17-18; emphasis mine)

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30 The procedures utilized by The Dictionary of Bible-Based Word Meanings (DBWM) will be explained in Appendix E.
…till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge (gnōsis) of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting. (Ephesians 4:13-14; emphasis mine) [Comments: All believers should progress to the point where they recognize the basic knowledge about the Son of God (no longer being Spiritually immature) and then continue toward ultimate Spiritual maturity (1 Corinthians 13:11). Spiritual maturity should not be confused with how one lives; it is that which one knows and enables him to possess the capacity to live a life pleasing to God as a result of that knowledge. Please allow the previous and the following Scriptures to challenge you to consider this possibility.]

For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. (Colossians 1:9-10) [Comments: Both words translated here “knowledge” are from the Greek word, epignōsis, which is more specifically understood as “faith-acquired knowledge.” Epignōsis is also translated simply by “knowledge” in Colossians 3:10; 1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 1:3, 5, 6, 8; and 2 Peter 2:20. The Greek words oida (a sure and absolute knowledge) and sophia (a knowledge that represents skill in application) will have to be detailed later in regard to their most-specific meanings in relationship within the semantic domain of “knowledge.”]

**Question:** Can all believers; even the remnant of the final generation, really be expected to attain Spiritual maturity? Can the Church ever, all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge (gnōsis) of the Son of God?

**Facts to consider:** Man often attempts to discount the absolute principles stated in the Word of God. Let us look at these questions from a practical viewpoint. The Bible contains 66 books with 1189 chapters and about 3.5 million words on approximately 1200 pages (KJV). This book contains many pages of historical narratives and much repetitive information. However, it is just ONE book that has been memorized in its entirety by even unbelievers! The Bible contains comparatively much less content than a person is required to learn in preparation for becoming a medical doctor, an engineer, a lawyer, or a practitioner of many other professions.

The world has many examples of people who have devoted their entire post-graduate lives (30-60 years) to the dedicated study of some inconsequential segment of human knowledge. I marvel at the secular scientist who dedicates his whole lifetime to studying the marks on the earth’s surface for evidence that aliens may have landed on earth thousands of years ago. And, consider the person who searches the world over to find non-existent proof to support the pseudo-science of evolution or the one who categorizes the many thousands of insects. How can any serious student of God’s Holy Word even begin to think that it is beyond a believer’s ability to learn thoroughly the finite amount of information God has communicated to man? It certainly is not due to the quantity of data contained in the Bible; but it could well be due to our incorrect viewpoint, lack of Spiritual readiness, or simply lack of study. Is a believer who discounts God’s Command, be holy in all your conduct, likely to even attempt to become Holy? (1 Peter 1:15b) Of course, becoming Spiritually mature is accomplished in stages as is becoming Holy.
In my opinion, the amount of wasted scholarship that theologians have spent over the centuries in attempting to disprove and discredit the false Theological positions of others is a travesty. Much of historical Theology is actually anti-Theology. Many Theology books are about Theologies rather than a study about God. If the Bible itself had been researched with the same zeal and effort that the academic subject of Theology has been, I believe a fully substantiated Bible-Based Theology could have been developed years ago.

Please do not confuse knowing Scripture with skill in applying that knowledge to life; that process requires submission. There is also confusion about equating Spiritual maturity with Spirituality, or even with Christian living. They are NOT the same things. Many Scriptural examples exist of Spiritually mature believers failing to live what they knew to be God’s Will (David, Solomon, Paul, et cetera). Rightly dividing these Spiritual factors is part of our reason to learn how to interpret Scripture correctly.

FOUR: Recognizing and Mitigating the Influence of Any Hindrances that Might Block your Study of God’s Word

The student of Scripture must constantly be vigilant regarding the danger of his personal sins hindering him. He also must be wary of and resist opposition to his studies from Satan’s influence. The following verses describe Satan’s gaining a foothold through man’s unforgiveness, anger, not being sober and vigilant (i.e., being mentally susceptible to being caught off guard), disbelief, or pride. (You might think of pride as any exaltation of our own opinion or self-importance above God, His Plan, or His Word.)

Now whom you forgive anything, I also forgive. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ, lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices. (2 Corinthians 2:10-11)

"Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil. (Ephesians 4:26-27)

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. (Ephesians 6:11) (Memorizing Ephesians 6:10-18 is highly advised.)

…not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. (1 Timothy 3:6-7) [Comment: Do not consider candidating for the position of an elder unless you are well on your way and committed to becoming Spiritually mature (having faith-acquired knowledge of the Word); AND have an excellent reputation with unbelievers who know your present manner of life.]

But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. (James 4:6-7)

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. (1 Peter 5:8-9)
But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. (James 3:14-17)

The following verse describes the type of challenges an interpreter of God’s Word may face, as well as gives advice on how to handle them.

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. (Hebrews 12:1) [Comments: Here is an onion of many layers. We may now only chop off a little to savor our present search for the truth of what the student of Scripture is confronted. This verse describes a Spiritual contest in which each Spiritually mature believer is meant to compete during his physical lifetime. One could see it as his “calling” or Spiritual purpose for his earthly life.]

We are all challenged by this verse to compete (let us run decisively) in the race (the course being laid out before us.). This is not a little foot race, but an agonizing struggle like one of the intense stadium games of Greece. And we are to run by means of endurance (perhaps painfully). But this is not all. We will have to prepare to compete in this contest by getting rid of all weights that might encumber us (such as an athlete’s losing weight, avoiding fleshly entanglements, stripping—the Greek athletes often competed naked). It also means getting rid of the sin which so easily ensnares us [this sin is one that encompasses (cleverly well-placed around, like an obstacle) the believer physically or mentally].

Hebrews 3:7-10:39 addresses the sin of disbelief as contrasted with the historical testimony of those in Chapter 11 who lived their lives (competed successfully in their Spiritual contest) by faith. It seems likely that the faith described here represents these believers’ Spiritual maturity (their faith-acquired knowledge of God’s Word), which provided them with sure expectation and confidence in what they could not see with their human perception.

Believers are engaged in a Spiritual battle that requires (as Mathew 16:24 describes) 1) a continuing desire to follow Christ, 2) a denial of all personal wants (denying self), 3) a total commitment even under intense conflict (taking up his Cross), and 4) living by faith (following Christ in the way that Abraham is described as doing in Hebrews 11:6—even when he did not know and could not see where he was going. How can a mortal man ever hope to win the contest? Answer: Only by focusing on Jesus.

Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:2)

Paul describes his own participation in this conflict in several verses.

Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:13-14) [Comment: See also, Acts 20:24; 1 Corinthians 9:24-
27; and 2 Timothy 4:7 in which Paul describes his calling as a perpetual contestant in a Spiritual version of the Olympic games as both a runner and as a boxer (fighting with gloves studded with glass, rock, and/or metal) competing in an agonizing contest. (In these verses we can observe an example of the personal expressions of one of the writers of Scriptures becoming a part of the Inspired text.)]

Note: There is one particular weakness of personal character that can severely cripple a student's ability to reach God's intended Purpose for his Calling. It is the lack of self-discipline. The apostle Paul had to discipline his body and bring it into subjection (1 Corinthians 9:27). Paul had more or less to disable his body, or enslave it, to keep it from what it desired. This is a little more than just momentarily choosing not to eat, rest, or have fun so you can study for a little while. It is sacrificing what one could do for the short run in order to do whatever is necessary to reach the goal of winning the race in the long run.

Self-discipline is one of the nine components of the singular fruit of the Holy Spirit (see Galatians 5:22-23). Each human can naturally exhibit any one or more of these components, but none can exhibit them all without submitting to the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. If one is naturally weak in exercising power over any of his fleshly desires, he will be especially dependant on being in fellowship during his study. For instance, if one is naturally lazy, he will need God's Power to overcome that weakness. One can be naturally weak due in part to his heredity, environment, life experiences, or education. God grants a human the choice to overcome these influences partially by his will (see Jeremiah 31:29-30). “It is not what happens to us that makes us who we are, but what we allow to affect us.” (See a complete discussion on this subject in Chapter Six of the author's book on Biblical manhood.)

Of course, the believer has more than human will-power available to him to overcome the handicaps of his soul. He also has the grace benefit of Supernatural power available to him from the indwelling Holy Spirit. A believer has no excuse for not being "all that he can be."

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? (1 John 5:4-5)

What are some of the philosophical weights which could encumber a serious student of God's Word today that he must lay aside (get rid of) in order to run a good race such as Paul did? A few of the possible obstacles one might encounter at the beginning of his event are

1. holding fast to any "ism" or pre-established, but Scripturally unsubstantiated, Theological position,
2. allowing the absence of doctrinal unity among today's professing believers to cause him to concede that God's Truth is beyond discovery,
3. holding to the false opinion of "inscrutability" (believing that finite man cannot know the Revelation of God due to His Infiniteness),
4. maintaining the false assumption that gaining too much Bible knowledge destroys faith (see Hebrews 11:1),
5. thinking that Salvation is the only important issue,

6. feeling hopeless due to man’s apparent inability to handle the multitude of opinions and *rightly divide the word of truth*,
7. doubting that a more precise meaning of Scripture can be determined now after so many sincere and learned Bible scholars have already studied the Bible for hundreds of years and still cannot come to agreement, and
8. holding to any particular doctrine built on "proof texts" without Biblical substantiation. (Any position that cannot be defended by Scripture is only a personal opinion.)

So what say you? Are you committed and willing to face and overcome the hindrances that could block you from winning the course being laid out before us? Do you have what it takes to set aside your pride, get rid of all weights that might encumber you and get rid of the sin (of disbelief) which so easily ensnares you (encompasses you with obstacles along the agonizing path)? Are you willing to compete diligently in the contest with the empowering of God the Holy Spirit while Satan actively attempts to trip and disqualify you?

*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 (gnosis) of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.* (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

Do you desire for your faith in God to be a testimony similar to the faith of those in Hebrews 11 who served God by following Him with their lives—enduring ridicule, suffering, imprisonment, torture, and even death? Do you think that you have a Calling from God to interpret His Word correctly and to teach it without compromise?

**FIVE: Applying Consistently and Honestly All Rules of Sound Hermeneutics as Determined and Confirmed by Scripture**

Every word study performed, every verse of Scripture exegeted, and every category of doctrine developed must be subjected to the rules of a sound Bible-based hermeneutic. Even the rules themselves must be challenged with Scriptural proof and then made to comply. The procedure should be as follows.

FIRST—KNOW THE RULES
SECOND—APPLY THE RULES
THIRD—TEST ALL CONCLUSIONS BY THE RULES
FOURTH—RECONCILE THE RESULTS AND/OR MODIFY THE RULES

To approach Bible interpretation objectively, a student must set aside every presupposition that might prejudice the evaluation of his study. Since every human being is known to possess an inherent nature of sin, every true student must be willing to approach every study with a “blank slate” on which God is allowed to write His Interpretation of Scripture. Everyone has certain mental blocks that can thwart good hermeneutical procedures. The student will be challenged to “think outside the box” of orthodox Theology and “inside the box” of only Scripture. No man-made dogma, creed, category of doctrine, systematic Theology, or human idol can be the authority over honest and proven interpretation of Scripture. Scripture alone must be allowed to interpret itself. No human rules for interpretation of God’s Revelation can be allowed to
exist above the literal and fully substantiated interpretation of the Spiritually Illuminated Word of God.

Please seriously consider these possible blocks that you might now have and that you may constantly need to fight to overcome:

1. Relying on positions held by anyone else as being absolute truth without having adequate and vindicating support from Scripture. The opinions, conclusions, or theories of other Theologians (Calvin, Luther, Hodge, Wuest, Chafer, Robertson, Henry, Scofield, Ramm, Thieme, Zuck, MacArthur, or anyone else) are not "proof" for any of the student's conclusions. Of course, when a student references the Bible research of others, he must always give proper credit, but such quotes do not add any credence to what the Bible says. The objective of this course is not to promote that part of academic scholarship that consists of reading and quoting other people's opinions. It is to insist that each student learns for himself how to discover and substantiate what the Bible itself teaches.

2. Recognizing that all human pursuit of wisdom (philosophy) by intellectual means and moral discipline is governed by the researcher's conscious or unconscious thinking. This philosophical bias (an inclination toward or against new information that inhibits impartial judgment) is present prior to any research. It maintains a certain prejudice against all data being evaluated until that bias is eventually recognized and rejected. Those who stubbornly defend their humanly gained wisdom are expressing jealous envy and self-seeking. The source of their positions is human wisdom, which is base and demonic, rather than Spiritual Wisdom from God.

   But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. (James 3:14-17)

Any of these personal hindrances can block a believer from ever comprehending Scripture as completely as God intends. If we can overcome our personal sins of pride, laziness, and lack of self-discipline, as well as Satan's multiple attacks, we can truly come to know what His Word means. Then, application of these truths simply becomes the personal adaptation of living by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

I write to you, fathers,
Because you have known Him who is from the beginning.
I write to you, young men,
Because you have overcome the wicked one.
I write to you, little children,
Because you have known the Father.
I have written to you, fathers,
Because you have known Him who is from the beginning.
I have written to you, young men,
Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you,
And you have overcome the wicked one. (1 John 2:13-14)
Obviously, those responsible for this course of study have already determined basic Theological positions through their years of Bible research. They sincerely believe that the positions set forth in the next Section have been, and can continue to be, substantiated completely as “Absolute Doctrine.” They will graciously accept any honest challenge to those positions, but only from Scriptural evidence. It is a student's responsibility to prove out these doctrines thoroughly for himself. We believe these to be the essential doctrines on which all other Bible-based Theology can be established.

For inspiration to live a life of self-discipline and to commit to win your event in the arena of your earthly life, you can study those who have been successful as recorded in Scripture. You can also study the lives of men in recent history who seemingly ran their races well. A. W. Tozer and Oswald Chambers are two Christians in history who come to my mind when I consider examples of living the Christian life. Christians are to have only one Hero to emulate or admire—The Lord Jesus Christ. Neither of these men would desire our glorifying their lives or works. Nevertheless, they have produced a testimony of their devotion and personal commitment to God that has glorified the name of Jesus for many years. Several of their writings are worthy of study, not so much for a study of their Theological philosophies, but for an example of real-life disciples of Christ who submitted their lives in service to Him. These men were committed to becoming mentally and Spiritually prepared, self-controlled, and therefore successfully ran their races by laying aside the weights and obstacles that were placed before them. I recommend that you read:

A. W. Tozer's, *The Knowledge of the Holy* and/or *Warfare of the Spirit*. Also of value is *Pursuit of God*, Tozer's classic on the Christian life. *Baffled to Fight Better* was Oswald Chamber's only book, but he was most known for the devotional, *My Utmost for His Highest*. 
SECTION FIVE

Accepted Theological Presuppositions

Where do we begin in considering the subject of Theology? No subject can be studied in a vacuum; everyone has preconceived thoughts concerning any topic. The secret in reaching the most non-biased and most accurate position is to recognize these preconceptions and then be willing to subject them to ongoing evaluation and revision when conflicting information is discovered. Of course, there is a natural reluctance for fallen man to evaluate his own position honestly. Peer accountability\(^\text{32}\) for Biblical substantiation can help overcome this reluctance. Anyone approaching the study of Theology has at least a few basic premises. Some of these premises might be a list such as this: God exists; He has Communicated to mankind; the Bible is that current medium of Communication; and man is meant to comprehend all of Scripture (at the God-ordained time in history, when under the correct Spiritual influence, and by the appropriate means). These and the following premises have been accepted in this course as the starting point for our study, but even they must be subjected to substantiation by Scripture alone. Since God’s Word must be recognized as being the absolute Authority for a truly Bible-Based Theology, no premise can be based on any preconceptions of humanly-contrived philosophies.

The following position on Theology was stated in the “Foreword”:

The only Theology that is fitting for man to learn and base his teaching on is one that can be totally substantiated by Scripture. This is not to suggest that all existing Theologies are incorrect. It only means that any systematic Theology (or fragment thereof) a student accepts as truth must be able to stand up to honest evaluation based on hermeneutically correct Scriptural analysis. Am I insinuating that all existing Theologies are wrong or that man does not know anything about God’s Word at this time? Absolutely not! However, every humanly developed Theology has sprung forth, at least partially, from the mind of man and therefore has potentially been tainted by man’s fallen nature. It even may have been developed as a response to challenges from unbelievers or from apostate, heretical, or misguided Christians. The challenges of Gnosticism, Arminianism, and other heresies have been the impetus for much Biblical research. Sadly, some Theologies are more anti-positions than positions developed by an objective attempt to research and rightly discern “the mind of Christ.” What I am saying is that NO doctrinal position can be blindly accepted as truth, especially by those Called to preach to others. God commended the Bereans because, as Acts 17:11 states (based on the author’s interpretation from the Greek), “they welcomed [Paul’s teaching] with all eagerness, carefully examining the Scriptures daily, [wishing] to find those things [the things that Paul said] were so [in the degree or manner stated].” These were not those Jews who were negative to Paul’s teaching and challenged what he said; they sought the truth and readily anticipated its being

proved out of Scripture. Every doctrine should be so investigated before it is
accepted, and especially before it is taught.

A concept for classifying ALL theological positions adopted for any course of study
was also proposed in the “Foreword”:

A simple procedure that might help restrict man’s desire to promote any doctrine
beyond the extent of Scriptural support would be to categorize doctrines as
absolute, probable, and possible.

- Absolute doctrines would be those that have been proved and accepted with no
  known Scriptural conflict.
- Probable positions would be those that are apparently correct and can be
  accepted as a working thesis, but having incomplete evidence in Scripture to
  answer all unresolved disputes.
- Possible suppositions would be for logical deductions based on probable
  positions or absolute doctrines as defined above.

I now further propose that any doctrines accepted as “Absolute” within ANY
Theological course of study must be accompanied with complete Scriptural support by
honest application of a solid, Bible-based hermeneutic. This confirmation extends to any
of those Theological positions set down below. Other doctrines that cannot be verified
as being “Absolute” should be openly classified as either “Probable” or “Possible.”
Probable positions should list all Scriptural conflicts known along with an honest
challenge for further proof. Possible suppositions should include the logic for their
consideration as well as reasons they should not be classified at a higher level without
further substantiation. The “Foreword” also stated:

Many important categories of Theology have already been developed solely from
Scripture and are generally accepted as absolute doctrine by most informed
believers. The Spiritual source and Authority of the Bible, sin, the fallen nature of
man, angels, the Work and Person of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, and many
other foundational topics are some of these categories. Sound exegesis and
reasonable categorization have been accomplished on these key doctrines in
harmony with all Scripture and substantiated by a literal, historical, and logical
hermeneutic. However, there is still need for improvement in substantiating a
completely Bible-based, systematic Theology. Every systematic Theology—from the
Institutes of Calvin to the standard texts of Darby, Hodge, or Chafer—states
dogmas that need to be classified and substantiated thoroughly by Scripture. Some
of these dogmas concern the source and interpretation of Scripture, the way man
becomes saved, eschatology, eternal security and perseverance, covenants and
dispensations, determinism versus human volition, Church government, and other
similar categories. Also, doctrinal positions concerning one’s own personal
Spirituality maturity, worship, prayer, parenting, and many practical aspects of
Christian living are currently a matter mostly of personal opinions or various
ecclesiological decrees.

Since there have already been centuries of accurate Biblical research that can
easily be classified and built upon, we have an excellent beginning point for an entirely
Bible-Based Theology. The Reformation is recognized as a pivotal period of Christian
history. It decidedly challenged the philosophies of 1) salvation by works and 2) a
human priesthood standing between believers and God. These philosophies had
dominated established Christianity for hundreds of years through the Catholic religion.
The Theologies of Luther, Calvin, and later, Hodge led to Reformed/Covenant philosophies. The Reformation was indeed a reforming of many Catholic doctrines and also became a contrasting position to the philosophy of works later systematized as the Arminian position. The major Calvinist doctrine of a personal election-to-faith as expressed by the acronym of TULIP 33 established a new religion, which is based on a philosophy that is also unable to stand the test of honest, literal interpretation. (See Appendix C for access to a list of scholarly presentations responding to each position of this philosophy from the standpoint of a Bible-based hermeneutic.)

Although any student of Theology ought to be acquainted with the tenets of Reformed Theology, little effort should be spent in proving why any of its positions are incorrect. We should always seek to verify what is true and simply ignore what is false. (A bank teller is not taught how to identify all of the many varieties of counterfeit bills; only how to recognize the genuine items.) Those who desire to be productive scholars of Scripture would be better off spending their efforts in setting forth Biblically well-supported positions than in attacking the false positions of others.

I firmly believe that a Bible-Based Theology could make a major contribution to Christianity at this time in history. However, such a development would need to be based on a deeper level of Scriptural examination than has been performed previously. It would require beginning at the "every word level" combined with competent grammatical exegesis of every passage by means of the consistent application of the hermeneutical principles contained herein. The proposed Theology would be an attempt to fulfill Isaiah 28:10 literally. The result would not be just another Reformation of false positions, but the formulation of a thoroughly Biblical Theology that could serve as a possible “Resolution” of the conflicts between the Reformed/Covenant and Free Grace/Dispensational positions. The doctrines of election and human volition, as well as various millennial positions, need to be fully substantiated by Scripture once and for all.

The following Theological presuppositions are considered by this author as verifiably “Absolute” doctrines are listed by his order of importance. They are presented here in keeping with full disclosure:

1. **Sufficiency of the Scriptures.** God’s Word (as it was given to man in the original manuscripts in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek) is indisputable Truth and, as such, is foundational for every philosophical position this author holds concerning the correct interpretation and understanding of the entire New and Old Testament. The Scriptures are accepted without apology as being inerrant, harmonious, reasonable, absolutely authoritative, and intended as the basis for a believer’s faith and life. Nothing—no Theological system, human philosophy,

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33 T.U.L.I.P. is a mnemonic (memory formula) that represents the Five points of Calvinism: T = total depravity (meaning that man cannot do anything to deserve or earn acceptance by God and that man has no ability even to respond positively to God); U = unconditional election (meaning that we are each in an unconditional state of either being elect or non-elect by God’s decree); L = limited atonement (meaning that Christ died to save a certain portion of mankind, namely “the elect,” and that He died only for these and that they alone can be saved); I = irresistible grace (meaning that only “the elect” for whom Christ died will in fact have their eyes opened to their sinful state and need for salvation and will, without fail or choice, come to Christ) and; P = perseverance of the saints (meaning that the life of the true believer will be marked by holiness and increasing sanctification, not sinless perfection, but, over the course of a lifetime, be a life lived in constant pursuit of God. Thus, it is believed that a true saint, by virtue of the grace of God, will never completely fall away from true faith into the ultimate and final apostasy). (There are many ways to word this definition; this is just this author’s rendition.)
or supposed new revelation—is accepted as being above Scripture. Humbly accepting Scripture as the absolute Authority is based on the concept that **the fear of the Lord** is the starting point for being instructed by God and for receiving the knowledge and understanding of His Wisdom (Proverbs 1:7; 2:5; 9:10; 15:33; 22:4).

2. **Literal Interpretation of Scripture.** Literal is defined as meaning that **each word** is to be interpreted by a literal methodology (a normal, ordinary, customary, grammatical, historical, and critical logic). In other words, in a logical sense; just as one would seek to understand the writings of anyone who is sane and desirous of truly communicating information (not by spiritualized or mystical allegories). Literal methodology includes the normal interpretation of all idioms and figures of speech as such.

3. **Verbal, Plenary Inspiration.** The Scriptures were "God-breathed" through human conduits with the result that God's intended Message is found in Scripture without error, omission, or embellishment. God (as the Creator of the minds of men and all human languages) so utilized the original languages of Hebrew and Greek as to communicate His Thoughts for man. The role human writers played in recording Scripture will be covered in Section Seven. The following points suggest some of the known forms by which His Communication came through these chosen men.

- In some cases, God Dictated each word, often going beyond the present knowledge or vision of the writer/recorder. (See Exodus 20:1; Matthew 1:22; 2:15; 4:4,7,10; 15:4; 21:13; 22:43; 26:31; 27:9; Luke 1:70; John 12:49-50; 14:10; 1 Corinthians 14:37.) [Comments: Please note that the human writers/recorders of these verses are seldom credited by name. The human writer of the book of Hebrews, as well as other Old Testament Scriptures, has remained unknown to man. Also note that even Jesus states that He was told what to say by His Father. Whenever the human writer/recorder is mentioned, it is not to give him credit, but to associate the audience with their recognition and identification of that particular writer. (See Matthew 19:8; Mark 7:10, 10:3; Luke 2:22, 5:14, 16:29, 31.])

- In other cases, God miraculously allowed the education, experience, style, and personality of a human writer to be observable as he expressed His Message accurately under His Supernatural control.

- In other cases, God even allowed a writer of Scripture to express his opinion, which by the acceptance of it in the completed canon of Scripture ordained its validity (example: all or portions of 1 Corinthians 7). Many passages in Job, the Psalms, and other books of Scripture allow the writer to express his subjective responses to the Character or Works of God as they relate to his thinking or emotions. As in the interpretation of any literature, the context must be considered paramount as to who is speaking to whom about what, when, and where. When a writer subjectively refers to his thoughts or feelings concerning the topic being addressed, it is not a "thus says the Lord" statement. It is only realistic to interpret what is being said as the subjective interaction of that writer. Nevertheless, God is still the true Author/Originator of the Message being presented in the overall context and by the Words used to communicate that Message through the human writer/recorder. This concept will be further addressed in Section Seven.
In a few cases, as one given below, God literally required the vessels of His Truth to say exactly what He Desired, even when it was not those vessels' intention to do so.

Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. (Jude 3) [Comment: The phrase “I found it necessary” is stronger in the original Greek. Jude says that he was actually "held back or constrained" from writing on the subject he "diligently intended" to say or write about. (See also Numbers 22-23; Jonah 3:2; and John 11:51, 52.)]

4. Emphasis on Greek and Hebrew Exegesis. The absolute necessity of an ever-increasing personal competence in Greek and Hebrew grammar will become evident to the sincere Bible interpreter. However, even beginning students will be able to discover almost immediately that they can experience the thrill of exploring the original languages of Scripture, which undergird all English translations. After learning the Greek and Hebrew alphabets and Bible-Based Hermeneutics, they can begin to utilize a few basic language tools and be able to catch a glimpse of what lies ahead in their studies.

5. Dispensational Theology. Bible interpretation could be approached in one of two ways. The Bible either literally means exactly what it says, or it could be considered to speak to man in some kind of allegorical method (by symbolic, spiritualized, or mystical code). Allegorical interpretations have been used to support several false theories (Amillennial, Postmillennial, and portions of Covenant/Reformed Theologies). Each of these positions is based on the personal interpretations and opinions of men and cannot be substantiated by honest, literal hermeneutics. These Theologies do not even attempt to satisfy all of Scripture literally or consistently. On the other hand, the interpretation of Scripture by consistently-applied, literal hermeneutics results in the most Biblically substantiated conclusion; that of Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth. 34

I suggest that a student would be most successful in his Theological studies by beginning his research with the dispensational models of J. N. Darby (the nineteenth-century Plymouth Brethren writer) as further developed by C. I. Scofield (editor of the widely used Scofield Reference Bible), L. S. Chafer (founder of Dallas Theological Seminary), and many professors from that institution. (For a thorough overview of this position, see Dr. Chafer’s Systematic Theology.) 35 Of course, all aspects of Dispensationalism must also be subjected to test and approval by the final Authority of God’s Word. There have always been some disagreements even among those who hold to a dispensational framework as well as unanswered charges against this position from those who accept Reformed/Covenant Theology. Obviously, more evidence is required for this position to be proven absolutely.

The fact that God has, does, and will administer His Plan in three distinctly different ways with reference to mankind can be fully proven in harmony with all of God’s Word. There was a nation of Israel, whom God administered by the

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Law of Moses and to whom He made promises that are still unfulfilled historically. Those promises will be fulfilled literally, beginning with the 1,000-year period when Christ returns to reestablish the nation of Israel and administer it as its Lord and King. During the interim period, the Church came into being and is being administered by the Holy Spirit as Romans 11:25 states, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. These administrations can be verified as absolute doctrine by consistently interpreting Scripture in a literal manner.

God gave covenants to the nation Israel through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David. Each of these will be literally fulfilled prior to the end of human history. The promise to Eve that from her, and His later promise to David that through his lineage, God would provide a Seed by Whom man could obtain Salvation for his soul and receive an eternal Spiritual life was fulfilled in the death, burial, and resurrection of the last Adam, Jesus Christ. The Church Age began on the day of Pentecost. (See, Appendix D.)

6. Salvation by God’s Grace. This is the view that God provided Salvation for mankind by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone. No works before, during, or after the moment of personal faith in Christ contribute anything to His dearly paid for Gift of forgiveness and eternal life, which one freely receives through faith in Him. The absence of good works during or after the moment of faith subtracts nothing from one’s eternal position in Christ. Nevertheless, good works do determine whether one will receive eternal rewards to cast at the feet of Christ. The offer of God’s Grace toward mankind does not equate to man’s having “free-will” by which he may function outside of God’s Character, Methods, or Plan for history. Nevertheless, man is accountable for volitionally responding to God’s so great Plan of Salvation.

7. Integrity of God. This concept undergirds all aspects of a Bible-Based Theology with an emphasis on the equally-applied Integrity of God’s Character—all aspects in perfect tension, complete, and whole. In other words, each of God’s Attributes is considered collectively as co-equal in importance and value. This position is recognized from Scripture. Practically, it prevents the error of exalting any aspect of God’s Character to a position of importance that is out-of-balance with any other aspect. For example: the Sovereignty of God cannot be considered to be more important than His attributes of Justice and Love; God’s Love also cannot function in disregard of His attributes of Justice and Righteousness. The Reformed/Covenant position mistakenly emphasizes the former; the modern Charismatic movement mistakenly emphasizes the latter. See Lewis Sperry Chafer’s Systematic Theology for a full treatment of these doctrines.

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SECTION SIX
Bible-Based Word Meanings

Introduction

We have thus far studied the essential presuppositions concerning the interpretation of God’s Word—The Holy Scriptures. These presuppositions are reviewed below as the foundation for our next topic:

- God’s Spiritual provisions enable any member of mankind to bridge the great chasm between the Infinite God and the finiteness of man. These provisions are specifically: Revelation, Inspiration, Illumination, the Spiritual life of a believer, and God’s Provision for a person to be in joint participation with Him (Spiritual fellowship with the Holy Spirit) when he studies.

- God’s Message to man was recorded for all history in the original manuscripts of the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek—the Old and New Testaments. We do not possess the original manuscripts, but we have many very early copies to compare with each other. [Comments: Fragments of the New Testament (called papyri) exist from about AD 200 and complete New Testament manuscripts (called Uncials because of the type of writing) date from as early as the third and fourth centuries AD. Probably the oldest surviving scroll of an Old Testament book is the so-called St Mark’s Scroll of Isaiah, dating from about 100 BC, which contains that whole text. Scholars who study ancient texts consider the manuscript evidence for the Bible, especially the New Testament, earlier and more numerous than that for any other ancient writings (even the most recent such as the works of Cicero and Julius Caesar)]

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- A Latin, English, or any other translation is at least one more step removed from the Divine communication of any original language manuscripts available to man today. Additionally, each translation has been subject to all of the possible foibles inherent in any human interpretation.

- God’s Word is indisputable Truth: Inerrant and absolutely Authoritative in EVERY word, phrase, sentence, paragraph, and higher-level discourse. The teachings of all 66 books of the Bible complement each other and are not contradictory when honestly compared.

- Every Theological position accepted and posited must be substantiated by the use of those words in each context (i.e. solid contextual exegesis) and in harmony with all of Scripture.

- The rules of hermeneutics must originate from Scripture and be substantiated as such by a literal methodology: normal, ordinary, customary, grammatically precise, historically accurate, and reasonable.

- A Dispensational Theology will be the logical conclusion of applying these standards with all of Scripture honestly and consistently, and this doctrine can be confirmed by competent and unbiased interpretation.

Any student must meet certain personal conditions before he can expect to interpret Scripture accurately. Those conditions include his being in possession of a Spiritual life, in personal Spiritual fellowship, in submission to God’s Authority; and being willing to sacrifice all pride, to progress toward Spiritual maturity, and to eliminate all human and Satanic hindrances to his study.

Simply having the mechanical knowledge of Hebrew and the Greek grammar, isagogics, systematic Theology, and hermeneutical rules is not enough to ensure the correct interpretation of Scripture. As necessary as these essentials are, they must each be honestly and skillfully applied consistently, and any conclusions checked to determine the most accurate interpretation possible.

Taking Hermeneutics to the Next Level

This Section is intended to establish and begin validating an advanced approach to the current position on verbal, plenary inspiration. Bible scholars today tend to approach the meaning of each word in Scripture primarily in a literary sense, as if all verses were actually authored (originated, created, and composed) by the human writers. Of course, if this were true, men by definition would be responsible for the Bible's content instead of God. The position that distinguishes Bible-Based Hermeneutics is that it considers each individual Word as being Authored by God. This position accepts as reality that all of Scripture is the unified Message of one single Author.

This position does not imply that God dictated every Word of Scripture or that the literary style, education, or personality of the human conduit was not utilized. It does acknowledge the fact that God Supernaturally impressed on each writer's mind the exact Words and even their grammatical construction and arrangement. This position is similar to what Conservative Evangelical Theologians like John Murray, Carl F. H. Henry, B.B. Warfield, Charles Hodge, E. J. Young, Lewis Sperry Chafer, Charles C. Ryrie, Roy B. Zuck, and others have described. Bible-Based Hermeneutics, however, necessarily rejects any portion of a verbal, plenary position, which incorporates the creative choice of words or grammar to the human writers independent of God's influence. This rejection is specifically of terms such as: dual-authorship, confluence, concursus, human authorship, or even worse—a supposed God/Man inspiration by hypostatic union. The precise role man played in the writing of Scripture will be considered in Section Seven.

The term that "God superintended the writing of Scripture" is currently the most accepted definition of the Supernatural Miracle of Inspiration in explaining 2 Peter 1:21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. To be Biblically accurate, however, the definition of "superintend" must be understood as God's maintaining absolute control over what was ultimately written.

Nevertheless, why cannot Theologians just declare that, All Scripture is God-breathed, and simply recorded by chosen vessels, as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. That is all God's Word says; and that is all man has the prerogative to say. This position is proven by these Truths:

1. Scripture clearly declares that man was not its creator.

38 The American Heritage Dictionary, 4th ed., s.v. "Author, An originator or creator, as of a theory or plan; Author God; to assume responsibility for the content of."
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 Corinthians 2:13, emphasis added here and in the following verses) 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. (1 Corinthians 14:37)

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**. (Galatians 1:11, 12)

For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe. (1 Thessalonians 2:13)

Jesus often quotes specific passages in the New Testament that were commonly known by His audiences to have been penned by various human writers. Nevertheless, He references His quotes as literally being the Words of the Lord. Examples are Matthew 1:22 (which avoids crediting Isaiah for **authoring** Isaiah 7:14), Matthew 2:15 (which does not credit Hosea for **originating** Hosea 11:1), and Matthew 15:4 (which does not credit Moses for the **creative** thoughts expressed in Exodus 20:12 or 21:17.) Note that each emboldened word above defines what a genuine author actually contributes to any work of literature. Surely no one would accuse Jesus of plagiarizing the work of another without giving them due credit? Obviously, He was quoting Himself.

2. The concept of human writers acting as conduits or channels for God's Message is also clearly stated by

Matthew 1:22 **So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through (dia) the prophet, saying:** [Comment: In this and the next three verses, the Greek preposition dia is used in the genitive case, meaning directionally "through." If instrumentality "by means of" were intended, God could have used another preposition and/or the instrumental Dative case. Greek is that precise.]

Matthew 2:15 **and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through (dia) the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son."**

John 1:17 **For the law was given through (dia) Moses, but grace and truth came through (dia) Jesus Christ.**

Hebrews 2:2 **For if the word spoken through (dia) angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward…**

**What Say the Scriptures?**

Exactly what does Scripture declare about this issue? Anyone who accepts the Bible as the Word of God must base his thinking on only the testimony of Scripture. Therefore, please examine each of the following passages carefully in making your decision where you should stand on this most crucial of issues. (All following underlining emphasis is mine.)

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God (2 Timothy 3:16a) [Comments: 1) The Greek word pas (used here for “all”) can mean all, each, or every. If all of Scripture is
meant, it follows logically that each portion is included and every word would be as well. That both “all” and “Scripture” are in the singular and that the article “the” is absent may help narrow the translation to “each,” or even “every.” 2) We have additional evidence that the correct interpretation of pas is “every” or “each” by comparing this verse with one in Matthew where pas is also used. But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every (pas) word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’” (Matthew 4:4) In this context, Jesus corrects Satan, stating that man was not intended to live by a loaf of bread only, but by each and every word of Scripture.

The next verse makes it clear that the content of Scripture NEVER originated from man’s will or decision, 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. (2 Peter 1:20-21) [Comments: This verse does not say that God inspired or influenced (in the sense of artistic inspiration) the writers of Scripture with a Divine Message. It does not even imply that the writers selected the best choice of words, in their own opinions, to convey that message. The Greek word translated “spoke” in verse 21 emphasizes just the form or the physical utterance of words, rather than their meaning or content, as we will see later in this section. This word meaning is consistent with the fact that the writers of Scripture did not always comprehend the meaning of their own writings. They hardly could have chosen which words would best convey God’s intended Meaning, if they did not know exactly what the Message meant. They could, therefore, only write the Words that God impressed upon their minds as He alone was the Originator, Creator, and responsible Agent of what was written.]

How do we know that the infinite God of the Universe actually intends for finite man to comprehend exactly what He Communicates in the Bible? We know this simply because His Communication says so in absolute terms. We should be able to understand and accept this fact from the following single passage of Scripture; although, the concept is taught throughout. The following verses are the most important verification by Scripture for the “each and every word” position of Bible-Based Word Meanings. Please read the following carefully:

6 But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you unless I speak to you either by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by teaching? 7 Even things without life, whether flute or harp, when they make a sound, unless they make a distinction in the sounds, how will it be known what is piped or played? 8 For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare for battle? 9 So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to understand, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air. 10 There are, it may be, so many kinds of languages in the world, and none of them is without significance. 11 Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to him who speaks, and he who speaks will be a foreigner to me. (1 Corinthians 14:6-11)

Even a student of the Bible who understands only the English language can easily figure out what is being said and probably means in the previous passage. Nevertheless, we will explore a few of the key words from the Greek to clarify possible ambiguities. To gain the full impact from this study, it is suggested that the reader make a copy of the "Worksheet" that is the final page of this Section and compare it while reading the following notes.

Important Note: This demonstration is not a full exegesis of this passage. It is only the examination of some of the key words, which process is usually done simultaneously
with a word-by-word grammatical exegesis. In this case, we are merely seeing how most-specific word meanings assist in the understanding of an important passage of Scripture.

1. The Greek word translated *speaking* and *I speak* in verse 6, *is spoken* and *speaking* in verse 9, and *speaks* (twice) in verse 11 should be marked with a #1. These are each a form of the Greek word *laleō* as it is transliterated (English letters that correspond to each Greek letter). Its most-specific meaning is “the mechanical action of physically uttering words” (speaking or talking) as contrasted to the content of what is spoken.

2. The Greek word translated *tongues* in verse 6 and *tongue* in verse 9 are forms of *glōssa*, meaning "language(s)."

3. The word translated *profit* in verse 6 means “to serve, help, or benefit."

4. The word translated *things without life* in verse 7 means “inanimate things” as contrasted with living creatures.

5. The word translated *sounds* in verse 7, *sound* in verse 8, *languages* in verse 10, and *language* in verse 11 are from the Greek word transliterated *phōnē* and mean, a type of “sound or voice” that is made by a man, animal, or musical instrument.

6. The word translated *a distinction* in verse 7 means “distinction” as in segregating like things.

7. The word translated *make* twice in verse 7, *makes* in verse 8, and *utter* in verse 9 each come from the Greek word transliterated *didōmi* and means “to give” (as in to give forth).

8. The word translated *sound* in verse 7 means “a musical note."

9. The word translated *how* in verses 7 and 9 means “how” or “in what way.”

10. The word translated *known* in verses 7 and 9 is from the Greek word *ginōskō*, meaning “to know” (here, “to recognize”).

11. The word translated *uncertain* in verse 8 means “not evident, or uncertain.”

12. The word translated *so* in verse 9 grammatically ties verses 9 and 10 to the argument given in verses 7 and 8.

13. The word translated *easy to understand* in verse 9 means “clearly defined.”

14. The word translated *words* in verse 9 is transliterated *logos*. It means “word” as in the meaning or content of what is spoken. The distinction of this word is extremely important. *Logos* is used in John, Chapter One, for the Name of Jesus Christ in His Deity. This word most-specifically refers to the content of that which is spoken (*laleō*).

15. The word translated *without significance* in verse 10 means “voiceless or mute.”

16. The word translated *therefore* in verse 11 is from the Greek word *oun* and announces the closing statement for the argument that has proceeded in the previous five verses.
17. The word translated if is the little Greek word ean. It is used here in verse 11 in a grammatical construction that introduces a conclusion that is a likely or potential result (if, and it is potentially true).

18. The word translated know in verse 11 is from the Greek word oida and means possessing a knowledge that is gained by experience.

19. The word translated meaning in verse 11 is from the Greek word dunamis which means inherent power. Here, it probably refers to the power (or source) of the voice, as in "What is the language you are speaking"?

20. The word translated be in verse 11 is from the Greek word eime, and means the state of being.

21. The word translated foreigner is the Greek word barbaros. (This is an ancient word that can mean simply one who talks in almost unintelligible sounds (stammering or stuttering – bar-bar), but also was used to indicate a non-Greek or non-Roman, or anyone talking in an unknown foreign tongue.)

You can now use this "Worksheet" to make notations on each verse corresponding to the paraphrasing given below. This should help you to envision how most-specific word meanings assist in the overall understanding of a passage. Paul is the known human writer of this epistle and will be addressing his audience in the first person. We can easily see the extremely logical style of the human conduit, Paul, being utilized in this discourse. However, it is God the Holy Spirit Who is the creative Author and is the responsible agent originating what is recorded through Paul.

The following is a paraphrasing of this passage incorporating the most-specific meanings of the Greek words: 3Verse 6 sets up the first condition (protasis) of an argument based on simple logic. Paul says, "If indeed I should come before you, speaking in some language, what benefit would it be to you unless I speak about revelation, knowledge, prophecy, or doctrine"? God states a principle that unless one's talking has valuable content that can easily be understood, what good is his speech to the hearer?

- Verse 7 begins to make the case that the purpose of language is communication, not just making sounds. It states the logical position that even inanimate things, such as the musical instruments, a flute or a harp, give forth musical notes that can be distinguished from each other (whether...or). Otherwise, how would anyone know which one is being played"? (Notes being played on a flute or a harp sound distinctly different from each other. One should be able to recognize the instrument being played as well as the difference in the tunes.)

- In verse 8, the argument is strengthened: "If indeed a trumpet gave forth an uncertain sound (a not clearly discernable cadence), who would prepare himself for battle"? The obvious point to those familiar with warfare is that there is a distinct and important difference between a trumpet playing taps, wakeup, retreat, or charge!

- Verse 9 states the final condition (protasis) of this argument. It sets up the comparison between verses 7 and 8 and verses 9 and 10. In verses 7 and 8 the subject was the recognizable distinctions between sounds made by different instruments and the notes that each plays. Now, it will be logically deduced in
verses 9 and 10 that the same distinctions exist in what is communicated by the individual words (notes, tunes, and trumpet calls) of human language.

- Verse 9 states the conclusion that: The same thing applies to you. Unless your language gives forth words (that have real meaning), which can be clearly defined (like differing sounds between instruments or specific notes of a particular instrument), how (in what way) will what you speak be recognized? You will be talking into the air (we might say – wasting your breath). This conclusion is the strongest evidence we have from Scripture that we MUST discover the most-specific nature of every word used by God in His Word and determine the particular part it may play within every passage.

- Verse 10 continues challenging the audience with additional information for them to consider. There potentially exist many generations of voices in the world and not even one is mute. The point is that there are a multitude of sounds and every one has a distinction that can be recognized as different from any other sound and is unique.

- Verse 11 completes the logical argument by applying the uniqueness of sounds in the world to human languages: "If he is not familiar with (has never experienced) another person’s voice (language), the logical result will be for him to consider that person to be a barbarian when he speaks; and that person’s speech will logically make him seem to be a barbarian as well."

This passage is extremely important in demonstrating that every word God has used in Scripture to communicate to man is so carefully chosen and utilized as to have particular meaning. **Those word meanings are as precise as individual musical notes, played on different sounding instruments and in differing arrangements.** The above argument (created by God the Holy Spirit and given to us through Paul’s analytical style) had a contemporary application for those dealing with speaking in tongues in the early Church. Nevertheless, this passage has a specific meaning that can be overlooked by interpreting the contemporary application for its primary meaning. Its most-specific meaning provides us with the basis for determining a more in-depth and precise interpretation of Scripture than has been accomplished heretofore.

Dr. George E. Meisinger, President of Chafer Theological Seminary, recently sent me an article he wrote many years ago on Inspiration. His statements concerning the importance of individual words in verbal, plenary Inspiration are very insightful and are thus quoted below: 39

"What about the individual words of the Bible"? [Comment: (The next two sentences are abridged from several in Dr. Meisinger’s article.) Thoughts are always clothed in words during the communication process and we cannot separate the two. God thinks in precise thoughts and therefore must convey His precise thoughts with precise words.] "Moreover, Scripture often asserts that even the words are inspired, e.g., 'Moses wrote down all of the words of the Lord' (Exodus 24:4), and Paul talks about 'words…taught by the Spirit'" (1 Corinthians 2:13). Occasionally, the writers were even told to 'not omit a word' (Jeremiah 26:2), and John pronounced anathema upon all who would add or subtract from the 'words of the book of this prophecy' (Revelation 22:18-19).

39 Dr. George E. Meisinger, Th.M., D.Min., PhD from an undated article entitled, “Inspiration.”
"So, then, we see that every portion of the Bible is inspired; even the very words themselves. Accordingly, our attitude toward God's Word should be this: Verbal and plenary inspiration. We say verbal because the very words are inspired. We say plenary because every part or portion is inspired. In addition, we say inspired, meaning God-breathed. The Word of God is a book in which every word, in every part, God Himself breathed out. Scripture is, in the final analysis, a divine production."

Finally, is the issue of God-originated Inspiration of each and every word really so important? Only, if we desire to discover exactly what God means by every word He says. Either God is the ONLY Author of ALL Scripture, or He is not! If we are ever to discover exactly what God has said and means to the highest degree of accuracy, we must allow Him the choice of EACH word AND it's most-precise meaning. This meaning includes considering the influence that each part of speech has on the interpretation of every word in its context based on the case of the noun or pronoun, the function of a preposition, the class of a pronoun, the use (or absence of use) of the article, the voice, person, and number of a verbal form, and the function of every infinitive, participle, adverb, conjunction, particle, or clause.

I wonder how any believer can expect to obey Christ's admonition in Matthew 4:4, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God,'" without knowing precisely what EVERY Word God has provided for us means from God's vocabulary.

**Bible-Based Hermeneutics** proposes that the exact meaning of each word is to be determined by the following approach:

1. Recognizing that the correct interpretation of Scripture is entirely a Spiritual endeavor, prayer and meditation must be used throughout the process while depending on Spiritual Illumination by God the Holy Spirit.

2. Considering each word's grammatical/syntactical use within every Biblical context (verse and paragraph) first and foremost; then in the surrounding discourse (chapter and book). (Words can also be compared within a particular writer's normal use, but preference is always given to how God has most specifically and consistently used each word throughout His entire Book.)

3. Considering that any literary types, symbols, parables, allegories, or figures of speech are best explained by Scriptural definitions.

4. Considering all other passages in which God has utilized a particular word and its cognates, both generally and specifically throughout Scripture. Consideration is also given to a word's use in the Septuagint as well as the use of its Hebrew cognates (with the realization that it is not an Inspired writing). Extra-Biblical sources can be evaluated for possible clues when necessary.

The complete procedure for this approach is provided in Appendix E.

It is my prayer that God will use **Bible-Based Hermeneutics** and faithful men who will be able to teach others also (2 Timothy 2:2b) for His Glory and the sake of Christ...

*For the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; (Ephesians 4:12-13)*

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Worksheet for 1 Corinthians 14:6-11

6 But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you unless I speak to you either by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by teaching?

7 Even things without life, whether flute or harp, when they make a sound, unless they make a distinction in the sounds, how will it be known what is piped or played?

8 For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare for battle?

9 So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to understand, How will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air.

10 There are, it may be, so many kinds of languages in the world, and none of them is without significance.

11 Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to him who speaks, and he who speaks will be a foreigner to me.
As was stated in Section Six, most Bible scholars today (this includes secular, liberal, and even Conservative Evangelical Theologians\(^40\)) tend to approach the meaning of each word in Scripture in a similar way. They approach the Words of Scripture primarily in a literary sense, as if all verses were actually authored (originated, created, and composed) by the human writers. Of course if this were true, then Man, instead of God, would have to be responsible for the Bible's content by definition.

The orientation that distinguishes *Bible-Based Hermeneutics* from previously held positions of verbal, plenary Inspiration is that it considers each individual Word to be Authored by God. This advancement on the verbal portion of verbal, plenary Inspiration accepts as reality that all of Scripture is the unified Message of one single Author/Originator. As was also stated, this position does not imply that God dictated every Word of Scripture or that the literary style, education, or personality of the human conduit was not utilized. It acknowledges, however, the fact that God Supernaturally impressed on each writer’s mind the exact Words as well as their grammatical construction and arrangement. As has been previously stated,\(^41\)

Even the lies of Satan and the false opinions of men are God-breathed into Scripture. The fact that every Word of Scripture is God-breathed does not mean that the lies and incorrect statements of men and Satan originated from God. It does mean that they became a part of the overall message God makes available to man. The Inspiration of Scripture includes the private thoughts and emotional initiations and responses of man and Satan accurately recorded by the precise Words and grammatical constructions in which God chose for them to be preserved.

**This Advancement on the Verbal, Plenary Position is Essential.**

Why do I believe it is so important to make such a distinction? The reason is that God is the only true Author/Originator of every Word (verbal) of Scripture. (See my exegetical notes on Matthew 4:4; 5:18; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21.)\(^42\) Acceptance of, and reliance on, the fact that the entire (plenary) Bible, from Genesis through Revelation, is the product of the thoughts of one and only one Author/Originator is paramount in determining the most-specific meanings of the Words utilized by that Author/Originator. If man is ever to arrive at the most precise understanding of God’s Message, he must begin by accepting the Supernatural fact of Scripture—it’s Spiritual Inspiration and the Spiritual Illumination required for its proper interpretation.

Denying the Supernatural nature of the Inspiration or Illumination of Scripture is equivalent to denying Biblical Creation, the Virgin Birth, the Deity of Jesus, the Resurrection, the Trinity, the Spiritual Propitiation of Christ’s Death on the Cross, or any

\(^{40}\) By Conservative Evangelical, I refer to those who hold to a Biblically based Theology, a high view of Inspiration and Inerrancy of all Scripture, and in the necessity of personal Salvation through faith alone, by grace alone, in Christ alone.

\(^{41}\) See the material in *Bible-Based Hermeneutics*, Section Two, #2, “Inspiration,” pages 29-31.

\(^{42}\) Ibid.
other Miracle. The Bible declares Itself to be a Spiritual communication written in human languages. As such, It adheres to all natural, normal linguistic rules of grammar, is historically accurate, and can be comprehended logically. Nevertheless, as a Supernatural product, the very words, phrases, and syntax of Scripture were Authored by God the Holy Spirit and can be comprehended only by a believer submissive to Spiritual Illumination.

It is a simple matter to prove that God utilized a consistent and harmonious meaning for the Words He selected to create the entire Bible, as any human author would have done. Supposing different meanings for the words used by Moses, Isaiah, Paul, John, Peter, or the unknown writer of Hebrews (and several other Old Testament books and about 50 Psalms) is ascribing actual authorship to those human writers rather than God. Anti-supernaturalist critics in the field of linguistics have attempted to discredit the Supernatural Inspiration of God's Word for centuries in this same manner. Why would Conservative Evangelicals even consider sustaining the attack of the ungodly? The art of performing word studies based primarily on Biblical usage has been virtually non-existent due in part to this serious error in understanding. It is no wonder that most Bible scholars today look to the secular use and meaning for words before, or even instead of, performing inductive studies (comparing each word's uses only within Scripture). This practice is similar to attempting to ascertain Scriptural interpretation by studying translations rather than by the exegesis of the original languages. If interpretation is confirmed by comparing Scripture with Scripture, should not God's individual use of Words be confirmed in the same manner?

Now, we can see what really makes this course advancement on the previous approaches to Biblical hermeneutics. Theologians from the time of the earliest church fathers, to Luther and Calvin, to Hodge and Ramm, and to Chafer and Zuck have stated that the ultimate method for interpreting God’s Word is to allow Scripture to interpret itself. Many Theologians have proposed, by varying degrees, a literal hermeneutic. However, there has been, and still is, inconsistency in applying some of the rules that these men established. More importantly, to the best of my knowledge, no one has proposed using a literal, Biblically inductive hermeneutic for each and every word of the Bible. The following chart provides the key Bible verses, which define the specific roles God the Holy Spirit and the human writers each played in the making of Scripture.
God’s Contribution

1. **All Scripture is given by inspiration of God**, (2 Timothy 3:16)  
   *All* = every word of Scripture  

2. 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**. (2 Peter 1:20-21)

3. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by **every word** that proceeds from the mouth of God. (Matthew 4:4)

4. For *My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,*” says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, **And My thoughts than your thoughts**. (Isaiah 55:8-9).

Man’s Contribution

- Scripture Itself was "God-breathed;" not Its writers given creative inspiration.
- **Prophecy never came by the will of man**
- Men were **moved by, carried along** by, the Holy Spirit.
- Every single word; both "every” and "word” are singular in person.
- **God’s Thoughts are not mans’ thoughts.**
- **God’s Thoughts (are higher) than mans’; infinite and transcendent.**

God is the Author/Organizer of His Own Thoughts and arranged each Word He chose to utilize.

Man contributed none of his own thinking, will, or creative abilities to the authoring of God’s Holy Word.

**FIGURE 5**

**Conclusion: What Role Did Man Play in the Authorship of Scripture?**

There are basically six possible authorship theories:

1. That man alone authored Scripture as just another piece of human literature. This position gives no credence to Supernatural Inspiration or Inerrancy as its proponents are not believers in God.

2. That God and man co-authored Scripture. This position is held by those who consider that the natures of both Deity and humanity were intertwined, even in hypostasis (similar to the Deity and the humanity of man in Jesus Christ). This position has been logically and Scripturally challenged by this author without response from its proponents. You may request a copy of that argument by e-mailing me, j-richard@rfugate.org.

3. That God inspired human authors with ideas from which they then authored the individual books of Scripture in their own words. This position may have originated from a mistaken interpretation of 2 Timothy 3:16, supposing that the writers themselves were "breathed-into" or "in-spired." (It is clear from the Greek
grammar of this verse that it is the "All Scripture" itself that is the appositional subject of God's Inspiration and should be more specifically translated, “All Scripture—God-breathed.” The misunderstanding could also have come from the humanly recognized concept of someone being emotionally or mentally inspired (invigorated or motivated) in the way a musician or an artist might be.

4. That God Supernaturally controlled what each human writer wrote (as defined by Warfield, Young, Chafer, Packer, and Ryrie). This position states that each writer utilized his own will, writing style, education, vocabulary, and personality; but God superintended (had direction and oversight over) the final outcome so that the results were in exact keeping with what He wanted.

5. That God was the only true Author/Originator of Scripture. It states that God Supernaturally utilized the human writers as channels or conduits by which they wrote the precise words and in the exact grammatical constructions as Inspired by God the Holy Spirit. It acknowledges the differing style, education, vocabulary, and personality of each writer God chose, but does not credit any one of them with any creative license for what they penned. This is the only position totally supported by Scripture.

6. That God dictated all of Scripture. This position had been the one accepted throughout the first 1700 years of Christianity. At that time it suddenly came under ruthless attack by the literary critics of the day. It is summarily ridiculed by most secular, liberal, and Conservative Evangelical Bible scholars today. See the charts at the end of this Section, which depict these positions historically.

It should be obvious that there is a definite tension in understanding precisely how God utilized the human writers/recorders of Scripture. Conservative Evangelical Christians certainly accept that God is the true Author/Originator of all Scripture; that He not only created its content but caused it to be arranged in such a way that It communicates His Message exactly. (Perhaps, It communicates even more precisely than we have yet discovered.) It is also clear that the style, education, vocabulary, and personality of each of the writers God selected comes through what He Influenced them to write. Position number four above has been satisfactory for the past several decades, but a new apostasy is becoming more and more prevalent due to the influence and acceptance of secular literature. The more humanity is considered to have supplied input into Biblical authorship, the more man turns to extra-biblical linguistics to determine the meaning of God's Word. As I said in the “Introduction,”

I believe Satan's present-day tactical attack in obscuring God's Communication to man is directed at nullifying the reality of Supernatural Inspiration and need for Spiritual Illumination as a requirement in enabling full comprehension of Scripture.

Examining Past Positions on Verbal, Plenary Inspiration

Biblically correct definitions on Inspiration were set forth by Conservative Evangelical Theologians fifty years ago such as Benjamin B. Warfield and Edward J. Young:

For an excellent exegesis of this verse, you can study the article by Daniel B. Wallace, PhD, *The Relationship of theopneustos to graphē in 2 Timothy 3:16* (Biblical Studies Foundation, 1998), [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org)
"Inspiration is, therefore, usually defined as a supernatural influence exerted on the sacred writers by the Spirit of God, by virtue of which their writings are given Divine trustworthiness." 44 [Comments: This definition incorporates both of the concepts that God was the source of Scripture; and that men wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Note that it does not credit the writers with any degree of "authorship."]

"Inspiration is a superintendence of God the Holy Spirit over the writers of the Scriptures, as a result of which these Scriptures possess Divine authority and trustworthiness and, possessing such Divine authority and trustworthiness, are free from error." 45 [Comment: This definition adds the facts of Supernatural Inerrancy and Authority to that of Its Inspiration.]

"When we have set forth all that the Scripture has to say, we can go no further. It may well be that questions arise in our minds, but they are questions which, at present at least, we cannot answer. Our duty is to believe all that God has revealed and to bow in humble acceptance of the truth which He has given." 46 [Comments: I wholeheartedly agree. Why cannot all Bible-believing Christians just declare what the Bible itself does: All Scripture is God-breathed and simply recorded by men as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit? That is all God's Word says; and, therefore, that is all man has a right to say.]

Dr. L. S. Chafer sets forth a similar position on Inspiration: "Verbal, plenary inspiration is the unqualified claim of the Bible for itself, the teaching of Christ and the apostles, and the belief of the Church from her beginning. It has likewise been pointed out [previously in his Chapter IV] that the Word as written came forth from God as His breath and that chosen men were empowered to receive and record that message. As to how He transmitted that Word to them and secured inerrant oracles at their hand, the Scriptures are silent." 47 [Comments: If Bible-believing Theologians would just accept this simple and yet profound definition, they could turn their efforts and energies to unlocking the Scriptures for our fellow believers.]

Dr. J. I. Packer stated his resolve that God is the Author/Originator of all Scripture:

"God so controlled the process of communication to and through His servants that, in the last analysis, He is the source and speaker not merely of biblical prophecy but also of biblical history, wisdom, and doctrine..." 48 And, "Men were not left to articulate information about, and interpretations of, God’s ways with men apart from His superintending providence. On the contrary, the Lord who gave the Word also gave the words." 49

44 B. B. Warfield, The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1948) , p. 131
45 Edward J. Young, Thy Word is Truth (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), p. 27.
46 Ibid, p. 71
48 Norman L. Geisler, Inerrancy, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, p. 198 and 211, respectively.
49 Ibid, p.211.
Dr. Charles Ryrie describes the never-ending problem Christians have imposed on themselves over the years—the futile attempt in creating one apologetic after another in hope that they might appease those who reject God:

“While many theological viewpoints would be willing to say the Bible is inspired, one finds little uniformity as to what is meant by inspiration. Some focus it on the writers; others, on the writings; still others, on the readers. Some relate it to the general message of the Bible; others, to the thoughts; still others, to the words. Some include inerrancy; many don’t. These differences call for precision in stating the biblical doctrine. Formerly all that was necessary to affirm one’s belief in full inspiration was the statement, 'I believe in the inspiration of the Bible.' But when some did not extend inspiration to the words of the text it became necessary to say, 'I believe in the verbal inspiration of the Bible.' To counter the teaching that not all parts of the Bible were inspired, one had to say, 'I believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible.' Then because some did not want to ascribe total accuracy to the Bible, it was necessary to say, 'I believe in the verbal, plenary, infallible, inerrant inspiration of the Bible.' But then 'infallible' and 'inerrant' began to be limited to matters of faith only rather than also embracing all that the Bible records (including historical facts, genealogies, accounts of Creation, etc.), so it became necessary to add the concept of 'unlimited inerrancy.' Each addition to the basic statement arose because of an erroneous teaching. 50 [Comments: (Emphases in these passages are mine.) Note that the definitions of God’s Inspiration have evolved from the general to the increasingly more specific in order to counter the secular attacks against various aspects of what Divine Inspiration truly means. Apologetics designed for those who persistently question God is like throwing reason into the vacuous abyss of disbelief. Perhaps Christians should just stand on what the Word says about its being God-breathed, leaving those who hate and reject God to their own unbelief.]

Dr. Ryrie's own definition is accepted in essence by most Evangelicals today:

"God superintended the human authors of the Bible so that they composed and recorded without error His message to mankind in the words of their original writings." 51 [Comments: This position is in general acceptance among Conservative Evangelical Theologians today. Bible-Based Hermeneutics, however, must take exception to the use of the words "authors" and "composed." This objection is made due to the correct definitions of these two words as given in most dictionaries respectively ("an originator or creator," and "to create, to bring into being or produce by combining parts or elements.") Even though most of those who hold this position do not really intend to credit the human writers (conduits or channels) with God's Thoughts, choice of individual Words, their grammatical forms, and even their arrangement, the words "author and compose" do carry those meanings.]

Dr. Chafer makes the following comments concerning man's futile attempts to explain God's Supernatural Miracle of Inspiration:


51 Ibid, S. 81.
"At this point the so-called theories of inspiration are introduced. Too often these theories consist in an inquisitive attempt to pry into the unrevealed mystery as to how God moved the chosen men to write as they did. Upon this subject the Scriptures are silent." 52 [Comment: Why does man think he MUST invent a defense for God's Truth? Does the Bible not say in Luke 16:31, “If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead”? Jesus also says, whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet (Matthew 10:14).] Dr. Chafer continues his excellent point:

"As to how the divine revelation was given to the human author (sic), none other than God or the elect man could know. It was wholly within those personal and sacred relationships into which none other might intrude. Here the devout soul will hesitate and the prudent will at least respect the silence of God." 53 [Comment: Oh, that only we would. He had previously challenged the arrogance and pure speculation of human scholarship earlier in his Chapter IV, saying on page 63: "To reaffirm: The question is not what men—even great scholars—think is a workable theory as to the manner in which the Bible was written; it is what the Bible declares concerning itself."]

**What Prevents All Christians Today from Simply Accepting the Fact That God Authored Scripture?**

The issue of who actually Authored Scripture would seem to be beyond question or challenge at this point. If we actually accept the verbal, plenary Inspiration of Scripture, we MUST accept that God is the one and only Author. It is necessary to make a clear distinction between what it means to be an author compared to being a writer. When the term *author* 54 is used throughout this book, it means: “the one that creates, founds or originates; or the architect, creator, entrepreneur, father, founder, inventor, maker, originator, parent, or patriarch;” or an author, “as originator or creator, as of a theory or a plan,” or, “to assume responsibility for the content of a published text.” 55 When the term *writer* is used, it means: “one who writes, especially as an occupation;” or, a scribe, “one who forms letters, characters, or words on a surface with an instrument;” or, *recorder*, “one who sets down for preservation in writing or other permanent form.” 56

From the 1st Century AD when all of the New Testament books were written and until about 200 years after the Reformation period in the 16th Century, there existed virtually no creditable opposition against the verbal, plenary Authorship of All Scripture by God. This means that during the 300 years of the early church fathers (110 to 430 AD), throughout the entire reign of the Catholic Church (6th to 16th Century), and even for almost 200 years after the Reformation, man was not given any credit for the Bible's Authorship! Martin Luther did not need to make God's Revelation, or the Inerrancy and Inspiration of Scripture, issues in his famous 95 Theses. In fact, it was universally

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52 Chafer, ibid, page 81.
53 Ibid, page 82.
56 Ibid. s.v. "writer."
accepted by anyone who claimed Christianity throughout these 1700 or so years that
God directly dictated every word of Scripture. This universal belief was no doubt due to
many passages claiming Inspiration and no passage challenging that position.

That God directly Inspired all Scripture was the position accepted by Josephus and
all of the early Church fathers from Clement and Polycarp to Justin Martyr, Irenaus,
Tertullian, Cyprian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus
and his brother, Basil the Great, Chrysostom, Theodoret, Jerome, and Augustine; 
by the Catholic Church for about another 1,000 years thereafter, and later by Martin
Luther, John Calvin, and their followers for another 200 years.

There was hardly any challenge to this position until the Age of Enlightenment. Clearly, there was a sharp change of philosophy about that time. This change did not
originate from Scripture or from any new Illumination by the then current Spiritual
leaders. The challenge came from outside of the Church! Just as Satan had appealed to
Eve on the basis of human reason and the lust for knowledge, he challenged Bible
believing Christians to question the source of God's Word. He challenged the fact of the
Bible's Revelation, Inspiration, Inerrancy, and Authority over man. One of the most
subtle of those attacks was the issue of human writers' contributions to the Bible's
authorship. Logically, one would have to deny his God-given ability to reason in refusing
to acknowledge marked differences between the many different writers of Scripture.
Equally true, however, one must deny the clear testimony of God's Holy Word in
refusing to acknowledge that God alone is the Author/Originator of all Scripture. The
question then becomes: How did Christians of that day and continuing to the present
day attempt to resolve this dilemma?

Enter Satan and His Unrelenting Attack on Scripture

Satan's attack began in the Garden when he subtly asked Eve, Has God indeed
said, "You shall not eat of every tree of the garden"? And, he lied to her when he
replied, "You will not surely die" (Genesis 3:3-4). Satan has continued to attack the
literal acceptance of God's Word by believers throughout history. He challenged
Abraham's faith in God's Word about his having a son, the faith of the Israelsites many
times, and even Jesus Christ in the Garden. He also attempted to obscure Scripture
from humanity over many centuries through the priests of various religions cloaking
God's Word in allegory and mysticism. These priests also promoted the use of
languages that were not commonly understood by the average person. By the use of
these tactics, Satan was almost successful in stamping out the Word of God throughout
the known world for many centuries.

God then struck back through translations into the languages of the common man
and the invention of the printing press. God also used the commitment and courage of

57 The Inspiration and Authority of Holy Scripture, A Study in the Literature of the First Five
Centuries, by George Duncan Barry (New York: Macmillan, 1919), cited by Howard Lindsell,
The Battle for the Bible (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), pages 45-54.
58 Lindsell, ibid, page 54. Lindsell is emphasizing the inerrancy and authority of Scripture as
taught by these churchmen, but their quotes sometimes explicitly and other times implicitly
indicate a belief in the "Dictation Theory."
59 Superficially defined, the Age of Enlightenment is generally considered as beginning in the
late 17th Century with the Age of Reason and continuing through the 18th Century.
the leaders of the Reformation period in the middle 16th Century. Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and others led the cry for the literal interpretation of Scripture. Satan must have been furious and viciously attacked all of these leaders with the power he wielded over the then-current religion and governments. It apparently took Satan about 200 years after the Reformation to regroup fully and challenge man’s new understanding that God’s Revelation through the Scriptures was meant for all to read and understand. Satan launched a counter-offensive through man’s pride in his own opinions and his all-consuming lust for wisdom. Theological scholarship today is often still enticed by the new and the academically titillating. By the middle 18th Century, the secular liberal philosophies of the higher literary German critics Hegel, Kant, Schleiermacher, and Ritschl had spawned Naturalism, Super-Naturalism, and Modernism. By the middle 1900’s, Briggs and Bultmann were attacking the very idea of Divine Authorship, Miracles, and the Inerrancy of all or at least portions of Scripture. The attack continued in full force through the existentialist theology of Karl Barth and his rejection of the Bible as the actual, verbal, plenary Word of God. Few Christians comprehend how much these false philosophies influence even today’s Conservative Evangelicals.

Understanding Satan’s Attack

It is important for us to recognize the Theological/philosophical/cultural dynamics that all true Christians faced in the last half of the 17th and all of the 18th century. Man's thinking from The Age of Enlightenment and thereafter was influenced by many historical pressures. There was an increased interest in the philosophy of reason motivated by skepticism. There was also an overwhelming trend toward individualism. Personal autonomy and radical change sought to replace all authorities, dogma, and tradition. Leaders in every field of academics focused critical attacks against the existence of God and the validity of the Bible as an authority for physical (let alone for moral or spiritual) truth. All fundamentals of the Christian faith were under vicious attack, especially against any suggestion of Supernatural occurrences such as Miracles. Any consideration of Divine Revelation, Inspiration, and Illumination of Scripture was being intellectually ridiculed by those outside of “the faith.” Biblical criticism attacked the very foundation of the Protestant faith. This was particularly true of the historically accepted doctrines of Inerrancy and Inspiration by God's immediate agency. It is important to understand that the effect of this drastic change of position was exacerbated by Bible-believing Christians trying to counteract the attacks from outside the Church by unbelievers and ultimately from Satan.

An example of absurd pseudo-scholarship, which results when academia becomes obsessed with secular study about, rather than of, Scripture, is the renewed interest in solving the textual criticism mystery (?) of “The Synoptic Problem” with the Gospels. The hypothetical question is, “What was the source of the three Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke?” Rather than attempt to understand the differences between these Inspired Scriptures by the Illuminating Ministry of the Holy Spirit, these reputed experts defer to hypotheses of German higher criticism (which has always rejected the Inspiration of Scripture). This snipe hunt is based on the origin of the three Gospels, who wrote his first, and who copied from whom? Lost from consideration is God’s Authorship of them all. Theories include suppositions that there was a common document behind them all—like the “Q” (standing for the German word Quelle, meaning source). Or, “maybe” Mark came first, and Matthew and Luke borrowed mostly from his writings—the 2SH or “Markan” hypothesis. The fact that no records of these documents exist and are only in the vain imagination of men does not daunt its seekers.
Bible-believing Christians were being confronted with this atmosphere of disbelief, skepticism, and ennoblement of self (an elevated importance of human value or dignity) and man's supposed new ability to discover all truth through reason alone. It was at this time in history that the very survival of Reformed Christianity seemed in jeopardy. We must sympathize with those facing this dilemma, even if we cannot accept their attempted solutions. How would we have responded to being challenged by the highly intellectual scholarship of that day? The attack was on all fronts: the false science of evolution, historical critics of Biblical accounts of history, linguistic critics of the Divine Authorship of Scripture, and the multiple philosophies of rationalism, Deism, and anti-supernaturalism? This was a very hostile climate for Christians.

A well-known understanding pertaining to this period of history is the following,

"Since the Enlightenment in France and Germany (17th/18th Centuries), however, it has been fashionable to deny the verbal, plenary inspiration of Scripture in light of apparent historical inaccuracies and philosophical objections, particularly with the existence and nature of God as well as the limitations of language. But, while we can learn much from these views, we may safely set aside their anti-supernaturalistic prejudices as both unfounded and contrary to the teaching of Jesus who himself strongly upheld the complete trustworthiness of Scripture without reserve (e.g., Matthew 5:17-20)."  

Dr. James Sawyer describes the rise of Biblical criticism in his excellent article, which outlines the history of the philosophy of "Liberalism,"

"The rise of Biblical criticism in the mid to late nineteenth century represented a wholesale attack on the Sola Scriptura foundation of the Protestant faith and the theology of the post-Reformation period which had articulated a precisely defined doctrine of inerrancy. In some of these explanations the doctrine of inspiration and inerrancy was extended even to the vowel pointing of the Hebrew text. The biblical critics blasted such doctrines. The rise of textual criticism shook the confidence of many as to the accurate transmission and preservation of the text. Literary (Higher) criticism applied to the Bible the methods of literary analysis used in secular documents. The critics looked at the books of the Bible itself and concluded from their anti-supernaturalistic presuppositions that Moses did not write the Pentateuch. In the New Testament, the work of Strauss, Baur, and others purported to demonstrate that much of the New Testament was to be dated from the second century, rather than arising from the hands of the apostles writing as Jesus' authorized representatives. This all served to undermine the unique character and authority of the Bible both in the scholarly as well as in the worshipping community. No longer was it possible to proclaim 'Thus saith the Lord.' This destroyed the possibility of the rational certainty of the faith."  

Another recent evaluation states,

"Many scholars have noted the similarities between the biblical account of Noah and the countless secular flood myths. Yet, the biblical flood narrative should be taken literally because it is written as such...The neo-orthodox movement cut a

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swath through evangelical Christianity, leaving much wreckage in its wake. Its basic hermeneutical tenet was the equality of all ancient literature and the denial of inspiration...its method focused on historical criticism and literary comparison, so that the trio of inerrancy, infallibility, and authority fell as one. Conservative scholarship differs in presupposition, taking the Bible alone as the inspired Word of God."  

Apologetics: How Christians Responded to Satan's Attacks

Evangelical Theologians of the late nineteenth and early 20th Century's attempted to develop some kind of rational philosophy that might somehow appease the Modernists' attacks. This action is similar to a man encaged with a lion cutting off pieces of his body to forestall the inevitable. Christians had been warned that, *false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect* (Matthew 24:24). But, when Satan attacked the Church with false philosophy, false science, false history, and false religion, Christian apologists seemed coerced into responding by human reason instead of by Scripture. Many apologists today are still refining these types of responses. Of course, I am only referring to the type of apologetics that is created from human logic or philosophy to explain God's Supernatural occurrences rationally. There is a place for proper apologetics, but it should only be the Bible-based exposition of correct doctrine presented in a logical manner. Even then, it is only intended to be given to respectful inquirers; not responses to challenging unbelievers. (See Matthew 7:6; 10:14; Luke 9:5; and I Peter 3:15, where "ask" means most-specifically, "to petition one respectfully and submissively.")

When Evangelical Theologians attempted to defend God's direct Revelation and Inspiration of Scripture by crediting human writers for its creation, they unwittingly joined the attack by unbelievers and Satan against the Bible's Authority. But, if Scripture is not Spiritual in its origin, there would be no logical need for Spiritual Illumination or a believer's Spiritually upright status to enable his comprehension. From this point, it is easy to understand why the next step would be existentialism or seeking answers from secular scholarship. God's Word has no need of human defense against those by whom it is rejected. I earnestly believe that any speculation man undertakes to explain Supernatural Miracles by his own ingenuity or human opinion debases the Word of God.

Satan's Attack through Science

Satan's most sophisticated attack came through man's interest in knowledge and his legitimate desire to pursue the prime mandate for man to subdue physical creation. When Darwin published his pseudo-science of evolution in 1859, it challenged the literal accuracy of God's account of His Creation. Simultaneously, German philosophy and the theology of higher criticism stepped up its attack on the Divine source of Scripture. Modernists' linguistic and historical criticisms challenged the Bible due to its supposed errors and contradictions. Confronted by these "proofs" that the Bible could not possibly be believed literally, Christians retreated. From that time on, Satan has engaged in a continuous campaign to destroy man's belief in God's Word. Through consistent

64 *Dictionary of Bible-Based Word Meanings,* "αἰτεω" in the semantic domain of "PRAYER," (unpublished) FBR.
deceptions by those reputed-to-be experts in the fields of science and anti-God philosophy, Satan has attempted to discredit and nullify the Bible’s impact on both believers and unbelievers once and for all.

The so-called “science” of evolution has done irreparable damage to faith in the Bible for unbelievers and believers alike for about 150 years. Twentieth Century Theologians attempted to counter the impact that these “scientific theories” were having on mans’ confidence in the truth of God’s Word. Theologians tried to accommodate man’s popular acceptance of the idea that “science” had “proven” the creation of the Earth had to be very, very old. So, there was the Christian theory of One-Day Age based on the Scripture that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day (2 Peter 3:8). Evolutionists have had to expand their guesses about the age of the Earth from 70,000 years at first, to millions, and currently to 4.7 billion years. They had to do this in order to cover their repetitive errors in guessing the amount of time to allow for their ever-changing theory. Subsequently, Christians had to either drop the One-Day defense or adopt an allegorical interpretation for “day” in Scripture. There have been other attempts by Christians to fit in the millions of years that science had supposedly proven creation required. The Re-Creation (Gap), the Original Chaos, or the Divine Judgment theories attempted to solve this dilemma. These theories were probably set forth with the best of intentions to protect the literal interpretation of Scripture, while also incorporating the newest scientific theories that virtually everyone believed at the time. (If true, the advocates of these doctrines should be required to substantiate and categorize them as Absolute, Probable, or Possible by a solid Bible-based hermeneutic.)

This verification will need to consider the excellent scientific evidence available from the many competent, Christian creation scientists such as Henry and John Morris, Duane Gish, John Whitcomb, Don Patterson, Gary Parker, John Baumgardner, John MacKay, (all Ph.D.’s) and many others. Christianity now has its own well-trained and competent scientists who can disprove the ancient-age theories and honestly support literal Bibliology. (See www.creation-facts.org and The Institute of Creation Research at www.icr.org for an abundance of scientific information on true Biblical Creation.) Satan’s attack through the falsely-called science of evolution can now be countered, and man can again honor the Biblical integrity of the literal six days of Creation. Christians would do better against future attacks against the Word by following Our Lord’s example in the wilderness tests. Simply answer all attacks of religion, philosophy, and science against the literal accuracy of Scripture by standing on the Bible. Old time Christians said, “The Bible says it, I believe it, and that is all there is to it!” In our modern age of “sophistication,” 65 such a simple response of faith in God’s Word is passé.

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65 The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, 4th Edition. s.v. “Sophistication, To make impure or inferior by deceptively adding foreign substances; to cause to become less natural, especially to make less naive and more worldly.” [Comment: the sophist was characterized by Plato as superficial manipulators of rhetoric and dialectic.]
**Satan’s Attack through Philosophy**

The second prong of Satan’s attack, the one coming through anti-God philosophy in the field of linguistics, has continued to influence Theologians against a literal, Word-by-Word interpretation of Scripture to this very day.

Sadly, some Theological leaders propose a linguistical apologetic of some sort of dual-authorship; just as some still support theistic evolution. Perhaps they do this in simple ignorance of the proof for word-for-word interpretation. Or, perhaps some fear appearing non-scholastic or non-progressive. Many reputed-to-be scholars in even Conservative Evangelical circles today reject the concept of advanced verbal, plenary Inspiration. They wrongly compare it to the dictation theory and ridicule any possibility that a writer of Scripture would allow himself to be reduced to a mere stenographer to God. These scholars arrive at a series of incorrect deductions based on an incomplete thesis. Their deductions are based on two correct axioms. The first is the fact that God the Holy Spirit Inspired all Scripture, as the Bible clearly declares (Matthew 4:4; 19:4; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 14:6-11; 14:37; Galatians 1:11, 12; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Revelation 22:18-19; and others). The second axiom is the fact that any competent student of the original languages can easily observe the literary differences between the writings of Moses, Paul, Peter, John, and most of the other 36 possible writers of the Scriptures. Various incorrect deductions spring forth from the mind of man as he attempts to coerce these two truths into human understanding.

Most Conservative Evangelical scholars would readily accept the impossibility of finite man’s ability to explain God’s Miracles. They simply believe that God can alter or defy all humanly known scientific laws. Can man explain the Virgin Birth, Christ’s hypostatic Union, His Resurrection, or eternal life? When humanistic scholarship attacked these truths, those who accepted Biblical truth by faith simply rejected Satan’s attacks by quoting Scripture. But, when those same antagonists attacked the veracity of a literal, seven-day Creation by the direct result of God’s Word, they scurried for a way to adapt so-called “scientific” geology, anthropology, and the multiple lies of evolution into their Theology. When 18th Century liberal academicians in the fields of ancient history, archeology, literature, and philosophy attacked the Divine Authorship of Scripture based on all of the many supposed errors they had uncovered, Christian leaders again tried to adapt to the attack. They attempted to accommodate these equally false positions against the literal interpretation of Scripture. It was just a small compromise. Christians would still stand on the position that the Bible was Divinely Inspired, but would subtly add man as Its co-author. The fact is that the Bible nowhere declares that God needed or utilized man’s help in either the presentation of His Thoughts or in the choice of words, morphology, or syntax of each book. This apologetic position has increasingly become slanted away from God as the Bible’s sole Author/Originator toward emphasizing the human writers’ alleged contributions.

Here are some examples of what some Theologians have said:

“They all gave their answer in terms not of dictation, but of accommodation, and rightly maintained that God completely adapted his inspiring activity to the cast of mind, outlook, temperament, interests, literary habits, and stylistic idiosyncrasies of each writer.”

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that God accommodated and “adapted his inspiring activity” to the human writers of His Message. The strong position on Inspiration that Dr. Packer presented in his paper, The Adequacy of Human Language 67 (quoted previously) makes it very clear that he totally accepts God as Author/Originator of all Scripture. I believe this quote just indicates how much the modern apologetic affects even sound Theologians.]

"There are several important elements that belong in a proper definition of inspiration: (1) the divine element—God the Holy Spirit superintended the writers, ensuring the accuracy of the writing; (2) the human element—human authors wrote according to their individual styles and personalities; (3) the result of the divine-human authorship is the recording of God’s truth without error; (4) inspiration extends to the selection of words by the writers; (5) inspiration relates to the original manuscripts." 68 [Comment: Note, when man is bestowed with the definition of author, he logically must be granted the right to choose the words he writes instead of God.]

"Concursus: The Proper Conception. Every word is at once both Divine and human. By way of analogy see Philippians 2:12-13. Also Scripture is attributed to both God and man." 69 [Comment: This incorrect analogical interpretation of these verses is a prime example of making deduction fit a verse through the use of a “proof-text.”]

"(1) The Bible is truly the Word of God, having infallible authority in all that it affirms or enjoins. [Comment: Amen to this statement.] (2) The Bible is truly the production of man. It is marked by all the evidence of human authorship as clearly and certainly as any other book ever written by man. (3) This two-fold authorship extends to every part of Scripture as well as to the general ideas expressed." 70 [Comments: In my opinion, these last two statements border on the heretical! Here, man as supposed author is even being credited with the general ideas (content) of Scripture.]

"Verbal Plenary Inspiration: This view holds that the influence of the Holy Spirit over the writers of Scripture extended beyond the thoughts to the selection of the very words which the authors chose. Yet this influence of the Holy Spirit did not amount to a verbal dictation. The term often adopted is that of 'concursus,' or confluent authorship; that every word is both fully divine and fully human." 71 [Comment: This convoluted position (that the Holy Spirit influenced the writers’ choice of words, but that every word is BOTH fully divine and fully human) confuses the identification of who actually chose the Words of Scripture. By this definition of verbal, plenary Inspiration, the importance of word meanings would have to be considered equally from human linguistics as from Scripturally inductive comparisons. The next logical progression would be to consider the meanings given by human literature as the major, or even the most important factor for a balanced Bible interpretation. Conservative Theology has slid considerably down the slippery slope from the

70 Dr. Basil Manley, as quoted by M. James Sawyer, ibid, p. 679, www.bible.org.
71 This is the definition that bible.org attributes to proponents of conservative Evangelicalism and states it as being the correct position. www.bible.org/page.php?page_id=679.
positions of Benjamin B. Warfield, Edward J. Young, J. I. Packer, and Lewis Sperry Chafer stated earlier.

Of interest here should be these two additional quotes by Dr. Young:

"The Bible is not to be regarded as a 'joint' product, the combined effort of God and man. Surely the Bible itself does not make such a claim." And, "While the human authors were true authors, nevertheless, they were not the originators of the words and the thoughts that are found in the Bible."

[Comment: Of course, if they did not originate the thoughts or choose the words, they were not really "true authors."]

The entire apologetic to appease the liberal philosophy of linguistic criticism must be reevaluated today because Satan is very much alive and still actively opposes the verbal, plenary Word of God. The historical and scientific criticisms of Biblical accuracy have generally been repudiated today. Most of the supposed errors alleged by the 19th Century critics have been answered by more honest archeology, later historical records, and competent Biblical research. Well-qualified Christian creation scientists have thoroughly discredited the ancient-age theories. However, the destructive effects of the philosophical positions of linguistic criticism remain to this day. I believe it is time to dismantle the dual-author apologetic completely and stand on Scripture alone.

Therefore, Bible-Based Hermeneutics necessarily rejects any portion of a verbal, plenary position, which incorporates the creative choice of words or grammar to the human writers independent of God's direct influence. This rejection is specifically of these terms: dual-authorship, confluence, concursus, human authorship, or inspiration by a supposed hypostatic union of God and Man.

My Major Concern

When fallen humanity is considered to be a viable part of the authorship of Scripture, believers are likely to resort to human understanding as a partial or whole means of interpreting God's Word. Indeed, modern and post-modern Theologians have increasingly depended on secular period literature and history to provide them with the answers to difficult passages and concepts found in Scripture. It is only logical for them to deduce that if human authors actually chose the vocabulary and grammatical constructions of Scripture, then human literature should be consulted in determining Its meaning. The farther interpreters move away from God's being the source of every Word of Scripture, the less Divine authority each passage can claim. Interpretation progressively becomes "according to the Apostle Paul, or Peter, or John" rather than "thus says the Lord." Eventually, they can even quote various secular sources as the authority for word meanings. (For example, the Arnt and Gingrich or Thayer Lexicon, or Theological Wordbook of the New Testament, or Nida & Lowe are quoted that this word means X.) As soon as man begins to look outside of Scripture for what It means, he must then "lean to his own understanding" as to the correctness of his research. Thus, the Bible (and therefore God) looses the ultimate Authority over Its content.

Whenever humans are faced with a Supernatural event, they must analyze it and try to determine HOW it could have happened. Certainly, there is nothing wrong with man's using the mind God gave him to gather the facts, analyze their meaning, and even question the why of all things. God gave man the mentality to think by means of

72 Young, ibid, pp. 79 and 81, respectively.
rationalism (reason) and empiricism (senses). Nevertheless, happenings that fall outside the range of normal human understanding must either be accepted as Supernatural by faith or rejected as false by lack of faith. Inspiration of Scripture is one of those Supernatural happenings and, therefore, must be accepted by faith. Both, the theories of "dictation" and of "co-authorship," are human attempts to explain a Spiritual phenomenon. When men speculate beyond the information God has chosen to provide, they can only deduce human opinions. Most, if not all, of the apostasies throughout the Church Age have been the result of such unsubstantiated theories by man.

Exactly how God worked the Supernatural Miracle of Inspiration can be no more comprehensible to finite man than can any other Miracle of God. We are to accept such Miracles by faith, not by sight. The fact that our All-Knowing and All-Powerful God caused His exact Message to be recorded accurately through the simple vocabulary of John, the sophisticated style and well-educated vocabulary of Luke, and the analytical and precise style of the highly logical Paul is proof of Inspiration's Supernatural nature. To give man credit for co-authoring God's Word should cause a believer to react as Barnabas and Paul did when the people of Laconia called them gods. They ripped off their clothes and ran among the people screaming that they were merely men with human natures and evangelized them to convert from their empty worship to the living God (Acts 14:11-15).

How then do we address the manner of how God conveyed His Words to man? Any position that attempts to superimpose the contribution of man’s will or choice of one jot or tittle (or even any word, or its grammatical construction) by his own independent decision begins to move away from the fact of Supernatural Inspiration. Nevertheless, stating that dictation was the only means of God's Inspiration is just as much an error as insisting on dual-authorship. Forcing the choice of either the theory of dictation or the theory of human co-authorship is an effort to resolve a Supernatural happening by supposing a non-Spiritual solution. Obviously, there are identifiable differences in the styles of individual recorders of Scripture, but not in the unique meanings of the words utilized throughout, which might logically exist if authored by many distinct authors.

I know of NO Scripture passage that honors the human writer to the level of authorship.

- In Matthew 5:46 and 47, Jesus acknowledges that Moses wrote about Him, but then compares those writings as being equivalent to His Words, i.e. Moses’ writings were as much from God as anything Jesus might say.
- In 2 Peter 3:15 and 16, the epistles written by Paul are referenced; but only as a writer under the influence of the Wisdom having been given to him. Certainly Paul is not being credited for having originated what he recorded.
- Surely, Moses did not author the communication between Adam, Eve, and Satan in the Garden. Also, Matthew, Mark, and Luke did not create the discourse that was held in the wilderness between Jesus and Satan.
- Likewise, John clearly states that his information for recording the book of Revelation came directly from God through Words, Visions, and Angels as many other writer/recorders give their legal witness.
- Would not the same logic that concluded human writers must have used their own wills, thoughts, and vocabularies to record Scripture also be applied to those
who spoke in tongues unknown to them or prophesied about events far beyond their knowledge or imaginations?

Nevertheless, those who have accepted an apologetic that emphasizes human contributions to God's Message have great difficulty abandoning the programmed response they have posited for years. This may be due in part to the old apologetics becoming deeply entrenched into the minds of most Evangelical Christians. It is so well internalized that an almost identical response can be elicited by asking seminary-trained graduates a question as to what part humans played in the authorship of Scripture. It is one of the few questions upon which most Evangelical Theologians' answers would agree. Some advocates even use rhetoric (language that is elaborate, pretentious, insincere, or intellectually vacuous) to discredit any other possible position. When confronted with the concept that each and every Word used in Scripture has a most-specific meaning, I am often met with one of the following reactions:

- A dogmatic and uninformed insistence on equating this advanced position on verbal, plenary Inspiration with the dictation theory, or
- The equally false position that God and Man MUST have co-authored Scripture (i.e., "concursus," or confluent authorship—the theory that every word is both fully Divine and fully human.) Would not the extension of this logic have to include Balaam's ass as a co-author as well?

Personally, I have no reservation in thinking that God might not entrust man with His all-important communication. I know my fellow man and myself all too well. I submissively accept exactly what God says in 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:20, 21, plus 1 Corinthians 14:6-11. These are not "proof texts"; they are "texts that prove" God's Truth! I do not know of any writers of Scripture who expressed that it was beneath their dignity to speak God's Word. It is a humbling and fearful thing to speak for God to one's fellow man. I trust that those who teach the Word will always maintain this sense of accountability (James 3:1-2). Believers who truly accept verbal, plenary interpretation of Scripture of each and every word should state their position boldly. They must not allow Satan or academia to use euphemisms or double-talk to intimidate them.

If we are to accept the Biblically defined meaning of Inspiration, it must begin at the individual word level. This point is critical! I refer you back to Section Two, Paragraph 2, “Inspiration,” where “all” was defined as meaning that “every single word” was “God-breathed.” Also explained in that section was the fact that “no prophecy of Scripture” originated from the ideas of any man. Add to this testimony the concept that even the smallest letter (“jot”) and the tiniest pen mark (“tittle”) are honored by God's faithfulness. (Either of these marks can totally alter a word's spelling or meaning in the Hebrew language of the Old Testament.) We absolutely must accept this truth: Every Word of Scripture is God-breathed, not its writers inspired. The writers/recorders of Scripture either received their information directly from God the Father, God the Holy Spirit, from an Angel/messenger, Jesus Christ in person (the Lord in the Old Testament), one of the other Apostles or Prophets, from personally experiencing some event or vision, or from eye-witness testimony. Only when God allowed a writer to express his own thoughts or feelings, could the Holy Spirit of God be said to have superintended what the writers wrote and thus ensure the absolute accuracy of that which believers would depend on as a genuine part of God’s Word.
I believe Conservative Evangelical Theology today needs to adopt the advanced position on verbal, plenary Inspiration. I believe the Divine Inspiration of Scripture is one of those Supernatural happenings that simply must be accepted by faith. It is truly a Miracle that God spoke His exact Words through distinctly different vessels and that He did this in spite of their individual differences, without having a need to accommodate Himself or His message to their attributes, personalities, or limited knowledge in any way. It is fact that He communicated His consistent and exact Message throughout. The human writers who physically penned Scripture were simply channels (or conduits) through which God’s Words were brought to mankind without error or being compromised by man’s fallen state. Greek grammar supports this position by the use of δiα plus the instrumental genitive case when describing the delivery system for this Miracle of Inspiration (see Matthew 1:22; 2:15; John 1:17; Hebrews 2:2). Exactly how God worked the Supernatural Miracle of Inspiration can be no more comprehensible to man than can any other Miracle of God. We are to accept them by faith, not by sight or even human logic (mental supposition). The following is why I believe today’s Theological scholars may have difficulty in accepting this advanced position of verbal, plenary Inspiration.

Their First Block:

What is so wrong with the approach Biblical scholars have used to interpret Scripture for hundreds of years before now? It is not that so much is wrong; it is just that it has not begun at the most basic level—the individual words. The interpretation of words used by Scripture up to this time in history has been based on using humanly compiled lexicons of the Hebrew and Greek languages. Therein, Hebrew and Greek words from all known secular and religious literature have been synthesized into one homogeneous dictionary of those two dead languages. Greek lexicons include words, in their classification of meanings, used from 500 years before the writings of the New Testament to 300 hundred years afterward. Exclusive use of existing Greek lexicons as technical authorities for determining word meanings creates the first block in our determining the most accurate meaning of Scripture. It must be recognized that any lexicon is a commentary based on its authors’ personal research and opinions as to the meaning of each word. As such, their conclusions include their philosophical, theological, and personal biases. The most-specific meanings God may have intended for any particular passage can thus be obscured by 800 years of etymology or human opinions. After all, the entire New Testament was written within a relatively short window of only forty or so years during these 800 years. Any observer of English literature knows how drastically some of our own meanings for words have changed over even the last 300 or 400 years, particularly in just the last century.

I am NOT implying that lexicons are of no use to the interpreter. I DO mean to state that the understanding of the most-precise meaning possible for Biblically used words

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73 The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, 4th ed. s.v. "Channel: A course or pathway through which information is transmitted; new channels of thought; a reliable channel of information; a route of communication or access." And, "Conduit: A means by which something is transmitted." [Comment: The use of this word does not uphold mans’ exalted opinion of his own dignity and self-importance, but it does agree with Scripture’s definition of the writers.]
should be determined **first** from their use within Scripture. Through the discovery of these meanings, I believe we can avoid error in interpretation and may even be able to overcome Theological conflicts within the Church. There are many usable etymologies and good extra-Biblical examples contained in existing lexicons; however, the student must realize that existing lexicons are not Inspired writings and often include their authors’ philosophical and theological subjectivity. The rule should always be: extra-Biblical sources **must** be evaluated through the veil of Scripture; not Scripture through the veil of any information from extra-Biblical sources. A discussion of the problem with an interpretation dependent solely on existing lexicons follows.

Rather than allowing Scripture to interpret the meanings of Words within Scripture, well-intentioned scholars may have super-imposed a non-inductive element above God’s Meaning for some Words. In effect, these lexicons are like a human commentary as to what each word means in a **literary** sense (by a literary sense is meant inclusion of all secular literature over the entire time period any word has been used). But, I must say it again and again; the Bible is not just another book of literature—**IT IS THE WORD OF GOD!** When we approach the Bible we must allow God to provide His Own Definitions for Words He chooses. This can only be accomplished by allowing Scripture to interpret the meanings of its own Words. This is not to suggest the development of symbolic or mystical word meanings (an allegorical approach), but meanings that can be determined and substantiated by their use within Scripture. Every field of study has its own definitions of the words it uses to communicate technical factors. Medicine, Law, Engineering, Linguistics, and all technical fields have a highly-developed and specialized vocabulary so communication can be precise. **Bible-Based Theology** should also have a precise vocabulary as defined by Scripture alone.

Computer analysis has helped to compile entire dictionaries based solely on word usages in manuscripts discovered from ancient languages—even without linguists finding those languages’ dictionaries. In other words, a **Dictionary of Bible-Based Word Meanings** could be developed solely from word uses within Scripture. This approach would not result in codifying just another dictionary of a dead language. Instead, it would result in the dictionary of the living Word of God. This approach is what we would have to do if we did not have the helpful, although sometimes misleading, lexicons. We do not have to ignore totally all evidence available outside of Scripture. As has been previously admitted, many usable etymologies and even good extra-Biblical examples are contained in existing lexicons and more-recently discovered period literature. These can help provide clues for words that have limited use within Scripture. However, these can only be considered as **hints** on Biblical word meanings. Since Scripture should be compared with Scripture, the Words that compose Scripture should also be compared initially and primarily by the way they are utilized by Scripture. They not only should; they must! Sufficient evidence already exists to prove the Words that God chose to communicate to man have very specific meanings, as was demonstrated throughout this text.

**Specific Biblical Word meanings need not always be translated into every passage.** Even though each word used in the Bible has a specific nuance, it can also be used in its most general sense. The following example demonstrates how we use words in that manner every day. When we say to someone, “There is my son,” we could be speaking generically about a son who also may be more specifically an infant, a young child, youth, heir, progeny, young man, or even my dear child. We could have used any of
these words instead of “son.” (The fact that your son may also be described as a “young child” or a “young man” does not mean that every mention of him at any chosen point in time has to include that description. Those particular descriptions are just not intended to be emphasized in your statement.) Nevertheless, understanding that every Biblical Word has its own specific nuance may be extremely useful in determining the most precise interpretation of any particular passage.

The purpose of *Bible-Based Hermeneutics* is primarily to present the concept that it is possible to comprehend more thoroughly what all Scripture means by starting at the word level. It presents specific study methods and demonstrates how a student can reach decisions on Word meanings by use of the Bible alone. The student can then check his findings against existing lexicons or other technical language tools for whatever additional insights he might gain. This evaluation is equivalent to a competent exegete comparing the conclusions of his own research with technical language tools and commentaries. Of course, he should only do this comparison after he has performed his own study, so as not to be influenced by others' biased human opinions or transferred Theologies. (A competent researcher should always know the Theological and philosophical position of the author of his reference tools.) The student’s review of the exegesis of others is to help him guard against error and to consider if he may have overlooked some gem of knowledge another competent exegete may have uncovered.

In summary, to overcome the first block against the student's arriving at the most accurate interpretation of Scripture possible, one must literally apply the 2 Peter 1:21 and 1 Peter 3:15-16 passage (as well as 1 Corinthians 2:13; 14:37; Galatians 1:11-12; and 1 Thessalonians 2:13) to every single word of Scripture.

**The Second Block:**

The concept of most-specific meanings for the individual Words God chose to communicate to man is often not considered due to another reason. This is due to many evangelical Theologians ascribing pre-eminence to the concept of a “dual-authorship” of Scripture. The implication is that the multiple human writers were somehow “in collaboration” with the God of the universe. Our inability to know who penned the book of Hebrews, as well as other Scriptures, makes the point that distinguishing between human writers is not essential for interpretation of Scripture. Emphasis on the human writers, taken to its extreme, can also result in obscuring the determination of the most correct meaning of Words God used in Scripture. This occurs because that position tends to eliminate dependence on Illumination by the Holy Spirit. As a result, this approach places undue importance on man’s contribution and the use of modern linguistic analysis, which is heavily influenced by humanistic philosophy. A discussion of this problem follows.

Human wisdom observes that there are obvious differences between the writings of Moses, Paul, Peter, and the other humans who penned God’s Word. The logical conclusion is that: God MUST have allowed the writers to express His ideas, but by **their own words**. How else can we academically explain the various and even recognizable styles of most of the human writers? I might pose an equally logical question to those who insist on ascribing true authorship to these men. How many other books, letters, or writings of any kind outside of the Bible did these other reputed “authors” ever author? Logic and human experience would suggest that most true authors create multiple original works of literature. Additionally, several books of the
Bible have unknown writers (although academicians have wasted great effort on postulating about them). If the issue of human authorship is so crucial for Scriptural interpretation, why did God not preserve that information as well as the manuscripts?

There are another series of logical considerations: 1) How many of the Bible’s books would these writers been able to “author” on their own? 2) How would Moses have authored/originated the conversations in the Garden by his own will, intellect, and words? 3) How would Matthew, Mark, and Luke have invented the conversation between Jesus and Satan in the wilderness? 4) And, there are literally hundreds of examples of Scripture’s writers recording historical and scientific facts, private conversations, and even the thoughts of people beyond their observation or imagination. The theory that man somehow authored/originated God’s Word from his own intellect, will, words, or grammatical construction is not only unsupported by a single verse in Scripture, it is also illogical. Remember that a herald (kērux) was defined in this book’s “Preface” as one who had the duty to proclaim publicly an official message (kērugma) from the king. A herald did not choose his own message. He did not embellish the message with his own opinions or philosophies. He did not add to, subtract from, or alter the king’s message in any way. The task of a herald was to proclaim the message EXACTLY as it had been given to him, word for word. God communicated to these writers/heralds directly in speech or by mentally impressing His Words onto their minds. This fact is recorded throughout Genesis to Revelation as occurring through the Person of Christ, through Angels, and by dreams or visions; not by the imaginations of men.

One would be foolish to deny the fact that each writer of Scripture penned his contribution with his own personality and style. The theory of dual-authorship, however, tends to emphasize word meanings as being distinct according to each individual writer. The homogeneous nature of all Scripture, which it claims for itself, cannot exist based on this logic. This is because the false theory of dual-authorship cannot co-exist with the fact that God is the single Author/Originator of Scripture. God’s Word clearly declares that He alone is the Author/Originator of Scripture (as has been proven previously). Instead of emphasizing any of the supposed differences between the human writers, should not our position rather be to discover the conformity of all Scripture? Please understand that although stylistic differences can easily be observed between the human writers, those differences have nothing to do with God’s Choice of Meaning for each and every one of His Words.

Only one of two positions can exist. Either God is the only true Author/Originator of every word of Scripture, Supernaturally through the use of human agents; or He allowed human writers to select their own words and perhaps even the grammatical structures for what they thought He intended to communicate. The latter position implies that each human writer selected words from his own vocabulary first and foremost. We have already seen what Scripture says and means about this issue. Scripture not only declares that It is the Word of God; It emphatically denies that It came from man’s wisdom, ideas, or human abilities. Any form of the concept of “dual authorship” of God’s Word lessens the absolute fact of God’s Supernatural Inspiration of Scripture. This viewpoint implies that the Words themselves are not to be considered as Inspired by God. Is there any Biblical support for God’s being dependent on man for more than the mere recording of His very Words? This author’s position is that God did not depend on
man’s thoughts for even “one jot or tittle” in the precise recording of even ONE of His Words.

I recognize that it will be extremely difficult for today's Conservative Evangelical scholars who have internalized the dual-authorship position to recant from that position and accept the advanced position that God chose every Word of Scripture. They are emotionally committed to that position, have regurgitated it to others, and have even taught it as Absolute Doctrine. But, with God all things are possible! Prayerfully, many who have been programmed to that position will now consciously evaluate it honestly.

Conclusions

1. God is the only true Author (originator or creator) of each and every Word, Phrase, and Book of Scripture. Therefore, there exists a consistency in the meaning of Words throughout Scripture as they originate from a single Author. (Question: If you authored a book, would you intend for the reader to expect the meanings of your words to vary from chapter to chapter? Of course, this concept does not force a singular technical meaning on each word preventing it from being utilized in a general sense in any given passage.)


3. The Bible (All Scripture) is the sum total of that communication as recorded (set down in written form) by called, but normal, members of the human race.

4. These men received this communication in words, specific in grammatical form and arrangement, so as to provide God's exact Message.

5. God is the Creator of man's mentality, logical thinking, and all of the languages by which He is able to communicate by the normal use of those languages' grammars.

6. There is no passage in Scripture that credits any human writer with actual authorship, volitional choices, additions, or omissions. The possible exception is 1 Corinthians 7:1-6 (or maybe through verse 9.) Even in this case, Paul makes the point that he wrote those things with God's agreement. On the other hand, Scripture does state in many passages that Its writers/recorders received some messages by direct verbal dictation. That term is obviously (as evidenced by the personal experiences recorded) not used for every passage of in the Bible.

7. Some of God's communications were so given that their writers could not have even known the nature of what they were recording.

8. Bible-Based Theology demands that God-fearing men accept Revelation, Inspiration, and Illumination as Supernatural Miracles and therefore beyond human analysis.

9. It is patently absurd for Bible scholars to research secular literature first or even give it equal status in determining the meaning for what God has caused to be written in Scripture. In fact, it is extremely unscholarly not to begin any scientific study by going to the source first and foremost. If it is necessary to ascribe one vocabulary to Moses, a different one to Isaiah, another each to Paul, John, James, and Peter, how could we interpret Hebrews? (Of course, I am not saying 92
that a student of Scripture can never use secular lexicons or other extra-Biblical literature to seek possible clues for Biblically undefined words or phrases. Greater dependence on personal Spiritual preparation and on the Holy Spirit's Ministry of Illumination should even limit the need for this practice.

10. I believe that until a student of the Word 1) has prayed for Illumination by the Holy Spirit, and 2) has diligently done his own grammatical exegesis of every verse he is studying within its context, and 3) has performed inductive Bible studies on every Word he encounters that he has not previously researched, he has not reached a point where secular research is even an option. The Word of God can be comprehended ONLY by comparing Scripture with Scripture by Spiritually equipped students utilizing Spiritual Illumination under God’s Authority. It requires Supernatural means to unlock a Supernatural Message.

The following is a proposed definition for the advanced verbal, plenary Supernatural Inspiration of Scripture based primarily on Biblical information:

God is the one and only Author/Originator of Scripture. Scripture Itself is God-breathed. Man was utilized as a conduit through which God's Word flowed. God projected His exact Thoughts and His very choice of Words through the minds of the human recorders of Scripture in such a way that His Message is exactly, Word-for-Word, as He Intended it to be. These Words are without error, or omission, or embellishment in the original manuscripts. God (as the Creator of the very minds of men and of all languages) utilized the original languages of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek to communicate His Thoughts to man. God did not Author His Word in conjunction with man, nor was He dependant in any way upon these human recorders. God Chose each Word, including its grammatical form and syntax.

- **In some cases**, Scripture declares that God dictated each Word (sometimes going beyond the present knowledge or vision of the writer).

- **In other cases**, God allowed for the education, style, and personality of human writers to be observed as He expressed His Message through them. (God's utilization of multiple human beings with their many differing styles while retaining His true Authorship is the crux of the Miracle of Inspiration.) God's intended Message was always under His control, resulting in a communication that is just as precise as if every Word had come directly from God.

- **In a few cases**, God allowed a writer of Scripture to express his own opinions, which by His acceptance these Words became ordained. Ultimately, God required the chosen vessel of His vital Message to record exactly what He Planned, even when it was not the vessel's intention to do so.

A shortened version of the Miracle of Inspiration could be stated thusly:

God is the one and only Author/Originator of Scripture. Men were utilized as conduits and recorded (in each writer's individual style) the exact Words in the grammatical and syntactical constructions chosen by God to express precisely what He Planned to communicate about His Revelation to man.
POSSIBLE AUTHORSHIP POSITIONS OF SCRIPTURE

<table>
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<tr>
<th>MAN ALONE</th>
<th>GOD AND MAN CO-AUTHORED</th>
<th>GOD GAVE HUMAN WRITERS IDEAS</th>
<th>GOD CONTROLLED WHAT EACH WRITER WROTE</th>
<th>GOD AUTHORED THROUGH MEN AS CHANNELS</th>
<th>GOD DICTATED EVERY WORD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

?__________?______________?______________?__________________?______________ ?

FIGURE 6

HISTORICAL THEOLOGICAL POSITIONS ON INSPIRATION

<------------------------DICTATION----------------------------------------->ANTI-
1700 YEARS SUPERNATURAL MEANS GOD USED MAN

X____________________X____________________X____________________X

CHURCH FATHERS (110 TO 430 AD) CATHOLIC CHURCH (6TH-16TH CENTURY) REFORMATION (16TH CENTURY) THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT (18TH CENTURY) APOLOGETICS (19TH CENTURY TO NOW)

FIGURE 7
APPENDIX A
Should New Testament Greek Be “Required” In Our Ministerial Training Courses? 80

Should the theological seminaries follow the example of many colleges and make the study of the ancient languages optional? This is one of the crucial questions before theological teachers and students today. Very important results flow from the solution of this problem, and it is our purpose to examine the question briefly.

More and more keenly the theological seminaries feel the effect of the changes being made in the courses in the colleges. Since today many colleges require neither Latin nor Greek for the B.A. degree, the ministerial student often comes to the seminary not only without any knowledge of these languages, but with the distinct feeling that the study of the biblical language is, to say the least, not important. Let him that wishes to become a specialist in that field have the opportunity of taking a thorough course in Greek and Hebrew, but let him that is not interested in these languages as a specialty be permitted to take other subjects, more to his liking and more important in his judgment. This is the attitude of many young men today when they consider what seminary to attend for training for definite Christian service. It is a matter of regret that so many theological institutions are adopting this viewpoint and are making either one or both the biblical languages optional. One wonders how the smaller seminary can long maintain a language department when such is the attitude toward the subject; for no matter how much individual teachers may recommend the courses in the Greek New Testament, the seminary’s attitude in making the course selective indicates that officially the school does not consider them indispensable to every student.

But why oppose this tendency? Why not follow the example of other institutions, even if it becomes difficult or even impossible to maintain a language department? The writer does not assume to be an authority on the technicalities of pedagogy, but he does insist that as best we can we ought to examine the question before we come to such a conclusion. We must remember that not all that is new is good, and that not all that is old is bad. Since the older seminaries rather uniformly required the languages of all their students, we begin by considering the objections that are being offered today to this practice. When we have had these before us we shall suggest briefly an explanation of the present tendency; and then we shall follow with the positive reasons for requiring the languages of all students. What is true of New Testament Greek is, to a large extent, true of Old Testament Hebrew also; but for the purpose of this paper we confine ourselves more particularly to the importance of New Testament Greek.

The Objections Considered

The modern applicant for ministerial training asks, "Why continue to require New Testament Greek in a day when there are so many translations?" "Can a student in three or four years acquire sufficient knowledge of the Greek language to do

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80 This article was originally written by Henry C. Thiessen and published in *BSac* 91:361 (January–March, 1934): 34–45, and reprinted in the *CTS Journal* by gracious permission of *Bibliotheca Sacra*. 95
independent work in the Greek Testament?" "Are there not many more 'practical' subjects in the theological curriculum that one could take?" These questions are in reality objections to the study of the language. They deserve careful examination and merit a sincere answer.

It would seem that the many translations of the New Testament so far from being an argument against the study of the original are in reality an argument for it. A friend of the writer, a well-known Bible teacher, has approximately 150 English translations of the whole or parts of the Bible. There is, of course, nothing wrong about the acquisition of numerous translations.

Much help can be obtained from a comparison of different translations by one well taught in the Scriptures as a whole, especially if he be able to check up the translations with the original. But one wonders how the young student unfamiliar with the original could arrive at the exact meaning of a passage by reference to the translations. Is it sufficient to say, "It seems to me that this translation gives the true meaning here?" Clearly, such a practice makes personal opinion the final criterion—a most unscientific procedure. Heretics and false teachers have always been quick to adopt a rendering that is in harmony with their preconceived notions; but the faithful minister of the Word should seek for a more objective touchstone than mere personal preference.

Perhaps we should stop to inquire as to the reason for the many translations. Is it because of pecuniary reward or the ambition for honor? Possibly these considerations may enter in somewhat in some cases; but the writer believes that there is a deeper reason than that. It seems to him that scholar after scholar has felt that all existing translations fall short in many instances of giving the exact shade of meaning in the original. Becoming fascinated with the richness of meaning in the Greek text, he has yielded to the impulse to try to improve on the existing renderings, and so has added his own version. Thus the presence of the many English translations in reality argues for the insufficiency of translations when one is concerned about absolute accuracy in his study.

But can a student acquire sufficient knowledge of the Greek language in three or four years to do independent work in that language? We reply, "That depends on what we mean by 'independent.'" If we mean without recourse to lexicons and grammars, then the answer would, in most cases, be in the negative. The careful student will admit that even in his English study he is not altogether independent of the dictionary and grammar; how much less can he in so short a time become independent of such works of reference in a language that is read but not spoken? But if we mean ability to ascertain accurately just what the text means by the aid of such helps; if we mean ability to follow and test the interpretations of Greek commentaries, then the answer would be in the affirmative. A student can in the time specified acquire the ability to get the Greek viewpoint and find ways of expressing that viewpoint; he can become qualified to form an intelligent opinion of the interpretations of commentaries on the text of the original. And that is an accomplishment abundantly worthwhile.

And what about the third question, "Are there not many more 'practical' subjects in the theological curriculum today than the languages?" In turn we should like to ask, "What do you mean by the term 'practical'?" Is there anything more practical than an exact understanding of the Word of God? We are thinking not only of the personal spiritual benefit to the student, but also of the broader value of exegesis for an
expository ministry and for the organization of one’s whole theological thinking. Look at the practice in other fields of mental culture. When anyone undertakes to study Plato scientifically, does he do it in the translations? Or take the case of history. Are not educators constantly directing their students to the ‘sources’? It is the same with regard to biblical science. Christian ministers and missionaries are expected to have a scientific knowledge of the Word of God. It is their specialty. Can they lay full claim to specialization if they content themselves with the versions? Is not an accurate knowledge of the original necessary to the highest type of expository preaching? We thank God for the time-honored Authorized Version; but have not such mistranslations in it as come from the confusion of the Greek words for “world” and “age,” for “hades” and “hell,” for “devil” and “demon,” not to mention those of lesser importance, helped to build up and perpetuate colossal false teachings? It would seem to be “practical” enough to be able to refute the teachings of the restitutionists, second probationists, annihilationists, and other errorists, by direct reference to the original, especially since they so generally pretend to base their interpretations on the original; it would seem to be abundantly worthwhile to get such an accurate knowledge of the Greek text that one can use it in the exposition of the Scriptures and the formulation of his own doctrinal views. For the candidate for the foreign field there is always the additional possibility that he will have to labor in a field where a new translation of the Scriptures has to be made or an old one revised. Shall he content himself with translating from the English Bible or shall he aspire to translate from the original? There would seem to be few subjects more foundational to the Christian worker than the study of the biblical languages.

The Explanation Suggested

If, now, the tendency in theological education today is to get away from the study of the languages, what is the reason for it? We have shown the inadequacy of the objections to their continuance as required subjects; let us next suggest two explanations of the tendency itself.

The first is the present-day emphasis on utilitarianism in pedagogy and philosophy. Adopting the dictum of modern philosophy that we should include nothing in our curricula that does not “function” in the life of the graduate, some men claim that New Testament Greek must be eliminated from the list of required subjects. They tell us that men in the ministry today seldom use the Greek Testament in their pulpit preparation, and that others with very little or no knowledge of Greek are more successful in the ministry than those with the regular courses in this subject. How, we are asked, do you explain these facts, if the study of Greek placed the one class in so advantageous a position, and the omission of it does not seem to affect the success of the other?

In reply to the first assertion it may be said that there are still a goodly number of ministers that make use of their Greek Testament in the study, though the number is not as large as it was a generation ago. There are several explanations why many no longer depend on the original in a large sense. The present-day minister is so overburdened with administrative duties, social endeavors, and public services, that he finds it difficult to observe regular hours for study of any kind. Some of the activities of the modern pastor may not altogether square with the biblical conception of the ministry; some of them undoubtedly have been assumed because of the pressure of circumstances, at the expense of systematic private study. If on leaving the seminary
the young minister does not reserve for himself definite hours for study, including his Greek Testament, he will soon show it in his preaching. He will certainly not long retain a working knowledge of the Greek language. So when after this condition has well set in he snatches a few spare moments at irregular intervals during the week for sermon preparation, he finds it easier to sit down with the English Bible than to dig away at the original. This accounts for most of the nonuse of the biblical languages by men in the ministry today. But we believe that in some cases the reason can be traced a step further back than that. All too many come out of the seminary without a thorough knowledge of what Greek they did take, and so they have little to preserve and build on. Never having attained to a mastery of forms and functions, they have never felt sure of their own interpretations. It may have been the teacher’s fault. Perhaps he was too eager to make exegetes out of his pupils and did not sufficiently drill them on the mechanics of the language, or perhaps he took a purely professional interest in the language and so taught nothing but accidence and syntax. Both are extremes to be avoided, for the student that is taught to exegete without a thorough grounding in grammar must remain a slave of the commentaries, and the student that studies nothing but grammar misses the enrichment and satisfaction that comes from the understanding of the Greek statement. But the writer believes that these are faults that can be corrected and that the student can be inspired to do original work in the Greek text.

As for the claim that many Christian leaders with little or no knowledge of Greek are more successful in the ministry than others who have that knowledge we may say that that does not disprove our contention that with it they might have become even more successful. True success in the Lord’s work is not due to one’s knowledge or lack of knowledge of Greek, but to prayer, the faithful exposition of the truth one does know, and the blessing of God. This being true, we fail to see how such a fuller knowledge of the Word as comes from the ability to read the Scriptures in the original can subtract from a man’s success in the ministry. The rather must it help him to succeed in whatever type of work he may be engaged. We rejoice at the success of those honored servants of God who have not had the regular theological training; but it seems fair to say that they did not achieve success because of their deficiency in this respect but in spite of it. There are, we may admit, a few men so wonderfully endowed of God that they can do without the formal training of the schools; but we must remember that there was only one Spurgeon and only one Moody. What a foolish notion it would be to assume that all that one needs to do to become a Spurgeon or a Moody is to avoid getting any more education than they had when they began their ministry! We said began their ministry, for we know that both these men in a large measure overcame their handicaps by prolonged study and self-discipline after they got into the ministry. So do other men of that type today. They avail themselves of the fruit of the labors of other men, and, in some cases, attain to a mastery of the technical aspects of their specialty to a degree not attained by the seminary graduate. It may be said, also, that generally these men are the strongest advocates of intensive training for our young people today. They feel that the prospects are ever so much brighter for the young man that goes out fully equipped from the beginning than for the young man that must, like themselves, spend much time in hard study along with his ministerial labors, time that ought to be devoted to the teaching and preaching of the Word of God. At any rate, it is not right to say that New Testament Greek does not “function” in the life of a minister as long as any of the above reasons explain either his nonuse of the Greek Testament or his success without a knowledge of that language.
If the first explanation is not well founded on fact, the second is, in the writer’s opinion, the real reason. Briefly stated, it is the present attitude toward the Bible. If the Scriptures are inspired only as Shakespeare and Milton are inspired; if they are but the opinions of pious men of ancient times; then they are not infallible. If they are not infallible, then why study them with minute care. Then the English translations are quite sufficient to acquaint us with the general outlines of Old Testament history, the life of Christ, and the teaching of the apostles. Men with such views study the Greek Testament chiefly, if at all, merely as a language, and not in order to ascertain the full significance of its message. This is the attitude of the modernistic seminaries, and one can understand why such institutions make Greek an elective. But it is difficult to see why the conservative seminaries should do so also. Surely, they are not willing to admit that the Scriptures need not be studied with minute care; surely, they accept the original as the very Word of God. The writer could wish that schools that have for the present made the biblical language elective would reconsider their action and restore them to their former place among the required subjects.

The Reasons Stated

We have discussed the objections to requiring the biblical languages of all theological students and have suggested a possible explanation of the present tendency to get away from the older practice. Let us now consider the positive reasons for continuing New Testament Greek as a "required" subject.

In the first place we would mention the difficulty of expressing accurately the thought of one language in that of another. In a general way, words, phrases, and clauses in one language are similar to those in another, but that is not saying they are always exact equivalents. Weymouth shows that even the Greek words χείρ and ἵππος are not always the exact equivalents of our English hand and horse, though they usually are. If such common words as these sometimes have different meanings in the two languages, what is to be said about the abstract words ἄγαφ, ἀρετή, etc.; about the many cases of nouns and pronouns in Greek over against the few in English; about the two Greek tenses for past time over against our one past tense, etc.? A Greek word sometimes covers more, sometimes less, ground than the word by which it is represented in our English translations. The translator is constantly confronted by two problems, viz., first, how to express the exact shade of meaning in the original, and, secondly, how to do it in idiomatic English. Sometimes the one or the other purpose can be carried out only in part, owing to the differences in the two idioms.

But someone may ask, "Why then study Greek if there is this difficulty in exact translation?" "What is to be gained by the knowledge of a meaning that you cannot express?" To this we reply that we recognize the difficulty of exact idiomatic translation. We have contended above that this is the chief reason for the multiplication of versions. But we deny that the true meaning cannot somehow be expressed in English. We believe that the student can get the Greek way of looking at it and can express the exact meaning by paraphrase and circumlocation when he cannot do it in idiomatic English. Dean Alford resorts to this method when he comments on the verb ἤγεινηθεν in 1 Peter 3:6. This verb is translated in the A.V. by “whose daughters ye are," and in the

81 On Rendering into English of the Greek Aorist and Perfect, p. 4f.
82 Greek Testament, in loc.
A.S.V. by “whose children ye now are.” Alford remarks that “the aorist properly refers back to the precise time when they were so made; but,” he adds, it “cannot be so expressed in English.” He means in idiomatic English, for he translates by “of whom ye have become children.” But that may mean by a long process of well-doing, which is contrary to the sense of the aorist. Thus his explanatory statement is needed to indicate the true force of the original. Take as another illustration the first part of Paul’s statement in Ephesians 3:17. The writer was long puzzled as to Paul’s meaning when he prays, as the A.S.V. translates, “that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.” Were not his readers Christians? Was not Christ already in their hearts? Surely that was the case, as is clear from chapters 1 and 2. What then does he mean? It was not until the writer looked carefully at the original that light came. The important word here is κατοικήσαι, an aorist infinitive, not the aorist infinitive οἰκήσαι, nor the present infinitive οικέων. We have here the compound word κατοικεώ (from κατά and οικεώ) in the aorist tense. The compound expresses the perfective idea and means to dwell or settle, and together with the ingressive (inceptive) idea in the aorist signifies to take up permanent abode, to settle down in the heart. Not that Christ comes and goes in the experience of the believer, but that there is the privilege of having Him Who is already in the heart take up a settled abode in it. This implies a larger welcome on part of the Christian to Christ and a fuller surrender to Him. This is what Paul prayed for, and this is what believers should covet today. These examples show that the exact meaning of the Greek can be expressed, though not always in idiomatic English.

In the second place we would emphasize the solemn obligations of the Christian minister. He has been commissioned to “preach the Word” (2 Timothy 4:2). Even the Old Testament says: “He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully” (Jeremiah 23:28). That means more than to maintain a general loyalty to the great fundamentals of the faith: it means a conscientious dealing with every part of the revelation God has given us. Jesus emphasized the importance of jots and tittles in the Old Testament (Matthew 5:18), is the New Testament any less important than the Old? Paul based his argument that Jesus is the One through Whom the Abrahamic blessing comes to the Gentiles on the use of the singular (Galatians 3:16). A knowledge of the original makes it possible to interpret the Word of God faithfully. The Christian minister is not commissioned to preach the current views of philosophy or the changing hypotheses of science; he is not called upon to review the latest books of fiction or the present-day pictures in the movies; he is not even charged with the duty of preaching the purest kind of ethics he knows and of making men better,—he is asked to preach the Word, to be urgent in season, out of season; to reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and teaching (2 Timothy 4:2). He, like Paul, is “set for the defense of the Gospel” (Philippians 1:16), and, as Jude says, is to “contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). He is not to handle “the Word of God deceitfully” (2 Corinthians 4:2), for he is a steward of the mysteries of God, and “it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Corinthians 4:1-2). Some day he will be called to give an account of his stewardship. What will he say at the judgment seat of Christ if he has not availed himself of every opportunity to become qualified for the most exact and faithful exposition of God’s Word?

In the last place we would call attention to the relation between exegesis and preaching. Dr. A. T. Robertson quotes A. M. Fairbairn as saying, “No man can be a
theologian who is not a philologian. He who is no grammarian is no divine." 83 This
seems like an exaggeration in our day of superficial Bible study. Dr. Robertson refers us
to Alexander Maclaren as a good illustration of this dictum, saying that “his matchless
discourses are the fruit of the most exact scholarship and spiritual enthusiasm.” 84
Thayer says, “The somewhat indiscriminate depreciation of the study of the dead
languages at the present day is not without injurious influence upon those who are
preparing themselves to be expounders of the Divine Word.” 85 This is true, and we may
add that the “depreciation” has grown apace since Thayer wrote the above words. We
have emphasized above the importance of preaching the Word. No wonder there is
such a dearth of expository preaching in our day when there is so little interest in the
exact study of the text. We need to get back to the study of the Bible in the original
languages if we are to get back to biblical preaching. It should not be forgotten that the
foundations for the Protestant Reformation were laid in the Renaissance. Think of the
influence in those days of the lectures of such men as John Reuchlin (1455–1522) in
Germany who taught Hebrew, and of John Colet (1467–1519) in England who lectured
on the Greek text of Paul’s Epistles. However far these men may have fallen from the
true evangelical position, they contributed much to the undermining of the speculative
fancies of the Schoolmen and prepared the way for the fuller evangelical message.
Would it not be true today also that if teachers of theological truth returned to the
exposition of the Scriptures from the original languages the foundations of modernism
would soon be undermined and the way be prepared for a great spiritual awakening?

We have seen that the objections to requiring New Testament Greek for graduation
are not well taken; that the reasons for the present tendency to make the subject an
elective are not in harmony with the highest scholastic and spiritual ideals; and that the
results of the exposition of the Scriptures on the basis of the original are most practical
and far-reaching. In view of these facts the writer could wish that all the evangelical
theological seminaries would continue New Testament Greek as a required subject in
their curriculum! [Comment: The student might also wish to read another article on the

84 Ibid.
APPENDIX B
The Foundation for Biblical Research

Statement of Purpose
FBR was organized in 1977 for the purpose of conducting Biblical research. Some of FBR’s purposes are to

- Perform technical research in the original languages of Scripture.
- Develop, publish, and distribute technical tools as a result of this research. These tools are designed for men in the ministry as well as serious students of God’s Word.

Philosophy
We accept as absolute truth the fact that the Bible is the Supernatural Revelation of God’s Thoughts, Plans, and Purposes.

We believe that God’s Revelation in the original manuscripts of the Holy Scriptures is Inerrant and complete and that it is meant to be understood by man.

We believe that Scripture itself was God-breathed and that the human writers were merely conduits whom God the Holy Spirit Supernaturally carried along in recording God's Inspired Message to mankind.

We believe that the precise interpretation of God’s Revelation can be determined by thorough study and carefully conducted research performed only under the Holy Spirit’s Supernatural Ministry of Illumination.

We believe that this research must be conducted by men of God who are in joint-participation with the Holy Spirit and who bind themselves by integrity to a Biblically inductive approach to interpretation.

We believe that all human interpretation is subject to human error and, therefore, must be verified exclusively by Scriptural substantiation to minimize this error.

We believe that a true interpretation of the Bible should be completely open to scrutiny by like-minded men of God and can be reasonably proved without Scriptural conflict.

We believe that to reach an absolute, substantiated interpretation of Scripture, research must begin at the individual word level using the data existing on that level. Further research can then be built upon this base while continuously rechecking any previous conclusions for error.

We believe the basis for FBR’s methodology is the doctrine of verbal, plenary Inspiration. We accept the following to be true:

- God is the only true Author/Originator of all Scripture, providing a unified, unbroken, and consistent message throughout all 66 books (Genesis through Revelation). (John 10:35; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 10:6, 11; 2 Timothy 3:16; 1 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Peter 1:20-21)
• The grammar (morphology, phonology, syntax and linguistic structure) of each book was Inspired by God the Holy Spirit working Supernaturally through the human writers so as to produce a most-precise meaning of every word and passage in Scripture. (1 Corinthians 2:13; 14:6-11; 2 Peter 1:20-21)

• Any hypotheses or conclusions in Biblical interpretation that have been reached by human systems of reason or fields of human wisdom (such as philosophy, Theology, or linguistics) are ultimately subject to Scriptural verification as the final test for Biblical Truth. (1 Corinthians 1:19-21; 2:4-16; 3:19; Colossians 2:8; 1 Timothy 6:20-21; 2 Timothy 3:16-17)

NOTE: The exegesis and pertinent word studies on most of these verses is contained in FBR’s *Bible-Based Hermeneutics* text.

**Objective**

We believe we have been called by God to administer a Bible research effort based on, and consistent with, the philosophy herein described. FBR intends to co-ordinate the work of a highly-qualified team of Greek and Hebrew scholars—men of God who agree completely with the above defined doctrine of verbal, plenary Inspiration. We will evaluate and reference the best grammatical and lexical works available in our research. The objective of this research is to determine and thoroughly substantiate exactly what God’s Word says. All work will be subjected to two independent checking stages to help insure consistency, accuracy, and objectivity. Every attempt will be taken to eliminate subjective decisions based on Theological or pedagogical presuppositions. Even when conclusions are reached, they will be subject to critique and further evaluation on a continuous basis until any errors are removed.

This research will produce several practical tools to assist the serious student of God’s Word. A chart describing the technical tools under development is provided in the “Introduction.” For the seasoned scholar of Biblical languages, these tools will provide a trustworthy base on which to build his exegesis. It is also FBR’s desire to enable the teachers of God’s Word who lack training in the original languages to obtain a better understanding of what the texts actually say. It is our prayer that this better understanding will then be used to teach more accurately what the Bible truly means. This teaching is expected to result in the edification of the body of Christ by producing a greater quantity of Spiritually mature believers, thus creating a Christian dynamic like that of the Reformation. We pray this result might become the basis of a Resolution of Conservative Evangelical Christians.

**Description of FBR's Exegetical Bible, Phase I, Grammatical/Lexical Analysis**

This project was begun in April, 1977. At that time a mailing was made to about 300 seminary graduates from whom 38 potential writers and 17 checkers volunteered to contribute their academic knowledge and exegetical skills. The following description of the objectives and parameters of the project was set forth at that time.

This meticulously detailed work provides referenced identification of grammatical and lexical components on every word of the Greek and Hebrew texts. Every element is checked at least twice in an attempt to provide an adequate, reliable tool; one in which the experienced exegete can have confidence using as the basis or verification of his study.
For the student with only limited knowledge of the Biblical languages, this tool will greatly enhance his study. His study was previously possible only by laborious use of interlinear texts, analytical lexicons, basic grammars and concordances. A special users’ manual will be available to serve as a grammatical key and detailed guide on how to use the information provided.

FBR does not intend the *Exegetical Bible* to replace formal training in the original languages. However, many men already serve in various teaching ministries who have not acquired the training necessary to perform even basic grammatical exegesis. For these men, the *Exegetical Bible* will provide the basis for a more complete understanding of God's Word. Source material is footnoted throughout to facilitate an in-depth study by those who desire to do so.

The *Exegetical Bible* is not a commentary that attempts to promote a particular Theology. Although it is scholarly in quality, it is not merely an academic attempt to develop something new. Rather, it is the compilation of all sound grammatical and lexical information available to date as analyzed by competent exegetes. By FBR's coordination of the work of many scholars, this essential foundation for determining Biblical interpretation can be shared by all sincere teachers of God's Word.

This list presents the *Exegetical Bible*’s basic format:

- First, the English text is presented.
- Then, the Greek or Hebrew text is given with all textual variants noted.
- Each Greek and Hebrew word is followed by its transliteration in parentheses.
- A grammatical/syntactical analysis is then provided for every part of speech in the text by synthesizing all of the currently accepted scholarly grammatical tools available.
- This is followed by each word's lexical form, which has been carefully analyzed to provide both its general and most specific meaning as can be determined for its use in that particular text. Consideration is given in order
  1. first to a word's usage in Scripture,
  2. its usage by each writer and by the Septuagint,
  3. its occurrence in the early Church writings (2nd-5th Century),
  4. its definitions in generally accepted lexicons (using extreme care to note any meanings that are Theologically influenced).

NOTE: FBR will include and note any Scripturally-specific definitions that have been developed for the *Dictionary of Bible-Based Word Meanings* by using the methodology outlined in Appendix E. That word study research will also be subject to the strict use of the *Bible-Based Hermeneutics* approach described herein.

A simple example of the *Exegetical Bible* format is shown on the following page.
(1) *Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)* (Galatians 1:1) KJV

“Paul”

(2) Παυλος (nom. m. sg./used as subject of a substantive clause)

(3) Paulos

(5) (3) (6)

Παυλος (Paulos) = a Latin proper name, Paulus, or short form Paul meaning “little,” also named Saul from Hebrew (shaul) commonly meaning “ask for…”

(7) Most-specific meaning: cf. FBR’s *Bible-Based Dictionary of Biblical Word Meanings*

“apostle”

(2) αποστολος (nom. m. sg./nom. absolute, a grammatically independent use often used in titles or standing alone, cp. 1 Corinthians 1:1, et al) (Gk Grammar, A. T. Robertson, pp. 459, 460)

(3) apostolos

(5) (3) (6)

αποστολος (apostolos) = “a delegate, a messenger…”

(7) Most-specific meaning: cf. FBR’s *Bible-Based Dictionary of Biblical Word Meanings*

Note Key:
(1) English Text
(2) Greek/Hebrew Text
(3) Transliteration
(4) Grammatical Analysis
(5) Lexical Form
(6) Lexical Meaning
(7) Most-Specific Meaning by Scriptural Use.
A list of the men who originally endorsed the *Exegetical Bible* project in 1977/78 is given below along with their evaluations of the project at that time. Please realize that most of these men were in the early part of their ministries and have earned advanced degrees and positions as seminary professors and/or hold various Christian leadership positions beyond the credits shown at that time. Also, please understand that these endorsements should not be taken as endorsements for the present course on *Bible-Based Hermeneutics*. Most of these men have not seen this newly completed course at this time.

**ENDORSEMENTS FOR THE EXEGETICAL BIBLE PROJECT**

“I think the *EXEGETICAL BIBLE* provides a wealth of data that is absolutely essential for anyone engaged in Biblical exegesis. To try to analyze a text without asking the kinds of questions that you have attempted to answer in the *EXEGETICAL BIBLE* would be sheer folly. I would very much like to have copies of such material for our summer Greek students and, more particularly, for those of our Translation staff who are engaged in doing Literary-Semantic-Analysis. I would also like to see at least two copies of the material in every branch library. I imagine many of the individual translation teams would also be interested in a personal copy.”

Mike Kopesec,  
Assistant Coordinator  
Wycliffe Bible Translators  
Summer Institute of Linguistics, Inc.  
Dallas, Texas

“The work which FBR is preparing will, in my judgment, be a great help to serious students of the Word, especially to those who want to study the Greek New Testament in preparation for preaching or teaching. It will be a time-saver in presenting objective data, such as meanings of words, parsing, etc., and will give helpful guidance in their interpretations of those data for those who may be less skilled in the Greek language, or who need help in a particularly difficult passage. Therefore, I trust it will find wide acceptance and wide usefulness.”

Phillip R. Williams, Th.M, PHD  
Professor of New Testament Exegesis  
Northwest Baptist Seminary  
Tacoma, Washington

“The *EXEGETICAL BIBLE* is a most useful tool for student and pastor alike. Containing the fruits of detailed linguistic studies, the work includes extensive lexical, grammatical, and syntactical analysis and thus frees the interpreter from much laborious spade work. The work is simple enough in its format to be useful and complex enough to be of interest even to the most advanced student.”

Virtus E. Gideon, PhD  
Professor of New Testament  
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary  
Fort Worth, Texas 76122

“The *EXEGETICAL BIBLE-PHASE I* is the product of scores of hours spent in meticulous research into primary exegetical tools. Its value lies in the fact that it seeks to validate preliminary interpretive choices through the most objective tools at the exegete’s disposal – the grammars, lexicons, and concordances. By leaving no word unturned – either lexically or
grammatically – it lays a sure-footed foundation upon which the busy pastor can build solid exegesis and exposition.

"In short, this first phase of the EXEGETICAL BIBLE will be most helpful to those who are either weak in grammar and vocabulary or simply too busy to spend several hours every week in preliminary exegesis but desire to be faithful to Scripture in their preaching."

Daniel B. Wallace, Th.M and PhD Candidate
Instructor in New Testament Literature and Exegesis
Dallas Theological Seminary
Dallas, Texas

“The EXEGETICAL BIBLE provides in one resource the grammatical/lexical information previously accessible only through the laborious use of analytical lexicons, interlinear texts, concordances, and a shelf full of grammars. Those in various teaching ministries will find this tool not only a tremendous time-saver, but a springboard to the in-depth study of the original languages of Scripture. Project GRAMCORD has enjoyed the privilege of providing computer-prepared grammatical analysis materials for the team of exegetes who are coordinated by the Foundation for Biblical Research in the compilation of this valuable reference work.”

Paul A. Miller
Director, Project GRAMCORD
Indiana University
Bloomington, Indiana

“I used this material for my class in Introduction to Hebrew as additional materials. Our students were greatly aided in your approach which allowed them to see the many hours of research that would normally be involved in a detailed study, scholarly contained in one volume. Students and pastors would be extremely wise to obtain your materials for their personal study. I commend you for your work.”

Kenneth Strickland, B.C.E, M.C.E,
Th.D., D.Min, and PhD Candidate
Arkansas Bible College Institute and Seminary
Hot Springs, Arkansas

“I believe the project you are working on would be of great benefit to scholars, students, and pastors today. Many are pursuing similar works but none as thorough as yours.”

W. Wayne House
Assistant Professor, Biblical Studies
LeTourneau College, Longview, Texas
APPENDIX C
The TULIP Philosophy Answered

T.U.L.I.P. is the mnemonic (memory tool) for the Reformed response to the Arminian Remonstrants of the early 17th Century. It stands for a systematic philosophy that attempts to set forth the doctrines of Calvin in an organized manner. Each letter represents a doctrinal presupposition.

**Total Depravity**
**U**nconditional Election
**L**imited Atonement
**I**rresistible Grace
**P**erseverance of the Saints

A short description of this philosophy was given in the "Foreword":

T.U.L.I.P. is an mnemonic (memory formula) that represents the five points of Calvinism: **T** = total depravity (meaning that man cannot do anything to deserve or earn acceptance by God and that man has no ability even to respond positively to God); **U** = unconditional election (meaning that we are each in an unconditional state of either being elect or non-elect by God’s decree); **L** = limited atonement (meaning that Christ died to save a certain portion of mankind, namely “the elect,” and that He died only for these and that they alone can be saved); **I** = irresistible grace (meaning that only “the elect” for whom Christ died will in fact have their eyes opened to their sinful state and need for salvation and will, without fail or choice, come to Christ) and; **P** = perseverance of the saints (meaning that the life of the true believer will be marked by holiness and increasing sanctification, not sinless perfection, but, over the course of a lifetime, be a life lived in constant pursuit of God. Thus, it is believed that a true saint, by virtue of the grace of God, will never completely fall away from true faith into the ultimate and final apostasy). (There are many ways to word this definition; this is just this author’s rendition.)

It must be understood that many "proof texts" appear to support the systematic philosophy underlying TULIP; however, those texts do not truly support that position when properly exegeted and compared with all of Scripture. There are also a number of incongruous texts that have not been honestly addressed by its proponents as of this date. Therefore, the Theology built upon this philosophy has not been able to stand the verification required to be considered "Absolute Doctrine," as has been defined by this course of *Bible-Based Hermeneutics*. The thesis that follows is presented in the hope of setting forth an introductory answer to this position as a basis for a *Resolution* between the equally non-biblical positions of Calvinism and Arminianism.

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86 "Proof-text" is a technical term utilized primarily in Theology to describe the selecting of any text out of its context and using it in an attempt to prove a position for which it was not intended. This is often a result of superficial exegesis and/or lack of Scriptural comparison. Proof-texts are also utilized dishonestly to support a personal or Theological position for which there is little or no Biblical substantiation. Obviously, God intends for His "Texts" to be utilized as absolute "proof" of His Principles. Scripture often states, as it is written.
The early Reformers were, for the most part, scholars of high intellect who deeply desired to resolve the apparent incompatibility between God's absolute Right to rule His Creation (defined by their Theological definition of "sovereignty") and any accountability on man's part to accept or reject His Will. Those who developed this position were the intellectual scholars of the day; and the field of Theology has always attracted those who have been highly trained academically. The Reformed philosophy lends itself well to intellectual arguments.

The Catholic Church's Theology (that by a man's works he would earn his own salvation) was soundly proven non-Biblical by these Theologians. Reformed Theology was based solely on the freeness of God's unearned Grace. This Biblical truth was in direct opposition to human works or merit. Stripping man of any accountability was apparently thought to be the only way to uphold God's Sovereignty. In their zeal to eliminate any part of man's ability in obtaining personal salvation (or even in participating in its acquisition) they adopted a philosophy of determinism. Even believing faith has been incorrectly defined by some modern-day Reformed Theologians as a gift given only to certain individuals. Under this philosophy, man has no personal accountability to accept or reject God at any level. God not only knows all that will happen (foreknowledge), but that knowledge is thought to produce inescapable results (predestination). The deduction is made that since God is the Creator, He has the Right to choose which individual will remain lost and which will be saved (called/elected). Therefore, the positions of predestination and election are the major points of the Reformed position. This philosophy, when challenged for Biblical substantiation, often suggests that God's Thinking, Plans, and even His Word is inscrutable. Sadly, this position tends to make even the clearest testimony of Scripture appear to be beyond any human comprehension.

By God's Grace, scholars of equal intellect and academic training of the scholarly Reformers have increasingly come forth over the past fifty years. The established Theological positions represented by TULIP are currently being challenged at the highest level of scholarship. Many Conservative Evangelical Theologians have been diligently working to address this issue from a solely Biblical basis for several years. One recent example was a series of papers presented at the annual conference of Chafer Theological Seminary in 2005. The following are the titles of those papers, who presented them, their academic credentials, and how you can hear those sessions for yourself:

- (In response to TULIP overall.) The Backbone of the Plan of God, by Pastor Paul R. Schmidbleicher, Th.B, Th.M.
- (In response to the "T" in TULIP.) The Issue of One's Ability to Believe; Total Depravity/Inability, by Pastor George Meisinger, B.A., Th.M., D.Min., President and Professor of Old and New Testament Theology at CTS.

Some Theologians have incorrectly stated that "faith" (pistis) is linked to the "gift" (dōron) and its pronoun, "this" (toute), in an incredibly unscholarly translation of the Greek of Ephesians 2:8. Since both "gift" and "this" in this particular verse are in the neuter gender and the genitive case, they CANNOT grammatically tie to "faith" since it is in the feminine gender and the dative case. The antecedent for "this" and 'gift" is not easily determined in this passage, but is most likely the gift of salvation mentioned previously in verse 5. A grammatical diagram clearly ties (toute) to the periphrastic verbal translated "having been saved." Therefore, this proof text does not prove that a mystical saving-faith is a gift that occurs prior to, or simultaneously with, a believer's accepting Christ.
• (In response to the "U" in TULIP.) *Election in Romans 9:1-24: A Fresh Look*, by Pastor Ron Merryman, Director of Merryman Ministries, formerly acting President of Western Bible College.

• (In response to the "L" in TULIP.) *Doctrines of Elections*, by John Niemela, B.A., Th.M. Ph.D., former Professor of Biblical Languages at CTS.


• (In response to the "P" in TULIP.) *The Reign of the Servant Kings*, a book by Dr. Joseph C. Dillow presents an intricate and scholarly argument in response to this position. Dr. Dillow's book can be purchased through [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) This book is currently being revised.

The MP3 and its accompanying outline for the conference sessions listed above can be obtained for $5.00 each by e-mail request to: j-richard@rfugate.org
APPENDIX D

Dispensations: Israel and the Law; The Church and the New Covenant

Deuteronomy 29:29 The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

Acts 26:23 That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

Christ and the Church

This chapter may well explain the most important concept about the Christian life. This concept is The Church—the Spiritual body of Christ, the invisible, universal representative of Christ on earth, the Spiritual nation of priests, and the witness of the Gospel to all nations. The following are some aspects of The Church that Christians need to know.

- The Church was a mystery in the Old Testament.
  
  If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me toward you, How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery (as I wrote before in few words, by which, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel. (Ephesians 3:2-6; see also Ephesians 5:32 and Colossians 1:25-27.)

- Jesus Christ came to the nation of Israel to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies about the earthly reign by God (the Kingdom of Heaven or Kingdom of God) by the Seed of David (the Messiah).
  
  And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father, David. (Luke 1:31-32) (See also 2 Samuel 7:16; Isaiah 9:6-7; Luke 19:38; John 7:42; Romans 1:3.)

- Christ came to His Own people, the Jews, but they rejected Him.
  
  He came unto his own, and his own received him not. (John 1:11; see also Matthew 4:17; 10:6; 15:24; Luke 17:25; Romans 15:8.)

- Therefore, Christ began to teach His disciples that Israel would be set aside while The Church would become the new chosen people of God.
  
  For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits: that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of

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88 From the author’s book, What the Bible Says About Suffering, Chapter 13 and Appendix B.
89 All verses in this Appendix D only are from the Scofield edition of the KJV.
90 Greek, ekklēsia, “the called out ones, assembly.” This and the following definitions are from the Foundation for Biblical Research, Dictionary of Bible-Based Word Meanings.
91 Greek, mysterion, “knowledge only known by an initiate of a secret order; not a mystery unknown by an insider.”
the Gentiles be come in. (Romans 11:25; see also Matthew 13:10-15; 16:18, 21; 21:42-43.)

- The Church came into existence on the day of Pentecost, exactly fifty days following the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

   And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven like a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues as of fire, and it 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. (Acts 2:1-4)

- The Church is the means for fulfilling God's historical Plan for the salvation of the Gentile nations.

   I say, then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid; but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, to provoke them to jealousy. (Romans 11:11; see also Galatians 3:14; Ephesians 2:11-13; 1 Peter 2:9-10.)

- Jesus Christ had to suffer and sacrifice His Life to provide our salvation.

   And, being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. (Philippians 2:8; see also Titus 2:14; Hebrews 5:8; 10:10; 1 Peter 2:24; and many more.)

- At the point of salvation, every believer is Spiritually baptized by the Holy Spirit into The Church.

   For by one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Greeks, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:13; see also John 14:16-17; Acts 1:5.)

- Christ is the Spiritual head (leader, superior, chief) of The Church.

   And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the preeminence. (Colossians 1:18; see also Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Colossians 1:18; 2:10.)

- Christians make up the body (foot, hand, ear, eye, etc.) of The Church.

   Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. (1 Corinthians 12:27; see also 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; Romans 12:5; Ephesians 5:30.)

- Christ will return (Second Advent) after the fullness of the Gentiles comes, at which time The Church will be removed from Earth.

   This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. (Acts 1:11b; see also Romans 11:25; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17.)

It is beyond the scope of this book to resolve the many confusing problems concerning Covenant and Dispensational Theology. It is our identification with Christ and His Church that makes our lives so unique. It is important to realize that Christians are not Jews and that The Church is not Israel. The children of Israel were promised good health, financial prosperity, and safety from physical dangers—if they kept The Commandments of God. However, Christians have no such physical promises of prosperity (even though there are certainly advantages to obeying God's moral laws). The promise to Christians is an earthly life of suffering, followed by

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an eternal life of glory and joy. Jesus Christ was an example to Christians as to how they could 
epect to suffer.

For even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an 
example, that ye should follow his steps. (1 Peter 2:21)

After all, Christians are allowed to follow Christ in the first resurrection. 

But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that slept. 
(1 Corinthians 15:20)

And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the firstborn from the 
dead, that in all things he might have the preeminence. (Colossians 1:18; see also Acts 
26:23; 1 Corinthians 15:23.)

Christ is the First Fruits of all groups to be resurrected.

But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his 
coming. (1 Corinthians 15:23)

The groups (order of troops):

1. Jesus Christ, the first-born

2. All Christians from the beginning of The Church alive or asleep at Christ’s second 
Advent (1 Thessalonians 4:14-17)

3. The Old Testament saints plus those saints (martyrs) dying during the Tribulation 
(Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2; Revelation 20:4).

These distinct groups (or orders) make up the first resurrection (Revelation 20:5-6). Finally, 
immediately after the millennium, is the second resurrection of all unbelievers to judgment and 

Why We Are Called Christians

• Christ is in The Church; all believers are in the Church.
• Christ suffered during His life on earth; all believers are called to suffer during their lives 
on earth.
• Christ was the first to be resurrected in His group; all believers will also be resurrected.
• Christian’s can be identified by their badge of suffering as Jesus suffered.

Israel’s Promise of Prosperity

God chose the nation of Israel as a peculiar 92 (precious possession) people above all other 
nations, if they would listen to Him and keep (obey) all His commandments

And the Lord hath avowed thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised 
thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments. (Deuteronomy 26:18) (See also 
Exodus 19:5; Deuteronomy 7:6; 14:2; Psalm 135:4.)

Israel was to be so unique among the nations of the world that all peoples would be drawn 
to it and its people to find The God. These other nations would be attracted to Israel because it 
would be so wise, powerful, rich, and prosperous

92 Hebrew, segullah, a precious treasure, or valuable possession.
… for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, who shall hear all these statutes and say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who hath God as near unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for?” (Deuteronomy 4:6b, 7)

…I will also give thee for a light to the nations, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth. (Isaiah 49:6b; see also Genesis 12:2-3; Exodus 19:6; Numbers 14:13-16; 1 Kings 4:29-34; 8:41-43; Jeremiah 33:9)

The Law

The Law is most often referred to as the Ten Commandments, the Law of Moses, or the Mosaic Law. Actually, it was the entire Covenant God made with Israel as a nation. Theologians have divided it into three parts—commandments, judgments, and ordinances. Biblically they are referred to in total as The Commandments (orders or decrees), or as The Law (Romans 7:9-12). Together they make up a conditional covenant wherein God commits Himself to make Israel into a special nation above all other nations and to bless them if they will obey His covenant (the total law)

Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine: (Exodus 19:5)

The three divisions of the law are distinct in purpose:

1. **The Ten Commandments** establish moral absolutes for Israel (Exodus 20:1-17).
2. **The Judgments** are laws governing the peoples’ interpersonal relationships such as personal injury issues, servant/master rights, private property rights, crimes against humanity (treatment of widows, the poor, orphans), usury, bribes, false testimony, etc. (Exodus 21:1-24:11).
3. **The Ordinances** governed the religious system—the tabernacle, the ark, the priesthood, the sacrifices, the Sabbath, etc. (Exodus 24:12 through 31:18).

God’s Conditional Promises

And ye shall serve the Lord your God, and he shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee. (Exodus 23:25)

Chapter 28 of the book of Deuteronomy gives a list of specific blessings the nation of Israel would receive for obedience to God’s Laws

And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God. (Deuteronomy 28:2; see also Joshua 1:7-8.)

Several verses of Deuteronomy 28 enumerate many of Israel’s blessings of prosperity in commerce, agriculture, propagation, farming, husbandry, warfare, and wealth. While there are no specific blessings of health in these passages, it will be clear in the next group that disobedience to God’s laws would result in many types of illness. (Deuteronomy 28:3-14)

But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee. (Deuteronomy 28:15)

Other verses enumerate specific curses (consequences) Israel would face as a nation and as a people. Concerning health, this included deadly pestilence (verse 21); consumption, fever,
and inflammation, extreme burning, blight, mildew (verse 22); tumors, scale, and itch without healing (verse 27); madness, blindness, and astonishment of heart (verse 28); plagues, and long-term severe sickness (verse 59), some leading to death (Deuteronomy 28:16-68).

The choice was up to the people of Israel. They knew about the fantastic blessings of prosperity for their obedience; they also knew the horrible consequences for their disobedience. For the next 1400 years, Israel vacillated between cursing and blessing.

What about today? Do the Ten Commandments have purpose for our nation today? How about for Christians? Is it Spiritual, moral, or even practical?

The Law and the Church

The Church (Christians since the time of Christ) has been concerned about what part The Law (specifically, the Ten Commandments) is supposed to have over it and its members. Let us look to God’s Word to see if we can resolve this question, as well as what The Law has to do with suffering.

First of all, The Law was a Covenant from God to Israel.

*And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words; for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel.* (Exodus 34:27)

*And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone.* (Deuteronomy 4:13)

*And this is the law which Moses set before the children of Israel:* (Deuteronomy 4:44; see also Leviticus 26:46; Deuteronomy 14:2.)

Second, this Covenant was not intended for Gentile nations.

*And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and ordinances as righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?* (Deuteronomy 4:8; see also references to Israel as a peculiar people above all other nations.)

Third, the Old Testament (Covenant) Law was, in fact, specifically not given to The Church.

*For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law but under grace.* (Romans 6:14)

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. (Galatians 2:16)

*But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law.* (Galatians 5:18)

How the Law Relates to The Church

The Law as a Covenant relationship with Israel was never meant to be entered into with The Church. This is not to say that portions of The Law do not have value for mankind today, but it is not the means for having a relationship with God. Nine of the Ten Commandments are restated in the New Testament as valid, moral laws for man to live by, and to protect a nation by means of severe consequences.

The Sabbath is the only commandment not so restated. If a Christian wishes to set aside Saturdays (the Sabbath) or any other day(s) of the week and dedicate that day(s) to worship,
prayer, Bible study, and Christian fellowship, it would be a good practice. But, it is not a requirement of the New Covenant.

The second section of The Law, The Judgments, is the basis for most civil laws throughout the world. First and second degree murder are defined therein as well as manslaughter and the penalties for each. Personal damages and retribution for violated property rights are clearly spelled out along with honesty in testimony and exercising kindness toward others. Although these laws were meant for Hebrew to Hebrew and the nation of Israel, they still have value for civilized nations. However, while it is wrong to break many of these standards, keeping these Judgments does not obtain or maintain a Spiritual relationship with God for a Christian today.

The third section, The Ordinances (or the Priesthood), were specific to Israel’s religious system. One who believes in “keeping The Commandments” today would need to keep all of these as well, just as the Jews incorrectly do in modern Judaism. (A short, enjoyable study will prove to the reader that Jesus Christ can be clearly seen in the symbols and the sacrifices of the Tabernacle.) None of these Ordinances have any bearing on The Church. In fact, it is putting Christ to shame not to accept His new, high priesthood over the former Levitical priesthood.

For the law, having a shadow of good things to come and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make those who come to it perfect. (Hebrews 10:1)

Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, with which he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? (Hebrews 10:29)

Christ did not come to continue The Law but to complete its deficiencies.

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfill. (Matthew 5:17)

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth. (Romans 10:4)

For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.” (2 Corinthians 3:11)

And not as Moses, who put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished. (2 Corinthians 3:13)

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93 Greek, kataluō, “to demolish” met. “to nullify.”
94 Greek, kataluō, “to demolish” met. “to nullify.”
95 Greek, pleroō, “this word has several aspects to its meaning – to fill up, to satisfy a deficiency by filling, to influence (to pervade). Here the idea is to complete its deficiency of not being able to impart Spiritual life.” (Romans 8:3)
96 Greek, telos, “attainment of the end purpose, absolute end.”
97 Greek, katargeō, “here the present, passive, participle translated being done away, lit.not working, or completely ineffective.”
98 Greek, telos, “attainment of the end purpose, absolute end.”
99 Greek, katargeō, “here the present, passive, participle translated being done away, lit.not working, or completely ineffective.”
**Having abolished**\(^{100}\) in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, (Ephesians 2:15a)

Finally, what The Law could not do (provide a Spiritual life) would be fulfilled by the Holy Spirit in the New Covenant.

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (Romans 8:3-4; see also Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:7-13; 10:9.)

The Gentile nations would now be included in this New Covenant.

Wherefore, remember that ye, being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands—That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus ye who once were far off are made near by the blood of Christ. (Ephesians 2:11-13)

Who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people of his own, zealous of good works. (Titus 2:14)

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a people of his own, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light; Who in time past were not a people but are now the people of God; who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. (1 Peter 2:9-10)

The Church is now a new nation of priests to function through the High Priest, Jesus Christ, not through the Old Covenant. The Christian believer has been set free to observe God’s Commandments out of love, not bondage:

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not burdensome. (1 John 5:2-3)

In this we obey the essence of all The Law.

Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. (Matthew 22:36-40)

**Conclusion**

A Jewish believer under the Old Testament had a great fringe benefit. He was guaranteed good health, financial prosperity, and safety in warfare, if he would keep all of The Law.

Even though the nation of Israel has been set aside, anyone who considers himself a Jew today is not cut off from the love of God. Under the Old Covenant, Gentiles had to become proselytes of Judaism and discover their relationship with God through the Ordinances (the

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\(^{100}\) Greek, *katargeō*，“here the present, passive, participle translated being done away, lit.not working, or completely ineffective.”

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sacrificial system). During The Church, a Jew must find a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ; i.e., he must become a Christian.

But, it is important to remember that Christians are not Jews, and The Church is not Israel. Keeping The Law is not the source of our blessings or cursings. God’s Plan for our Spiritual nation is different from His Plan for the physical nation of Israel (Romans 3:21-28). The next section will set forth The Church as the new chosen nation and explain why suffering is an integral part of a Christian's Calling.

The New Covenant

The Church began with a bang on the day of Pentecost, exactly fifty days following the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit made a dramatic display of sound and fire before indwelling approximately 120 disciples who had gathered at Mount Olivet (Olivettes) for this promised occurrence (Acts 1:4-5, 15; 2:1-4). All of these disciples suddenly began to speak with languages other than their own native tongues, each of which was recognized by “devout men, out of every nation under heaven” who said, “and how hear we every man in our own tongue (language), wherein we were born?” (Acts 2:4-12)

This display was as dramatic as when God gave The Law to Israel (Exodus 19:18, 19; 2 Corinthians 3:7-11). The New Covenant was taking the place of the Old, and the Mount of Olives was a fitting location. God later explained the Gentiles as being a wild olive branch grafted into the olive tree trunk that represented Israel (Romans 11:17).

Israel is not dead, but it is dormant until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in (Romans 11:24-27). However, The Law (Ten Commandments and Judgments) was abolished, done away with, brought to an end; and the Ordinances were fulfilled by Jesus Christ once and for all when he died on the cross (2 Corinthians 3:11, 13; Ephesians 2:15a). The moment that Jesus dismissed His Spirit, the second veil in the Tabernacle was torn from top to bottom (Matthew 27:51) and He became the Testator of the New Covenant (Hebrews 9:15-22). Under the Ordinances of the Law, this veil had separated all but the high priest from entering the presence of God (Hebrews 9:7-14). Now, every Christian in The Church is a priest and has access to the Father through Christ (1 Peter 2:5; Ephesians 3:12; Hebrews 4:16). AMEN!

It should be obvious from the chart at the end of this chapter that Israel is the centerpiece of God’s Plan for history. The fact that God set Israel aside for a short period and allowed the Gentiles to have their own Spiritual nation is a blessing we should all appreciate. God’s Church is invisible and universal, but it is manifested by thousands of Bible-believing, local churches where Christ is proclaimed the Savior through His death, burial, and resurrection. It is only this Savior and only this message that must be truly accepted by an individual for his forgiveness of sin and his acceptance by God for eternal life

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (John 14:6)

This act of accepting Christ on your part is a deep experience for your soul. It means seeing your sin as God sees you: “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;” (literally used menstrual rags—Isaiah 64:6). It also means humbling your pride enough to accept a grace gift far beyond your ability ever to repay. And, it means not doing anything yourself (such as law keeping) to earn even the wrapping on the gift. Only God is to be praised and glorified for the work of salvation.
Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, (Titus 3:5a)

Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift. (2 Corinthians 9:15)

Off with the Old, in with the New

God originally designed the New Covenant for Israel. (See Jeremiah 31:31-40.) The book of Joel reveals a little more about this event

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; (Joel 2:28)

Notice, God’s Spirit (The Holy Spirit) is going to be given to all flesh (men, women, and children). That indicates this future event is to occur at the beginning of the Millennium since this is the only time in history that all flesh is saved. This is because the final judgment will have eliminated all unbelievers at the end of the Tribulation. Also, the descriptions that follow in Joel 2:30-32; 3:1-17 appear to be that of the Tribulation, and the Jeremiah passage suggests the rebuilding of Jerusalem (Jeremiah 31:38-40), which occurs during the Millennium.

When Israel rejected their Messiah, God set them aside and established The Church for both Jews and Gentiles. As previously described, the first Pentecost after Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection, the Holy Spirit was poured out on everyone who had been called to gather on Mt. Olivet (Acts 2:1-4 and 16-17). Anyone who knew the Scriptures would have recognized this event as being very similar to the Joel 2 and 3 discourses. Nevertheless, they would have also realized that at this time it was not being directed to the house of Israel or the house of Judah. It would have been immediately clear that Israel had been set aside and that The Church was now receiving blessings from God.

Of course the New Covenant is mentioned in relationship to the communion table (Luke 22:20 and 1 Corinthians 11:25); but the real proof that the Church is under the New Covenant, which will be given to Israel at a later date is this verse:

Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament, not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. (2 Corinthians 3:6)

In this verse, God states through Paul that He made them (the Apostles of The Church) competent (or qualified) servers of a New Covenant. He then made it clear he was speaking of the Spiritual covenant, not the written one. (See 2 Corinthians 3:7-9)

Summary

At this point we should all be in agreement that

- as born-again Christians we are born from above and therefore Spiritually alive, our souls are saved from future judgment, and we are guaranteed Spiritual bodies in eternity;
- we are not part of the nation of Israel or under the Old Covenant;
- we are members of The Church and should, therefore, desire to know and to live God’s Will for our lives.

The following chart pictures the role of the Church as a parenthesis in God’s Plan for the history of mankind. It also depicts the distinction of the administration by Law through the nation of Israel and the administration by the Holy Spirit through the Church Age.
The following chart might help to visualize the change over:

GOD AND THE HEAVENS

Old or First Covenant (Mosaic)

New or Second Covenant

The Church

End

Abolished

Set Aside

Dispersed and/or Occupied

The Great Tribulation

70th Week Of Daniel

New Covenant

Millennium

Eternity

The following chart might help to visualize the change over:

Abraham
Isaac
Jacob

ca 1400 BC  ↔  ca 25 AD

Mt. Sinai

Veil Rent

Pentecost

Judgement

Resurrection of Unbelievers

New Heavens & Earth

FIGURE 7

THE NATION OF ISRAEL
APPENDIX E

Procedures for Determining Bible-Based Word Meanings

The following is a summary of the procedure utilized by the Foundation for Biblical Research (FBR) in determining the most precise meaning for individual words God Chose to Author the Bible. This procedure was developed and followed meticulously as part of the 1600 hours of research engaged in the writing of the author's book on parenting. The procedure was devised in order to assist the serious student in understanding most-precisely what God’s Word communicates. All resultant word meanings were determined by comparing each word's use solely in Scripture.

Example: Biblical Greek and Hebrew Words Relating to Children

1. A list of all words from the English Bible (King James Version) was created from Strong's Concordance that fell within the semantic domain of the subject area of children. (Any concordance based on another translation could be used.) An English Thesaurus was used to determine the widest range of related words within the domain being investigated.

2. A cross list of Greek and Hebrew words for the English words in step one was made (only the Greek development is shown here). Englishman's Greek Concordance is helpful in locating each Greek word's English translation.

3. The Strong's Concordance was used to discover every passage in which those individual Greek words appeared. Today, GRAMCORD’s dynamic search program (utilized also by the LOGOS program) is ideal for this task.

4. An exhaustive word study was then performed on each individual word's use in every Biblical context. Every occurrence of the word was checked and noted as to its morphology, syntax, and its comparison/contrast with all other words within its semantic domain list. An especially detailed analysis was made when more than one of the words within the domain occurred in the same Scriptural context.

5. Any unresolved problems were noted for further analysis. It was at this point that the few problem words (those with limited Scriptural usage, which made determining exact meaning difficult) were cautiously researched from their use in other sources. These uses were only considered for clues as to their possible general and most-specific meanings in Scripture. Those sources were weighted objectively by the following subjective criteria.

   a. the verse in which the word is located and in its immediate discourse (paragraph context) = a weighting of 5X
   b. the higher level discourse (chapter and book) of these verses = a 4X weight
   c. the word or any of its cognates' uses in Scripture = 4X. (The value that can be gained from this step suffers from the secular viewpoint that there is not a unified definition for words as would be utilized by a single Author, God.)
   d. consideration given for any literary type, symbols, parable, allegories, or figures of speech that might influence its meaning = 3X
   e. consideration given for a Greek word or its cognates' uses in the Septuagint (and of the Hebrew words from which the Septuagint was translated); understanding that it is not an Inspired work, but a fairly reliable source for clues = 2X
   f. consideration for the word's use in accepted early Church writings = 2X
g. some possible consideration for period extra-biblical literature was given at the final lexical evaluation as explained below.

6. A hypothesis of both general and most-specific meanings was determined based on synthesizing the total analysis above. It is to be understood that this hypothesis was only a working theory and subject to further evaluation and correction as conflicting evidence is discovered. The objective must always be on determining right conclusions, not on defending our suppositions as being right.

7. Finally, lexicons were reviewed for each word’s etymology and extra-biblical usage. The results of this step were compared to the hypotheses developed in step six. This was done to evaluate lexical data by Biblical data. (The lexical data was dealt with subsequent to the Biblical data to ensure that the veil of previous secular research did not influence our determination about what the Bible had to say about each word’s meanings.) Secular data must be evaluated through the filter of the Bible, not the Bible through the filter of any secular information.

8. The hypothetical meaning (or derived Biblical meaning) was checked against lexical data and deviations were honestly evaluated and noted.

9. A conclusion was then arrived at with regard to the general and the most-specific Biblical meanings of each word.

10. These meanings were then checked for reasonable definitions by inserting them back into each of the passages where they were actually used.

11. A chart was then drawn to denote the most-specific, Biblically-determined meanings of the key words within the semantic domain of children.

CHILDREN

RELATIONSHIP TO PARENTS

Teknon; Children (Progeny)  Huios; Son (Heir)

STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

Brephos; Infant
(Pregnancy-Baby)

Pais; Child (Birth-19)

Neanskos; Anēr; Presbuteros;
(Embryo-Baby)  Young Man  Adult  Elder Man

Paidion; (Birth-12/13); Youth (12/13-19)

(19+); Man

CHARACTERISTICS

Nēpios
Immaturity……………………………….either/or………………………………Maturity
(Childishness)  (Adultness)

FIGURE 10

CONCLUSION

Most-specific word meanings can be determined best when word studies are performed simultaneously on ALL words within any semantic domain. The objective is to determine the unique parameters that reveal the nuance of each word. These nuances become most clear when two or more domain words can be compared in the same passage, especially when two or
more words are clearly shown to be opposites. Certain passages will also provide clues as to what a particular word can or cannot mean most specifically. These distinctions can then be pictured to emphasize their most unique characteristics. Think of all words within a domain as starting in an overlapping jumble of synonyms contained within a single nucleus. As each of the words is studied by God’s use of it in every passage of Scripture, try to imagine that nucleus taking on the form of a starfish. Now image multiple arms of the starfish protruding away from the nucleus as each word reveals its most-specific meaning at the end of each arm. The entire starfish would then represent the general meaning of the semantic domain.

The Koine Greek language is unlike the English language, which was derived from Greek, Latin, French, Gallic, and others. English is an amalgamation of words from many languages replete with multiple synonyms, which makes it ideal for poetic writing but often ambiguous for precise communication. By contrast, the Koine language was not developed from multiple languages. Although it had its roots in the earlier Homeric and Attic Greek, it was a “common” Greek. As such it was ideal for communicating easily to foreigners conquered by Alexander the Great. It was the language of the Septuagint and the New Testament. It was spoken as a second or even a first language in the Roman Empire and as such extended from Egypt to parts of India. Koine was the language of all Mediterranean countries for contracts and trade for about 600 years.

The purpose of any language is to express one person’s thoughts to communicate a specific meaning to another person’s mind. Consider that as a language originally develops, each word logically has only one meaning for clear communication. Imagine someone attempting to communicate to a foreigner. He might pick up a fish and show it to the foreigner and call it an XYZ. They each could then go their differing ways and tell others about an XYZ—what it looks like, its habitat, and maybe even how it tastes. After a period of time, however, every language becomes more complex and communication more difficult. This problem occurs because words are changed from their intended meanings through their use, misuse, and being subjectively redefined. Recall your experience of “passing on” a simple sentence around a circle by whispering it one to another. Remember what a convoluted mess that sentence became when it was finally returned to its sender.

Although Koine was not a “new” language, it was unique as a more-precise means of communicating and in its influence. Each word in the Koine tends to have a distinct meaning from other words, similar to a new language. Some Koine words possess both a general nature as well as a most-specific, technical nature. One can see in the following chart the inconsistent translations for the 44 English words from the KJV that were used to translate the eleven (11) different Greek words relating to children. It would be a difficult task for an English reader to discover which Greek word had been translated by his use of an English concordance. It is even more difficult to distinguish each Greek word’s most-specific English meaning without the type of study set forth in this appendix. Henry Alford recognized the preciseness of the Koine Greek utilized by the Holy Spirit for God’s Word. He expressed the Bible’s lack of synonymic occurrences when commenting of the use of (έις) as compared with (έν) in John 1:18:

“It (έις) is not ‘put for’ (έν): indeed it would be well for the student to bear in mind as a general rule, that no word or expression is ever ‘put for’ another: words are the index of thoughts—and where an unusual construction is found, it points to some reason in the mind of the writer for using it, which reason is lost in the ordinary shallow method of accounting for it by saying it is
‘put for’ some other word."[101] [Comments: The phrase “put for” was a way of saying “used as a synonym” in 19th Century English. Of course, the more intelligent and knowledgeable the author, the more precise his word choices would be—and God is the ultimate Communicator.]

It is important to note that these critically-identified, most-specific word meanings are not forced onto every passage where they appear. Even though each word used in the Bible has a specific nuance, it can also be used in its most general sense. The following example demonstrates how we use words in that manner every day. When we say to someone, “There is my son,” we could be speaking generically about a son who also may be more-specifically an infant, a young child, youth, heir, progeny, young man, or even my dear child. We could have used any of these words instead of “son.” (The fact that your son may also be described as a “young child” or a “young man” does not mean that every mention of him at any chosen point in time must include that description. Those particular descriptions are just not intended to be emphasized in your statement.) As discussed in Chapter Seven, specific Biblical Word meanings need not always be translated into every passage. Nevertheless, understanding that every Biblical Word has its own specific nuance may be extremely useful in determining the most precise interpretation of any particular passage. Context, however, always determines how the word is ultimately to be defined.

The purpose of Bible-Based Hermeneutics is primarily to present the concept that it is possible to comprehend more thoroughly what all of Scripture means by starting at the word level. It presents specific study methods and demonstrates how a student can reach decisions on most-specific word meanings by use of the Bible alone. The student can then check his findings against existing lexicons or other technical language tools for whatever additional insights he might gain. This evaluation is equivalent to a competent exegete comparing the conclusions of his own research with technical language tools and commentaries. Of course, he should only do this comparison after he has performed his own study, so as not to be influenced by others’ biased human opinions or transferred Theologies. (A competent researcher should always know the Theological and philosophical position of every author of his reference tools.) The student’s review of the exegesis of others is to help him guard against his own error and to consider if he may have overlooked some gem of knowledge another competent exegete may have uncovered.

Now, I challenge you personally to follow these methods and prove for yourself the accuracy of this approach.

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### GREEK WORDS IN THE SEMANTIC RANGE OF CHILDREN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greek Word (Transliterated)</th>
<th>English Translations (KJV)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>anthropos</strong></td>
<td>mankind, human being, man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>teknon</strong></td>
<td>children, descendents,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>teknion</strong></td>
<td>little or dear children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>huios</strong></td>
<td>son, heir, descendent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>brephos</strong></td>
<td>embryo, infant, new-born child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pais</strong></td>
<td>child, boy/girl, servant, youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>paidion</strong></td>
<td>child, young child, dear children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>paidarion</strong></td>
<td>little boy, lad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>paidiske</strong></td>
<td>little girl, maiden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>korasion</strong></td>
<td>girl, damsel, maiden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>neaniskos</strong></td>
<td>youth, young man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>anēr</strong></td>
<td>man, adult, husband, person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>presbuteros</strong></td>
<td>elder adult, old man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nothos</strong></td>
<td>illegitimate child, bastard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Related Characteristics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greek Word</th>
<th>English Translations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>nēpios</strong></td>
<td>nonspeaking, babe, infant, child, minor, simple, unlearned, childish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>teleios</strong></td>
<td>fully developed or accomplished, ripe, finished, full grown, mature, consummate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>