

*History of the
Bible Seminar*

By

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Introduction

The history of the Bible goes back to the beginning of time as we know it from our earthly perspective. That is, in Genesis 1:1 we read, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” The question for us is, to whom was this information first given to write it down, and how did they receive it? The answer is, we do not know for sure, but what we do know is that what is called ‘oral transmission’ was the means of communicating information such as the above before writing came on the scene.

From the biblical history perspective, we do not have any mention of writing or inscribing anything before the flood. One very interesting thing we do see in the antediluvian biblical history, however, is in regard to the temptation of Eve by the serpent. In Genesis 3:5, we read, “For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” The serpent was attempting to get Eve to disobey the Lord’s command to not eat from the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil” by showing her that God was a petty and narcissistic entity who was not wanting her to reach her full, divine potential and be like Him. Thus, the serpent held out to her the real potential that she too could be a ‘god’, “knowing good and evil.” The word I want to focus on is the word “knowing,” which implies a foundational premise of choices that may be deemed as either ‘good’ or ‘evil’. That in turn implies the process of thinking and the organization of one’s thoughts, which would also lend credence to the beginning processes of putting such thoughts in a prescribed, codified form to pass along to others. The first of such a codified presentation had to be oral, and the oral in turn developed over a period of time into a written, codified format.

Another important passage concerning the antediluvian culture is found in Genesis 4:19-22 with reference to the descendents of Cain:

And Lamech took to himself two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other, Zillah. 20 And Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the father of those who dwell in tents and *have* livestock. 21 And his brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe. 22 As for Zillah, she also gave birth to Tubal-cain, the forger of all implements of bronze and iron; and the sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.

In the above passage, we see mentioned the development of music and musical instruments, as well as the development of smelting and the manufacture of “implements of bronze and iron.” With the idea in particular of music being produced, it almost begs the question that writing of some type accompanied such music, which almost certainly, one would assume, had to include words and lyrics along with the notes, etc. However, in truth, did the notes, lyrics, and words that accompanied the music have to be written down? The answer is no, they didn’t, but the very real possibility exists that they may have. However, what is almost certain, is that this music very likely contained songs and lyrics about creation, the first family, the fall of man, the first murder, etc., and if not written, then through oral transmission these accounts were transmitted from one generation to another. In fact, we see this being done from the earliest extant writings of ancient Sumeria, up to and through the biblical text and beyond. However, in the midst of all of this oral and written transmission, we also see God’s sovereign hand leading, guiding, and directing His infallible, “God-breathed” Word to be transmitted through fallible men in such a way that His truth, from the beginning to the end, has come to us “for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (II Timothy 3:16-17).

Chapter One:

The Beginning of Writing

Abraham

The earliest known written sources we have date back to the ancient Sumerians around 3300 BC. Their script was cuneiform, which simply means that it consisted of wedge like forms connected together to form ‘signs’ that represented sounds, objects, etc., through which they could communicate with others by writing, versus being limited only to speech. As a result of this form of writing for communication, men were enabled to record their oral histories, business records, theological beliefs, etc., and that is what we find with the writings of the ancient Sumerians. As the Sumerian cultural dominance began to fade, the Akkadian culture began to take the leading role in Mesopotamia, and that included their language. There was a brief revival of the Sumerian culture and language toward the end of the 3rd and beginning of the 2nd millennium BC, during which time it is believed Abraham migrated to Canaan, but even at that, Akkadian became the dominant language of Mesopotamia, adopting the cuneiform script for its transmission.

The emergence of the Akkadian culture and language began to occur around 2500 BC, and it may be assumed, therefore, that this is the language that Abraham spoke in that it was around 2000 BC that he came from Mesopotamia into Canaan. In addition to that, we do know that Abraham and his family were heavily influenced by the Sumerian/Akkadian culture as far as their religious beliefs and worship, but also along practical lines as well. There are two things biblically that substantiate this assertion, and the first is a statement found in Joshua 24:2-3:

And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'From ancient times your fathers lived beyond the River, *namely*, Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods. 3 'Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River, and led him through all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants and gave him Isaac.

The other witness to the influence of the Sumerian/Akkadian culture in Abraham's life is the situation with Hagar, when Sarai told Abraham to copulate with Hagar, and the child from that union would then be Sarai's:

Now Sarai, Abram's wife had borne him no *children*, and she had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar. 2 So Sarai said to Abram, "Now behold, the LORD has prevented me from bearing *children*. Please go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children through her." And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. 3 And after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Abram's wife Sarai took Hagar the Egyptian, her maid, and gave her to her husband Abram as his wife. 4 And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her sight. 5 And Sarai said to Abram, "May the wrong done me be upon you. I gave my maid into your arms; but when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her sight. May the LORD judge between you and me." 6 But Abram said to Sarai, "Behold, your maid is in your power; do to her what is good in your sight." So Sarai treated her harshly, and she fled from her presence. (Genesis 16:1-6)

From whence did Sarai derive such a plan and idea? She was simply adopting what she had seen practiced in the Sumerian/Akkadian culture she had grown up in. In ancient Sumeria at the end of the 3rd and beginning of the 2nd millennium BC, there were two law codes written by two separate kings:

- 1) Ur-Nammu (2112-2095) – These laws were basic for normal societal order, and they represent the social order of Abraham's and his father's time in Mesopotamia.
- 2) Lipit-Ishtar (1934-1924) – Lipit-Ishtar was "the fifth king of the First Dynasty of Isin" (Hallo, William W. ; Younger, K. Lawson: *Context of Scripture*, vol. 2 [Leiden: Boston; Brill, 2000] 411), and he too developed a list of practical laws for societal governance. Law # 28 states:

If a man's wife does not bear him a child but a prostitute from the street does bear him a child, he shall provide grain, oil, and clothing rations for the prostitute, and the child whom the prostitute bore him shall be his heir; as long as his wife is alive, the prostitute will not reside in the house with his first-ranking wife. (Ibid., 413)

Clearly, this law represents the culturally accepted mores of Abraham's time in which he was in Canaan. Thus, the idea of having a child by another woman, and that child in turn becoming heir of that man was an accepted practice of Abraham's time.

Somewhat later, in the 18th century BC, Hammurabi of Babylon (1792-1750) also wrote a law code, and even though his code is very likely around 150 years after Abraham's death, the content of his laws were the codification of ideas and mores that were indeed existing during Abraham's life, and, like Lipit-Ishtar's laws, had an influential effect on Abraham. The one law of Hammurabi's that applies to Abraham is Law # 146:

If a man marries a *naditu*, and she gives a slave woman to her husband, and she (the slave) then bears children, after which that slave woman aspires to equal status with her mistress — because she bore children, her mistress will not sell her; (but) she may place upon her the slave-hairlock and reckon her with the slave women. (Ibid., 345)

This too is reminiscent of what Sarai did in providing Abraham a surrogate in order to produce a son to be his heir. Therefore, the reason for emphasizing these aspects of Abraham's life is that we have extra-biblical examples of practices that affirm the events of Abraham's life in the biblical record, and, therefore, give tremendous credence to the accuracy of the biblical text and its divine inspiration.

Cain & Abel

Another very interesting example of such transmission occurring among these early peoples has to do with Cain's murder of Abel, and we find that account in Genesis 4:1-8:

Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, "I have gotten a manchild with *the help of the LORD.*" 2 And again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. 3 So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. 4 And Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering; 5 but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell. 6 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? 7 "If you do well, will not *your countenance* be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it." 8 And Cain told Abel his brother. And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

The verse in this passage that is of interest to us is verse 7: "If you do well, will not *your countenance* be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its

desire is for you, but you must master it,” and interestingly, this passage is also one of the most difficult in the Old Testament due to its language and syntax.

The phrase, “be lifted up” is taken from the Hebrew verb **שָׁעַר** (*šē’ēl*), which is a qal infinitive construct from the root verb **שָׂא** (*nāsâ*), and it means “to lift up, carry away, pardon.” Thus, “pardon,” or “forgiveness,” may legitimately be used as the translation. The reading, therefore, would be, “Is there not forgiveness if you do well?” However, the problem arises with the remainder of the verse: “but if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. . .”

The trouble with the above translation is the last phrase, “sin is crouching at the door.” In Hebrew, unlike with English, you have masculine and feminine nouns, as well as masculine and feminine verb forms, except for the 1st common singular (“I”) and plural (“we”) for the perfect and imperfect respectively. Thus, whatever gender a noun may be, the verb used with it must be the corresponding gender. In the phrase above, the problem we have is that the word “sin” is a feminine noun, and the verb “crouching” is a masculine participle, which, according to Hebrew syntax, cannot be connected. In addition, in the phrase, “and its desire is for you,” the “its” is masculine, which would literally read, “and the desire of him is for you.” That being the case, the “its” cannot be referring to “sin” since “sin” is a feminine noun. It has to be referring to a masculine noun, but which one? The word “door” is a masculine noun, but that doesn’t appear to make any sense – “the door’s desire is for you.” There is one other possibility, and that is with the Hebrew masculine participle, “crouching.” The word in Hebrew is **רֹבֵשׁ** (*rōbēš*), and it comes from the Hebrew verb, **רָבַשׁ** (*rābaš*), which means “to lie down, or to crouch.” However, this word also has an Akkadian look-a-like and sound-a-like, *rābišu*, and this is a masculine noun in Akkadian, “denoting various officials and also demons, especially those that guard entrances to buildings. Here then sin is personified as a demon crouching like a wild beast on Cain’s doorstep” (Wenham, G. J., *Vol. 1: Word Biblical Commentary : Genesis 1-15* [Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002], 106). Therefore, if *rābišu* is indeed the correct word to be used, it would appear to make extremely good sense, and it fits in contextually with the grammar, as well as with the overall message.

Another slight change might also seem appropriate, which would include the following translation: “Is there not forgiveness of sin if you cause to behave well, but if you do not cause to behave well, the demon is at the door, and his desire is for you, but you will exercise dominion over him.” Here is a promise of God to Cain, even in the midst of his great sin of murder, both of grace, as well as of judgment. The phrase, “if you cause to do well,” is not an endorsement of ‘good words’, but rather it categorically refers to Hebrews 11:6: “And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.” Thus, the change would be to place the word “sin” after the word “forgiveness,” which would now be used as a noun, and thereby placing it in a construct state (“of”) with that word. By doing this, the grammatical problem would be solved as far as the feminine noun “sin” being connected with the masculine participle “crouching,” and secondly, the message is very clear and consistent with the overall biblical truth of the spiritual warfare we face with the forces of darkness (Ephesians 6:10-20).

The point to be made in this analysis of Genesis of 4:7 is that the Lord could and would use and work in and through various languages to speak forth his truth because His people, in particular Abraham and his immediate family, were immersed in the languages and cultures of other civilizations (e.g., Sumerian and Akkadian). Such immersion, therefore, in no way impugned, nor abrogated His inspired Word and truth from being orally transmitted and continued through these various language groups until it was fully recorded first in the Old Testament in Hebrew, Aramaic, and then in the Greek LXX. Consequently, during that process of oral transmission, words and phrases from other languages came to be incorporated into the communication of His Word and truth by the Holy Spirit, with the result being that some Hebrew words have within them incipient meanings derived from these other languages, and such is quite likely the case in Genesis 4:7 with the word רָבָאֵשׁ (*rābāš*), which may have an Akkadian source and application.

Thus, as stated in the *Introduction*, no limitations exist as to what God will use in transmitting His inspired, infallible Word of Truth to man, nor in how He will use whatever He chooses to use. He is our sovereign Lord, and all forms of communication are His!

The Birth of Enosh

One other very interesting event recorded in the antediluvian biblical history is the account of the birth of Enosh to Seth, the son born to Adam and Eve after Abel's death:

And Adam had relations with his wife again; and she gave birth to a son, and named him Seth, for, *she said*, "God has appointed me another offspring in place of Abel; for Cain killed him." 26 And to Seth, to him also a son was born; and he called his name Enosh. Then *men* began to call upon the name of the LORD. (Genesis 4:25-26)

There are two things that are important in this passage with regard to scriptural transmission, and the first is that according to the Hebrew Massoretic text, this is the first recorded spiritual revival in biblical history. We go from this announcement in chapter 4 to the line of Seth in chapter 5, which is considered to be the 'godly' line of Adam, and this is seen in particular with Enoch who "walked with the Lord":

Then Jared lived eight hundred years after he became the father of Enoch, and he had *other* sons and daughters. 20 So all the days of Jared were nine hundred and sixty-two years, and he died. 21 And Enoch lived sixty-five years, and became the father of Methuselah. 22 Then Enoch walked with God three hundred years after he became the father of Methuselah, and he had *other* sons and daughters. 23 So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. 24 And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him. (Genesis 4:19-24)

Enoch was indeed a "righteous man," but, like Abel, his righteousness was not as a result of his works, but rather through faith alone:

By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks. 5 By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death; and he was not found because God took him up; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God. (Hebrews 11:4-5)

Therefore, Enosh's coming to the Lord has great significance for mankind, and especially for Noah, who also was a man of faith, and through his faith, he and his family were delivered from the destruction of the flood:

By faith Noah, being warned *by God* about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the

world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.
(Hebrews 11:7)

The second thing I want to point out concerning Genesis 4:26 is that in the Aramaic Targums, we have a very different reading of this passage. The Aramaic Targums have their origin among the post-exilic Jews who returned from exile in Babylon. While in Babylon (ca. 605 BC – 538 BC), Aramaic, the language of Babylon, was assimilated by the Jews, and it ultimately became their common language. Nevertheless, Hebrew remained the liturgical language of worship and Bible study. However, as time went by, the need arose for the Hebrew to be translated into the more common language of Aramaic for the masses, and thus, the Aramaic Targums came into existence. The word Targum actually means “translation” from one language to another. Thus, Aramaic Targums simply means the Aramaic Translation of the original Hebrew. At any rate, “A major reason for the origin of the Targum must have been the fact that increasingly in the postexilic period Aramaic replaced Hebrew as the vernacular of the Jews of Palestine” (Freedman, D. N., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* [New York: Doubleday, 1996], 6:329). In addition, as time went by, the Rabbis began to see that the Aramaic could have a dual function – it could be used not only as a translation, but also as a commentary on the Scripture itself. Thus, what began to develop was “a comprehensive interpretation on the original Hebrew” (Ibid.). However, there were strict guidelines for use of the Targum:

The Rabbis were concerned that Targum should be clearly distinguished from Scripture: the same person could not publicly read the Hebrew and recite the Targum. Targum belonged to the oral Torah, and the translator had to recite it orally in public, while the reader had to read (and be manifestly seen to read) the Hebrew from the scroll. At the same time it is a fundamental rabbinic principle that the Targum is not a freestanding translation, to be used on its own; it should always be heard and studied in conjunction with the original Hebrew. Even when Targum was studied in the privacy of one’s home, the suggested rule was that the *pārāšâ* (*exact statement*) should be read twice in the Hebrew and once in the Targum (*b. Ber.* 8a). (Ibid., 6:330)

Having now received this brief overview on the Aramaic Targums, and seeing how they were used with the Jews (they are equivalent to our paraphrase English versions, which, in many cases, are interpolations, not word for word translations), we are now ready to examine the Aramaic translation of Genesis 4:26: “And as for Seth, to him also a

son was born, and he called his name Enosh. Then in his days the sons of man were lax in praying in the name of the Lord.” As we can see, this translation is the complete opposite from what we have in the Hebrew Massoretic text. However, as we read from the quote from Freedman, the Targum was viewed as secondary in nature to the Hebrew original, and it was seen as belonging “to the oral Torah,” versus to the written Torah, which is the Hebrew, Massoretic text. The question before us, therefore, is, why and how did the Targum of Genesis 4:26 become the antithesis of the Hebrew text in this particular instance?

The Aramaic Targums’ function in its secondary usage to the Hebrew text is clearly and purposefully that of an ‘interpolation’ in order to give commentary on the biblical text. Thus, what we are reading is a Midrashic interpretation that is worked into the translation – an opinion, versus a literal translation. Thus, as the Aramaic language itself developed over the centuries, it did so by means of incorporating the grammatical principles and concepts of previous languages, as well as the written texts of these former languages. In doing the latter, what came along with these texts were the ideas and concepts they contained about various and sundry topics, and this was especially true with reference to the religious texts and their theological beliefs and emphases. Thus, with the development of the Aramaic script, we see this quite clearly: “Aramaic is attested over a period of almost 3,000 years, during which time there occurred great changes of grammar, lexical stock, and usage” (Freedman, David Noel, v. 4, “Aramaic”, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* [New York : Doubleday, 1996], 173). Consequently, what came along with the assimilation of Aramaic into the biblical text was not only the grammatical influence, but very likely some of the theological beliefs and concepts of these former cultures, and those beliefs may have included the basis for the Aramaic text of Genesis 4:26 where it states “the sons of man were lax in praying in the name of the Lord”:

Aramaic is the best-attested and longest-attested member of the Northwest Semitic subfamily of languages (which also includes *inter alia* (among others) Hebrew, Phoenician, Ugaritic, Moabite, Ammonite, and Edomite). The relatively small proportion of the biblical text preserved in an Aramaic original (Dan 2:4–7:28; Ezra 4:8–6:18 and 7:12–26; Jeremiah 10:11; Gen 31:47 [two words] as well as isolated words and phrases in Christian Scriptures) belies the importance of this language for biblical studies and for religious studies in general, for Aramaic

was the primary international language of literature and communication throughout the Near East from ca. 600 B.C.E. to ca. 700 C.E. and was the major spoken language of Palestine, Syria, and Mesopotamia in the formative periods of Christianity and rabbinic Judaism. (Ibid.)

The Aramaic text I quoted from for Genesis 4:26 is called the Targum Onkelos, which contains the whole of the Pentateuch. Onkelos is considered in Jewish tradition to be the man who wrote the actual translation: “The Targum of the Pentateuch was composed by Onkelos the proselyte from the mouth of R. Eliezer and R. Joshua” (Freedman, David Noel, v. 6, “Targum, Targumim,” *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* [New York : Doubleday, 1996], 321). Actually, there is a debate as to just when the Onkelos translation came on the scene. There are those Jewish scholars who estimate that the translation occurred some time as late as ca. 400 AD. On the other hand, linguistic analysis tends to support a late 1st – early 2nd century AD date of origin (Ibid.). Regardless, Onkelos is considered the premiere Aramaic translation of the Pentateuch.

However, even within Onkelos, there are other alternative translations based on Rabbinic and Midrashic interpretations, and one of those other interpretations is as follows: “then in his days the sons of man profaned themselves in praying (*viz.* to idols) in the name of the Lord” (Aberbach, Moses, & Grossfeld, Bernard, *Targum Onkelos to Genesis* [Jersey City: KTAV Publishing House, 1995], 47). Aberbach and Grossfeld make reference to “Rabbi Simon’s statement that the term הוּחַל (*hûḥal*) is to be understood in the sense of rebellion against God (לְשׁוֹן מַרְדָּ [lěšōn mārad]–*tongue/language of rebellion*) (Ibid.).” The reason, therefore, for translating the Hebrew verb הוּחַל (*hûḥal*) that is used in the MT in Genesis 4:26 as “profaned,” versus “began,” is based solely on Midrashic interpretation. Aberbach and Grossfeld state, with reference to the above translation of “profaned” in this passage, that “the entire clause is intelligible only if we add the Midrashic interpretation that they were praying to idols in the name of God” (Ibid.).

It is important to know that the Hebrew verb הוּחַל (*hûḥal*), translated as “began” in Genesis 4:26, comes from the root verb הָלַל (*ḥālal*), which means “to profane, pollute, defile, and begin.” Thus, the translations of “profaned” and “began” are both valid – the determining factor is the verb form and context of the passage. In addition, the Aramaic

verb **חָלַל** (*ḥālal*) also means “to desecrate, degrade, and profane,” and as you can see, its root form is identical to that of the Hebrew **חָלַל** (*ḥālal*). Thus, the translator of the alternate version of Genesis 4:26 in Onkelos chose this meaning. It is at this point, however, that the choice between the translations of “lax” and “profane” within the Aramaic becomes interesting. The Aramaic verb **חֻל** (*ḥûl*) means “to be lax,” and its 3rd person masculine plural form is **חָלוּ** (*ḥālû*), which is what we have in TO in Genesis 4:26. In addition, the Aramaic 3rd person masculine plural form of **חָלַל** (*ḥālal*) is **חָלוּ** (*ḥallû*), which, without the pointing, also looks exactly like the 3rd person masculine plural form **חָלוּ** (*ḥālû*), which is from the Aramaic root verb **חֻל** (*ḥûl*) - חלו & חלו - “they were lax” and “they profaned.”

In the MT, the passage in Genesis 4:26 reads, “Then *men* began to call upon the name of the LORD,” and the word “began” is the Hebrew verb **הִחַל** (*hûḥal*). As has previously been indicated, this Hebrew verb has the meaning of “to profane, pollute, defile, and begin,” and the determining factor of how this verb should be translated is based on its verb form and the context of the passage where it is used. In this passage, the verb form is Hophal, which is passive in nature, and the literal translation is: “then it was begun to call on the name of the Lord.” If you will notice in your newer translations, the word “men” is in italics, which means that word is not in the original text, but the translators of your version are supplying it in order to aid in reading the text. The question here is, why should that translation, “begun,” be chosen over “profaned”?

As we look at the whole section of this passage, we see that a major catastrophic event occurred when Cain killed Abel. Cain was vanquished from his family, along with all of his progeny. Thus, it is rather clear that Cain’s progeny was alienated from the worship of God, let alone having a relationship with Him. However, it is also clear, from an anthropological perspective, that Cain’s progeny did have contact with their other family members, and it would only be natural, considering the fallen state of man’s nature, that Adam’s other descendents would be influenced to some degree by the anti-God sentiment emanating from Cain’s progeny, causing them too to move away from worshiping and trusting in the Lord.

We now come to Enosh, and upon his arrival, the scene is one of a degenerate and fallen mankind, where already the ‘self-deification’ of man and its attending destruction is occurring, versus the true worship of God and its life giving results. This would have been, therefore, a prime time for a revival to occur. Thus, what we have sociologically is a situation where all three translations are potentially valid: (a) “men began to call on the name of the Lord”; (b) “men were lax in praying in the name of the Lord”; (c) “men profaned themselves from praying in the name of the Lord.”

Grammatically, there are also some interesting parallels with the Hebrew verb in question in comparison with what appears to be the sociological conditions existing at that time. As I stated earlier, the Hebrew verb used in Genesis 4:26 is הוֹחֵל (hūḥal), and contextually, it comes from the verb חָלַל (ḥālal). However, the word הוֹחֵל (hūḥal) in the Hophal also comes from the Hebrew verb חוּל (ḥûl), “to whirl, dance, & writhe in pain,” but in this context, it wouldn’t be applicable. I also pointed out that in the Hebrew text, the word *men* is not in the original. Thus, the verb is a 3rd masculine singular verb, and with חָלַל (ḥālal), the correct translation is, “it was begun.” However, in the TO, the verb form used in place of הוֹחֵל (hūḥal) is חָלוּ (ḥallû), which we have already seen may come from either the Aramaic verb חוּל (ḥûl) or חָלַל (ḥālal), the latter having the same basic meaning as the Hebrew חָלַל (ḥālal), with חוּל (ḥûl) having the additional meaning of “to be lax, & to renounce.” In addition, both the Hebrew and Aramaic חָלַל (ḥālal) form the Hophal 3ms in the same way - הוֹחֵל (hūḥal).

As we look in the Aramaic text, the phrase “sons of man” is included as the subject of the verb, which would then match up with the plural form of the Aramaic verb, “they were lax,” or “they renounced.” That being the case, the significance of all of this with regard to the transmission of Scripture is that what possibly occurred is the following: An Aramaic translator saw the verb הוֹחֵל (hūḥal) in the Hebrew text, and he interpreted it as coming from the similar Aramaic verb, חָלַל (ḥālal), but with the meaning of “to profane,” versus “to begin” in the Hebrew. In addition, he moves it to the Peal in the Aramaic, versus the Hophal in the Hebrew, and makes it a 3mpl, giving it the form of חָלוּ (ḥallû), “they profaned,” seeing this self-desecration and degradation as a result of

the worship of idols made by their own hands in their own human image and likeness. Then, another Aramaic translator comes along, and he views the Aramaic חַלְלִי (*hallû*) as more accurately referring to the Aramaic verb חוּל (*hûl*), and gives it the translation of “to be lax.” Onkelos then comes along, and in his judgment, as he has read and studied Jewish teachings about mankind at that time from the rabbinical teachings and traditions, he opts for the translation of, “then in his days, the sons of man were lax in praying in the name of the Lord.” As was pointed out earlier, this is one of three interpretations of the condition of mankind at that time, and it appears that all three are correct in their assessment, from a spiritual, sociological, and anthropological perspective: (a) “*men* began to call on the name of the Lord” (Hebrew); (b) “sons of man profaned themselves from praying in the name of the Lord” (Aramaic version); (c) “sons of man were lax in praying in the name of the Lord” (Onkelos Aramaic).

One important question may still remain, however, and that is why in particular did the one targumic translator choose the translation, “the sons of man profaned themselves from praying in the name of the Lord”? I believe, once again, as we look at the world at that time, from a spiritual, sociological, and anthropological perspective, it would be accurate to say that men in the line of Cain were indeed ‘profaning’ themselves in step with their progenitor. However, the announcement in Genesis 4:26 of Enosh’s birth appears to be a ‘benchmark’ of some type, and the fact is that from Cain onward, his line had already consistently been ‘profaning themselves’, so that was nothing new. On the other hand, with Seth and his progeny from the MT perspective, we do see a contrast presented: “And to Seth, to him also a son was born; and he called his name Enosh. Then *men* **began** to call upon the name of the LORD.” The word “Then” is clearly presenting a contrast in distinction of what went on before, versus simply restating the obvious state of corrupted mankind at that time. Thus, it appears to me that the MT has the correct translation, “then it was begun (*for men*) to call upon the name of the LORD.”

There is one other interesting thing to note about Genesis 4:26, and that is the name Enosh itself. In Hebrew it is אֲנוֹשׁ (*’ēnôš*), and this comes from the Hebrew verb, אָנַשׁ (*’ānaš*), which means “to be weak, or sick.” In addition, the word אֲנוֹשׁ (*’ēnôš*) itself simply means “men,” and in particular, “ordinary men.” Thus, it seems very reasonable

to assume that Enosh was the personification of the common man at that time who came to see his own insufficiency and desperate need for the Lord, and in turn, God began to do a work of conviction in his heart, as well as in the hearts of many others, so as to cause people to turn to Him, call on His name, and be restored to Him in saving faith by His grace. However, as with all revivals, the ‘spiritual fire’ eventually wanes, and so too with the revival brought on with Enosh’s birth. The high point may be seen with Enoch (Genesis 5:18-24), but then the demise eventually begins, leading up to Noah’s time, and that is where we come to our next important passage regarding scriptural transmission.

The “Sons of God”

Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, 2 that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose. 3 Then the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." 4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore *children* to them. Those were the mighty men who *were* of old, men of renown. 5 Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. (Genesis 6:1-5)

The phrase “sons of God” in the Hebrew is written בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים (*běne-hā’ēlōhîm*), and in four other passages (Job 1:6; 2:1; Ps. 29:1; 89:6) this, or a similar phrase, בְּנֵי אֱלִים (*běne elîm*), “sons of the mighty,” are both clearly referring to angels. However, what is important in the analysis of the usage of this phrase is this question, must this phrase, בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים (*běne-hā’ēlōhîm*), always mean only one thing? That is, must it always be referring to “angels,” or can it be used to refer to men, and are there similar type phrases in the Hebrew that are referring to men? The answer to the first question is, no, it doesn’t always have to be referring to “angels,” and the answer to the second question is yes, it can be used to refer to men. And the answer to the third question is also yes, there are examples in the Old Testament of similar type phrases that refer to men: (1) The Davidic King is referred to as God’s son - II Samuel 7:14: “I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; . . .”; Psalm 2:7: “I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, "Thou art My Son, Today I have begotten Thee”; (2) The elect nation of Israel is

posed if Keret is a “son of God” because he is sick, and those around him have placed him in a category that such things as sickness should not occur to one of his status: “Is, then, Keret a son (𐎎𐎗𐎚 -bn – bn is also the word used for “son” in the Hebrew) of El, an offspring of the Kindly One, and a holy being” (Ibid., 147)? In the context of this passage, the answer is no, because he ultimately dies, and a “son of God,” that is, a “god” from the perspective of Ugarit’s usage of this term, does not die. Therefore, from the Ugaritic cultural and theological mindset, a “son of God” is a “god” and does not have the limitations of a human being, but Keret is a human being, even though those around him had come to a point of idolizing him so that they thought he was more than that.

The reason this particular passage is important for us in our understanding the transmission of Scripture is because these Ugaritic texts are dated to around 1350 BC in northern Syria, and at that time it was a thriving and flourishing community. However, the actual oral transmission of these texts goes back much further. But that which is most significant for us is that the time period when the Ugaritic literature was written is what is called the ‘Amarna Age’, and this is based on some tablets that were found in Egypt that were written primarily during the period of time between the reigns of Amenhotep III: 1402-1364; and Amenhotep IV (Akhenaten): 1350-1334. These tablets were written in Akkadian (a cuneiform script similar to the cuneiform of Ugarit) from the vassal kings of Canaan to these two Egyptian Pharaohs. What is also important to keep in mind is that it was during this very time that Israel was in Egypt, and secondly, Akhenaten was the one and only Egyptian Pharaoh who was a monotheist. Was he influenced by the Israelites in general, and perhaps by Moses in particular? We have nothing to verify or substantiate such a hypothesis as far as written records are concerned, but what we do have is a very interesting coincidence with regard to the timing of his monotheistic turn and the presence of Israel in Egypt during that same general time period. El Amarna was the site of Akhenaten’s capital, Akhetaten, and thus, that period is called the ‘Amarna Age’. Cyrus Gordon describes the important significance of Ugarit with regard to this time period:

In cultural studies the importance of Ugaritic is greater still, because Ugaritic literature was produced at the crossroads of the Cuneiform and East Mediterranean Worlds, and of Canaan and Anatolia, during the pivotal era of

ancient Near East history: the Amarna Age. That period witnessed the confluence of the mainstreams of Near East culture: Babylonian, Canaanite, Aramean, Hurrian, Hittite, East Mediterranean, Egyptian, etc. What the Hellenistic Age was to later generations, the Amarna Age was to the earlier Near East. Into the Amarna Age flowed all the main currents of the past. Out of it flowed, in varying degrees, the cultures of the Middle Assyrians, Phoenicians, Israelites, Mycenaean Greeks, Late Egyptians, etc. The significance of Ugarit is in the course of unfolding. (Gordon, Cyrus H., *Ugaritic Testbook* [Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1965], 2)

Thus, Israel was in the very midst of all this confluence of cultures, and we can see this evidenced in Scripture, especially in the books of the Pentateuch where admonitions are given to the people to not partake of the idolatrous lifestyles of the people of the land. However, the Israelites did not heed God's exhortation, and the consequences of their failure to do so are recorded throughout the whole of the Old Testament. That in turn brings us back to the Ugaritic language and what we see written in the Keret Legend.

It is clear, therefore, that the phrase "son of God" (*bn/bnm El*) in Ugaritic in the Legend of Keret is referring to a 'god'. However, there is no such allusion in the Hebrew Old Testament at any point where any man is ever considered to be a 'god' as was Keret when it was asked, "Is Keret a son of God?" Rather than accepting such pagan 'myths' in the corpus of Old Testament, inspired writings, just the opposite occurs with a very strong tenacity in denying such pagan concepts and influences.

Therefore, it is my contention that Genesis 6:1-5 is in no way referring to 'angels' copulating with human beings. For one thing, Jesus says that the "angels" do not marry (Matthew 22:30; Mark 12:25; Luke 20:35), and secondly, through simple observation, one can see that the "Nephilim" in Genesis 6:4 were on the earth before and after the copulation of the "sons of God with the daughters of men": "The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore *children* to them. Those were the mighty men who *were* of old, men of renown." The other important thing to note in Genesis 6:5 is that it was not because of some victimized state that man was in because of having 'demonized' blood in him that caused him to sin, but rather it was because of his sin nature that his mind was utterly corrupt.

On the other hand, it is true that in the early church some of the Church Fathers did believe that the "sons of God" referred to in Genesis 6:1-5 were fallen angels who

copulated with human women (e.g., Justin Martyr [100-165 AD], Iranaeus [ca. 125-190 AD], Clement of Alexandria [ca. 150-215 AD], & Tertulian [ca. 160-240 AD]), as well as the Jewish philosopher, Philo of Alexandria (20 BC – 50 AD), and the Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus (37 AD – 100 AD).

There are two primary, pseudepigraphal, written sources from which the early Church Fathers drew this belief – the first is the work, **I Enoch**, chapters 6-11, which was written ca. 200 BC; and the other is **The Book of Jubilees**, written sometime between 160-100 BC. Both of these books contain accounts of angels coming to the earth and copulating with human women and producing a corrupt race of beings that precipitated the flood with Noah.

The following is from the book of **I Enoch**, which describes the angels descending, copulating, and the prodigy produced:

And it came to pass when the children of men had multiplied that in those days were born unto them beautiful and comely daughters. 2 And the angels, the children of the heaven, saw and lusted after them, and said to one another: 'Come, let us choose us wives from among the children of men and beget us children.' . . . And all the others together with them took unto themselves wives, and each chose for himself one, and they began to go in unto them and to **defile** themselves with them, and they taught them charms and enchantments, and the cutting of roots, and made them acquainted with plants. 2 And they became pregnant, and they bare great giants, whose height was three thousand ells: 3 Who consumed all the acquisitions of men. 4 And when men could no longer sustain them, the giants turned against them and devoured mankind. 5 And they began to sin against birds, and beasts, and reptiles, and fish, and to devour one another's flesh, and drink the blood. 6 Then the earth laid accusation against the lawless ones. (R. H. Charles, ed., *Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* [Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2004], 2:291-292)

This next quote comes from **The Book of Jubilees**:

And in the second week of the tenth jubilee Mahalalel took unto him to wife Dînâh, the daughter of Barâkî'êl the daughter of his father's brother, and she bare him a son in the third week in the sixth year, and he called his name Jared; for in his days the angels of the Lord descended on the earth, those who are named the Watchers, that they should instruct the children of men, and that they should do judgment and uprightness on the earth. And in the eleventh jubilee Jared took to himself a wife, and her name was Bâraka, the daughter of Râsûjâl, a daughter of his father's brother, in the fourth week of this jubilee, and she bare him a son in the fifth week, in the fourth year of the jubilee, and he called his name Enoch. And he was the first among men that are born on earth who learnt writing and

knowledge and wisdom and who wrote down the signs of heaven according to the order of their months in a book, that men might know the seasons of the years according to the order of their separate months. . . . And in the twelfth jubilee, in the seventh week thereof, he took himself a wife, and her name was Ednî, the daughter of Dâânâl, the daughter of his father's brother, and in the sixth year of this week, she bare him a son and he called his name Methuselah. And he was moreover with the angels of God these six jubilees of years, and they showed him everything which is on the earth and in the heavens, the rule of the sun, and he wrote down everything. And he testified to the Watchers, who had sinned with the daughters of men; for these had begun to unite themselves, so as to be defiled, with the daughters of men, and Enoch testified against (them) all. . . . And it came to pass when the children of men began to multiply on the face of the earth and daughters were born unto them, that the angels of God saw them on a certain year of this jubilee, that they were beautiful to look upon; and they took themselves wives of all whom they chose, and they bare unto them sons and they were giants. 2 And lawlessness increased on the earth and all flesh corrupted its way, alike men and cattle and beasts and birds and everything that walks on the earth—all of them corrupted their ways and their orders, and they began to devour each other, and lawlessness increased on the earth and every imagination of the thoughts of all men (was) thus evil continually. (Ibid., 2:18-20)

The reason for pointing out what the early Church Fathers believed with regard to the “sons of God” in Genesis 6:1-5 is because this was, and still is in some Jewish and Christian circles today, a widely held belief that the “sons of God” in Genesis 6:1-5 were angels who came and copulated with humans, producing a race of giants who accelerated the corruption of mankind, leading to the flood. The question before us, therefore, after investigating both the Hebrew text and these two pseudepigraphal sources, is, is this the message of Genesis of 6:1-5? That is, as I previously stated, is the message for us to embrace from this portion of Scripture, ‘the devil made me do it’, and we as humans are not responsible for our own sin? Or is it that as a result of our corrupt, sin nature, which we have inherited from our father, Adam, we choose to sin and attempt to deify ourselves, the same as Satan, with the result being that the only deliverance we have is through repentance and brokenness over our sin and a commitment to Jesus as our Lord and Savior, receiving forgiveness of our sin through His shed blood? As for me and my understanding of biblical truth, I choose the latter, and upon that I stand.

In addition, it is important to note that Augustine in his book, *The City of God*, also rejected the notion that fallen angels copulated with human women and bore a race of giants that were responsible for corrupting the human race. Augustine maintained that the “sons of God” were indeed the godly line of Seth, who, in pursuing their own lust

over against following the Lord, which, because of the innate corruption within every human being, was exacerbated through their self-deification, and that is what brought on the flood:

Let us omit, then, the fables of those scriptures which are called apocryphal, because their obscure origin was unknown to the fathers from whom the authority of the true Scriptures has been transmitted to us by a most certain and well-ascertained succession. For though there is some truth in these apocryphal writings, yet they contain so many false statements, that they have no canonical authority. We cannot deny that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, left some divine writings, for this is asserted by the Apostle Jude in his canonical epistle. But it is not without reason that these writings have no place in that canon of Scripture which was preserved in the temple of the Hebrew people by the diligence of successive priests; for their iniquity brought them under suspicion, and it was impossible to ascertain whether these were his genuine writings, and they were not brought forward as genuine by the persons who were found to have carefully preserved the canonical books by a successive transmission. So that the writings which are produced under his name, and which contain these fables about the giants, saying that their fathers were not men, are properly judged by prudent men to be not genuine; just as many writings are produced by heretics under the names both of other prophets, and more recently, under the names of the apostles, all of which, after careful examination, have been set apart from canonical authority under the title of Apocrypha. There is therefore no doubt that, according to the Hebrew and Christian canonical Scriptures, there were many giants before the deluge, and that these were citizens of the earthly society of men, and that the sons of God, who were according to the flesh the sons of Seth, sunk into this community when they forsook righteousness. Nor need we wonder that giants should be born even from these. For all of their children were not giants; but there were more than in the remaining periods since the deluge. And it pleased the Creator to produce them, that it might thus be demonstrated that neither beauty, nor yet size and strength, are of much moment to the wise man, whose blessedness lies in spiritual and immortal blessings, in far better and more enduring gifts, in the good things that are the peculiar property of the good, and are not shared by good and bad alike. It is this which another prophet confirms when he says, “These were the giants, famous from the beginning, that were of so great stature, and so expert in war. Those did not the Lord choose, neither gave He the way of knowledge unto them; but they were destroyed because they had no wisdom, and perished through their own foolishness.” (Philip Schaff, ed., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, vol. 2 [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1983], 305)

Therefore, as we look at all of the above evidence, when we come to questions as to what is the actual divinely inspired Word of God, it is essential that we do a careful analysis of the surrounding evidence – the Scripture itself (i.e., letting the Scripture be its own commentary on itself, as we looked at other places where the phrase “sons of God” is

used, as well as like minded phrases); linguistic evidence and analysis (i.e., examining the Hebrew, Aramaic, & Greek as best you can with the available tools you have access to); extra-biblical sources (e.g., in our case, the books of **I Enoch** and **Jubilees**); and historical sources (e.g., Philo, Josephus, early Church Fathers, & Augustine). Once we have conducted this analysis, guided by the Holy Spirit through prayer and the “mind of Christ,” we will then be able to come to a balanced and biblical conclusion that will honor Christ and His divinely inspired truth in His Word!

Without question, however, the above process is not easy, but I view this as part of Luke 9:23-24, as well as II Timothy 2:14-19:

Remind *them* of these things, and solemnly charge *them* in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless, *and leads* to the ruin of the hearers. 15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth. 16 But avoid worldly *and* empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, 17 and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, 18 *men* who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and thus they upset the faith of some. 19 Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord abstain from wickedness."

The above passage reinforces the truth that as we move into this new century in our country, as well as the world at large, we must reject the notion of a ‘bow-flex’ Christianity – spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and even physically. But with respect to what we are looking at in particular regarding the topic of the divine inspiration of God’s Word, the battle is going to become even more intense. Thus, may we indeed recommit ourselves to be ‘followers of Jesus’ as is described in Luke 9:23-24 in being diligent students and advocates of God’s truth in His inspired Word.

Chapter Two:

The Septuagint & Its Influence

Its Beginning

The Septuagint is one of the most important biblical translations ever made. After Alexander the Great's death (356-323 BC), his kingdom was divided up among his generals. However, for our purposes, what is significant about Alexander is that as a result of his conquests, Greek became the common language of the Middle East, North Africa, and Southern Europe. As with the Aramaic, so too with the Greek among the Jews-it also became the common language of the Jews, and especially so in North Africa. The name Septuagint actually means 70, and that comes from the tradition that 72 rabbinic scholars translated the Hebrew Pentateuch into Greek for Ptolemy II in Alexandria, Egypt, beginning ca. 250 BC. As the work of translation continued, it began to include the whole of the Hebrew Old Testament. However, in the LXX are also found books that are not in the Hebrew canon (e.g., Wisdom of Solomon, Maccabees, etc.), which are called the Apocrypha.

Its Usage

This translation work continued up to the 1st century BC, and it became the primary source of Old Testament quotes in the New Testament as the early church used it in its preaching and teaching. For example, in Romans 3:9-18 we read:

What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; 10 as it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one; 11 There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God; 12 All have turned aside, together they have become useless; There is none who does good, There is not even one." 13 "Their throat is an open grave, With their tongues they keep deceiving," "The poison of asps is under their lips"; 14 "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness"; 15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood, 16 Destruction and misery are in their paths, 17 And the path of peace have they not known." 18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

This portion of scripture is taken from Psalm 14:1-3 in the LXX. However, the actual Hebrew text of Psalm 14:1-3 reads as follows:

The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does good. 2 The LORD has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men, To see if there are any who understand, Who seek after God. 3 They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, not even one.

You can immediately see that there is a significant difference between the Massoretic text and the LXX. But here is what is interesting, the extra verses in the LXX are all found in the Hebrew Old Testament in other places: (1) 3:13 = Ps. 5:9; 140:3; (2) 3:14 = Ps. 10:7; (3) 3:15 = Prov. 1:16; Is. 59:7-8; (4) 3:16-17 = Is. 59:7-8; (5) 3:18 = Ps. 36:1.

This is a very important aspect of transmission, because what we see here is one form of Scripture, the LXX, being used as an authority, whose text is different, but in truth is the same, merely expanded. Thus, there isn't any contradiction, but simply an amplification of what is there in the Word already! What very likely happened is that a Jewish scribe made some notes on the side of a copy of the LXX of Psalm 14:1-3 that included the verses from those other portions of scripture we noted. He very likely did this to show how other scripture throughout the Bible agreed with what was being stated in Psalm 14:1-3. Another scribe comes along, sees the scriptural notes, and he includes those notes into the text itself, thinking this would really add emphasis to what is being said about man's utter sinfulness. Eventually, this expanded text of the LXX gets passed along as the final and authoritative one, and this becomes the text of the early church, which the apostles and early disciples preached and taught from.

Another passage in the LXX I want us to look at is found in Habakkuk 2:4 and Romans 1:16-17. The passage in Romans 1:16-17 reads:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it *the* righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "But the righteous *man* shall live by faith."

The quote in verse 17 above is taken from Habakkuk 2:4: “Behold, as for the proud one, His soul is not right within him; But the righteous will live by his faith.” The first thing to notice is that the Hebrew text reads “by his faith,” whereas the Greek New Testament simply says, “by faith.” The actual Hebrew word for “by his faith” is בְּאִמּוֹנָתוֹ (be’ēmûnātô), and when reading it, one would easily assume that the “faith” being referred to is that of the individual himself; i.e., “by his *own* faith.” However, when we read this very same passage of Habakkuk 2:4 in the LXX, we find: “If he should draw back, my soul has no pleasure in him: but the just shall live by my faith.” The actual wording in the Greek of the phrase “shall live by my faith” is ἐκ πίστεώς μου ζήσεται (ek pisteōs mou zēsetai), and this is identical in nature, although not literally, to the statement in Romans 1:17, “from faith to faith”: “For in it *the* righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; . . .” The “it” being referred to here is the “Gospel” of verse 16 just before this verse. Once again, the Greek reading of “from faith to faith” is ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν (ek pisteōs eis pistin), and the *ek pisteōs* of Romans 1:17 is identical to the *ek pisteōs* of the LXX Habakkuk 2:4.

What is all of this saying to us? I clearly believe that Paul was taking his quote in Romans 1:17 from the LXX version of Habakkuk 2:4, but, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he chose to reword it a bit. Thus, rather than giving the exact quote of Habakkuk 2:4, “by my faith,” he inserted, under the Holy Spirit’s leading, “from faith to faith,” which may also be literally translated as, “out of faith into faith.” The Greek preposition ἐκ (*ek*) literally means “out of”; i.e., it is showing ‘source of origin’. And in Habakkuk, as well as here in Romans 1:17, Paul, under the leadership and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is demonstrating and stating that the source of the faith we exercise comes from God, and we in turn place it back “into” God (the Greek preposition εἰς [*eis*] literally means “into”) from whom we have received it. Thus, the faith that saves us is not something we produce in and of ourselves, but rather it is something that God Himself works within as His gift to us. A further confirmation of this truth is found in Romans 10:17: “So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.” A somewhat more literal translation of this passage would be: “So faith out of (ἐξ [*ex*], which is the same as ἐκ [*ek*], only before a vowel, the κ [*k*] becomes a ξ [*x*]) hearing, and hearing by means of (διὰ - *dia*) the word (ῥήματος [*hrēmatos*] – the word of Christ that is

spoken into our heart by the Holy Spirit making the written word real) of Christ.” That is, the faith through which we believe and are born again is a gift from God, enabling us to believe and exercise the faith He has given us back ‘into Him’. However, the final step of exercising the gift of His faith that He has given to us is totally ours – we can either accept or reject it, and the benefits and consequences of that decision will be totally ours.

Thus, as we look at Romans 1:16-17 in the total context of biblical inspiration, what Paul is doing in this particular passage is applying a midrashic interpretation, which we have already alluded to in the Aramaic Targums. Midrash is an interpretive analysis and commentary of Scripture, and we see that clearly here in Paul’s quoting of Habakkuk 2:4 in Romans 1:16-17. However, as has been pointed out, what is absolutely essential to remember is that Paul’s midrashic interpretation was guided, led, and inspired by the Holy Spirit, versus other forms of midrash, which are guided, led, and inspired by ones own reasoning and flawed bias. The difference is that divinely inspired midrashic interpretation will be in line with the totality of God’s revealed truth in His revealed Word, whereas humanly inspired midrashic interpretation will not only contradict the totality of God’s revealed truth, but at times it will also subtly divert the true message of salvation by God’s grace through faith to one of works, and it will also diminish in some way the absolute and complete corruption of man’s inner self, hinting at and supporting the belief that man can redeem himself through his own works. The passages in Genesis 4:7 and 4:26 we looked at earlier were more of an example of misunderstanding the correct verbal syntax of those passages than of midrashic interpretation, whereas the interpretative analysis of Genesis 6:1-5 regarding the “sons of God” would come under the category of midrashic interpretive analysis in the writing we read in **The Book of Jubilees**, as well as the interpretive analysis of a number of early church writers that coincided with **Jubilees**’ position. That is why Augustine’s analysis of the controversy over the “sons of God” interpretation is so important to us because in his analysis, he probes all sides of the question and takes into account the whole of Scripture, versus just a small, linear view, and that too is what we must do when we encounter writings, teachings, and stories that are very linear (i.e., only a small segment

of truth, versus the totality) in their approach, versus those that take into account the whole of scriptural truth.

The final passage I want us to look at with regard to comparing the reading of the Greek LXX, the Hebrew MT, and the Greek NT is found in Matthew 8:14-17:

And when Jesus had come to Peter's home, He saw his mother-in-law lying sick in bed with a fever. ¹⁵ And He touched her hand, and the fever left her; and she arose, and waited on Him. ¹⁶ And when evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill ¹⁷ in order that what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, "He Himself took our infirmities, and carried away our diseases." (Matthew 8:14-17)

The quote in verse 17 is taken from Isaiah 53:4: "Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." This quote is taken from the MT, and the LXX quote of Isaiah 53:4 reads as follows: "He bears our sins, and is pained for us: yet we accounted him to be in trouble, and in suffering, and in affliction." In the Hebrew text, the words for "griefs" and "sorrows" respectively come from חָלִי (ḥālî) and מַכָּאֵב (mak'ōb). "Griefs" may also be translated as "sickness, disease, distress, and wound," and "sorrows" may also be translated as "physical and mental pain." In the LXX, the corresponding word for "griefs" in the Hebrew MT is "sins," ἁμαρτίας (*hamartias*), and it means just that, and the corresponding word used for "sorrows" is actually a verb, ὀδυναῶ (*odunaō*), and it means "to undergo physical torment, as well as to experience mental and spiritual pain." When we look at the reading in the NT of Matthew 8:17, the corresponding word for "griefs" in the Hebrew MT is "infirmities," and it comes from ἀσθένεια (*astheneia*), which means "sickness, disease, weakness from physical limitation, and a sense of helplessness and spiritual, mental, and physical inadequacy." The corresponding word for "sorrows" in the Hebrew MT is "diseases," and it comes from νόσος (*nosos*), which means "a physical disease and illness, as well as a moral disease and malady." Thus, as we look at the three together, we see the following:

Hebrew MT

“griefs” = **חֲלִי** (*ḥōlî*) = sickness, disease, distress, and wound

“sorrows” = **מַכְּאֵב** (*mak’ōb*) = physical and mental pain

Greek LXX

“griefs” is “sins” = ἁμαρτίας (*hamartias*) = sin

“sorrows” is “pained” = ὀδυνάω (*odunāō*) = to undergo physical torment, as well as to experience mental and spiritual pain

Greek New Testament

“griefs” is “infirmities” = ἀσθένεια (*astheneia*) = sickness, disease, weakness from physical limitation, and a sense of helplessness and spiritual, mental, and physical inadequacy

“sorrows” is “diseases” = νόσος (*nosos*) = a physical disease and illness, as well as a moral disease and malady

As we begin to analyze these three different readings, we notice first of all that the LXX translator interpreted **חֲלִי** (*ḥōlî*) as referring to our “sins” (ἁμαρτίας (*hamartias*), which, as you can see, appears to be quite different from the basic meaning of **חֲלִי** (*ḥōlî*), “sickness, disease, distress, and wound.” There are five different words in Hebrew that are used for “sin” – **חָטָא** (*ḥāṭā*); **חַטָּא** (*ḥaṭṭā*); **חַטָּאָה** (*ḥaṭṭā’ā*); **חַטְּאָה** (*ḥaṭṭā’ā*); **חַטְּאָת** (*ḥaṭṭā’t*) – and it is obvious to see that they are quite different in form from **חֲלִי** (*ḥōlî*). Thus, what is apparent is that the translator of the LXX, as he viewed the whole of Isaiah 53:4-12, considered **חֲלִי** (*ḥōlî*) in this instance to be referring to the “distresses and wounds” associated with our “sins” and their accompanying circumstances and consequences, both temporally and eternally. Therefore, he exercised his midrashic interpretative analysis to say that in this use of **חֲלִי** (*ḥōlî*), the meaning should be that of “sins.” However, as Matthew viewed this same passage in Isaiah 53:4, he apparently understood **חֲלִי** (*ḥōlî*) to be referring to more than just “sins” as the LXX translator did.

Consequently, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he provided a more inclusive perspective as he interpreted חֲלִי (ḥōlî) to mean ἀσθένεια (*astheneia*), “infirmities,” whose broader application of “sickness, disease, weakness from physical limitation, and a sense of helplessness and spiritual, mental, and physical inadequacy” would certainly include our “sins,” as well as our “griefs,” for our “griefs” were brought on by sin, and that sin has corrupted not only our own, individual human lives, but also the whole of the universe (Romans 8:18-25). The ultimate consequence, therefore, of that sin in our lives and in the world as a whole has in turn been the “sickness, disease, weakness from physical limitation, and a sense of helplessness and spiritual, mental, and physical inadequacy.”

With regard to the Hebrew word “sorrows,” מַכָּאֵב (mak’ōb), the LXX translator supplied the verb ὀδυνάω (*odunaō*), “pained,” which would certainly include the “physical and mental pain” that is the additional meaning of מַכָּאֵב (mak’ōb). In fact, in this particular instance, the Greek word “pained” is in the present tense and passive voice. The present tense indicates continuous and linear action, and the passive voice means that someone or something is causing the “pain” He is experiencing. Thus, the picture we have is that our Savior is continuously being placed in “physical torment, and mental and spiritual pain” over our “sins” and the consequences of those “sins” in our lives. Now we know that this torment and pain was for a period of time, and that now Jesus is in heaven interceding for us before the Father (Romans 8:34). However, while he was here on this earth in ministry, He went through continuous “mental and spiritual pain,” and this is especially true just prior to His going to the cross where “being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground” (Luke 22:44). Then, when He was on the cross, He unequivocally went through continuous “physical torment,” taking upon Himself the punishment we deserve for our sins in order that through His righteousness, we might have eternal life: “He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (II Corinthians 5:21).

As we look at Matthew’s wording for the Hebrew word מַכָּאֵב (mak’ōb), which is translated “sorrows” in the Hebrew MT, Matthew uses the Greek word νόσος (*nosos*),

which is translated “diseases,” but as we saw above, it may also be translated as a “moral disease and malady.” In the setting in which Matthew quotes this passage, Jesus first of all heals Peter’s mother-in-law of a fever, and then He heals many who were demon-possessed, as well as those with other various illnesses:

And when Jesus had come to Peter's home, He saw his mother-in-law lying sick in bed with a fever. ¹⁵ And He touched her hand, and the fever left her; and she arose, and waited on Him. ¹⁶ And when evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill ¹⁷ in order that what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, "He Himself took our infirmities, and carried away our diseases." (Matthew 8:14-17)

Therefore, clearly under the guidance, leadership, and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Matthew interpreted what Jesus did as a direct fulfillment of Isaiah 53:4, and he apparently did so exercising his own midrashic, interpretive analysis, applying the word νόσος (*nosos*) to cover not only the physical illnesses brought on by disease, but also seeing, as did the LXX translator, that our sin, which was started by Adam and we have genetically inherited, is the ultimate cause of all of humanities’ “moral diseases and maladies,” including demon-possession!

Having now analyzed all three of these readings, we see that both the LXX translator and Matthew, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, exercised midrashic interpretive analysis in the words they used to describe the Hebrew words חֲלִי (ḥālî) and מַכָּאֵב (mak’ōb). And even though the LXX and Matthew differ from the Hebrew MT and each other, they are all three saying the very same thing with regard to Jesus’ atonement for our sins and just what that means to the whole of humanity. Thus, the midrashic interpretation in both the LXX and Matthew is divinely inspired as it is in total agreement with the whole of God’s revealed truth in His revealed, inspired Word. God is, therefore, without any question, the very same, and “Forever, O LORD, Thy word is settled in heaven” (Psalm 119:89), and Jesus Christ, who is God in the flesh (John 1:1), and the “reproduction and exact representation of His essence and actual being” (Hebrews 1:3 – my amplified translation) is “the same yesterday and today, *yes* and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).

Chapter Three:

The Documentary Hypothesis

Its Major Premis

The Documentary Hypothesis is primarily associated with a German Old Testament Scholar by the name of Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918). In essence, Wellhausen was drawing from the work and scholarship of earlier Old Testament scholars who believed, in one way or another, that the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible) was written by different authors, or schools of authorship, versus by the one, single authorship of Moses. There was another scholar who preceded him named K. H. Graf (1815-1868), who was also one of Wellhausen's professors, and Graf believed the following:

Graf took up this theory, and maintained that the priestly interests of the "Foundation Document" indicated a date of composition subsequent to the contents of the book of Deuteronomy. As a result he assigned the document to the post-exilic period and associated it with the promulgation of the Law in the time of Ezra. However, he held that Leviticus 18–26, the so-called "Holiness Code," belonged properly to the period of Ezekiel.¹

The "Foundation Document," referred to as the *Grundschrift*, was initially considered by those who embraced a multi-authorship of the Pentateuch to be made up of what was termed as the Elohist writings, which writings were designated as such from the name of God, Elohim, that was used by these sources. However, as time went by and as scholars plumbed the Hebrew text even more, the "Foundation Document" was subsequently divided into the Priestly source as well, which source was primarily comprised of the Levitical Law. Thus, as all of this analysis proceeded, Graf comes along and dates the Levitical Law's origin to some time in the life of Ezra (ca. 458-444 BC). The consequence of this division of Pentateuchal authorship resulted in four sources: the Jehovistic writings (J – which referred to the name of the LORD, YHWH); the Elohist writings (E – which referred to the name of God, Elohim); the Priestly

¹Harrison, R. K. (1969). *Introduction to the Old Testament* (19). Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

writings (P – which comprised primarily the Levitical Law); and the whole of the book of Deuteronomy (D).

The Arguments For and Against the DH

What is important to realize in all of this analysis is that so much of this was and is based on subjective perception by individual scholars, versus on objective, logical, and reasonable facts, which are in turn based on reality, not on conjecture. The following is a very good assessment of Graf's approach:

With regard to the rest of the Pentateuch Graf adhered to the supplement theory, asserting that the Jehovistic additions were subject to redaction by the editor of Deuteronomy. The criteria upon which Graf based his late dating of the Priestly document were purely subjective in nature, and although his conclusions were challenged on this and other grounds he still clung to his contention that the basic Pentateuchal document was late rather than early.²

What this presupposes is that Moses was not the author at all, but rather this is a historical representation of traditions about Jewish history associated with the Exodus and the prophet Moses, who according to Jewish tradition, received the Ten Commandments from the Lord and also wrote the remainder of the Law at the Lord's directive. This approach, which may be termed as 'historical criticism', then had to find dates that supported and substantiated this approach. What is important to keep in mind is that 'historical criticism', or a better term might be, 'historical analysis', has a valid place in biblical interpretation. The problem arises with the underlying motive of approach; that is, is one honestly analyzing the evidence to determine the real date, or is one attempting to manipulate the evidence to support a predetermined position of questioning biblical, divine authority and reliability in favor of the deification of human reason and nature as being the ultimate authorities in all areas of life. With regard to this latter approach to historical analysis, Harrison presents another good assessment:

Unfortunately this useful branch of criticism was dominated almost from the very beginning by the wholly fallacious assumption that, because the more significant regulations were either ignored entirely or at best rather neglected for prolonged

²Ibid., 19.

periods in the early history of the Israelite nation, they could not possibly have been promulgated in the time of Moses or even in the early monarchy. Such a standpoint was adopted by De Wette, Vatke, and later writers. The fallacy of this position has only been exposed within comparatively recent years with the realization that the peoples of the ancient Near East habitually lived for long periods according to inherited customs and traditions, many of which were frequently quite independent of legal promulgations.³

This now brings us up to the time of Wellhausen. Wellhausen, therefore, compiled the former research and associated theories of multiple authorship of the Pentateuch and came up with the following theory, which reflected his own scholarly input and ultimate conclusions:

By applying the developmental approach of Vatke, a thoroughgoing Hegelian, to the study of Hebrew religious institutions and combining it with the successive arrangement of ritual laws made by Graf, Wellhausen attempted to prove that the connection between the succession of the legal codes and the progressive development of religious practices among the Israelites could only be compatible with a late date for the Priestly document. Wellhausen apparently did not subject the theories of Graf to searching criticism, but developed them to what he deemed to be their logical conclusion. In consequence he regarded the Pentateuch as essentially of composite origin, consisting of a Jehovistic source (J), dated in the ninth century B.C.; an independent Elohist document (E), coming from the eighth century B.C.; the basic content of the book of Deuteronomy (D), which was assigned to the time of King Josiah (640/39–609 B.C.); and a Priestly source (P), from about the fifth century B.C. According to the process outlined in his book entitled *Die Komposition des Hexateuchs*, published in 1877, the Jehovistic author compiled a narrative document from the sources J and E, and this was supplemented by the addition of Deuteronomy in the time of Josiah. Leviticus 17–26 was added to the Priestly document somewhat after the time of Ezekiel, while the remainder of the priestly material in the Elohist source was compiled by Ezra. At a subsequent period the entire corpus was revised and edited to form the extant Pentateuch, perhaps by about 200 B.C.⁴

With all due respect to Julius Wellhausen, the above is an unbelievable, convoluted approach to the theory of the authorship and transmission of the Pentateuch, but what is more astonishing, this became the accepted theory and foundational approach toward Pentateuchal studies in many colleges and seminaries even up to today.

³Ibid., 20.

⁴Ibid., 21.

What is important to remember, however, is that with every attack on the authority and reliability of God's inspired Word there is an equal and powerfully anointed refutation of such attacks by those whom God raises up to affirm His Word, and that is certainly the case here as well. One such refutation was promoted by Wilhelm Möller:

Persistent attacks upon the Graf-Wellhausen theory had been made from 1899 on by Wilhelm Möller, a scholarly pastor who had once been an ardent supporter of the documentary theory. His most important work, *Wieder den Bann der Quellenscheidung* (*The Repudiation Again of the Division of the Sources* [my translation] - 1912), subjected the critical hypothesis to a searching examination. In repudiating its general approach to Pentateuchal problems, and arguing both for the unity and the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, Möller explained the two divine names as being in fact indicative of two different functions. Thus *Elohim* was employed when the reference was to the activity of God in nature, whereas the tetragrammaton *YHWH* was used specifically of the God of revelation.⁵

One very interesting thing to note among those who embraced the Documentary Hypothesis of Wellhausen is their attitude toward criticism of this theory by those of a more conservative persuasion, and what is even more fascinating is that their attitude toward criticism is the same as all who tend to embrace, in some form or another, the idea that man's reason is the ultimate source of authority, versus God's wisdom and reason, and thus, they either knowingly or unknowingly support the deification of man:

English liberal scholars were accustomed to adopt an attitude of condescension towards the views of more conservative writers if they did not ignore their work altogether, and the general impression which one derives from perusing the literature of the period is that of a completely unwarranted confidence in the evolutionary *Zeitgeist* (attitude of their time period – my translation) and an uncritical acceptance of the hypotheses advanced by European scholars of the liberal variety.⁶

Even today in our own country with regard to the postmodern, man-deified, secularistic, liberal mindset that we see being promoted in every venue of our society, from the religious, to the political, to the economic, to the educational, to the business, and to the family sphere, the resulting arrogance, pride, and condescendence exhibited by those who

⁵Ibid., 39.

⁶Ibid., 40.

have a deified view of themselves toward criticism of most any type is glaringly apparent. It is important to also note that such an attitude toward criticism is a manifestation of a deep insecurity, which in turn is brought on by an aversion to the truth, and that is why they cannot handle being criticized, because what they are actually facing is the truth, and the truth strips them bare of their deified attitude of themselves, pointing them to the need they have to surrender to God and His eternal truth.

However, in spite of the evidence that began to emerge by responsible, critical, conservative scholars that consistently exposed the serious flaws and false assumptions associated with the Documentary Hypothesis, those who embraced the DH continued to do so with what appeared, and still appears to be a spiritual and intellectual mindset of denial. That is, they see the obvious facts and truth before them, but to admit to and embrace that truth would require a life-changing event to occur in their lives, and that is, a formal renunciation of a lie and an admission that they are not God, but God is God, and His Word is eternally true:

Despite the optimistic pronouncements of the advocates of the literary-critical method, the results obtained by this approach were by no means as assured as many liked to think, and continued criticisms of the Graf-Wellhausen scheme were being made by European scholars as well as English-speaking conservative writers. What was tantamount to a denial that the Priestly Code ever existed as a literary corpus was made by Max Löhr in 1924. Although he recognized the existence of priestly interests in certain portions of the Pentateuchal writings, he advanced the view that Ezra had formulated the Torah from small groups of laws and narratives rather than from extended documentary sources.⁷

With regard to the book of Deuteronomy being written in the time of Josiah (640/39-609 BC), conservative scholars began to expose the fallacies of such thinking:

In 1919 Kegel examined the implications of the reformation under Josiah in a work that repudiated the theory that the “Book of the Law” was a recent composition that was being foisted upon the people of Judah by priestly interests, and argued convincingly for its antiquity and the general correctness of the historical narrative describing the event. He also took issue with the critical contention that the purpose of the reformation was to restrict sacrificial worship to the central shrine in Jerusalem, and maintained instead that its primary aim was to remove alien religious practices from the cult itself, with other considerations assuming a secondary place. He insisted further that the newly

⁷Ibid., 41.

discovered book must have consisted of the entire Torah rather than the book of Deuteronomy alone, positing an early date for the Law in its complete written form. That the document provoking the reforms of Josiah was in fact the whole Torah seems unlikely, however, as Gordon has indicated, and in all probability comprised only one comparatively small portion of the Law.⁸

Others also weighed in on what they considered to be a very fallacious and poorly contrived attempt to explain away the antiquity, Mosaic authorship, and divine authority of the Book of Deuteronomy:

Welch maintained that Deuteronomy consisted of many ancient legal principles which had circulated in the northern kingdom, and had originated as a result of prophetic censures of Baal worship. He insisted that the main point at issue in the book was not the conflict between one shrine and many shrines, but between the depraved Baal religion and the ancestral faith of the Israelites. The Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy was again urged by Möller, who attempted to demonstrate the way in which Deuteronomy contained allusions to and implied the existence of the remainder of the Pentateuch.⁹

Now although there was some disagreement among scholars who repudiated the Documentary Hypothesis' of the late date of Deuteronomy as to just exactly who was responsible for putting together Deuteronomy in its final form (e.g., Moses, Samuel, other priests, etc.), there was an overwhelming agreement of the antiquity of Deuteronomy and the Mosaic source, if not the final author of the book:

An important contribution to the study of the Deuteronomic problem was made by Edward Robertson, who in a series of studies undertaken between 1936 and 1949 maintained that Deuteronomy had been compiled by Samuel from the religious traditions associated with the local shrines prior to the Kingdom period. He emphasized the importance of the Samaritan sources for an understanding of the religious situation existing in Canaan before the time of King David, and in this he was followed by Brinker, who held that Samuel compiled Deuteronomy for the twelve tribes, as contrasted with the Priestly material of the Pentateuch, which he deemed to have originated in religious circles at Gibeon. The essential Mosaicity of Deuteronomy was also supported by an eminent Jewish scholar, J.

⁸Ibid., 43.

⁹Ibid., 45.

H. Hertz, who reflected the traditions of Hoffmann and Jacob in his conservative commentary on the Pentateuch, which gained wide scholarly acclaim.¹⁰

Since the end of WW II, there has been important scholarly research and findings that once again expose the DH as being ill-founded in its basic precepts, and one such repudiation has been by Cyrus H. Gordon, an eminent Ancient Near Eastern Scholar who has written the preeminent Ugaritic Grammar, the one which I studied in graduate school at UCLA and still use today. Gordon's criticism of the DH has tremendous merit, and it still carries much weight today:

One of the most important repudiations of the Graf-Wellhausen theory was made by C. H. Gordon in an article in *Christianity Today*. Gordon, a veteran Near Eastern archaeologist and a brilliant linguistic scholar, stated the reasons which led to his change of outlook from an earlier liberal position, and drew upon parallels in ancient Near Eastern literature to show the complete inadequacy of using the divine names in the Pentateuch as a criterion for documentary analysis. In particular he warned, as others had done, against employing a critical methodology which was out of harmony with the observed facts of the ancient Near Eastern *Sitz im Leben* (The Life Situation – i.e., the actual historical setting), and which could only result in the conclusion that little or nothing in the Old Testament was authentic. This extremely important criticism of the Graf-Wellhausen analytical method, reflecting as it does a vast knowledge of oriental life and customs, will of necessity have to be taken into account by all serious students of the Old Testament.

In 1962 Gordon published a valuable contribution to the study of the background common to the Greek and Hebrew civilizations in which he demonstrated that, so far from being totally different from one another, they were actually parallel structures erected upon the same east-Mediterranean cultural foundations. Gordon was concerned not so much with the Hellenistic age, when the union of Greece with other areas of the Near East was an accomplished fact that is now recognized on all sides, but with the "Heroic Age" of Greece and Israel. The period under consideration extended from the beginning of the Egyptian Amarna Age (fifteenth century B.C.) to the tenth century B.C. By reference to numerous similarities and differences Gordon furnished a convincing account of the extent to which Greek and Hebrew texts alike reflected authentic traditions of the Heroic Age of the eastern Mediterranean during the last half of the second millennium B.C.

Although W. F. Albright attempted to disparage to some extent the conclusions that Gordon arrived at, the latter was equally emphatic as to the validity and importance of his work for Homeric and Old Testament studies alike; and for

¹⁰Ibid.

anyone who is well grounded in both disciplines the facts of the matter are quite evidently on the side of Gordon. Particularly valuable for the whole question of Pentateuchal origins is his insistence upon a maximum of written sources underlying the narratives, as opposed to the general emphasis of liberal orthodoxy, which adheres to the concept of a prolonged period of oral transmission before the written material assumed its final form. This conclusion led Gordon to a rejection of the notion that the Pentateuch was the “work of an editor who pasted together various documents,” and an espousal of the view that it was instead the epic of nationhood.¹¹

Thus, one of the most convoluted controversies concerning the authority, historicity, and reliability of the Old Testament, in particular the Pentateuch, subsumed in the DH, has been and is being shown to be a highly subjective and very unreliable means of determining the dating of the authorship of the Pentateuch, and the reason for that is a predetermined mindset that it cannot be Mosaic in its original form, nor can it be from that late of a date. These reasonings are based on a disbelief in the power and nature of God’s eternal state, and the fact that He is the sovereign of the universe. However, through careful research, both literary and archaeologically with regard to other ancient texts and finds, the historicity and authority of the Old Testament is once again affirmed, and in particular the Pentateuch in our specific analysis.

¹¹Ibid., 79.

Chapter Four:

Old Testament Prophecies

& Their Fulfillment

Introduction

Having looked at the oral and written transmission of God's Word through the various language and cultural traditions, I now want to look at two areas of critical study in the Old Testament that are at the heart of biblical inspiration and that is biblical prophecy and its fulfillment. The two books that we will examine in particular are Isaiah and Daniel. The reason for such debate concerning these two books has everything to do with their predictions of historical events outside the Bible that came to pass, as well as the overall prophetic character of both books. For example, by the 19th and early 20th century AD, Daniel came to be viewed by many liberal scholars as having been written sometime in the 2nd century BC.

The question before us, therefore, is this, can God give accurate and precise prophecies about the future that include men's names, events, places, numbers, etc., or can He not? Are such futuristic prophecies just too much for God to do, or is it that we just cannot comprehend, from our human perspective, the very real question before us, and quite honestly, it is there because we are looking at God as being no bigger than our own reasoning and understanding – thus, we are actually seeing God as being us, with our human limitations, etc.

In all honesty, this is an indictment on all prophecy throughout the Scripture, and that would have to include the prophecies given to Mary and Joseph about Jesus' birth and ministry, as well as the prophetic announcement to Zacharias about John the Baptist's birth and ministry – both were very specific and pointed. Therefore, the rule that guides me in assessing biblical data such as dates, authorship, historical events, linguistic borrowings, etc., is the following question: Am I making a judgment on the basis of my believing that such and such a matter is just too hard for me to conceive that God could do or cause something like that to occur, or am I analyzing a matter because the evidence from all sources points to a specific conclusion, but in no way takes away from God's

eternal power and might? This question has helped me, and I hope it will be a guide to you as well as you are “diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed” (II Timothy 2:15).

The Dead Sea Scrolls

The Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in the spring of 1947 by a young Bedouin shepherd named Muhammad edh-Dhib, on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea in a very rugged, mountainous area in a cave. From that time forward, one of the most important archaeological finds ever was announced to the world, which began an intense search for other scrolls, as well as an ongoing deciphering, analysis, and translation of the ones that were found. In all, eleven caves were discovered containing a treasure trove of manuscripts and fragments that are still being researched today.

The Dead Sea Scrolls are divided into two groups – biblical and non-biblical. All of the books of the Hebrew Old Testament are represented at least in fragments, except Esther. There are also Aramaic and Greek translations of the Old Testament from the Targums and LXX respectively. In addition, there are also some works of the Apocrypha, as well as the Pseudepigrapha (i.e., the Book of Jubilees & the Book of Enoch).

As far as the dating of the scrolls, the consensus is that they were written or collected between 200 BC to 70 AD, with a few of the texts actually dating back to the 3rd century BC. However, the major portion of the material is seen as having been written or compiled in the 1st century BC.

One of the most important discoveries of the Dead Sea Scrolls was the Isaiah Scroll. Prior to its discovery, the oldest Hebrew text of the entire book of Isaiah dated back to 895 AD. Thus, liberal scholars, who generally do not accept the divine inspiration of the Scripture, have routinely disavowed large portions of the Old Testament as not being written by the said authors of the books at the alleged times they are supposed to represent, but rather as being merely the collections of various authors who were writing to propagate their own religious agenda for political or other reasons. However, with the discovery of the Isaiah Scroll, such criticism was exposed for the serious flaws and biases it generated as far as its dating and antiquity. For here was a witness to the book of Isaiah

that was copied almost 1000 years earlier that was practically word for word as the 895 AD text! What a testimony to the integrity and trustworthiness of the text and the scribes who copied it, let alone God's superintending its transmission, as He, through His sovereign power, caused and preserved the text as He gave it to Isaiah, or any subsequent authors.

With regard to the Isaiah Scroll in particular, one of the most important passages for us would be Isaiah 53, and the following is the English translation of the Dead Sea Scroll text of that chapter:

Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? 2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. 3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. 4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. 7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. 8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. 9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. 10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. 11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. (1QIsa^a col xliv)

When you read this, you will immediately notice that it is in essence the same as your English versions, and that is because it is the same as your English versions! What a glorious truth and demonstration of God's power, even in the midst of our incredible human frailty, weaknesses, and flaws, that He would maintain the integrity of His Word

even in the harshest of circumstances, including ‘bat poop’, which is what the Isaiah Scroll was found in!

Another important passage in Isaiah with regard to Jesus is Isaiah 7:14: “Therefore *the Lord himself* will give y[ou a sign. Loo]k, the young woman has conceived and is bearing a son, and *his name will be Immanuel.*” As you can see, the Isaiah scroll is missing some of the letters that are in brackets, and those words that are in italics are not in the text either. However, the meaning is quite clear – we are talking about an extraordinary birth that will be a sign of God’s intervention in the deliverance of Judah during the reign of Ahaz (735-715 BC). The question about this verse is just what does the Hebrew word עַלְמָה (‘*almâ*’) mean? The actual meaning is a “young woman who is ripe sexually; a young maid; or a young woman who is newly married.” That is, this is a young woman who is either a virgin; betrothed to be married; or is already married. The question before us, therefore, is how is this word to be understood in this passage of Isaiah 7:14?

Some other examples of where and how this word is used are the following:

1) Genesis 24:43-44: “behold, I am standing by the spring, and may it be that the *maiden* who comes out to draw, and to whom I say, ‘Please let me drink a little water from your jar’; and she will say to me, ‘You drink, and I will draw for your camels also’; let her be the woman whom the LORD has appointed for my master's son.” This statement was made by Abraham’s servant who was looking for the wife for Isaac that God had picked for Isaac. I can assure you, without any equivocation, that in this passage, the עַלְמָה (‘*almâ*’) is clearly referring to a young woman who is a virgin.

2) Exodus 2:8: “And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, ‘Go *ahead*’. So the *girl* went and called the child's mother.” Once again, in this instance, the word עַלְמָה (‘*almâ*’) is clearly referring to a young woman who is a virgin, who in this case, is Miriam, Moses’ sister.

3) Proverbs 30:19: “The way of an eagle in the sky, The way of a serpent on a rock, The way of a ship in the middle of the sea, And the way of a man with a *maid*.” Here too, there is no way that this passage could be referring to anything but a young woman who is “sexually ripe,” but who is also a virgin, or perhaps betrothed to be married.

The MT reading of Isaiah 7:14 is as follows: “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.” The phrase “be with child” comes from one Hebrew word, הָרָה (hārâ), which can either be an adjective or a verb. The LXX translators saw and understood this as being a verb with their translation of, ἐν γαστρὶ ἕξει (en gastri hexei – “in the womb will have,” which idiomatically means, “she is pregnant”). This too is what the translators of the Isaiah scroll see הָרָה (hārâ) as being, that is, a verb, “the young woman has conceived.” On the other hand, if this is an adjective, then the translation would be, “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the ‘almâ/young woman is pregnant, and she will bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.” Based on the Hebrew syntax, the word *is* is supplied to help us who are English readers understand the phrase better, but literally, it simply says, “Behold, the ‘almâ/young woman pregnant,” with הָרָה (hārâ) clearly being used as the adjective, “pregnant.” As a verb, it would read in a literal fashion, “Behold, the ‘almâ/young woman has conceived, and she will bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.”

Therefore, based on the above analysis and how Isaiah 7:14 is using ‘almâ in this passage, it is clear that in this instance, עַלְמָה (‘almâ) is talking about a young woman who is either betrothed, but not yet married, or one who has recently been married. In the context of Isaiah 7:14 with regard to Ahaz and God’s promise of deliverance for him from Rezin and Pekah, the עַלְמָה (‘almâ) here would be a young woman who was betrothed in marriage, perhaps to Isaiah some think, and would eventually bear a son after her marriage, and at the time of his birth and his growth into a young boy, this would be a sign of God’s promised deliverance and victory over these two kings. This can be seen in 7:15-16 as to the timing of God’s deliverance for Ahaz: “He will eat curds and honey at the time He knows *enough* to refuse evil and choose good. For before the boy will know *enough* to refuse evil and choose good, the land whose two kings you dread will be forsaken.” In addition, the LXX translators clearly understood the use of עַלְמָה (‘almâ) in this instance to be a young woman who had not had sexual intercourse as a result of marriage, thus, betrothed. The word παρθένος (parthenos) in Greek

unmistakably means “virgin,” that is, someone who has never had sexual intercourse.

The following analysis is basically the same as I have just stated:

On the other hand, the very two-sidedness of the sign in Ahaz’s time demanded something more. Yes, the disappearance of Syria and Ephraim could be seen as evidence that God was with them. But what of Assyria, foolishly trusted and soon to turn on its hapless client? Was God still with them in that? And suppose even greater powers than Assyria strode onto the world’s stage, what then? If we can believe that the transcendent One is really immanent, and the immanent One truly transcendent, then there is reason to live courageously and unselfishly. But no child born to a young woman in Ahaz’s day is proof of God’s presence in all times. But if a virgin overshadowed by God’s Spirit should conceive and give birth, it would not only be a sign of God’s presence with us. Better than that, it would be the reality of that experience. So Ahaz’s sign must be rooted in its own time to have significance for that time, but it also must extend beyond that time and into a much more universal mode if its radical truth is to be any more than a vain hope. For such a twofold task *‘almâ* is admirably suited.¹²

As we now go to the New Testament, and as we have learned that the New Testament writers primarily referred to the LXX, and the LXX translators clearly understood עַלְמָה (‘*almâ*) in Isaiah 7:14 to be referring to a “virgin,” a παρθένος (*parthenos*), then we understand the transcendent fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14 to be realized in Mary, the mother of Jesus, who was betrothed to Joseph, but had not yet been married to him, and she was still a “virgin”:

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.¹⁹ And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her, desired to put her away secretly.²⁰ But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit."²¹ "And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins."²² Now all this took place that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying,²³ "Behold, the virgin (παρθένος – *parthenos*) shall be with child, and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which translated means, "God with us."²⁴ And Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took *her* as his wife,²⁵ and kept her a virgin (παρθένος – *parthenos*) until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus. (Matthew 1:18-25)

¹²Oswalt, J. N. (1986). *The Book of Isaiah. Chapters 1-39*. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (211). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Deutero-Isaiah

Another very important aspect about the Scroll of Isaiah is the discussion and debate over whether or not there was more than one primary author of the Book of Isaiah. Now although the DS Scroll of Isaiah itself has not made any significant contribution to this debate, the fact of its entirety being the same as the 9th century text does tell us that this was the same text from which the translators of the LXX completed their translation, as well as that which Jesus and His disciples worked from whenever they may have accessed the Hebrew text. Thus, we have as much of an access to the original hand of Isaiah as did the translators of the LXX and the early church.

At issue is the change in focus between chapters 1-39 and 40-66 in the book of Isaiah. Chapters 1-39 are more of a historical presentation of events occurring during the life and ministry of Isaiah, whereas chapters 40-66 are indeed more messianic in nature. However, in both sections, we see a crossover of emphases – that is, there are indeed messianic sections in 1-39 (e.g., 7:10-17; 11:1-9; Isaiah 9:1-7), and there is one unequivocal historical section in 40-66 (e.g., 44:24-45:7). In fact, it is this last passage in 44:24-45:7 that has caused some to speculate that this is a later addition because Cyrus is mentioned by name, and those who propose this to be a later edition do so because they don't believe predictive prophecy can actually name the names of real individuals who will emerge at a later time – thus, they see a limitation as to what they think God can do, if they think he can do anything. Some critics have even suggested that there are as many as three different writers – a *Trito-Isaiah* – with the third section comprising chapters 56-66. As we go through this analysis, we will discover, as we did with the DH theories, that the root of the problem appears to be an overall disbelief that there is a supernatural God who transcends human reason and abilities, and who is limitless in what He can do, who He can use, how He can use, and how He can accomplish His ends and purposes.

There have been inferences as far back as the second century AD that there were two authors of Isaiah:

. . . a Jewish author of the second century after Christ, Moses ben Samuel Ibn Gekatilla, wrote a commentary on Isaiah in which he held that the prophecies in the earlier chapters were the work of Isaiah himself, but attributed the subsequent sections of the book to the period of the Second Temple. His observations were preserved by the medieval Jewish commentator Ibn Ezra (1092–1167), who

shared his view that chapters 40–66 were the work of someone other than the eighth-century B.C. prophet.¹³

However, it was not until the late eighteenth century that the debate over the multi-authorship of Isaiah became a major critical focus. This was due primarily to the work of two German Old Testament scholars, J. C. Döderlein (1775) and J. G. Eichhorn (1780–83), and the following is a list of the arguments that respectively ensued to both support a Deutero-Isaiah and refute such a multi-authorship position:

- (1) The historical setting of chs. 40ff reflects the exilic period because Jerusalem is pictured as having fallen and the captives departed.
- (2) The striking differences in language, style, and concepts between the first and second parts of the book point to different authors.
- (3) The role of the Hebrew prophet involved addressing the people of his day with contemporary issues in the light of God’s commands. If chs. 40ff. were spoken by an eighth-century prophet to the needs of an exilic people some 150 years in the future, it would be a situation without parallel in the rest of the Old Testament.

Conservative scholars, both Protestant and Catholic, reacted vigorously with the following rebuttal.

- (1) The present literary context attributes the whole book to Isaiah which tradition is supported by rabbinic and New Testament authority.
- (2) There are enough similarities in language and concepts to maintain a unified authorship. The differences are to be explained by the new subject matter and altered intention of the prophet.
- (3) The supernatural quality of the prophecy is jeopardized if chs. 40ff were written in the sixth century rather than in the eighth.¹⁴

As the past two centuries have progressed, so too has this debate, as the following quote demonstrates:

When Bernard Duhm in 1892 separated chapters 56–66 from the Second Isaiah and assigned them to another prophet of the period of Ezra and Nehemiah who had become known as Trito-Isaiah, he opened the way for a further fragmentation of Isaianic authorship of the prophecy. Apart from making some alteration in the dating that Duhm assigned to those chapters, many scholars gave solid support to his theory that a Third or Trito-Isaiah wrote this portion of the prophecy. However, it ought to be noted at this point in the discussion that such a

¹³Harrison, 765.

¹⁴Brevard Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 316–17.

designation can only be regarded as legitimate under two conditions: first, that chapters 56–66 can be isolated successfully in terms of authorship from chapters 40–55, and secondly, that they do in fact purport to comprise a literary unit that can be ascribed with confidence to a single author. Some of the scholars who supported the general concept of a Trito-Isaiah entertained distinct reservations with regard to the second of the above considerations, and preferred to attribute various portions of chapters 56–66 to the work of individual writers, thus carrying the process of fragmentation to all kinds of subjective extremes.¹⁵

Thus, as with the DH, so too here with the multi-authorship of Isaiah, the degree of subjectivity was and is quite high. But once again, the important question is, why such high subjectivity on matters that question biblical authority and legitimacy? And once again, the answer in very simple terms is that we as men do not want to have our own self-deification dethroned by being made spiritually and morally accountable to a Supreme, Eternal God to whom we will have to answer some day, and to whom we are completely subservient. On the other hand, as we noted with the DH debate, there are very legitimate questions posed by what appears to be the differences between chapters 1-39 and 40-66 in Isaiah that need to be addressed, but they need to be addressed objectively through solid, linguistic, historical, and theological analysis, versus through highly subjective analysis that embraces whatever appears to be the current “wind of critical thinking” that is blowing by at the time, which is what the following Scripture passage is also alluding to:

He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)¹¹ And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers,¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ.¹⁴ As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;¹⁵ but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him, who is the head, *even* Christ,¹⁶ from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. (Ephesians 4:10-16)

¹⁵ Harrison, 767.

You may have never thought of applying this passage to academic and scholarly “winds of doctrine” that pass through institutions of learning and are in turned spilled over into churches through pastors and students taught there, and these pastors and students in turn disseminate this ilk to their congregations and friends. Thus, to say that it is unimportant to study and be informed about this type of “doctrine” is misinformation at best, and at worst it is totally foolhardy! However, with the quote from Harrison above, I wanted you to see once again that there is a subjective agenda that is embraced by academic scholars who tend to run after the current, popular, critical theory that attacks biblical authority and truth without applying sound, critical thinking and objective thought to their pursuits, and the results are always the same – misdirection and misapplication that always has to be correctly reinterpreted.

In response, therefore, to the nineteenth century critical assumption that there was a multi-authorship of Isaiah, J. A. Alexander gave some very important analyses:

One of the outstanding conservative contributions to the study of Isaiah, and one which anticipated many subsequent critical objections to the integrity of the book, was made in 1846 by J. A. Alexander. A brilliant linguist and learned Biblical scholar, Alexander rejected what he regarded as the critical excesses of Koppe, Eichhorn, and Bertholdt, and while he preferred the more moderate positions adopted by De Wette and Gesenius, he was not slow to point out the basic fallacies which underlay their critical procedures.

In upholding the Isaianic authorship of chapters 40–66, he declared that it would be unparalleled in literary history for an author of brilliance and erudition to produce a series of prophecies of such far-reaching importance for the Babylonian exiles, and then to disappear without leaving any trace of his own personality upon them. Furthermore, he raised the question as to how such anonymous writings could become attached to the work of Isaiah ben Amoz when, on the critical view, they had scarcely anything in common. Alexander also pointed out how comparatively few references there were in chapters 40–66 to Babylon and the exile, a matter that C. C. Torrey was to press still further many years later. The work of Alexander was marked by brilliant exegetical insights, and stands as one of the finest literary products to emerge from the hands of any nineteenth-century Biblical scholar.¹⁶

As we saw in the first critique of support of chapters 40-66 as being from a second author other than Isaiah, the position is that “The historical setting of chs. 40ff reflects the exilic period because Jerusalem is pictured as having fallen and the captives departed.” Thus,

¹⁶Ibid., 769-70.

Alexander addresses that critique and exposes it very simply, but also very profoundly for the misdirection that it is.

There were a number of other nineteenth century Old Testament scholars who also skillfully, objectively, and powerfully defended the unity of Isaiah (e.g., M. Dreschler, F. Delitzsch, Rudolf Stier, C. P. Caspari, A. Rutgers, & L.D. Jeffreys, to mention a few), and as we move into the twentieth century there arose some equally notable scholars who very ably defended the unity of Isaiah, and one of them was E. J. Young. The following, therefore, are the reasons given by Young as to why he rejects a multi-authorship of Isaiah:

- (1) In the New Testament Isaiah is quoted more than all the other prophets together, and this is done in such a way as to leave no room for doubt that, in the eyes of the New Testament, Isaiah was the author of the entire prophecy. In John 12:38 it is stated that despite the miracles which Jesus had performed, the people did not believe in Him, in order that 'the word of Isaiah the prophet' might be fulfilled.
- (2) The tradition of Isaianic authorship appears as early as Ecclesiasticus (written in the early 2nd century BC and is part of the Apocrypha). In 48:24 we read, 'He [*i.e.*, Isaiah] comforted them that mourned in Zion. He shewed the things that should be to the end of the time, and the hidden things or ever they came.' In speaking of Isaiah's comforting those that mourned in Zion (not, incidentally, in Babylon), the translation of Ben Sira employs the same Greek word for comfort (*parakalein*) that is used in the LXX of Isaiah 40:1 and 61:1, 2. So also does the Hebrew original employ the same word (*wayyinnahem*) as does Isaiah. It should be noted that this is the first appearance of any tradition concerning the authorship of Isaiah, and this first appearance of such tradition ascribes the work to Isaiah. Not a word is said of any 'prophet of the exile'. Thus, the so-called 'greatest' of Israel's prophets, the alleged 'Second Isaiah', is unknown to Ecclesiasticus. And if anyone was interested in the great prophets, it was Ben Sira. On the other hand, he does speak of 'Isaiah the prophet', 'who was great and faithful in his vision', 'who saw by the spirit of might'. Such language, based upon Isaiah 11:2, indicates the highest of praise. This also raises a problem.

If 'Second Isaiah' was so great, the greatest of the prophets according to some, a man who supposedly presented the most exalted doctrine of God which the world had ever witnessed, why had he dwindled so rapidly in stature that by the time of Ecclesiasticus his stature had disappeared entirely? On the other hand, why did the stature of the eighth-century Isaiah who, according to criticism, was by no means the greatest of the prophets, grow so tremendously that Ecclesiasticus would give to him such high praise? This is

a phenomenon without parallel in the history of literature, and those who deny the Isaianic authorship must provide an explanation.

- (3) The heading of the prophecy (1:1) is intended to stand for the entire book. This heading describes the book as a vision (*hazon*) of Isaiah the son of Amoz, having to do with Judah and specially Jerusalem, and having been seen at a specific time. This title was probably added by Isaiah himself. If it was the work of later editors, then the question arises, What led them to be so definite in attributing the book to Isaiah the son of Amoz?
- (4) The author of Isaiah 40–66 was a Palestinian. The author does not show a familiarity with the land or the religion of Babylon such as we might expect from one who dwelt among the captives. But he does speak of Jerusalem and the mountains of Palestine, and he mentions some of the trees that are native to Palestine, *e.g.*, the cedar, cypress, oak (44:14; 41:19). In 43:14 the Lord speaks of sending *to* Babylon, a passage which is clearly addressed to those who are not in Babylon. In 41:9 the prophet addresses Israel as the seed of Abraham which the Lord has taken from the ends of the earth. Such a phrase as ‘ends of the earth’ could only have been employed by one who was writing in the promised land. The same may be said of 45:22. In 46:11 such phrases as ‘from the east’ and ‘from a far country’ are more understandable when spoken from a Palestinian viewpoint than from a Babylonian one. But 52:11 is conclusive. The phrase ‘from thence’ clearly shows that this passage was not uttered in Babylon.
- (5) There are passages in chapters 40–66 which do not fit the time of the exile. One or two may be mentioned now; others will be discussed under the subheading Analysis. In 62:6 the walls of Jerusalem are standing. In 40:9 the cities of Judah, as well as Zion, are yet in existence. How could such a passage as this have been penned during the exile? (*Cf.* also 43:6; 48:1–5; *etc.*)
- (6) If one begins to separate or divide Isaiah, it is impossible to rest with two or even three large divisions. One is compelled to continue analysing and dividing until only a conglomeration of fragments remains. The history of the literary criticism of Isaiah had shown that the end of such divisive processes is really scepticism.
- (7) The arguments which are generally adduced for refusing to attribute chapters 40–66 to Isaiah are the following: The name of Isaiah is not mentioned in these chapters, they do not suit the time of Isaiah, and they are written in a style of Hebrew different from the genuine prophecies of Isaiah. It is true that Isaiah’s name is not mentioned in 40–66, but when one considers the aim of these chapters (see below under Purpose) it is easily understandable why the name does not appear. With respect to the claim that 40–66 does not suit the time of Isaiah, it may be said that the theory which is most free from difficulty is that the aged Isaiah, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, looked forward to the time when his people should be in bondage and would be freed by a mighty deliverance (see under Purpose). In other words, when the purpose of these chapters is taken into consideration, this objection is seen to be irrelevant. Lastly, the linguistic and stylistic differences are not as great as is sometimes assumed. The reason for these differences is to be found in the subject-matter, the prophetic and eschatological character of the section.

- (8) There is a unity in the prophecy which is too often overlooked. There are words and expressions common to both parts. Thus, the phrase ‘Holy One of Israel’ as a designation of God reflects the great impression made upon the prophet by the majestic vision seen in the Temple. So indelible is this impression that in 1–39 Isaiah uses the phrase twelve times and in 40–66 he employs it fourteen times. Elsewhere in the Old Testament it occurs only five times. Other words also characterize both portions of the prophecy, *e.g.*, ‘thornbush’, ‘delusions’, ‘dross’, ‘saith the Lord’ (*yo’mar*); (*cf.* also 40:5 with 1:20; 43:13 with 14:27; 65:25 with 11:9; *etc.*). Further similarities will be pointed out under Analysis. The importance of 36–39 should also not be overlooked. These chapters form a connecting bridge or link between the earlier Assyrian period and the later Babylonian. They serve as a beautiful introduction to the last great section of the book.
- (9) There are passages in Zephaniah (636-623), Nahum (650-620), Jeremiah (627-574), and Zechariah (520-489), which seem to reflect upon parts of 40–66 and hence indicate that the latter portion of Isaiah was in existence when these prophets wrote. Those who deny the Isaianic authorship of these chapters (739-681), however, generally argue, in so far as they notice the point at all, that 40–66 made use of the other prophets. These passages will be discussed under Analysis (see also *SI*).¹⁷

There is one other important question regarding the unity of Isaiah, and that is the mention of Cyrus in 44:24-45:7. Those who deny predictive prophecy, and thus, embrace a multi-authorship view of Isaiah, point to this passage to support their view – they ask, ‘How could any specific man’s name be mentioned with such historic accuracy other than a post-event writing?’ With conservative scholars who do believe in predictive prophecy and that Isaiah is a unity, there are two primary approaches taken:

(1) The mention of Cyrus is a predictive prophecy, given by Isaiah almost 150 years before, and the very fact that Cyrus was a pagan polytheist demonstrates God’s sovereign power through which He will and does even use unbelievers to accomplish His divine purposes and plans (*e.g.*, Adolph Hitler, who, in his attempt to destroy all Jews from the earth, actually became the catalyst by which God reestablished the Nation of Israel).

Edward J. Young is a proponent of this view.

(2) The name of Cyrus is a gloss, placed there by a post-exilic scribe (*i.e.*, a writer who was living after Cyrus the Persian conquered Babylon in 538 and allowed the Jews to return to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem in 536) who was wanting to affirm the

¹⁷ Edward J. Young, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1964), 205-210.

prophecy of God's future deliverance of Jerusalem given by Isaiah 150 years before, even through a pagan such as Cyrus, who didn't even believe in Jehovah God, but who was chosen by God to accomplish His plan and purpose for His people. R. K. Harrison is a proponent of this view.

Both of these views are objectively valid, affirm the unity of Isaiah, and support predictive prophecy. However, the first view is unequivocally predictive, and the second is only partially so, but it is nonetheless predictive, but less than the first. Personally, I can see validity in both positions, but I question the step in the second view of considering "Cyrus" as a gloss by a post-exilic writer because to me, by doing so, I am saying, 'God is limited as to what He can predict in the future.' That is troubling to me. To be sure, there are places where it is obvious that someone else infused a gloss for explanation, etc., with Deuteronomy 34 describing Moses' death as one of the premier examples. However, such a gloss as in Deuteronomy 34 is wholly obvious, and does not take anything away from the authority, inspiration, integrity, and reliability of the Scripture. On the other hand, the view that "Cyrus" in Isaiah 44:24-45:7 is a gloss does bring into question for me in this particular instance the trustworthiness of God's predictive prophecy. We will look at this a bit later in the Book of Daniel as well. But let it suffice to say now that for me, for whatever that is worth, I lean rather heavily on the view that "Cyrus" was mentioned by name, through Isaiah, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and is an affirmation not only of God's sovereign power, but also of the fact that He not only knows, but has ordered the events of time to fulfill His plans and purposes! Oswald T. Allis makes the following comment on this matter:

Thus we conclude that the most striking and significant features of the poem favour the view that while this utterance was significant in and of itself, it was chiefly significant in view of the exceptional circumstance under which it was spoken, i.e., in view of its *early date*. The chronological arrangement of the poem assigns the restoration and Cyrus to the future. The perspective of the poem, together with the abrupt change of person in the second strophe, argues that this future is a *remote* future. And finally the carefully constructed double climax attaches a significance to the definiteness of the utterance which is most easily accounted for if this future was so remote that a definite disclosure concerning it would be of extraordinary importance.¹⁸

¹⁸Oswald T. Allis, "The Transcendence of Jehovah, God of Israel," *Biblical and Theological Studies* (May, 1912), 628.

Daniel

The other Old Testament prophecy that is of great significance for us is the book of Daniel. As I pointed out earlier, there are those who believe that Daniel was written some time during the 2nd century BC due to its incredible accuracy in delineating the kingdoms of Persia, Greece under Alexander the Great, and then the division of Alexander's kingdom, but in particular the incessant warfare and intrigue between the Ptolemies of Egypt and the Seleucids of Syria – the kingdoms of the South and the North respectively as described by Daniel. These two kingdoms were under two of the four kings among whom Alexander's empire was divided after his death in 323 at the premature age of 33. Thus, in 321 when the Empire was divided, Ptolemy I Soter was given Egypt, and Seleucus I Nicator was given the territory of Babylon, which included modern day Syria. From that point forward, up to the mid-second century BC, the Ptolemies and the Seleucids were in constant conflict over the region of Palestine, but then, after the Hasmonean revolt against the Seleucids, which began in 167 BC, the land of Israel once again came back into the hands of the Jews. The Jewish independence lasted until 63 BC when the Roman general Pompey conquered Jerusalem, and Judea became a Roman protectorate.

The time period with which Daniel is dealing with in particular in chapter 11 ranges from the following dates:

- (1) The four Persian kings mention in 11:2: Cambyses (529-522); Pseudo-Smerdis (522-521); Darius I Hystaspes/Darius the Great (521-486); Xerxes (486-463, who is also known as Ahasuerus in the Book of Esther).
- (2) Alexander the Great's years of rule in 11:3 (336-323).
- (3) The division of Alexander's empire between his four generals in 11:4: Cassander – Macedonia; Lysimachus – Thrace; Seleucus – Babylon; Ptolemy – Egypt (321-100 BC).
- (4) The conflict between the Ptolemies and the Seleucids in 11:5-45 (321-164 BC).

Thus, as you look at the above timetable involved in this chapter of prophecy, not to mention the detailed events described, it is easy to see why some would regard this portion of Daniel not as prophecy, but rather as history, written by someone looking back

at what has happened. However, the question is once again posed to us, “Is God a God of prophecy in minute details, as well as an overall view, or, is He as limited as we are in being able to know what the future holds?” With regard to this last point, there has been a theological development called Open Theism, which for some people is new, but in actuality, it has been around for a long time, just in different packages. The following is a description of Open Theism and its weaknesses:

Open Theism – The Definition

Open Theism is a theological position that attempts to explain the concept of God’s foreknowledge. The essential question of Open Theism is, “Does God know the future?” For nearly 2000 years of church history, the answer has been almost universally, “Yes! Of course God knows the future.” Open Theists today, however, claim that this view of God’s foreknowledge is based more on philosophy than the actual teaching of Scripture.

Open Theism – The Scriptures

A verse of Scripture that Open Theism often points to is Genesis 6:6 (KJV), “And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at his heart.” The argument goes like this -- God did not know how wicked mankind would become, therefore He “repented,” wishing that He had never made man. The problem with this interpretation is this: the fact that God was grieved at the wickedness of humanity does not indicate He did not know it would happen. It is entirely logical that God could know something was going to occur, yet still be saddened when it did in fact occur. Further, if God did not know how wicked humanity would become, why would He provide Jesus as the sacrificial lamb “before the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8)?

Another common verse in Open Theism is Genesis 22:12 (NIV), “‘Do not lay a hand on the boy,’ He said. ‘Do not do anything to him. **Now I know that you fear God**, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.’” In Genesis 22:2, God had told Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. In verse 12, it seems like God did not know whether Abraham would obey Him or not. Is this accurate? If God did not know that Abraham was willing to sacrifice Isaac, why would God have sent the angel to stop him ([Genesis 22:11](#))? Why would God have prepared a ram ahead of time ([Genesis 22:13](#))? Abraham had obeyed everything God had ever told him to do. Why would God doubt Abraham’s obedience for this command? God knew absolutely what Abraham would do. God commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac to “stretch” Abraham’s faith, and to give a powerful example of the sacrifice God already knew He would make -- His Son, Jesus Christ.

A third “proof-text” for Open Theism is Jeremiah 7:31 (see also [Jeremiah 19:5](#) and [Jeremiah 32:35](#)), “They have built the high places of Topheth in the Valley of Ben Hinnom to burn their sons and daughters in the fire -- something I did not command, nor did it enter my mind.” According to Open Theism, God did not know that the Israelites would practice these evil acts. However, that is not what Jeremiah 7:31 is saying. The meaning is this -- God never commanded the

Israelites to do these things. . .and it never even entered God's mind that the Israelites should do these things. If God did not know ahead of time, why would He have commanded against it some 800 years earlier ([Deuteronomy 18:10](#))?

The overarching thesis of Open Theism is this --

1. God gave human beings a free will.
2. If God knows the future, human beings cannot truly be free.
3. Therefore, God cannot know the future.

It is a frequent misunderstanding that Open Theism denies God's sovereignty and/or omniscience. While some more extreme elements of Open Theism may deny God's sovereignty, the majority of Open Theists do not. Open Theism claims to believe in God's omniscience by arguing that the future is unknowable, therefore God knows everything that is possible to be known.

Open Theism – The Correction

The primary failure of Open Theism is that it is an attempt to understand an infinite God with a finite mind. Yes, God has given mankind a "free will." Yes, God is absolutely sovereign and knows the future. These two truths seem contradictory, but in the mind of God, they are not. The only contradiction is in our failure to comprehend God and His plan.

Here are a few Scriptures and concepts that clearly demonstrate that Open Theism is unbiblical:

Scriptures:

[Psalm 139:4](#), "You know what I am going to say even **before** I say it, LORD"

[Psalm 139:16](#), "You saw me **before** I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed."

Concepts:

How could God make so many exact predictions about Jesus Christ if He does not know the future?

How could God guarantee our salvation if He does not know the future?

How could Jesus promise that He would return if He does not know the future?
(<http://www.allaboutgod.com/open-theism.htm>)

Open Theism, therefore, would be the conservative approach to disbelieving that God could give such detailed accounts of future events, whereas the liberal view would simply be they don't believe in divine, supernatural prophecy in any form. Thus, for the liberal,

Daniel 11 is merely a historical reckoning of events put into a prophetic format for whatever effect those writing the Book of Daniel wanted to convey (e.g., a belief in a supernatural God who is in control of the universe and all in it for an ultimate, divine plan and purpose, etc.). Therefore, as we look at the book of Daniel as a whole, here too we must realize that the same question is before us with Daniel as it was with Isaiah, “Can God really and truly give detailed, prophetic accounts of the future, or is this simply men writing in a manner from a historical perspective in an attempt to portray God as a powerful all-knowing being who has an eternal plan and purpose, and He is working that purpose out in His own way, manner, and time?” Now once again, we need to be careful that we do not delegitimize real and genuine questions about times, authorship, historical settings, transmission of scripture, etc., but we must also be equally careful that we do not embrace and use as a grid for our study and research the idea that God is no greater than our mind and reasoning abilities, as well as our power to do and accomplish things. If we do the latter, then we in essence make ourselves out to be God, and God is made out to be us! This brings us all the way back to the initial temptation in the Garden where the Serpent lured Eve into thinking she could be “like God, knowing good and evil”:

Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?"² And the woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat;³ but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, lest you die.'"⁴ And the serpent said to the woman, "You surely shall not die!"⁵ "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."⁶ When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings. (Genesis 3:1-7)

As we read the above, always keep in mind that the innate desire we have toward self-deification is always there, and especially is that true with regard to becoming “wise.” The verb in that phrase literally means to “cause oneself to have understanding and insight.” However, it was a lie then, and so too is it a deceptive, self-deifying lie today to believe that we are God, and God is no greater than our own reasoning abilities.

Therefore, as we look at chapter 11 of Daniel, we want to carefully analyze the personalities, the dates, and what is being said is going to happen that will affect human history, and in turn be in synchronization with God's overall prophetic plan for His purpose and end. It is always an amazing thing to see how God works in and through the most minute of details that work together in a conjunctive manner in order to affect major and world changing events. For example, a French newspaper man named Theodore Herzl, who was Jewish, was moved by the baseless accusation against a Jewish, French military officer, Alfred Dreyfus, into beginning the Zionist movement, which led to the ultimate reestablishment of the nation of Israel on May 14, 1948. This is an incredible example of how God fulfills His prophetic plan and purpose by using those people and groups of people who the world views as meaningless and unimportant. Thus, Paul's assessment of who and what God works through is of vital significance for us today and forever:

For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And the cleverness of the clever I will set aside." 20 Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not *come to* know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. 22 For indeed Jews ask for signs, and Greeks search for wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, 24 but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 26 ¶ For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; 27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, 28 and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are, 29 that no man should boast before God. 30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, 31 that, just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord." (I Corinthians 1:18-31)

The following is the analysis of Daniel 11, and we will look at in sections.

1) **Daniel 11:1-4** – In this passage, the angel of revelation is speaking to Daniel, and he begins by giving a specific date as to when this prophetic revelation began to be

unfolded: “In the first year of Darius the Mede, . . .” which would be in 539 with the fall of Babylon as Darius conquered Babylon. Then begins the predictive prophecy of what will occur:

a) “three more kings are going to arise in Persia. Then a fourth will gain far more riches than all of *them*.”

- (1) Cambyses (529-522)
- (2) Pseudo-Smerdis (522-521)
- (3) Darius I Hystaspes (521-486)
- (4) Xerxes I (486-465)

Under Xerxes, the Persian Empire launched a disastrous attack against the Greeks as the following quote describes:

According to Daniel, the climax of Persian rulers came with Xerxes I who in secular history used his great riches and a period of some four years to gather a great army amounting to hundreds of thousands, one of the largest armies in the ancient world. The expedition which he launched in 480 BC against Greece was disastrous, however, and Xerxes never recovered. The Ahasuerus of Esther 1 may be identified with Xerxes I, and the ill-fated expedition against Greece may have occurred between chapters 1 and 2 of Esther. Details on the Persian Empire are not given here because these are covered adequately in the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, insofar as they related to the people of Israel and the plan of God, and these records are supplemented by the prophetic books Haggai, and Malachi. The revelation turns immediately to details of the third empire not given elsewhere in the Word of God. (John F. Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation*, [Chicago: Moody Press, 1971], 256)

b) “And a mighty king will arise, and he will rule with great authority and do as he pleases.” This is obviously referring to Alexander the Great of Greece. Alexander lived from 356-323, and he was king from 336-323. Clearly, this is about conquering Persia and dismembering its Empire:

From his accession Alexander had set his mind on the Persian expedition. He had grown up to the idea. Moreover, he needed the wealth of Persia if he was to maintain the army built by Philip and pay off the 500 talents he owed. The exploits of the Ten Thousand, Greek soldiers of fortune, and of Agesilaus of Sparta, in successfully campaigning in Persian territory had revealed the vulnerability of the Persian Empire. With a good cavalry force Alexander could expect to defeat any Persian army. . . After visiting Ilium (Troy), a romantic gesture inspired by Homer, he confronted his first Persian army, led by

three satraps, at the Granicus (modern Kocabaş) River, near the Sea of Marmara (May/June 334). The Persian plan to tempt Alexander across the river and kill him in the melee almost succeeded; but the Persian line broke, and Alexander's victory was complete. (“Alexander the Great,” *Encyclopædia Britannica, Encyclopaedia Britannica Ultimate Reference Suite*, [Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, 2010])

c) “But as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom will be broken up and parceled out toward the four points of the compass, though not to his *own* descendants, nor according to his authority which he wielded; for his sovereignty will be uprooted and *given* to others besides them.” Upon Alexander’s death, his kingdom was divided between four of his leading generals: Cassander – Macedonia; Lysimachus – Thrace; Seleucus – Babylon; Ptolemy – Egypt.

2) **Daniel 11:5-13** – In this section, the prophecy gets very specific.

a) verse 5 – “the king of the South” is referring to Ptolemy I Soter of Egypt (323-285); “along with *one* of his princes who will gain ascendancy over him and obtain dominion” is referring to Seleucus I Nicator of Syria:

Seleucus had fled from Antigonus of Babylon and was temporarily associated with Ptolemy I. They combined their strength and defeated Antigonus, thus paving the way for Seleucus to gain control of the entire area from Asia Minor to India; and in time, he became stronger than Ptolemy who ruled Egypt. (Walvoord, 258)

b) verse 6 – “the daughter of the king of the South” is referring to Berenice, daughter of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 BC), who married Antiochus II Theos of Syria (261-246 BC) around 252 BC. In order for this marriage to occur, Ptolemy had demanded that Antiochus divorce his current wife, Laodiceia. However, as verse 6 states, this union did not work, nor last:

Within a few years of the marriage, Ptolemy died; and Antiochus then took back his wife, Laodiceia. To gain revenge, however, Laodiceia murdered her husband as well as his Egyptian wife, Berenice, and the infant son of Antiochus and Berenice. The reference to “the one who sired her” is, of course, to Ptolemy II whose death precipitated the murders which followed. (Walvoord, 259)

c) verses 7-9 – “But one of the descendants of her line will arise in his place, and he will come against *their* army and enter the fortress of the king of the North, and he will deal with them and display *great* strength. 8 "And also their gods with their metal images *and* their precious vessels of silver and gold he will take into captivity to Egypt, and he on his part will refrain from *attacking* the king of the North for *some* years. 9 "Then the latter will enter the realm of the king of the South, but will return to his *own* land.” Ptolemy III Euergetes (246-221 BC) came to power in Egypt and he defeated the Syrian king, Seleucus Callinicus (247-226 BC). When Ptolemy III won, he in turn brought into Egypt some of the royal family as hostages, along with some of their idols and gold and silver (Walvoord, 259). Ptolemy III was the brother of Berenice, thus, “one of the descendants of her line.” The following is a quote from Jerome’s commentary on Daniel, written sometime between 400-420 AD:

After the murder of Berenice and the death of her father, Ptolemy Philadelphus, in Egypt, her brother, who was also named Ptolemy and surnamed Euergetes, succeeded to the throne as the third of his dynasty, being in fact an offshoot of the same plant and a bud of the same root as she was, inasmuch as he was her brother. He came up with a great army and advanced into the province of the king of the North, that is Seleucus Callinicus, who together with his mother Laodice was ruling in Syria, and abused them, and not only did he seize Syria but also took Cilicia and the remoter regions beyond the Euphrates and nearly all of Asia as well. And then, when he heard that a rebellion was afoot in Egypt, he ravaged the kingdom of Seleucus and carried off as booty forty thousand talents of silver, and also precious vessels and images of the gods to the amount of two and a half thousand. Among them were the same images which Cambyses had brought to Persia at the time when he conquered Egypt. The Egyptian people were indeed devoted to idolatry, for when he had brought back their gods to them after so many years, they called him Euergetes (Benefactor). And he himself retained possession of Syria, but he handed over Cilicia to his friend, Antiochus, that he might govern it, and the provinces beyond the Euphrates he handed over to Xanthippus, another general.

http://www.ccel.org/ccel/pearse/morefathers/files/jerome_daniel_02_text.htm

The statement, “Then the latter will enter the realm of the king of the South, but will return to his *own* land,” is referring to the fact that Seleucus Callinicus did mount an invasion of Ptolemaic Egypt in 240 BC, but he was soundly defeated and returned to Syria. This, therefore, was a picture of the back and forth warring that was to continue between the Seleucid Syrian North and the Ptolemaic Egyptian South, of which

Israel/Palestine was in the middle. This may be also seen as setting the stage for the intense persecution inflicted upon the inhabitants of Israel by Antiochus Epiphanes less than a hundred years later because of Israel's supposed ties to Ptolemaic Egypt.

d) verses 10-13 – “And his sons will mobilize and assemble a multitude of great forces; and one of them will keep on coming and overflow and pass through, that he may again wage war up to his *very* fortress. 11 "And the king of the South will be enraged and go forth and fight with the king of the North. Then the latter will raise a great multitude, but *that* multitude will be given into the hand of the *former*. 12 "When the multitude is carried away, his heart will be lifted up, and he will cause tens of thousands to fall; yet he will not prevail. 13 "For the king of the North will again raise a greater multitude than the former, and after an interval of some years he will press on with a great army and much equipment.” The sons of Seleucus Callinicus, however, were moved to continue the Seleucid attack on Ptolemaic Egypt. Thus, verses 10-13 are describing the conflict between Seleucus Callinicus' grandson, Antiochus III the Great (223-187), and the Egyptian ruler, Ptolemy Philopater (221-203). Thus, Antiochus III sought to regain lost territory in Palestine to the Ptolemies:

The latter attempted to turn the tide of aggressive power between the Seleucids and the Ptolemies, beginning in 219 by recapturing Seleucia. He invaded Palestine and conquered a large part of it. “But the southern king . . .”: Ptolemy IV (221–203) in due course sent an army to engage with Antiochus III at Raphia, the Egyptian stronghold on the border with Palestine, in 217. According to Polybius (*Histories* 5.79), Antiochus took 62,000 infantry, 6,000 cavalry, and 102 elephants into battle against Ptolemy's 70,000 infantry, 5,000 cavalry, and 73 elephants. Antiochus lost over 14,000 men in defeat, but Ptolemy, despite the encouragement, still lacked his father's instinct for warmaking. He was content with victory and the regaining of Palestine and Phoenicia, and did not press his advantage, making peace with Antiochus. . . over the next fourteen years Antiochus campaigned in Turkey and the east and regained much of the old Seleucid empire, winning for himself the title “the Great.” (J. E. Goldingay, vol. 30, *Word Biblical Commentary : Daniel* [Dallas: Word Incorporated, 2002], 297)

Thus, we once again see the prophecy of verses 10-13 fulfilled as it described this outcome.

3) **Daniel 11:14-19** – “Now in those times many will rise up against the king of the South; the violent ones among your people will also lift themselves up in order to fulfill the vision, but they will fall down. 15 Then the king of the North will come, cast up a siege mound, and capture a well-fortified city; and the forces of the South will not stand *their ground*, not even their choicest troops, for there will be no strength to make a stand. 16 But he who comes against him will do as he pleases, and no one will *be able to* withstand him; he will also stay *for a time* in the Beautiful Land, with destruction in his hand. 17 And he will set his face to come with the power of his whole kingdom, bringing with him a proposal of peace which he will put into effect; he will also give him the daughter of women to ruin it. But she will not take a stand *for him* or be on his side. 18 "Then he will turn his face to the coastlands and capture many. But a commander will put a stop to his scorn against him; moreover, he will repay him for his scorn. 19 "So he will turn his face toward the fortresses of his own land, but he will stumble and fall and be found no more.”

After Antiochus had regained the former territory in Turkey for the Seleucids, he then turned his forces against Egypt once again:

Then he raised an even larger army in alliance with Philip V of Macedon to invade the Ptolemaic kingdom. . . . there were native Egyptian rebellions against Ptolemaic rule from 207 (a consequence, Polybius [5.107] suggests, of the encouragement of native Egyptian morale by the Egyptian victory over Antiochus), and Ptolemy IV died in mysterious circumstances, to be succeeded by his infant son Ptolemy V (203–181). The country was actually ruled by Agathocles, a chief minister under Ptolemy IV; his oppressive regency provoked insurrection in Egypt, and his assassination. But the “many” may also refer to the soldiers of Antiochus and Philip. (Ibid.)

Thus, we again see the conflict being described in specific detail in predictive prophecy, and men, with no relation to the true God, through their own lust for power and gain, are the tools God uses to bring about the prophecy’s fulfillment, just as with Pharaoh:

Then Moses said to God, "Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I shall say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?" 14 And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" 15 And God, furthermore, said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of

Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations. 16 "Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, "I am indeed concerned about you and what has been done to you in Egypt. 17 "So I said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, to a land flowing with milk and honey.'" 18 "And they will pay heed to what you say; and you with the elders of Israel will come to the king of Egypt, and you will say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. So now, please, let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.' 19 "But I know that the king of Egypt will not permit you to go, except under compulsion. 20 "So I will stretch out My hand, and strike Egypt with all My miracles which I shall do in the midst of it; and after that he will let you go. 21 "And I will grant this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be that when you go, you will not go empty-handed. 22 "But every woman shall ask of her neighbor and the woman who lives in her house, articles of silver and articles of gold, and clothing; and you will put them on your sons and daughters. Thus you will plunder the Egyptians." (Exodus 3:13-22)

Thus, we can see that from the very outset of God's leadership of His people out of Egypt, He knew all that was going to happen, as well as how it was going to happen, and the account of the Exodus is one of the best biblically historical examples we have.

As we look back at this section in Daniel, we also see in verse 14 a reference to the "violent ones among your people," and this points out what was going on within the Jewish community itself:

the period was one of strife within the Jewish community itself. The high priest held supreme authority in both political and religious affairs, but Onias II had been forced to share de facto political power with his brother-in-law Tobias, and the Tobiads became significant political forces in Jerusalem. The Oniads were inclined to be anti-Egyptian, the Tobiads to be pro-Egyptian, though there was also conflict over policy within the Tobiad family . . . The assertiveness of the "wild men" (בני פריצים) has often been taken to refer to Jews—presumably Oniads—joining in that resistance to the southern king which v 14a refers to. But it is odd to say that they failed or "fell." . . . Daniel would be implying a conscious or unconscious attempt to bring about the fulfillment of God's plan expressed in these scriptures (i.e., perhaps Ezek. 12:22-27; Hab. 2:2-3; Isa. 19:19-22 – my comment), but one that fails, because God's time has not yet come; the present vision goes on to indicate the further events that must take place before that End. (Ibid.)

As we look at this analysis of verse 14, it is so important that we take close head to what it is presenting. The “violent ones” are acting out in their own perception of what and how they believe prophecy is being fulfilled. However, they do not know, and thus, they “fall down,” or fail. This has tremendous implications for us today, as we see so many who are trying to interpret present day events as fulfilling specific prophecies, and thereby, for some, they believe they are enabled to have an idea of when Jesus is going to return.

Over the past 2000 years, there have been numerous individuals and groups who have arisen claiming they have been enabled to interpret when the “end is coming and Christ is returning.” However, in each and every instance, they have ALL BEEN PROVEN WRONG! I think it is absolutely essential that we keep in mind two primary passages of Scripture:

But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. (Matthew 24:36)

And so when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" 7 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; . . . (Acts 6:6-7)

It is clear, therefore, that Jesus is saying that NO PERSON can know, nor figure out, nor can he or she accurately predict, based on some “special revelation,” or on some “special, insightful understanding” of biblical prophecy that no one else has, when Jesus is returning! In my own lifetime, I have seen numerous attempts and claims that people can, but they have ALL FAILED! However, what we are to do is spelled out in Acts 1:8: “but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”

Consequently, that which we need to be absorbed with is not trying to guess and calculate when Jesus is returning, BECAUSE WE CANNOT! Our focus needs to be proclaiming the Gospel to all we can, whenever we can, which includes the fact that Jesus is coming back, but we also need to be “committed to the death” to stand for Him, His liberating truth, and the freedom we have in Him.

In verse 15, we read of the “king of the North” who will come against the “forces of the South,” and this is referring to an assault by Antiochus III in 199 BC against the Egyptian garrison in Caesarea Philippi, which was under the leadership of the Egyptian General, Scopas. Scopas was defeated and had to retreat northwest to Sidon, which was an Egyptian stronghold on the Mediterranean coast. Antiochus laid siege to Sidon, and by 198, Scopas had to surrender. Thus, 11:15 was completely fulfilled through this action.

Verses 16-19 are clearly laid out in an orderly, step by step manner as to what was going to happen, and in the following historical account, we read of an incredible fulfillment of God’s predictive prophecy that was accurately stated and completely brought to pass through His sovereign plan and purpose:

Antiochus thus gained firm control of Palestine and Phoenicia, including Judea, and also captured some of the areas on the coast of Asia Minor that had been subject to Egyptian rule: Cilicia, Lycia, and Caria. He was in a position to invade Egypt itself and destroy the Ptolemaic empire, but he feared Roman intervention. Instead he made peace with Egypt in 197, betrothing his daughter Cleopatra to Ptolemy V. He hoped to further his designs on Egypt through her, but she (Egypt’s first Cleopatra) became perfectly loyal to her husband and new homeland and encouraged an Egyptian alliance with Rome, which frustrated Antiochus’s continuing designs on the Ptolemaic area of the old empire of Alexander. “So he will turn his attention to the sea lands ...” (v 18): in the meantime, Antiochus resumed his attacks on Egyptian-held areas of Asia Minor and went on to invade Macedon, Thrace, and Greece itself. But in 191 the Romans defeated him at Thermopylae, and again decisively at Magnesia near Smyrna a year later, ending his pretensions to power in the west. Antiochus became a vassal of Rome and his younger son, the later Antiochus IV, was taken to Rome as a hostage. “So he will turn his attention to the strongholds in his own land ...” (v 19): Antiochus thus returned to Syria; he was assassinated at Elymais in 187 while attempting to pillage the treasury of Bel, one of his own gods, to pay the tribute imposed on him by the Romans after their victory. (Ibid., 298)

Thus, once again, we see how the greed for power and material gain in the life of Antiochus III was the driving force which God used to bring about the fulfillment of His prophecy, and it is this self-deifying drive in men that God ALWAYS uses to accomplish His plans and purpose (I Cor. 1:18-31).

4) **Daniel 11:20-28** – “Then in his place one will arise who will send an oppressor through the Jewel of *his* kingdom; yet within a few days he will be shattered, though neither in anger nor in battle. 21 "And in his place a despicable person will arise, on whom the honor of kingship has not been conferred, but he will come in a time of tranquility and seize the kingdom by intrigue. 22 "And the overflowing forces will be flooded away before him and shattered, and also the prince of the covenant. 23 "And after an alliance is made with him he will practice deception, and he will go up and gain power with a small *force of* people. 24 "In a time of tranquility he will enter the richest *parts of* the realm, and he will accomplish what his fathers never did, nor his ancestors; he will distribute plunder, booty, and possessions among them, and he will devise his schemes against strongholds, but *only* for a time. 25 "And he will stir up his strength and courage against the king of the South with a large army; so the king of the South will mobilize an extremely large and mighty army for war; but he will not stand, for schemes will be devised against him. 26 "And those who eat his choice food will destroy him, and his army will overflow, but many will fall down slain. 27 "As for both kings, their hearts will be *intent* on evil, and they will speak lies *to each other* at the same table; but it will not succeed, for the end is still *to come* at the appointed time. 28 "Then he will return to his land with much plunder; but his heart will be *set* against the holy covenant, and he will take action and *then* return to his *own* land.”

Upon the assassination of Antiochus III, his son, Seleucus IV Philopator (187-175) became king. The word “oppressor” in verse 20 is referring to “tax collector,” and this person’s name was Heliodrus, who, among other forms of extracting taxes, tried to raid the treasury of the Temple in Jerusalem. However, as Heliodrus began to enter the Temple, the power of God came upon him and those with him, and he was completely overpowered to the point he had to be carried out. Onias the High Priest prayed for him, God healed him, and Heliodrus returned to Seleucus and told him to leave the Temple alone (II Maccabees 3:22-40). Thus, even in the early 2nd century BC, God was still protecting His people in supernatural ways, and this is one of those accounts, as well as a fulfillment of His prophecy with Daniel, some 350 years earlier!

After this failed attempt to secure funds, Seleucus IV was ultimately assassinated in 175 through the efforts of Heliodrus, and perhaps even Seleucus’ younger brother,

Antiochus IV (175-164 BC), who conveniently was on his way back to Antioch from Rome. The following is taken from the *Syrian Wars* by Roman Historian, Appian:

[3 July 187] Afterward, on the death of Antiochus the Great, his son [Seleucus](#) succeeded him. He gave his son [Demetrius](#) as a hostage in place of his brother [Antiochus](#) [2]. [3 September 175] When the latter arrived at [Athens](#) on his way home, Seleucus was assassinated as the result of a conspiracy of a certain Heliodorus, one of the court officers [3]. When Heliodorus sought to possess himself of the government he was driven out by Eumenes [II Soter of Pergamon] and Attalus, who installed Antiochus therein in order to secure his good-will; for, by reason of certain bickerings, they had already grown suspicious of the Romans. (*The Syrian Wars*, Appian – 11:8 [45])

Thus, the reference to his being “shattered, though not in anger nor in battle,” is a reference to his assassination by Heliodorus, and once again, this is all substantiated historically!

Verse 21 is referring to Antiochus IV (175-164), who embraced the title of “Epiphanes,” or “Manifest/Glorious One,” for himself:

Beginning with verse 21, a major section of this chapter is devoted to a comparatively obscure Syrian ruler who was on the throne from 175 to 164 BC, previously alluded to as the “little horn” (Dan. 8:9-14, 23-25). . . . From the standpoint of Scripture and the revelation by the angel to Daniel, this was the most important feature of the entire third empire. The reasons for the prominence of Antiochus IV Epiphanes were his desecration of the Jewish temple and altar, and his bitter persecution of the Jewish people. . . . By comparison with Seleucus IV Philopator, his predecessor, he is described as a “vile person.” The title Epiphanes, meaning “glorious,” was a title which Antiochus gave himself, in keeping with his desire to be regarded as god. The description here given is God’s viewpoint of him because of his immoral life, persecution, and hatred of the people of God. His life was characterized by intrigue, expediency, and lust for power in which honor was always secondary. (Walvoord, 264)

Verses 22-23 are referring to the intrigue against him from Egypt. The term, “overflowing forces” is most likely referring to the military forces arrayed against him, including those of Heliodorus and later the Egyptians:

When Antiochus (*IV*) learned that the Egyptians were about to attack him, he invaded Egypt in 170 BC and defeated the Egyptians in a battle which occurred between Mt. Casius and Pelusium, an area on the southeast sea coast of

Medeterranean Sea, halfway between Gaza and the Nile delta. The battle area is today called Ras Baron. (Ibid., 265)

The reference to the “prince of the covenant” is referring to the High Priest at the time, Onias (190-175 BC), who was ultimately murdered by Antiochus in 172 BC after he had already replaced Onias as High Priest with his brother, Jason, in 175, as a result of Jason paying Antiochus more money. The refernce in verse 23 to the “small force of people” is referring to his exploitation and manipulation of the leadership in Jerusalem:

Thus while Antiochus began with only the support of “a small group” (v 23), in Judea he won over the “powerful ones of a province,” the Tobiads and Jason, Onias’ brother. They furthered his cause in Jerusalem; he made it possible for them to hold both civil and religious power there; and it is presumably they who are the beneficiaries of his well-known liberality on the basis of plunder. (Goldingay, 300)

Verses 24-27 are describing in general the method and manner of Antiochus’ rule. According to verse 24, therefore, he robbed through excessive taxation “the riches *parts* of the realm,” and unlike his father, Seleucus IV who used his money primarily for personal gain, Antiochus IV used his money to buy the favor and support from others. In addition, Antiochus would attack his opponents at a “time of tranquility” when they were not even expecting an assault – thus, he began to “accomplish what his fathers never did, nor his ancestors.” The following describes the events of verses 25-27:

There now begins a more detailed account of Antiochus’s involvement with Egypt. “He will assert his strength ...”: in 170 b.c. an Egyptian army set off to attempt to recapture Palestine. According to 2 Macc 4:21–22 Antiochus became aware of the need to defend Palestine; indeed, according to 1 Macc 1:16 he had designs on Egypt that mirrored Ptolemy’s on the Seleucid realm. Antiochus defeated the Egyptian army, captured the border fortress of Pelusium, entered Egypt, took his nephew Ptolemy VI prisoner, and occupied much of the country (1 Macc 1:17–19). “Plans will be devised against him: people who eat his provisions will break him”: in some sense Ptolemy was the victim of treachery. Perhaps the reference is to people who betrayed Pelusium to Antiochus, or perhaps to Ptolemy’s advisors who brought about the Egyptian defeat by urging the attack on Palestine, his capture by urging him to flee from Antiochus, and his deposition by then crowning his brother as Ptolemy VII in Alexandria in 169 b.c. “The two kings ...” (v 27): Antiochus and Ptolemy VI were now united in desiring to regain the throne for the latter, as Antiochus’s puppet. Both are

declared to be serving their own interests and deceiving each other but not achieving their conflicting ultimate purposes. (Ibid., 310)

Once again, we see a reference to the “end is still to come at the appointed time,” and this, without any equivocation, is telling us that God is in control, not us, and we will not be able to ‘figure it out’ because God alone has that timetable (Acts 1:6-8)!

Verse 28 is of great significance because it is substantiated by historical record in I Maccabees 1:20-28 and II Maccabees 5:11-17. In these passages, we are told of the horrendous atrocities against the Jewish people, killing thousands and pillaging the Temple on his return in 169 BC.

5) **Daniel 11:29-35** – “At the appointed time he will return and come into the South, but this last time it will not turn out the way it did before. 30 "For ships of Kittim will come against him; therefore he will be disheartened, and will return and become enraged at the holy covenant and take action; so he will come back and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant. 31 "And forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the abomination of desolation. 32 "And by smooth *words* he will turn to godlessness those who act wickedly toward the covenant, but the people who know their God will display strength and take action. 33 "And those who have insight among the people will give understanding to the many; yet they will fall by sword and by flame, by captivity and by plunder, for *many* days. 34 "Now when they fall they will be granted a little help, and many will join with them in hypocrisy. 35 "And some of those who have insight will fall, in order to refine, purge, and make them pure, until the end time; because *it is still to come* at the appointed time.”

The above Scripture in verses 29-30 is painting a picture of the beginning of the end of Antiochus IV. He, like all others, both before and after him who see themselves as ‘God’, come to the eventual place of realizing they are not God, but rather are mere, flawed, weakened men, who meet the same fate as all others – death and judgment! So too with Antiochus IV as the above Scripture begins to indicate. The following is a historical analysis of the above described events:

“At the set time”: the momentous, then painful, then horrifying events to follow are all marked as within the control of God. “He will again invade the south ...”: after Antiochus’s departure from Egypt the two Ptolemies had made peace and agreed to reign jointly. In 168 Antiochus invaded again, but this time with disastrous results. “Ships from the west ...” (v 30): Gaius Popillius Laenas, heading a delegation from Rome—to which Egypt had appealed in connection with the events of 169—intercepted Antiochus on his way to Alexandria and ordered him off Egyptian territory (Appian 11.11 [66]). It was a turning point in Roman history, a mark of the extent to which internationally the period from 200 to 150 is the story of the extension of Roman dominion in the Hellenistic empire. (Ibid., 301)

The reference in verse 30 to the “ships of Kittim” is clearly referring to Rome. Thus, Antiochus was humiliated by this surrender to Roman might, and he took out his anger on Judea as he returned back to Antioch.

The description of this destruction and all that followed with it is depicted with incredible accuracy from the end of verse 30 through verse 31. Indeed, what Antiochus did is the prototype for what the future Anti-Christ will do during the Great Tribulation period. Therefore, this is the “Abomination of Desolation” that Jesus was referring to in Matthew 24:15 that will be the ultimate sign of the Anti-Christ’s rule, and his assumption of power is clearly described in II Thessalonians 2:1-12. However, what Antiochus Epiphanes did will be dwarfed by what the Anti-Christ will do, for the Anti-Christ will be the literal ruler of this world system for a brief period, whereas Antiochus was only ruling over the area of Palestine and Syria. Below is a description of what he did to the Temple and Judea as a whole:

In the process of his opposition to the Jews, Antiochus polluted the holy altar in the temple by offering a sow upon the altar and forbidding the continuance of the daily sacrifices (cf. I Mac. 1:44-54). He also issued orders that the Jews should cease their worship and erected in the holy place an idol, probably the image of Zeus Olympius. This represents placing “the abomination that maketh desolate,” mentioned in verse 31 to which Christ referred in Matthew 24:15.

This desecration of the temple, in opposition to the Jewish faith, precipitated the Maccabean revolt which was cruelly suppressed by Antiochus with tens of thousands of Israelites perishing. The entire series of incidents, however, including the persecution of Israel, the desecration of their temple, and the stopping of the daily sacrifice, although fulfilled historically in Antiochus’ persecution, is also prophetic of the future persecution of Israel which will result in the great tribulation. (Walvoord, 268)

Verses 32-35 are describing the ensuing turmoil in Judah following these acts and laws by Antiochus, and all of this was the catalyst for the Maccabean revolt, which lasted from 166-160 BC. In December, 164 BC, the Jews regained control of the Temple, cleansed it, and thus began the celebration of Hanukkah even to this day. However, during this whole process that led up to the Maccabean revolt and beyond, many Jews compromised in order to stay alive, and that is what these verses are about:

The continued opposition of Antiochus to the Jewish faith is prophesied in verse 32, indicating how he attempts to corrupt them; but the strong reaction of the Jewish people is indicated in the expression *but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits*. The resulting conflict, however, brought much harm on the people of Israel; and though it caused to some extent a spiritual revival, many were killed, as indicated in verse 33. Some of the Jews succumbed to the flattery of the king and defected from their fellow Jews as they revolted against Antiochus (e.g., the Maccabean revolt – my note). It was a time of purging and separation of the true from the false, of those who were courageous from those who were fainthearted. (Ibid., 268-269)

The remaining verses of chapter 11 are dealing with the future, that is, the coming Anti-Christ who is yet to come, but he will come exactly as he is described in Daniel 7:23-27; 9:24-27; 11:36-45; and II Thessalonians 2:1-12. Therefore, as God has been absolutely correct in the past about the past events, so too is He correct about the future, including Acts 1:1-8. Therefore, let us not get caught up in fanciful predictions that try to calculate when Jesus' return is going to be from people who are indeed sincere, but sincerely misdirected. Rather, let us be caught up in Acts 6:8, which includes the fact that Jesus is coming again, but EVERYTHING ELSE AS WELL!

The Qumran Community

An important question that does arise about the Dead Sea Scrolls is, who were the people who occupied Qumran where the Scrolls were found? The belief that the Essenes were the inhabitants of ancient Qumran was widely accepted initially. One of the primary reasons for this assumption was and is the written accounts of Philo (10 BC – 50 AD), Pliny the Elder (23 AD – 79 AD), and Josephus (37 AD – 100 AD). However, today, there are those who question this belief, but even in the face of that criticism, the

Essene theory still holds the greatest weight until something for more convincing comes along.

The Essene beginning goes back to the Hasidic movement, which had its origin around the beginning of the 2nd century BC when Mattathias began his revolt against the Syrian/Greek authorities who were ruling Palestine at that time. After the Syrians/Greeks were defeated, however, corrupt Jewish leaders began to take religious and political power in Jerusalem, and that is when the sectarian (i.e., a separate, Jewish religious group) Essene history began as they opposed the Jerusalem leaders. They in turn chose their own leaders, including the “Teacher of Righteousness” who is referred to throughout the sectarian scrolls. Thus, Qumran, as well as other localities around Judah, became centers of their operation. Therefore, it is quite likely that John the Baptist and his disciples, as well as Jesus and His disciples, not only had contact with the Essenes, but also shared some of the same perspectives on certain matters, but there were also some striking differences.

With regard to scriptural transmission, Qumran preserved Old Testament texts that were older than any other extant copies we had up to that time in 1947, including the LXX. Thus, the DSS are a testimony to God’s preserving hand over His inspired and infallible Word of truth. I want us to look at some of the DSS texts and see just how integral they are to the Cannon of the New Testament. We have already mentioned the Isaiah Scroll, but there are some other very important texts that substantiate biblical truth in the New Testament.

One such text is the *Messianic Apocalypse*, which is listed as 4Q521 (i.e., Cave 4, in Qumran, and text # 521). The significance of this text is due to its affinity with Matthew 11:2-5:

Now when John in prison heard of the works of Christ, he sent *word* by his disciples, 3 and said to Him, "Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?" 4 And Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you hear and see: 5 the blind receive sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

In the *Messianic Apocalypse*, 4Q521, we read the following:

[the hea]vens and the earth will listen to His Messiah, and none therein will stray from the commandments of the holy ones. Seekers of the Lord, strengthen yourselves in His service! All you hopeful in (your) heart, will you not find the Lord in this? For the Lord will consider the pious (hasidim) and call the righteous by name. Over the poor His spirit will hover and will renew the faithful with His power. And He will glorify the pious on the throne of the eternal Kingdom, He who liberates the captives, restores sight to the blind, straightens the bent (Ps. 146:7–8). And f[or] ever I will clea[ve to the h]opeful and in His mercy ... And the fr[uit ...] will not be delayed for anyone and the Lord will accomplish glorious things which have never been as [He ...] For He will heal the wounded, and revive the dead and bring good news to the poor (Isa. 61:1) (Vermes, Geza: *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, Revised and extended 4th ed. [Sheffield : Sheffield Academic Press, 1995], 412-413).

The paleographic date for this text is about the beginning of the 1st century BC – i.e., around 100 – 75 BC. Thus, we have a ‘messianic vision’ that is essentially identical to that which Jesus said about Himself in quoting Isaiah 61:1: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives, And freedom to prisoners.” This is incredibly significant in that we see approximately 100 years before the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, a perspective on the coming Messiah that was exactly what He both came to do and did!

Another important DSS text is that of *4Q246*. In this text, we find a reference to the coming Messiah that is identical to the message of that the angel Gabriel delivered to Mary concerning Jesus’ birth, life, and ministry:

Col. i 1 [...] settled [up]on him and he fell before the throne 2 [...] k]ing for ever. You are angry, and have changed you 3 [...] ... your vision, and everything that shall come for ever. 4 [...] mi]ghty ones, oppression will come upon the earth 5 [...] and great slaughter in the provinces 6 [...] king of Assyria [and E]gypt 7 [...] and he will be great over the earth 8 [...] they [will d]o, and all will serve 9 [...] gr]eat will he be called and he will be designated by his name. Col. ii 1 He will be called son of God, and they will call him son of the Most High. Like the sparks 2 that you saw, so will their kingdom be; they will rule several year[s] over 3 the earth and crush everything; a people will crush another people, and a province another provi[n]ce. 4 Blank Until the people of God arises and makes everyone rest from the sword. Blank 5 His kingdom will be an eternal kingdom, and all his paths in truth. He will jud[ge] 6 the earth in truth and all will make peace. The sword will cease from the earth, 7 and all the provinces will pay him homage. The great God is his strength, 8 he will wage war for him; he will place the peoples in his hand and 9 cast them all away before him. His rule will be an eternal rule, and all the abysses

4Q246 is an Aramaic document, but the message in it is reiterated in the Gospel of Luke, a Greek document written ca. 65 AD, very likely at least one hundred and fifty years subsequent to the writing of 4Q246. Thus, we read in Luke 1:30-35:

And the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; 33 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end.' 34 And Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' 35 And the angel answered and said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God.'

This passage also recalls Jesus' statement in John 14:6: "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me." In other words, the pronouncement in 4Q246 is restated in Luke 1:30-35, and Jesus' understood this pronouncement in both to affirm what He said in John 14:6: He will be "the Son of the Most High" & "the Son of God" in Luke and 4Q246; "He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end" in Luke, and "His kingdom will be an eternal kingdom" & "His rule will be an eternal rule" in 4Q246; and "all his paths in truth. He will jud[ge] the earth in truth and all will make peace" in 4Q246. Thus, 4Q246 is very important regarding the biblical truth concerning the person of Jesus.

Another document from Qumran that has stirred interest is the 7Q5 fragment that some have labeled as a portion of Mark 6:52-53. The actual portion of the verses in the Greek is pictured below:



Mark 6:52-53 reads as follows: “For they had not understood about the loaves, but their heart was hardened. And when they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret and they were anchored.”

It is a very fascinating and interesting analysis of the fragment by which some have assumed it to be this portion of Mark. However, there are others who are not convinced it is Mark, but perhaps some other portion of Scripture. Nevertheless, those who do support this fragment as representing Mark 6:52-53 piece it together through a comparative analysis of the Greek text. The following is the Greek text:

οὐ γὰρ συνῆκαν ἐπὶ τοῖς ἄρτοις, ἀλλ’ ἦν αὐτῶν ἡ καρδία
πεπωρωμένη. Καὶ διαπεράσαντες ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν ἦλθον εἰς
Γεννησαρέτ και προσωρμίσθησαν.

For the 7Q5 fragment to be identified with Mark 6:52-53, it would need to be reconstructed in such a way that would fit with the above Greek text, and that would include a transition from some of the Greek letters above to a phonetic synonym in order to make the fit work. The following, therefore, is a suggested reconstruction in order to make the 7Q5 fragment fit with the received Greek text:

Ου γαρ συνηκαν] ε [πι τοισ αρ
Τοισ αλλ ην α] υ των η [καρδια
Πεπωρωμεν] η και τ ι [απερασ
Αντες ηλθον εισ γε] ν νη σ [αρετ
Και προσωρμισ] θ η σα [ν

The above would need to be the rendering for this 7Q5 fragment to actually be a part of Mark 6:52-53. One major difference that you will notice is that in line 3 of the fragment, the Greek letter τ has replaced the Greek letter δ in the received Greek text, and the reason given for this is that phonetically, in Palestine, the “t” sound could replace the “d” sound, and vice versa. The way this would look in the English text would be the following:

For they had not understood] a [bout the loaves, because t] **heir** [heart was
hardene] **d. And wh** [en they had crossed over, they came to the lan] **d** of
Gennes [aret and they we] **re** anchor [ed

You can see, therefore, how painstakingly difficult this analysis is. In addition, the difference between the “t” and the “d” would be similar to leaving out the “h” in “when,” and instead having “wen.”

Another important concern with this reading is that in line two, there is a serious question as to whether or not there is a Greek ν (our English “n”) connected to the Greek letters $\tau\omega$. If the Greek ν is not there, then it would be all but impossible to relate the 7Q5 fragment with Mark 6:52-53. On the other hand, if it is a ν , then the chances of this being Mark 6:52-53 are very good.

The reason for this being so significant in our History of the Bible Seminar is that if 7Q5 is a portion of Mark 6:52-53, then that would support a dating for Mark’s Gospel around 50 AD, which would also impact the dating of the other two synoptic Gospels, Matthew and Luke. In other words, this would strongly indicate a possible pre-60’s AD date for the synoptic Gospels, and that would tend to further show that the belief in the resurrection of Jesus was not a later addition that the synoptic authors perhaps contrived, but rather it was something that they gathered from the oral witness communicated to others by the original eyewitnesses, and it is likely that a number of those eyewitnesses were still alive and possible contemporaries of the synoptic authors. In fact, Luke says as much in the following passage:

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, 2 just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word have handed them down to us, 3 it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write *it* out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; 4 so that you might know the exact truth about the things you have been taught. (Luke 1:1-4)

On the other hand, if this is not a part of Mark’s Gospel, the truth of the matter is that it is entirely reasonable to assume that many Essenes became Christians, and consequently, the Gospels were quite likely a part of Qumran literature in some form.

Chapter Five:

Nag Hammadi & The New Testament

The Nag Hammadi Texts

On the western bank of the Nile River in southern Egypt is the town of Nag Hammadi, and it was here that Egyptian peasants in 1945 discovered thirteen, Gnostic codices, which have opened up to us a wealth of information about Gnosticism from first hand perspective. Prior to this discovery, the only knowledge we had of Gnosticism was what the Church Fathers wrote as apologies against Gnosticism. The one text I want to look at briefly is the *Gospel of Mary*. We are going to look at 4:25-32:

25) Peter said to him, Since you have explained everything to us, tell us this also: What is the sin of the world?

26) The Savior said There is no sin, but it is you who make sin when you do the things that are like the nature of adultery, which is called sin.

27) That is why the Good came into your midst, to the essence of every nature in order to restore it to its root.

28) Then He continued and said, That is why you become sick and die, for you are deprived of the one who can heal you.

29) He who has a mind to understand, let him understand.

30) Matter gave birth to a passion that has no equal, which proceeded from something contrary to nature. Then there arises a disturbance in its whole body.

31) That is why I said to you, Be of good courage, and if you are discouraged be encouraged in the presence of the different forms of nature.

32) He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

As you can see from this writing, there is a basic denial of sin as an existing entity. According to this ‘gospel’, sin is only what you make it to be, but in reality, it does not

exist. Thus, salvation is not based on one's sin being forgiven, but rather on realizing that you are indeed one with the 'Eternal'. This teaching is also found in Hinduism and the eightfold path of Buddhism, as well as Bahai.

Gnosticism, therefore, is the personification of self-deification, which we have seen at the very beginning in the Garden (Genesis 3:1-7). Thus, Gnosticism, as represented in the Nag Hammadi texts, was not some 'new revelation', but rather it was the 'old lie' in a new package.

With regard to scriptural transmission, however, there are those today who are using the Nag Hammadi texts as a pretext to challenge the canon of the New Testament. That is, they are questioning why the 27 New Testament books we have were chosen over other Gnostic texts found at Nag Hammadi, and that is a legitimate question. In answer to that question, the above quote from the *Gospel of Mary* certainly sets the stage for the Holy Spirit led guidance that rejected such writings. In essence, Gnosticism was and is a man-centered belief that denies the sin-nature and espouses man's self-deification through his own knowledge and innate goodness.

Another very important aspect of Gnosticism with regard to its man-centeredness had to do with how one received this knowledge that would enable him to rise and attain divinity, and that was through special and specific teachers who were the 'spiritual ones'. In other words, you could not simply learn on your own, but you had to go a special teacher, within a special group, because you do not have the ability to know for yourself through your own reading – a special 'spiritual one' must teach and guide you into the truth. This too is a lie of Satan that has been permeated down through the ages as he wants to point men away from a personal relationship with God on a one-on-one basis, to instead be centered in some man as one's source of truth, which in essence is idolatry and false worship. John the Apostle confronted this lie of Gnosticism head on in the 1st century AD. What he had to say in the Epistle of First John substantiates not only its date and authorship (extra-biblical sources confirm John's confrontation with Gnosticism), but also the divine inspiration of scriptural transmission by reaffirming the authenticity of the debate. Prior to the Nag Hammadi find, we only had the apologetic writings of the Church Fathers and certain scripture passages that spoke against Gnosticism, but now we

have the actual writings from the Gnostics themselves who were a very real people, who had very real and misdirected ideas and concepts. Thus, in I John 2:27 we read:

And as for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him. (I John 2:27)

The above passage is stating just the opposite of Gnosticism by saying that we do not need some ‘special’ teacher or ‘spiritual one’ to guide us into the truth because we who are true believers in Jesus Christ have the indwelling Holy Spirit living within us, and it is He, the Holy Spirit, who is our true teacher, not some man!

There is a modern day example of this above lie and distortion, and it is found in the Jehovah’s Witnesses writings of Charles Taze Russell, their founder:

. . . Not only do we find that people cannot see the divine plan in studying the Bible by itself, but we see, also, that if anyone lays the “Scripture Studies” aside (*these were written by Russell as directions to the truth of Scripture – i.e., he is a “spiritual one,” and only he can lead people to the real truth of salvation*) even after he has used them, after he has become familiar with them, after he has read them for ten years – if he then lays them aside and ignores them and goes to the Bible alone, though he has understood his Bible for ten years, our experience shows that within two years he goes into darkness. On the other hand, if he had merely read the “Scripture Studies” with their references and had not read a page of the Bible as such, he would be in the light at the end of two years, because he would have the light of the Scriptures. (Anthony A. Hoekema, *The Four Major Cults* [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970], 227)

Thus, once again, the core of the debate over the Gnostic texts of Nag Hammadi is a man-centered religious belief, which in essence deifies man and goes back to the initial lie in the Garden in Genesis 3:5: “For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” Therefore, at every turn the inspired transmission of God’s Word of truth is challenged, and that is why you must be “diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed” (II Timothy 2:15).

New Testament Manuscripts

While we do not have any of the first hand writings of any of the New Testament writers, we do have ca. “5000 Greek manuscripts which contain all or part of the New Testament” (Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, 2nd ed. [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968], 36), with the oldest of these manuscripts dating back to the 2nd century AD. In addition, there are what we call ‘Families of Texts’, or ‘Text Types’, and there are four of them: the Alexandrian (Alexandria); Western (Rome); Caesarean/Jerusalem (Caesarea); Koine or Byzantine (Constantinople). Each of these ‘Text Types’ contain a sub-division of the type of text they were written on and the type of lettering used: papyrus or parchment (a scroll on which the material was written); uncials (all capitol letters); and minuscules (predominantly small letters).

As time went by and the copying and transferring of manuscripts occurred, there were eventually manuscripts that began to differ from one another due to scribal error in some instances, inclusion of notes from a previous scribe, and intentional changes for the purpose of clarity and emphasis. However, even in the midst of all these various manuscripts, we do not find any major differences among the texts, going back to the original hands as much as possible, where there are antithetical statements that contradict the foundational doctrines of biblical truth.

On the other hand, there are some differences, and what we see in particular with the KJV and modern translations is evidence of those differences. For example, the KJV translators had at their disposal the Byzantine text of Erasmus, which was minus many of the extant manuscripts we now have today, but due to no fault of Erasmus or the KJV translators. As time has gone by, however, these other manuscript finds have helped and aided us considerably in getting back to the original hands of the authors.

With the reverence given to the KJV, there has been much controversy over these numerous versions, and it is to that controversy that I want to give the remainder of our seminar. God’s Word is certain, and misinformation, more than anything else as I have observed, has been and is the cause of confusion. Thus, II Timothy 3:16-17 is also applicable for the New Testament, as well as the Old.

I want now to look at some of the aspects of textual analysis that help in determining what is the closest to the original hand of the authors. The differences among texts are divided into unintentional and intentional changes:

(1) Unintentional Changes

- (a) Errors of Sight – the original Greek manuscripts had no spaces between the words, and thus, it would be relatively easy to incorrectly divide a word. For example, in I Timothy 3:16, we read in some mss. the following Greek rendering, ὁμολογοῦμεν ὡς μέγα (*homologoumen hōs mega*), for “we acknowledge how great,” versus ὁμολογουμένως μέγα (*homologoumenōs mega*), which means “without controversy, great.” This difference in no way changes the overall message – *homologoumen hōs* = verb + adverb; *homologoumenōs* = adverb.
- (b) Confusion of Letters – for example, Ος and θεος look very similar, and once again, in I Timothy 3:16, we can see the reason for the different reading in different texts:

θεὸς ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί (*theos ephanerōthē en sarki*), which means “God was manifested in the flesh,” versus Ὁς ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί (*hos ephanerōthē en sarki*), which means “He who was manifested in the flesh.” The entire verse reads as follows: “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: **He who was manifested in the flesh**, was vindicated in the Spirit, beheld by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.” This verse is obviously referring to Jesus, and the Greek phrase in this instance is Ὁς ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί (*hos ephanerōthē en sarki*). The alternative reading would be as follows:

“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: **God was manifested in the flesh**, was vindicated in the Spirit, beheld by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.” In this instance here too, Jesus is who the writer, i.e., Paul, is unquestionably referring to. What is more than likely the original hand of Paul, however, is the “He who was manifested in the flesh” in that we find that phrase with the Greek Ὁς (*hos*) in the vast majority of older manuscripts that were not at the disposal of Erasmus (1469-1536) when he published his five Greek New Testaments between 1516-1535, nor with the

KJV translators between 1604-1611. Thus, they in turn used the Greek text with θεός, which is what the KJV reads.

- (c) Errors of Writing – these would include the above example, as well as skipping over a line that looks similar to a previous line, and also repeating a phrase or word when it should be only once (eg., Mk. 12:27 – God is written twice in some mss., versus only once: θεος θεος [God God], versus only θεος [God]).
- (d) Errors of Hearing – in Romans 5:1 we have just such an example between ἔχομεν (*echōmen*) and ἔχομεν (*echomen*), which is the word for “we have.” Thus, the first rendering of ἔχομεν (*echōmen*) would be as follows: “Therefore having been justified by faith, we should have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” With ἔχομεν (*echomen*), however, we read: “Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” The difference is between the subjunctive mood in the first example, versus the indicative mood in the second, and it is the second that is considered to be the original.

(2) Intentional Changes

In this category, I want us to look at one example, and that is I John 5:6-9: “This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is the truth. 8 For there are three that bear witness, the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. 9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for the witness of God is this, that He has borne witness concerning His Son.” The Byzantine text reads: “This is He who came by water and blood -- Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. 7 For there are three that bear witness **in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.** 8 **And there are three that bear witness on earth:** the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one. 9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son.”

This is not an intentional change for the purpose of distorting the text, but rather it was quite likely the result of a scribe including a ‘note’ in the margin of the text written by a previous scribe who was simply stating a truth about the Trinity. The earlier scribe’s note was subsequently included into the text, and that is how it came down in the Byzantine text. However, out of Erasmus’ five publications of the Greek New Testament, he only included the Trinitarian text in his third edition, in large part from pressure by his ‘higher ups’. He stated in that edition that he did so with reservations.

The Question of the Gospels

Another very important study within the New Testament is that of the relationship of the Gospels and the differences we find in them. Matthew, Mark, and Luke are referred to as the Synoptic Gospels in that they are synonymous in the way they are literarily laid out and presented. John, on the other hand, is quite different in its approach to the person of Jesus Christ than the first three – John takes what is considered a far more doctrinal/philosophical approach toward presenting Jesus as the Son of God as is seen in the first eighteen verses of John’s Gospel:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. 6 ¶ There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. 7 He came for a witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him. 8 He was not the light, but *came* that he might bear witness of the light. 9 ¶ There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. 11 He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, 13 who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. 14 ¶ And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. 15 John bore witness of Him, and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'" 16 For of His fulness we have all received, and grace upon grace. 17 For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. 18 No man has seen God at any time; the only

begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained *Him*. (John 1:1-18)

When you compare these first eighteen verses with the other three Gospels, you immediately see the difference – John is far more theological in his presenting the Person of Jesus Christ than are the first three Gospels.

However, there are two other primary issues as well that the differences in the Gospels present to us: the contrast between the same accounts in each of the Gospels; the fact that some accounts and parables are not in all four of the Gospels – that is, some are unique to a particular Gospel.

However, before we delve into that area of analysis, it is also important to point out what are considered to be the particular themes of each Gospel:

1. Matthew – Matthew has been viewed as written primarily for Jews who came to Christ during the first century AD. For example, there are more references to the OT in Matthew than in the other Gospels, and a great deal of attention is given to Jesus' fulfillment of OT prophecies regarding the coming Messiah.
2. Mark – Mark, on the other hand, is considered to be focused on reaching the Gentile reader and convert. For example, Mark consistently attempts to explain Jewish concepts and religious practices (e.g., 7:1-4).
3. Luke – Luke's emphasis is seen as being universal in its approach. That is, Luke tends to focus on the overall ministry of Jesus to deliver men and women from the catastrophe, judgment, and horrendous consequences of their sins, and to lead them into true life, purpose, meaning, and an eternal relationship with God, beginning on this earth and leading into heaven after physical death, versus an eternal separation from God in Hell with Satan and the eternal judgment and punishment that will ensue in the "lake of fire and brimstone" (Rev.20:11-15).
4. John – As we already discussed briefly, John's Gospel is aimed at presenting Jesus as the eternal, living Word of God – that is, He is God in the flesh, and apart from Him, no one will ever be able to come "to the Father" but through Him (John 14:6).

As we see the difference of theme related to each of the Gospels, that will also help to explain why there are differences – that is, each author, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and guided by God's ultimate design and purpose for them to write, emphasized

and spoke of certain things that the others may not have, but all of it in line with God's leadership of each of them individually. In addition, these men were not robots, but were separate individuals, with separate and distinctive characteristics in their personality development, and God chose to use these differences in the communication of His Gospel to mankind.

We will now look at some of the differences in the Gospels, why they are possibly there, and what those differences may mean. With reference to the first issue of the contrast of the same accounts and parables in the Gospels, we will look at the following example:

Jesus' Temptation in the Wilderness

Mt. 4:1-11; Mk. 1:12-13; Lk. 4:1-13

1. First of all, Mark only mentions the fact that Jesus was in the Wilderness, "tempted by Satan," whereas Matthew and Luke go into detail about that encounter. However, as we have already read about Mark's focus being to reach the Gentile reader, then he, under the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit, was led to only mention the Wilderness encounter, versus going into great detail for his Gentile readers. It is also interesting to note that he adds something about the Wilderness experience that is not in Matthew or Luke, and it is this: "and He was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to Him." Matthew states that the "angels came and *began* to minister to Him," but this was at the end of His temptation experience, and Luke says nothing about the "angels" coming to minister to Jesus at all, and neither Matthew or Luke say anything about Jesus being "with the wild beasts." For whatever reason God had for Mark mentioning Jesus being "with the wild beasts," versus Matthew and Luke not doing so, it had to be for the purpose of relating to the Gentile readers of this Gospel.
2. As we now compare this account with Matthew and Luke, we again see some differences between these two. In the first temptation, whereby Jesus was told by Satan to make the stones into bread, we read the following accounts:
 - a. Matthew 4:3-4 – "And the tempter came and said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.' But He answered and said, 'It

is written, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’”

- b. Luke 4:3-4 – “And the devil said to Him, ‘If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.’ And Jesus answered him, ‘It is written, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone.’”

As you can see, there are some slight differences in these two passages, and the first is that Matthew uses the word “tempter,” which is actually a present participle used as a ‘substitute’ for a noun – literally, “the one who continually tempts to sin,” indicating that this is his very nature. Now as we read, Matthew is wanting to appeal to his Jewish readers, therefore, he is giving them a picture of Satan that they can readily relate from the Old Testament (e.g., Gen. 3:1-7). Luke, on the other hand, uses the word “devil,” or *diabolos* in Greek, which could readily be understood by any Jew or Gentile who would read this as being the one who is the enemy of their soul.

In addition, Matthew uses the word “stones,” whereas Luke refers to one “stone.” Here too, God sovereignly had Matthew to make reference “stones” and Luke to “stone,” and once again, the audience is central to understanding the difference. As Matthew was writing to Jewish believers, they were quite familiar with the Wilderness’ stony landscape, and as hungry as Jesus was at the end of 40 days of fasting, it would be very clear to them how the “stones” around Jesus could be used by Satan to turn them into numerous pieces of “bread” to satisfy the tremendous hunger of Jesus. The following picture gives you an idea of the nature of the temptation Satan was presenting Jesus in lieu of the many “stones” Jesus had immediate access to.



On the other hand, as Luke was focusing on the universal ministry of the Gospel, the idea of a “stone” certainly carried the same force of Jesus’ tremendous hunger and the incredible temptation to satisfy this enormous ‘lust of His flesh’ through carnal manipulation of His power, versus trusting in the Lord. And secondly, it is highly likely that the people to whom Luke was addressing did not have a clear picture of the landscape of the Wilderness that the Jewish believers did.

The last difference we see is in the quoting of Deuteronomy 8:3 by Jesus. Here too, the audience is key, in that Matthew refers to the whole verse, which would be very familiar to the Jews: “And He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that **man does not live by bread alone, but** man lives **by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD.**” In Hebrew, the word for “proceeds out” is מוֹצֵא (môšā’), and it comes from the Hebrew verb יָצָא (yāšā’), which means “to go out or go forth.” Thus, with the “m” before it, it is a substitute noun and has the form of a Hiphil participle. The Hiphil verb in Hebrew is a causative active verb, and, therefore, as it is associated and linked with this verb, it means “whatever God causes to go forth from His mouth.” In the LXX, the translators translated מוֹצֵא (môšā’) into ἐκπορευομένῳ (ekporeuomenō), which means “what God causes to come forth,” thus, the exact same meaning. In addition, in the LXX, the translators translated the Hebrew word כֹּל (kol), “everything,” with παντὶ ῥήματι (panti hrēmati), which means, “with every word.” The word ῥήματι (hrēmati) means more than just a ‘spoken or written word’, but it carries the idea of God’s written Word and command becoming alive and real in our own heart and mind. Thus, that which God speaks into our hearts, from His written Word, and makes alive in our hearts and minds by His Holy Spirit is what man is to ultimately and truly live by, not just simply “bread,” and that is what Matthew, under the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit, was communicating to his Jewish readers, who clearly knew what this passage in Deuteronomy was referring to. Luke, on the other hand, who was writing to a far more universal crowd, simply stated that “Man shall not live on bread alone,” which was what they needed to hear and could grasp, since they were not familiar at

all with the OT or Jewish traditions, but they certainly understood man's need and desire for "bread," and especially so in the context of the temptation Jesus was facing.

3. In the second temptation, Matthew and Luke have the order reversed – in Matthew, Jesus is next tempted with jumping off of the "pinnacle of the temple," but in Luke He is secondly tempted with having control of "all the kingdoms of the world." This is not a significant change, but once again, the audience is the key – Matthew is writing to Jewish listeners, and for them, the emphasis of the temple as the second temptation is significant, whereas with Luke's listeners, they could immediately relate to the temptation of having dominion over the "kingdoms of the world," as that was something they were continually confronted with in their own lives.

However, in the temptation of jumping off of the "pinnacle of the temple," there is an important difference, and that is with the quote of Psalm 91:11-12: "For He will give His angels charge concerning you, To guard you in all your ways. 12 They will bear you up in their hands, Lest you strike your foot against a stone." In Matthew's account, we read the following:

Then the devil took Him into the holy city; and he had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God throw Yourself down; for it is written, 'He will give His angels charge concerning You'; and 'On *their* hands they will bear You up, Lest You strike Your foot against a stone.'" 7 Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" (Mt. 4:5-7)

In Luke we read:

And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here; 10 for it is written, 'He will give His angels charge concerning You to guard You,' 11 and, 'On *their* hands they will bear You up, Lest You strike Your foot against a stone.'" 12 And Jesus answered and said to him, "It is said, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" (Lk. 4:9-12)

As you look at Psalm 91:11-12, Matthew 4:5-7, and Luke 4:9-12, you will notice that there is a distinct difference in what Satan present to Jesus and what is written in this Psalm – in Matthew's account, Satan completely leaves out, "To guard you in all your ways," and the question is, Why? And again, in Luke's account, the phrase, "in all your ways" is omitted by Satan, and here too, the question is, Why? Once again, it is

the audience. Matthew's audience of Jewish converts would immediately pick up the fact that Satan left out that very important statement, implying that Jesus could do anything He wanted and God would take care of and protect Him, regardless of His motives, or if He was truly obeying God's directives. On the other hand, the readers of Luke's Gospel would probably not be familiar with that passage in the Psalms, so he quotes Satan as leaving out "in all your ways," which also implies the very same thing as stated above. However, in Luke's case, he gives a little more of a clarity of the passage so his readers could fully grasp the truth while not necessarily being familiar with this passage that the Jewish believers were fully familiar with.

4. The final temptation of the "kingdoms of the world" has some meaningful differences:

Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory; 9 and he said to Him, "All these things will I give You, if You fall down and worship me." 10 Then Jesus said to him, "Begone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'" (Matthew 4:8-10)

And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6 And the devil said to Him, "I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. 7 "Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours." 8 And Jesus answered and said to him, "It is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.'" (Luke 4:5-8)

You will notice in Matthew, however, that he emphasizes where Satan confronted Jesus with this temptation, and once again, it has to do with his reading audience – the mountainous landscape of Judea, and its surrounding kingdoms, could easily be seen from one such mountain, and Matthew's Jewish readers could easily understand and grasp that truth. Luke, on the other hand, uses the phrase, "in a moment of time," because his readers don't necessarily have a grasp of the topography of Judea, but they certainly have a grasp in their minds of the many nations in just the Mediterranean region alone, let alone beyond that area.

Concerning the actual offer that Satan presents to Jesus, Luke's account is unequivocally aimed at his audience: "I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours." This is clearly an explanation to Luke's

readers of just how and why Satan is able to make such an offer – it has been handed over to him by God for a temporary period of time, and he has a control of it for that limited time, and like Matthew's account, it will belong to Jesus for a limited time if He will worship Satan (Is. 14:3-21; Ezek. 28:12-19; Job 1-2; Dan. 10:12-21; Gen. 3:1-7). Matthew, on the other hand, simply presents Satan's offer, based on the premise of Jesus giving His allegiance to him, Satan: "All these things will I give You, if You fall down and worship me." Matthew did not need to say anything else beyond that, because his Jewish listeners knew quite well the biblical basis of Satan's limited authority on this earth, but they were also well aware of Satan's attempt from the beginning of wanting to usurp God's power and authority (previous verses referenced).

The second issue of Gospel differences has to do with accounts that are unique to a specific Gospel. The one example I would like to look at is the following:

The Necessity of the Re-birth to Enter Heaven - John 3:1-21

Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; ² this man came to Him by night, and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God *as* a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." ³ Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." ⁴ Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?" ⁵ Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. ⁶ "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' ⁸ "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit." ⁹ Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?" ¹⁰ Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not understand these things? ¹¹ "Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak that which we know, and bear witness of that which we have seen; and you do not receive our witness. ¹² "If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how shall you believe if I tell you heavenly things? ¹³ "And no one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven, *even* the Son of Man. ¹⁴ "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; ¹⁵ that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life. ¹⁶ ¶ "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. ¹⁷ "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. ¹⁸ "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ¹⁹ "And

this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. ²⁰ "For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. ²¹ "But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God." (John 3:1-21)

This passage, without a doubt, is not only one of the most important and well-known passages in the Bible, but it is also one of the most well-known and famous pieces of literary passages in the world today in the field of religious, philosophical, and political belief systems. Once again, the significance of this passage is focus of the theme of John's Gospel – Jesus is the Living, Word of God, and in order to have a true, vital, and personal relationship with God, one must come through Jesus, and the way that happens is through a re-birth experience by the Holy Spirit coming into one's heart and soul. Thus, John's Gospel is aimed at countering the Aristotelian, philosophical focus of man's reason as being the ultimate high of man's pursuit, as well as the Persian influence of Zoroastrianism that emphasized the innate ability within man to achieve moral goodness and excellence, and thus, entrance into heaven based on that goodness. The following is a brief analysis of Aristotelian philosophy and Zoroastrianism:

Aristotle's ethics contains several major strands. . . . It suggests that well-being consists in excellent activity such as intellectual contemplation and virtuous actions stemming from a virtuous character. Virtuous action is what the person with practical wisdom could choose; and the practically wise are those who can deliverate successfully towards well-being. This might be termed the *Aristotelian circle*, as the key terms (well-being, virtue, and practical wisdom) appear to be interdefined. (Ted Honderich, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995], 54)

Zoroastrians believe that human beings are essentially divine in nature and share the spiritual nature of God. So they are not born as sinners nor is there a compulsion to be sinful. Human beings are born pure and have a choice to either to follow the teachings of God and remain righteous or follow the ways of the evil and be damned. Depending upon their choices and their actions, God decides their fate in the spiritual realm. God offers knowledge of righteous conduct and provides instructions for the expiation of sin. But He does not make a promise to take upon Himself the sins of His worshippers.
(<http://www.hinduwebsite.com/zoroastrianism/beliefs.asp>)

Thus, as you briefly look at these two belief systems that were present and permeating the non-Jewish peoples of John's day, you can easily see God's calling upon John to clearly

and perceptively, under the anointing, guidance, and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, write his Gospel. In addition, in just these two systems quoted above, we have the seeds of Buddhism, Gnosticism, and Islam – all three are there, with the same deception, but simply in a different package, and that is especially true with Zoroastrianism’s denial of Jesus’ atonement for our sins, which is the exact same as Islam. In Islam, we are our own Savior!

Thus, what must be stated conclusively is that the original hands of Scripture are indeed the inspired, inerrant Living Word of God. And even in those instances of human flaws and frailties in the transmission of this Living Word in written form, His eternal and everlasting truth NEVER VARIES, NOR IS IT ALTERED! Thus, John 1:1-18 is that eternal truth – YESTERDAY, TODAY, AND FOREVER! Therefore, let us remember the following three passages as we pursue the truth of His Word in order to be conformed to His image:

Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine; 32 and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:31-32)

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth. (II Timothy 2:15)

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. (II Timothy 3:16-17)

Thus, what must be stated conclusively is that the original hands of Scripture are indeed the inspired, inerrant Living Word of God. And even in the midst of human flaws and frailties in the transmission of this Living Word in print, the truth NEVER VARIES, NOR IS IT ALTERED!