

Know Your Bible Better

All-Church Conference at ELBC
March 25, 2023

925 East Brooks St.
Norman, OK 73071
elbcnorman.org

EVERLASTING LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

KNOW YOUR BIBLE BETTER

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	2
General Information About the Bible.....	3
Nature of the Bible.....	7
Major Bible Themes.....	9
Christ and the Scripture.....	11
High View of Scripture.....	13
Bible Interpretation.....	17
Combating Charismatic Theology.....	24
Authors and Book Recommendations.....	29
Notes.....	33

INTRODUCTION

As we embark on our quest to know the Bible better, it is with deep gratitude to the Eternal Triune God, Who, in His merciful providence, restored the Scripture to His people. Our God used bold, courageous, and resolute men as His instruments in liberating His Word from the medieval church.

John Piper writes, “Along with other reformers, John Calvin rescued the Scriptures from the subordination to tradition in the medieval church. The Reformation was the recovery of the unique and supreme Authority of Scripture over church authority.” This recovery, beginning in the sixteenth century, has resulted in us having God’s Word in our hands (even in multiple translations), not to mention almost innumerable Bible study aids.

Ours is a rich time indeed with respect to the physical possession of God’s Word. This historically unprecedented privilege to study the Bible and be educated in eternal matters should not be taken for granted. Rather, it should catalyze our energetic and ongoing pursuit to know our Bible better. The consequence of which is to know our Lord better. What can top that? For we will enjoy all eternity in His presence, loving, serving, and worshipping Him.

For now, we can be as the saints have always been concerning the inscripturated Word of God and say, “Oh how I love your Law” (Psalm 119:97). The Law, i.e., the Scripture, is supreme. It is our authority, and we gladly bow in submission to God’s authority, mediated through His eternal Truth. Thus, we join with the reformers who rightly said, “*Sola Scriptura*” (Scripture Alone).

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE BIBLE

Terry N. Wilson
Pastor-Teacher

The Bible is a library of 66 books written over a period of 1500 years (1405 B.C. to A.D. 95) by 40 different authors. This library exhibits a variety of literary genres—poetry, prophecy, parable, history, gospels, letters, and so on.

The Bible's authors come from every walk of life including kings, fishermen, and poets.

- Moses, a political leader trained in the universities of Egypt.
- Peter, a fisherman.
- Amos, a herdsman.
- Joshua, a military general.
- Nehemiah, a cupbearer.
- Daniel, a prime minister.
- Luke, a doctor.
- Solomon, a king.
- Matthew, a tax collector.
- Paul, a Rabbi.

The Bible was written in different places.

- Moses in the wilderness.
- Jeremiah in a dungeon.
- Paul inside prison walls.
- Luke while traveling.
- John on the Isle of Patmos.

The Bible was written in three languages.

- Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament.
- Aramaic, **Daniel 2:4b-7:28**.
- Greek, the language of the New Testament.

Though there were human authors involved in the production of the Scriptures, the ultimate Author is God Himself (**2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21**). The reality that the Bible is dually authored, God and man, has led theologians to term the process of inspiration “concurrent inspiration.”

This incomparable book is comprised of 39 Old Testament books and 27 New Testament books. These books comprise the Word of God inscripturated.

We often refer to the Scriptures as the Bible. The word *Bible* comes from the Greek term *biblos* meaning “a book.” Other titles for this unique book are Scripture (**Galatians 3:8**), the writings (**2 Timothy 3:15**), the Word of God (**1 Thessalonians 2:13**), the law, the prophets, and Psalms (**Luke 24:44**).

The Designations Old Testament and New Testament

The word testament is derived from the Latin *testamentum* and has the meaning of a will.

- The Old Testament was based on the Old Covenant (**Exodus 19:5; Deuteronomy 28:1; 15**); a covenant of obedience and blessing.
- The New Testament is based on the New Covenant.
- The New Covenant is better than the old (**Hebrews 7:22; 8:6**).
- The Old Covenant has passed away (**Hebrews 8:13**).
- The New Covenant is through Christ’s blood (**Luke 22:20**).
- The New Covenant is not of the law but of the Spirit (**2 Corinthians 3:5-6**).
- The Law brought knowledge of sin (**Romans 3:20**). No one was able to keep the law’s demand for perfect obedience. It results in death.
- The New Covenant is of the Holy Spirit who, through Jesus Christ, gives eternal life.

The Bible has different sections which reflect the literary genre contained in them. The Old Testament sections are comprised of 17 historical books, 5 poetical/wisdom books, and 17 prophetic books.

The 17 historical books begin with Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These five books are also known as the Book of the Law (Torah), and by the designation, Pentateuch.

The category of historical books are 12 history and government books. This group of books include Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther.

There are five books of poetry/wisdom, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon.

The total number of the books designated by prophecy is 17. They are divided into two categories, major prophets, and minor prophets. The terms *major* and *minor* reflect the length of the books, not their relative importance. The five major prophets are Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel. The 12 minor prophets include Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

Between the Old Testament and the New Testament there are approximately 400 years. This intertestamental period has been called “the four hundred silent years.” However, the history of these years followed the pattern predicted in Daniel (**Daniel 2:24, 45; 7:1-28; 8:1-27; 11:1-35**) with exact precision. Though the voice of God was silent (no prophecy given), the hand of God was actively directing the course of events during these centuries.¹

The New Testament includes literary classifications of history, letters, and prophecy. There are 27 books in all. The Gospel and Acts comprise history. Acts is a history of the early Church.

Twenty-one books comprise the letters of the New Testament. Thirteen of them were penned by the Apostle Paul. Those epistles are Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon.

The other letters are designated general epistles. They are Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 2 John, and Jude.

The concluding book of the New Testament and biblical revelation is prophecy. The book is Revelation.

Books Not Included in the Bible

The Apocrypha

The Protestant Bible and the Catholic Bible differ with respect to which books are included in the Bible. Protestants do not believe that the books called the *Apocrypha* (means hidden) are divinely inspired or God-breathed books. This should not be a part of the collection of books called the Scriptures or Bible.

¹ MacArthur Study Bible

There are 14 apocryphal books. They should not be accepted because they are never quoted in the New Testament and Christ never mentions them in His list in **Luke 24:44**. They lack endorsement of the ancient Jewish writers.

There are problems with content. For example, the book of Tobit teaches that alms giving can save you from death and the dark abode (Tobit 4:8-10; 12:9). Second Maccabees 12:43-46 states that one can make atonement for the dead. It is clear that these teachings are inconsistent with biblical teachings. They do not have prophetic power, which is a powerful mark of true Scripture. Therefore, these books are not included in the Canon of Scripture.

Canon applied to Scripture means an officially accepted list of books. It must be noted that the Church did not create the Canon of Scripture, but discovered the books that should be accepted because they are the Word of God.

Josh McDowell provides tests for a book's inclusion.

- 1- Is it authoritative – did it come from the hand of God? (Does this book come with a divine “thus saith the Lord?”)
- 2- Is it prophetic – was it written by a man of God?
- 3- Is it authentic? The fathers had a policy of “if in doubt, throw it out.” This enhanced the validity of their discernment of canonical books.
- 4- Is it dynamic – did it come with the life-transforming power of God?
- 5- Was it received, collected, read, and used – was it accepted by the people of God?

Peter acknowledged Paul's work as Scripture parallel to Old Testament Scriptures (**2 Peter 3:16**).²

² *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, Josh McDowell

NATURE OF THE BIBLE

1) The Inspiration of Scripture

2) The Inerrancy of Scripture

3) The Authority of Scripture

4) The Clarity of Scripture

5) The Sufficiency of Scripture

The Bible's self-claim to being Divinely originated is abundantly provided.
Deuteronomy 6:6-9, 17:18; Joshua 1:8, 8:32-35; 2 Samuel 22:31; Psalms 1:2, 12:6, 19:7-11; Jeremiah 15:16; Zechariah 7:12; Matthew 5:17-19, 22:29; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 2:15, 3:15-16; 1 Peter 1:23-25; 2 Peter 3:15-16; Revelation 1:2; 22:18

MAJOR BIBLE THEMES

1) The Revelation of God's Character

2) The Revelation of Divine Judgment for Sin and Disobedience

3) The Revelation of Divine Blessing for Faith and Obedience

4) The Revelation of the Lord Savior and His Sacrifice for Sin

5) The Revelation of the Kingdom and Glory of the Lord Savior

6) How are Old Testament Saints Saved?

CHRIST AND THE SCRIPTURE

1) A Student of Scripture

2) Christ Affirmed the Inerrancy of Scripture

3) Christ Affirmed the Historicity of Scripture

4) Christ Interpreted Scripture According to the Grammatical Historical Method

5) Christ Endorsed Scripture's Authority

HIGH VIEW OF SCRIPTURE

Terry N. Wilson
Pastor-Teacher

REVELATION

Man could not know of God unless God revealed Himself to us. Man has no means of discovering God on His own. God is inaccessible to His creatures.

God has revealed His existence in a number of ways.

- Nature (**Psalm 19:1; Romans 1:19-21; Acts 14:15-17**)

Revelation in nature cannot clearly reveal His person, His righteousness, and, above all, His redeeming love. For these things, we need specific revelation which is the Word of God.

Some ways God revealed Himself as recorded in Scripture: Theophanies (appearances of the Deity), **Genesis 17:1, 22; 18:1** (Abraham), **Genesis 26:2** (Isaac), **Exodus 3:2-6; 33:11** (Moses)

- Dreams and Visions (**Numbers 12:6; Genesis 28:12-16** (Jacob); **I Kings 3:5-15** (Solomon); **Daniel 2:19, 28; 7:1; 10:7-8; Matthew 1:20; 2:13** (Joseph))

Believers in the church age should not expect guidance via the media of dreams and visions. These media of revelation seem to be reserved for the time when God was giving His revelation to His people. With the close of the Canon, revelation has ceased.

- Prophets (**Amos 1:1**)

The revelation of God in Jesus Christ. The fullest revelation of God was in His Son (**Hebrews 1:2; John 1:18**). Incarnate deity is the best means by which God communicates to mankind.

- Scripture

God's revelation to man was written down for future generations. God still speaks by His Word. As mentioned above, revelation has ceased. Everything humankind needs to know about God and salvation is contained in Scripture. Our understanding of the written word comes through the illuminating ministry of the Holy Spirit.

INSPIRATION

Explain **2 Peter 1:20, 21**

1. The English word *interpretation* connotes explaining the meaning of a word, texts, etc. That is not the meaning of the Greek word by the English rendering.
2. *Interpretation* (Greek *epilusis*) – releasing, solving, explaining. Genitive case in the Greek and means *source; divine origin*.

The New Testament texts are equally inspired, or God-breathed.

I Timothy 5:18

The “a” part is from **Deuteronomy 25:4**

The “b” part is from **Luke 10:7**

Both quotations are said to be Scripture.

2 Peter 3:15-16

“...rest of the Scriptures.”

Paul’s writings are considered Scripture.

Plenary: full inspiration

All Scripture is inspired, or God-breathed. The partial inspiration theory denies this tenet of Orthodox Christianity. Partial inspiration claims that the divine truths are accurate but “we cannot accept historical, geographical, or scientific statements in Scripture” (Major Bible Themes).

Neoorthodox View

“This view claims that there are errors in the Bible and thus cannot be taken as literally true. The Bible, in this theory only, becomes true when it is comprehended, and truth is realized by the individual reader” (Major Bible Themes).

This view fails to recognize the intrinsic nature of Scripture’s truthfulness. It is true because of its origin (**2 Timothy 3:16**). It is objectively true. An individual’s comprehension or even existence does not determine Scripture’s truthfulness.

Verbal Inspiration

The choice of the very words of Scripture was guided by the Holy Spirit.

I Corinthians 2:13

Inerrant – The Bible does not contain any error as to statement of fact.

Infallible – unfailingly accurate.

CANON OF SCRIPTURE

The word canon...means the list of books contained in Scripture, the list of books recognized as worthy to be included in the sacred writings.... We might define the word as “the list of writings acknowledged by the church as documents of the divine revelation.”

The word *canon* is from the Greek *kanōn*. In Greek, it meant a rod, especially a straight rod used as a rule; from this usage comes the meaning of rule or standard.

(The Canon of Scripture, F.F. Bruce)

- The church did not create the canon; it discovered the books that were God-breathed.
- The sixty-six books that comprise the Bible are inspired.
- God authorized the writing of His Word, and the people recognized it as such (**Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 31:26**).
- Also, the words of **Joshua 24:26**
- Not all Jewish literature was considered canonical or meeting the standard for inclusion among the God-breathed books. For example, the Book of Jashar (**Joshua 10:13**), Book of the Wars of The Lord (**Numbers 21:14**).
- The Jews agreed that Old Testament Canon closed about 400 B.C. with the prophecy of Malachi (Old Testament), and the New Testament is often referred to as the *Four Hundred Silent Years*.

BIBLE INTERPRETATION

Terry N. Wilson
Pastor-Teacher

To know your Bible better requires knowing what the Scripture means by what it says. The understanding of the biblical text cannot be rightly gained by guesswork or, as the well-worn phrase goes, “what it means to me.”

The Bible has a meaning that is independent of us. What it means by what it says is not dependent on our existence.

The Bible interpreter must resolve to obtain the true meaning of the text of Scripture. The interpreter should desire to know what God actually communicates in the verse and/or passage before him or her. To state it differently, an interpreter who wants to know the mind of the ultimate Author should aspire to interpret Scripture correctly. That is certainly the will of God for any would-be interpreter of God’s Word.

God demands that His Word be correctly interpreted (**2 Timothy 2:15**). He puts a premium on getting it right (**Nehemiah 8:8**). He also condemns those who twist the Scriptures (**2 Peter 3:16**).

Problems Present

There are some problems that confront the interpreter of holy writ. The Bible is an ancient book. Its antiquity presents some interpretive obstacles to modern interpreters.

Writers on the subject of Bible interpretation have enunciated what these problems are that meet the student of Scripture as he or she seeks to unlock its meaning. These obstacles are called gaps. Without bridging gaps, we will not properly understand the text.

What are the chasms that stand between us and getting at the dual authors’ meaning?

Gaps Explained:

Time Gap (Chronological)³

A time gap, as mentioned above, the age of the Bible, means that we cannot talk with the Bible authors to gain a firsthand meaning of what they wrote.

³ *Basic Bible Interpretation*, Roy Zuck.

A Space Gap (Geographical)

Many readers live far away from the places the events in Scripture took place. This distance puts us at a disadvantage.

The Customs Gap (Cultural)

The differences between the way people lived, did things, and thought in the Bible compared to our world, especially we who live in the western world. Often faulty interpretations stem from an ignorance of these customs.

A Language Gap (Linguistic)

The Bible was not written in modern English, let alone Elizabethan English, in which the KJV was written. The Bible was written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Also, Hebrew and Aramaic are to be read from right to left rather than from left to right, as we are accustomed to doing. In addition, no spaces were inserted between words. Roy B. Zuck has helpful paragraphs about this problem. Moreover, the average Bible reader does not have facility in the biblical language.

A Writing Gap (Literary)

Differences exist between the styles and forms of writing in Bible times and those in the western world today. For instance, we seldom speak in proverbs or parables, yet a good portion of the Bible is proverbial or parabolic.

A Spiritual Gap (Supernatural)

There is a gap between the way God does things and our way. God, being infinite, is not fully comprehensible by the finite. The Bible speaks of difficult-to-comprehend truths such as the Trinity, the two natures of Christ, God's sovereignty, and man's will.

How do we bridge the chasms and achieve an understanding of the meaning of this ancient book for our spiritual life, service, and glorifying God?

Bridging the Gulf

We must learn the proper Bible interpretation method. That method is the literal, historical-grammatical approach to the biblical text. By this method of

interpretation, the Bible interpreter seeks to know the author's intent by the words he used.

The Word literal refers to the normal or customary usage of words. "When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense," according to Dr. David L. Cooper. As the above statement suggests, there are times when we must seek another sense. That is when, of course, Scripture employs figures of speech.

Walter Kaiser provides some figures of speech and their biblical usage.

A. Figures of Comparison:

Simile – *expressed* or *formal* comparison between two things.

– A is *like/as* B: "He shall be like a tree" (Ps. 1:3).

Metaphor – an *implied* or *unexpressed* comparison where an idea is carried over from one element to another without directly or expressly saying that A is "like" or "as" B. A is B: "Go tell that *fox*" (Luke 13:32).

B. Figures of Addition:

Pleonasm – a redundancy of expression where more words than are necessary are used in order to obtain a certain effect on the mind of the listener or reader.

"The butler did not remember, but forgot" (Gen. 40:23).

Paronomasia – the repetition of words that are similar in sound but not necessarily in sense or meaning.

"Having all sufficiency in all things" (2 Cor. 9:8).

Hyperbole – a conscious exaggeration to increase the effect of what is said.

"I am weary with my sighing; yea, I make my bed swim"
(Ps 6:6).

Hendiadys – the use of two words when only one thing is meant.

"It rained fire and brimstone" (=burning brimstone)
(Gen. 19:24)

C. Figures of Relation:

Synecdoche – the exchange of one idea for another associated idea; thus, a part may be used for the whole or the whole for a part.

"All the world went to be taxed" (Luke 2:1).

Metonymy – the exchange of one noun for a related noun.

"They have Moses and the prophets" (=the *books* these men

wrote) (Luke 16:29).

D. Figures of Contrast:

Irony – the use of words to convey the opposite of their literal meaning.

“Behold, man is become one of us” (Gen. 3:22).

Litotes – a belittling of one thing to magnify another.

“I am but dust and ashes” (a remark of Abraham intended to magnify God’s greatness) (Gen. 18:27).

Euphemism – the exchange of a harsh, disagreeable, or indelicate word or expression for a more pleasant, gentler, or modest one.

“He covers his feet” (one’s garments fall around his feet when he stoops [as we would say with another euphemism] to go to the bathroom) (Judg. 3:24; 1 Sam. 24:3).

The grammatical aspect of the interpretative process endeavors to ascertain the meaning of words, the function of words (parts of speech), and the relationships of words (syntax) in a text or passage. The form of the words or morphology refers to how it is structured. Their structure affects their meaning. *Ate* means something different from *eat*.

The historical aspect of biblical interpretation requires gaining knowledge of the history of the period in which a book was written.

Context

Context is an important component of accurate interpretation of a scriptural text or passage. Walter Kaiser provides aid in this part of our quest to know what the Bible means by what it says. “The word context is composed of two Latin elements, *con* (together) and *textus* (woven). Hence when we speak of context, we are talking about the connection of thought that runs through a passage, those links that weave it into one piece.”

Book Context

An aid to the interpreter is to know the book’s context. That is the overall purpose of the book. Kaiser points out that sometimes the book’s author tells us his purposes (**Ecclesiastes 12:13**). Luke does as well (**Luke 1:1-4**), and John in his gospel (**John 20:30-31**). Some commentators will offer the purpose of the books on which they are writing.

Caution

There is an approach to Scripture interpretation that must be avoided. That approach is to allegorize a text. This method separates the text from its historical setting and context. Instead of taking a text of Scripture at face value (literal approach), the allegorizer of Scripture looks for hidden meanings in the text.

It is obvious what this procedure leads to: the interpreter is not bound by any controlling principles; hence, his only guide is a subjective reading into the passage, a meaning that is divergent from the normal literal meaning of the passage.

John Calvin and Martin Luther rejected allegorical interpretation. Calvin called it satanic because it leads men away from the truth of Scripture.

Who Is A Qualified Interpreter?

One who is unregenerate cannot properly interpret the Scripture. The unsaved man can comprehend the facts and grammar of Scripture but fails to understand its meaning because he doesn't act on the fact he learns.

Why is this? He is blinded by the god of this world. Spiritual blindness is a metaphor for unbelief (**2 Cor. 4:4**). The unbeliever does not possess the Spirit of God and, as a consequence, does not accept the things of the Spirit (**1 Cor. 2:14**).

The reformer Martin Luther once remarked the unregenerate can understand the grammar of **John 3:16**, but they do not act on those facts. It is in this sense that they are unable to know the things of the Spirit of God.

This writer recalls hearing Dr. James Montgomery Boice tell about his English literature professors at Harvard who could articulate the Doctrine of Justification by Faith with great fluency but did not believe it.

In interpreting Scripture, a believer must approach it with a willingness to obey the Word of God. The believer must rid himself or herself of known sin by confession in order not to hinder fellowship with the Lord in understanding His truth.

Bible students have employed a four-step procedure in Bible study. That process is used here in adapted form from *Fundamentals of Faith*.⁴

⁴ *Fundamentals of Faith*, Grace Community Church.

Preparation

As mentioned above, we should confess our sins (**1 Peter 2:1-2**). Also, ask for divine aid and wisdom (**Psalm 119:34; Col 1:9-10**).

Observation

In this step, we engage the text. What is taking place in the passage? What do I see?

- 1) Ask questions as you read and write them down. Who? What? Where? When?
- 2) As you observe the passage, look for:
 - a. Keywords
 - b. Key subjects (people, topics)
 - c. Commands (particularly verbs)
 - d. Warnings
 - e. Repeated words or phrases
 - f. Comparisons (things that are similar; things that are different)
 - g. Questions, answers given
 - h. Anything unusual or unexpected

Interpretation

What does it mean?

- 1) Scripture can be clear. Who has God given us to teach us (**1 John 2:27**)? The Holy Spirit.
- 2) Begin by asking interpretive questions.
 - a. What is the importance of:
 - i. A given word (especially verbs)
 - ii. A given phrase
 - iii. Names and titles
 - iv. Dates
 - v. Others
 1. What is the meaning of a particular word?
 2. Why did the writer say this?
 3. What is the implication of this word, phrase, or name?
- 3) To find answers to your interpretative questions, use:
 - a. The context-the verse before and after the passage you are studying.

- b. Definitions of words.
 - c. Grammar and sentence structure.
 - d. Other passages of Scripture.
 - e. Bible study tools, such as:
 - i. Bible dictionaries
 - ii. Concordances
 - iii. Bible handbooks
 - iv. Bible encyclopedias
 - v. Bible commentaries
- 4) When interpreting, remember:
- a. All Scripture will agree. It will not contradict itself.
 - b. Let the passage speak for itself in its context. Be careful not to draw conclusions that the author did not intend.

There is only one correct interpretation of any particular passage of Scripture: the author's originally intended meaning.

Application

“What effect will this have on my life?”

This part of the Bible study process takes the truths that have been observed and seeks to incorporate them into everyday life and practice.

- 1) Once we have heard the Word of God, what should our response be (**James 1:22**)? We are called to be “doers of the Word.”
- 2) A simple tool to help you apply what you have learned is to “put on the ‘SPECS’.” Is there a:
 - Sin to forsake?
 - Promise to claim?
 - Example to follow?
 - Command to obey?
 - Stumbling block to avoid?

While there is only one correct interpretation of a given passage of Scripture, there are many applications.

COMBATING CHARISMATIC THEOLOGY

Richard Mayhue

*Former Senior Vice President and Dean, The Master's Seminary
Co-General Editor of "Biblical Doctrine, A Systematic Theology"*

PURPOSE: To Gain a Biblical Perspective on This Issue

INTRODUCTION

1. There have always been:
 - True and false *prophets* (**Deut. 13:1-5; 18:14-22; 1 John 4:1-4**)
 - True and false *apostles* (**2 Cor. 12:12**)
 - True and false *believers* (**Matt. 7:13-23**)

2. *Neither exclamations* (e.g., Lord, Lord) *nor experiences* (e.g., supposed messages from God, miracles, or exorcisms) *necessarily validate the truth* (**Matt. 7:21-23**).
Judas Iscariot stands the classic example. Cf. "Son of perdition" **John 17:12**.

3. *Experience is not self-validating*. Rather, the absolute Word of God serves to authoritatively distinguish between the true and the false. All experience must submit itself to the Scripture's test for authenticity. (See Richard Mayhue, *How to Interpret the Bible for Yourself*, Christian Focus Publications, 1997), 151-161.

4. Believers are continually *warned* in the New Testament to *beware of deceivers* (**Acts 20:29-30; 2 Cor. 11:13-15; Jude 12-13; 2 John 7-11**). See Richard Mayhue, "Who Surprised Whom? The Holy Spirit or Jack Deere?" *The Master's Seminary Journal* 5/2 (Fall 1994): 123-140.

PROPOSITION

There are at least four essential theological elements in the neo-Pentecostal or charismatic movement — 1) continuing revelation, (2) Spirit baptism subsequent to salvation, (3) tongues, and (4) healing. Without these features, the charismatic brethren would not exist as a distinguishable element of Christendom. I believe that each of these marks is unbiblical in the sense that God is not now energizing these kinds of ministries. The phenomena experienced are self-generated, or in rare instances, counterfeited by Satan.

DISCUSSION

1. *Continuing revelation* involves an additional word from God beyond the Bible. I believe that God’s special revelation (oral and written) ceased when the Apostle John climaxed God’s progress of revelation with the Apocalypse because:
 - a. Of the structure of the Bible
 - i. Revelation details the course of God’s redemptive plan from the church (**Rev. 1-3**) through eternity future (**Rev. 21-22**). Nothing else is needed.
 - ii. Genesis to Revelation covers the creation to the consummation.
 - b. Of the nature of the Bible – one book (cf. **Deut. 31:24-26; Josh. 24:26; 1 Sam. 10:25; Ps. 40:7; Acts 7:42; Heb. 10:7**).
 - c. Of the statements of **Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Prov. 30:5-6; Rev. 22:18-19**.

(For further stimulation, read R. Laird Harris, *Inspiration and Canonicity of the Bible*, Zondervan, 1969; Richard Mayhue, “Alarmed by the Voice of Jack Deere,” *The Master’s Seminary Journal* 8/2 [Fall 1997]: 151-61.

2. *Spirit Baptism* involves a second work of grace (cf. **Eph. 4:5**, “one baptism”), which the believer must earnestly seek to reach the highest plateau of spirituality. I believe every believer is baptized by Christ with the Holy Spirit at salvation because:

- a. **Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; John 1:26; Acts 1:5; 1 Cor. 12:13** all speak of the one baptism referred to in **Eph. 4:5**.
- b. The Bible makes no distinction (as do the Charismatics) between (1) the Spirit baptizing believers into Christ at conversion and later (2) Christ baptizing believers into the Holy Spirit.
- c. Believers are never urged in the Epistles to seek so called “Spirit baptism.”
- d. Spiritually is (1) always marked by a righteous lifestyle and (2) never by some post-conversion experience, (e.g., **1 Cor. 13:4-7; Gal. 5:22-25; 2 Peter 1:5-11; 1 Tim. 3:2-7; Titus 1:5-9**).
- e. Believers are spoken of as already having every spiritual blessing in Christ (**Eph. 1:3**). We have “everything pertaining to life and godliness” in Christ (**2 Peter 1:3**).

(For further stimulation read Frederick D. Bruner, *A Theology of The Holy Spirit*, Eerdmans, 1970).

3. *Tongues* involves a manifestation of Spirit baptism (some concede this is optional, while others demand it as essential) and/or a private prayer language. I believe that Spirit-generated tongues have ceased because:

- a. Tongues are mentioned only briefly in the New Testament (**Mark 16:17; Acts 2:3-11; 10:46; 19:6; 1 Cor. 12-14**).
- b. Tongues are never normative in the New Testament.
- c. Tongues are never commanded of believers in the New Testament.

- d. Tongues are not mentioned as Spirit-borne fruit (**Gal. 5:22-23**) or as a mark of spirituality (see 2d.).
- e. Tongues were manifest in a foreign language, not unintelligible gibberish (**Acts 2:6**).
- f. Tongues were rightly practiced to edify the body and evangelize the lost, but never exercised to satisfy self or practiced as a mark of super-spirituality.
- g. Tongues (since the Apostolic age ended) have been practiced historically only by pagans and heretics until the Pentecostal movement began at the start of the 20th century.
- h. Tongues, as practiced today, almost always violate the prohibitions set down by Paul in **1 Cor. 12-14**.

(For further stimulation, read John MacArthur, *Charismatic Chaos*, Zondervan, 1992).

4. *Healing* for all believers (1) who have enough faith, or (2) who go to the right faith healer, or (3) who use the right healing method. I believe that God can sovereignly choose to heal whomever and whenever, but (1) it will not be a frequent occurrence; (2) nor will it be done through human healers because:

- a. The gospel is good news about our sin problem, not our sickness (**Rom. 3:23; 6:23**).
- b. Christ's atonement focuses primarily upon our sins (iniquities), not our sicknesses (**Lev. 16:1-34; Is. 53:5-6; 11-12; 1 Pet. 2:24**).
- c. Christ died for our sins, not our sicknesses (**1 Cor. 15:3**).
- d. Christ was made sin, not sickness (**2 Cor. 5:21**).
- e. Christ forgave our sins, not our sicknesses (**1 John 2:12**).

- f. Christ gave Himself for our sins, not our sickness (**Gal. 1:4**).
- g. Our bodies are corruptible and thus subject to sickness (**1 Cor. 15:42-44**).
- h. We will all die physically (**Heb. 9:27**).
- i. The NT “healing promise” refers to salvation, not physical healing (**1 Pet. 2:24**).

(For further stimulation, read Richard Mayhue, *The Healing Promise*, Christian Focus Publications, 1997).

DISCUSSION

There are many sincere Christians involved in the Charismatic experience. However, neither sincerity nor experience alone prove their claims that (1) continuing revelation, (2) Spirit baptism subsequent to salvation, (3) tongues, and (4) healing are true as God-given experiences. I believe for the reasons stated (plus many more included in the suggested reading), that the Bible judges these charismatic experiences as finding their source in someone other than the Triune God. Therefore, they are not to be sought, and if currently practiced, are to be stopped.

Richard Mayhue, Th.D.
The Master's Seminary
The Shepherd's Conference
March 2003

AUTHOR AND BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

Terry N. Wilson

Pastor-Teacher

For 2000 years of church history and counting, the Holy Spirit has been teaching the Church—the Body of Christ, Divine Truth. He has provided gifted teachers who have written helpful texts on the meaning of Scripture and its application for the equipping and edification of Christians. We have rich resources from which we may gain a greater understanding of the divine deposit that is Scripture.

Because of our time in redemptive history, we are the best positioned generation of Christians to profit from the Lord's inscripturated Word. We recommend specific authors who are reliable guides to the meaning of the Bible. They will help you know your Bible better.

We know that the only inerrant and infallible resource is Scripture itself. Still, we also know that we all need the aid of godly, Spirit-enabled teachers to help us in our pursuit of deepening our comprehension of this unique literature that is the Word of the living God. Below is a list of recommended authors to be your assistant in growing in the Word of God.

James Montgomery Boice

Boice was a man gifted with intellectual heft who could have served in the halls of academia. However, his calling was to be a pastor in a local church.

He served the larger community of followers of Christ through his written works as well as his sermons that were played on the *Bible Study Hour*. One of his written works that influenced me when a young man was *The Sovereign God*.

Jerry Bridges

Reformed theology perspective underlines Bridges' books. They are sound, clear, and helpful to the reader's spiritual understanding and life.

Dale Ralph Davis

Davis, a pastor and a professor of the Old Testament, has written excellent expository commentaries on Joshua, Judges, 1 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings. I concur

with Alec Motyer, who said, “a great feast of biblical truth made so digestible, garnished with so many apt illustrations.”

Steven J. Lawson

Lawson’s clear and energetic prose communicates compelling to the reader. Lawson is biblically and theologically sound.

New Life in Christ

Show Me Your Glory

Foundations of Grace

John MacArthur

MacArthur is the premier expositor of God’s Word in our era of redemptive history. He has preached through the entire New Testament, leaving a legacy of doctrinally sound expositions with practical application.

The sermons were transcribed, and MacArthur turned his Sunday sermons into the *MacArthur New Testament Commentary Series*. This resource is not only an immense aid to pastors and Sunday school teachers, it is, and continues to be, a valued go-to for Christians who do not hold teaching positions in the church.

In addition to his commentaries, MacArthur has authored hundreds of books that, like the commentaries, feed the soul of the reader. MacArthur is known for his clarity in the pulpit. He is also clear in his written work.

For your own spiritual growth’s sake, do as St. Augustine did when he heard a child’s voice say, “take up and read.”

J. I. Packer

James Packer is an evangelical icon whose pen enriched the saints through the decades of the twentieth century and into the beginning of this one. He was sought out to write forwards to books that were theological in content. He was a masterful theologian.

Dr. Packer wrote the well-known classic, *Knowing God*. This book will repay its price with the spiritual dividends returned to the reader.

John Piper

Piper is the author of several helpful books. His books span the scholarly, such as the *Justification of God* to lay-friendly, *Don’t Waste Your Life*. This writer’s bookshelf holds over a dozen and a half of his books.

Puritans

A popular misunderstanding of the Puritans is reflected in the term *Puritanical*, which is a noncomplimentary expression. The Puritans, however, were committed to the purity of the church and personal holiness. The Puritans, who were Trinitarian, never tired of proclaiming the electing grace of God, the dying love of Jesus Christ, and the applicatory work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of sinners.

They believed, as Christ stated, that “except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of Heaven” (**John 3:3**), so they excelled at preaching the Gospel, probing the conscience, awakening the sinner, calling him to repentance and faith, leading him to Christ, and schooling him in the way of Christ. They held to reformed doctrines of grace, also known as Calvinism.

“They shaped life by Scripture. The Puritans loved, lived, and breathed the Scripture relishing the power of the Spirit that accompanied the Word.”⁵ For anyone wishing to read the Puritans, their works have been written in contemporary language for easier reading by modern readers: John Owen, Thomas Watson, and Thomas Brooks.

R. C. Sproul

Sproul was a reformed theology theologian whose teaching enabled this brainy scholar to communicate difficult-to-grasp doctrines for lay people to understand. His written works will bless your time reading them.

The Holiness of God

The Invisible Hand

Charles Haddon Spurgeon

Though Spurgeon died in 1892, he still speaks. All these years later, people read his sermons and books. He is often quoted across our nation’s pulpits.

Many books about him detail his spiritual life and unswerving devotion to the Lord he loved. Spurgeon’s words stir and put the reader or hearer in a heavenly frame of mind.

⁵ Meet the Puritans

Systematic Theology

Systematic Theology answers the question, “What does the completed Canon of Scripture teach about any one theme or topic?”⁶ Systematic Theology acts as a guardrail in preventing a Bible student and interpreter from straying off the path of accurate understanding of God’s Word. So, Systematic Theology is a necessary aid to one who wishes to know the Bible better.

Warren Wiersbe

Laypeople-friendly commentaries. The *BE series* explains the biblical texts. The commentary is not designed for depth, yet one can gain insight into a text passage of Scripture.

⁶ *Biblical Doctrine*

