

IN WHAT WAY IS THE BIBLE UNIQUE?

Guidelines II

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~ Welcome to the Spiritual Safari. My name is Andrew Hunt. Our second report from our expedition through the entire Word of God is entitled "In What Way is the Bible Unique?" Today, we will deal with the type of book the Bible is. The Bible is highly unique and, in many ways, extremely unusual.

First, let's pray for this study: ~ *Heavenly Father, thank You for the faith You have given us to believe in Your Word! We ask You to increase our faith as we trust You again today; open our eyes to the beautiful wonders found in Scripture – in Jesus Precious Name we pray ~*

Perhaps the most unusual aspect of the Bible is its dual-authorship. God is the Author of the Bible in one sense and man is the author in another sense. Some forty individual human beings wrote the Bible over a period of about fifteen hundred years or so; and most of the writers never heard of the others. There is no collusion between the human authors. Two or three may have known each other and possibly compared notes at some point in their writing lives - but others could never have known about the books written around them; not before, during or after their own contribution to Scripture had been completed.

Even so, these sixty-six books have the most remarkable continuity - and more of it - than has ever been previously compiled in any body of literary work. Collusion does, in fact, occur – but only in the sense of being between man and Holy Spirit. So, when I say dual authorship, I mean exactly that. The Bible is a God-human book and it is a man-God book. In many ways the Bible likens itself to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Christ became incarnate on this earth at one time. He existed as both God and man during that time. John said, "...the Word became flesh dwelling among us"! The Spirit of God will continually reveal parallels of that in and through

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the Bible throughout this safari. The Word is living, friends - the Word of God is alive.

On the *human* side we have authors from all types of different backgrounds and from all walks of life. That makes the Bible a very human book. We have a prince and a pauper; the highly intellectual; the simple man and complicated men. Luke wrote classical Greek, for example. Simon Peter also wrote Greek but didn't do so well with it. God, through the Holy Spirit, still used both of these men in marvelous ways. That is what we mean when we say God speaks through us by inspiration. It means God used these men without destruction to or even an alteration of their personality - He let them express exactly their thoughts and their feelings in their own way about the matters of which they wrote.

Even with that method God is able to overrule in such a way that the words written communicate exactly what He desires to say to man today. That is the wonder of the Bible. It's a *human* book. This is a book that *communicates* to mankind. It speaks to men in all walks of life and in all circumstances of it. The Bible conveys its message to the college professor as well as to the man who has an eighth-grade education. People may disagree about some of the details, but the Bible communicates to them either way. This book knows no generation gap; and hasn't changed. I hope it speaks to you – as it is – for who you are.

Approximately 2,500 times the Bible repeats the phrase (or some variation of it): "*Thus Saith the LORD!*" God has made it very clear that He is speaking through this book. If you invite Him to speak to your heart, then you *will* hear Him speak. This is a God book – but this is a human's book, also. Of course, the Bible is a human translation - because if it were in the original text, I couldn't read it – and neither could you! It was put into a language we can understand. We trust God has preserved the text according to His plan and purpose. As a God book it is a book that can communicate life to you; and whereby you become a child of God - begotten not by corruptible seed but by incorruptible seed. The Word of God liveth and abideth forever. The Bible is extremely personal and will lift you up in your joy and

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satisfaction of life; and speak to you of your pains, for your hurts and in your sorrow and heartaches.

Another interesting aspect of the uniqueness of the Bible – and this may be obvious – is that no other book is comparable. Categorically, Scripture stands alone. There are so many books today full of gross non-content – even so called “religious” books. Everyone seems to have written a book today; from the adult film star to the death-row convict. Take in a book by a retired sports hero or movie star for a bunch of abjectly dead-behind-the-eyes nothingness and sheer meaninglessness. Fantasy stories direct from that land written mostly by a bunch of slimy perverts who only want fame and desire to do the things they write of - but never can do because they are such shallow, unenlightened, dark, pathetic people – permeate libraries and book store shelves. Honestly, because I always am honest with you, friends, they are too cowardly for the supernatural book of the Bible; so, they are relegated to write on their own dim and dismal level.

However, the truly remarkable thing about Holy Writ is the way in which the wholly ignorant atheist elevates themselves above the Author of the Bible and dismisses it out of hand! Of course, they never study the Bible; and those who claim they have went out from among us because they were never one of us - first epistle of John. The Bible is truly a thriller that has anything man can produce beat. It contains some of the most shocking stories you’ve ever heard - the likes of which man could *never* conceive of in his own imagination. It has been demonstrated again and again that the natural man is simply not capable of thinking in these terms; not in a hundred-trillion light years. History has seen man create gods since man's beginning - but man-made gods are always angry, demanding beings with specific realms and limited functions and capabilities. The True and Living God of the Bible is the exact opposite of all of that.

God has communicated His Word to man today and continues to speak to His creatures in it. There is nothing God has to say to mankind today that is not written in the Bible already. If God spoke from Heaven right now, He would only quote from the Bible. There is nothing else that He wants to say to you or me that is not found somewhere on the pages of His text. More

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importantly, there is nothing more we need Him to say to us that He hasn't already said – in written form! My estimation is that most people do not understand more than about two or three percent maximum of the Word of God; so, why would the Lord tell them any more about some complicated eschatological plan of His in a dream or vision when they don't even make an effort to grasp the most basic tenets of truth in these things He has already said to us? No, friends, it doesn't happen that way; God communicates to mankind ONLY in Scripture today – nowhere else. No other way, either. Never.

Furthermore, God doesn't learn anything from reading our newspapers and watching our news broadcasts. Man learned absolutely nothing from the rocks we brought back from the moon so long ago. Even today as we reach Mars and beyond – it doesn't look like we are discovering very much. These are very expensive trips just to get pretty pictures and a sack of dusty rocks! I think the rocks in my backyard may be very much the same as those at NASA. The point is: God created the entire universe and He is the only way we can comprehend any of it.

So, God has communicated with man through the divine in this very human book. The authors, expressing their own feelings in their own words to their own generations with all of their limitations and mistakes communicated God to man. Moses made many mistakes. However, there are no mistakes in the Pentateuch. I once heard of a little book entitled "The Mistakes of Moses". When I think of that book I think it should be entitled "The Mistakes of the Author of the Book entitled, "The Mistakes of Moses;" because his mistake was writing on the mistakes of Moses. There are no mistakes in the Pentateuch – or anywhere else in the Bible, for that matter.

Now, there are four aspects of *divinity* found in the Bible: (1) inspiration (2) illumination (3) revelation and (4) interpretation. Divinity is God's side of the responsibility for the production of the words and books in the Bible. Revelation means that God has spoken; it means that God has communicated to mankind thereby revealing Him to us. Inspiration guarantees the revelation of God. Illumination speaks of the Holy Spirit being our teacher. If the Spirit of God is not permitted to communicate to

you because you deny Him, no one will succeed in communicating any spiritually discerned or divinely interpreted thing to you. Only the Spirit of God can do that – and, since it was He Who wrote the Bible, I have found that if I simply give it away then He will communicate it to whomsoever He will! That’s the Glory of it all, Christian friends. That’s the wonder and amazement of Scripture that will never cease.

Alright, briefly, regarding interpretation, which we will look at in a later Guideline report - the problem is not that the Bible can be interpreted in many different ways – the problem is that there are so many people interpreting the Bible. Unfortunately, not everyone interprets it my way. I wish they did - but they don’t – so I just have to try to be as patient as God will allow me to be with them and continue on the best that I can. Naturally, there are always three perspectives: yours, mine - and then there’s the correct one which is always Gods. Some day we will all stand in the presence of God and we will understand together the *correct* interpretation of it all. No less than 2,500 times God tells us that it is Him speaking in the Bible. I guess He didn’t want us to misunderstand exactly what was going on. In the 1st chapter of Hebrews, it is made very clear that God hath spoken.

Hebrews 1: 1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds ~

Whenever we find two like-minded people endowed with a reasonable degree of intelligence; who harbor the same feelings and desires and who are, more or less, attracted to each other in a common objective; you will find communication happening between them. Persons of like propensity separated from each other delight in the ability to communicate and in “getting back together”. We all rejoice when we receive communications from people we know and love. This innate characteristic of the human heart explains the post office, the telegraph and the telephone, email, instant messages and love notes in the classroom. Friends write to friends; husbands away from home write to their wives and kids write home for

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money. People separated from others that they know and love want to talk to those people. It is all communication and it is an expression from the heart. To even think that God would want to speak to us at all, though....well, that's where my thinking breaks down; because I can easily understand why God hated Esau - but I don't see any reason for God to love Jacob. It is truly amazing.

Some may remember the story of Helen Keller. I remember how I felt learning this woman was shut out from the world: blind, deaf and no way to communicate - so it would seem. Then, the way was opened up for her and she learned to communicate better than most people can communicate today in normal situations. So, I pose a reasonable and intelligent question: doesn't it only make sense that God has communicated to His creatures; to those whom He has imparted a certain level of intelligence and of whom were originally created in His own likeness?

God has a message for all of us - and He speaks to us today - but ONLY through His Word. While I know God has partially revealed Himself in more ways than the Scripture alone, we should be very careful and sincere about that, because even Satan transforms himself into an angel of light! If you want to hear directly from God speaking intimately to your heart – it can only be found in Holy Writ. Nowhere else. The passage we looked at from Hebrews says God spoke IN TIMES PAST through the prophets. Today, He has spoken through Christ. That means the Word that became flesh. Both the prophets and the revelation that came from Jesus Christ are located only in one place - the Bible; and Scripture is the only way you would ever know anything about either one of those things. Turn that over in your mind a few times and see what you come up with.

Now, in the interest of a proper, correct and complete Bible study, I recognize that the fact God has revealed Himself to us through creation is a good example of communication to us outside of Scripture. Paul says, “.... things that are not seen are shown forth through things that are seen”. The Heavens and the earth do declare the handiwork of God. God also communicates with man through the human heart. Those are not direct

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revelations of truth and wisdom, though. That only happens in His Word. God does reveal Himself to us through the experiences and emotions you and I have - but it's always Biblically based. We must reason from truth to experience - never from experience to truth. I'm sure you can look back right now in your life and see the hand of God in it. Either way, however, God has communicated all of that with us ultimately through the Bible.

The Bible is the revelation of God; it is His revelation in 66 books that we should learn, know and have a working knowledge of. The Old Testament has the Pentateuch; the historical books; the poetic books; the major prophetic books and the minor prophetic books. The New Testament has the Gospels; the historical books of the New Testament; the epistles, which bring the total up to 65, and then we have the last book – that book of Revelation – a prophetic book. That is the way God has spoken to us today; that is God's formula for communication with His creation – humanity, mankind - people.

There is a constant attack being waged against the Word of God today. A former dean of Princeton Theological Seminary wrote the following indictment in his book entitled "Christianity in America: Crisis:" *"Few intelligent Protestants can still hold to the idea that the Bible is an infallible book. Some may still cling to original copies of the Bible as infallible character but this view only begs and makes apologetics more ridiculous in the eyes of sincere men'*. Union Seminary in New York had yet another professor who released this statement: *"No intelligent person could possibly believe the Bible is the Word of God"*. The examples of attacks on the Bible and man's utter hatred of it continue on and on. According to contemporary intelligencia, I am not considered intelligent. Yet, both of these men I cited also boasted that they were humble liberals. They are saying anyone that does not agree with them is a fool and that they are the only intelligent people around. Of course, they're dangerous in their position - but many still take that attitude today. They are nothing but a curse to the world and a plague on our society.

"Aristotle's whole philosophy was the learning of the schoolman; it cloistered the Bible – worshipping bones in the churches in an attempt to

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link them with the apostles. The tenth century was by far the darkest, but in the twentieth century, Aristotle's philosophy through Darwin and the like worship bones in the universities in an attempt to link them with the apes. It has also given us Unitarianism through Emerson in America; reformed Judaism through Moses Mendelson and Bolshevism through Carl Marx. It is the doctrine of demons and seducing spirits". – Dr Gregory.

BB Warfield was among some very intelligent men that believed the Bible. It is said that he had the largest intellect the Americas have ever produced. Dr. Warfield said, "*....the Bible is the Word of God in such a sense that whatever it says, God said*". – BB Warfield. "*There is more meaning in Holy Writ than we shall ever get out of it*". – Bishop Hadley.

Plenary verbal inspiration of the Scripture means that we believe the Bible is the Word of God, the authoritative statement from God and that every single word in it is written either to us or for us - from Him - in the day in which we live. Plenary means full and complete – that the words themselves are inspired. We must keep that before us and I wish I had more space to devote to developing that subject here, but that may be a topic to which there is just no end. Inspiration guarantees revelation from God. That is exactly how the Bible defines and identifies itself. Two men, Paul writing to Timothy, and Peter writing his last epistle, have very definite things to say about the Bible.

2 Timothy 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works ~

All scripture is given by inspiration; the very word means the action or power of moving the intellect or emotions. What man can make another man think or feel anything? God spoke through the men of the Bible and He said precisely what He intended to say. Peter said, "*...."for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit"* – second Peter chapter one verse twenty-one. The men who wrote the Bible were moved and carried along by the

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Holy Spirit. Their thoughts are wedded to words as necessarily as the soul is wed to the body. We could more easily have music without notes or mathematics without figures than thoughts without words. It is not the thoughts that are inspired but the words are as inspired as they are written. Satan was not inspired to tell a lie but he did tell a lie. The words of the Bible are inspired.

The Lord Jesus said over and over again, "It is written". The Word of God is written. These men were simply giving out what God had to say. It is not any more a human book because it is a God book and it's not any less a God book because it is a human book! God used these human writers leaving their free will intact. These men were not fountain pens that God had to turn upside down and shake to get them flowing. He picked them up and wrote with them by allowing them to express their own thoughts and feelings and emotions. This is the living Word of God.

Lastly, when we talk about verbal plenary inspiration we need to be clear about what that means because we will hear it again and again. It means we believe that *every single word* we are going to come across in the Bible is literally the inspired Word of God. It is the words in the Bible and not the thoughts of man that inspire. One of the fathers of the church said, "... the scriptures, indeed, are perfect; for God, in His Spirit, has spoken them". Augustine said, "Let us therefore yield ourselves and bow to the authority of the Holy Scriptures which neither err nor deceive". We must remember that whatever the Bible says – God said. He speaks through it to our hearts and to our lives - answering all of our questions and solving all of our problems. Let's thank Him for that today ~

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