

Help in Reading

THE BIBLE: An Introduction

THE BIBLE: An Introduction (Third Edition, Jerry L. Sumney, Fortress Press, 2021) is a textbook which provides an overview of some Biblical matters, while also promoting ideas that are hard to reconcile with the Christian faith. Following are some considerations as you read the textbook.

The textbook views Scripture on a natural level as explained in the epilogue and in the comments on inspiration in chapter 3. It treats Scripture as only human thought that developed over time. This is not how the Bible views itself, because it claims to be from God. Its authors often say “thus says the LORD” and Jesus quotes Deuteronomy that the Scriptures are from God’s mouth (Heb. 1:1, Matt. 4:4, 2 Tim 3:16). However, the textbook takes a skeptic’s view of the Scriptures. As you read the textbook, you will find that it:

1. Does not consider the Bible as being from God
2. Implies the Bible is historically inaccurate without giving a basis
3. Drives the idea of genre in an unreasonable way
4. Presses readers to feel we need to apologize for the Bible
5. Makes many statements without providing a basis (be like the people in Berea who examined what Paul said to see if it was accurate; Acts 16)
6. Denies fulfilled prophecy (like Isaiah 53 being about Jesus)
7. Charges writers as frauds without giving a real basis
8. Charges New Testament writers with reading new meanings into Old Testament Scriptures to have them point to Jesus
9. Claims to know why books were written while giving little basis

Because the book does not offer balancing thoughts, some are provided in the table in Appendix 1 and in the following chapter-by-chapter notes. Resources listed at the end should help build your confidence in the Bible as being from

God Himself. It will be helpful to keep in mind that the Scriptures have been demonstrated to be divine as seen in realities such as:

1. Fulfilled prophecy
2. Historical accuracy demonstrated repeatedly
3. Archaeological confirmations
4. Divine consistency though written by 40 authors over a 1500-year period
5. Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead
6. Transformed lives by the gospel

Preface

As the book begins, it suggests the Bible is “problematic” (page xxix) so as to put the reader in a defensive posture. When a reader hears how people find the Bible “disturbing” (page xxix), they may feel a need to diminish its force or be cautious in accepting it. But one should not feel in a corner of feeling defensive.

The textbook suggests that if a writing has theological importance then we do not anticipate it to be historically accurate (page xxix). However, this is not a reasonable position to take. ***A writing can be aiming at a theological point while still being historical in nature.*** Further, ***the Scriptures are historically accurate*** and have been often demonstrated to be so through archeology and comparison with other historical documents.

Note that this initiates a viewpoint of the Scriptures as earthly, human products, suggesting we should ask 'why their original authors might have held the views expressed' (page xxx). But ***the Scriptures present themselves as being from God which is a perspective not taken throughout the textbook.***

Timeline

The timeline includes things that do not have a solid basis, yet the reader may think what is listed is based on solid facts. ***The J, E and P documents do not exist.*** They are imagined by men. ***Listed dates are based on skeptical theology that contradicts the Scriptures.*** For example, dating the exodus as 1250 is not founded on solid archeology or history. See for example videos on YouTube on the Expedition Bible channel. Nehemiah did not arrive in Judah in 538. Perhaps this is just a typo. It should be 444. Luke and Acts should be dated before Paul was killed in the 60s AD. The text of Acts ends with Paul still alive. It is incorrect to list the Hebrew Bible as being established in 70-130 AD. It was established long before Jesus Christ came. Jesus referred to it (Luke 24:44).

Chapter 1 The Bible, A Gradually Emerging Collection

The textbook says the reason for Scripture is so a group can govern itself, but the Bible presents a different perspective, that it is “God-breathed” (2 Timothy 3:16), with God communicating to man because God wanted to. “God has spoken” (Hebrews 1:1) God communicated because He expects people to obey Him. This is emphasized in the Pentateuch, and the Lord Jesus says, “if you love me, keep my commandments.” (John 14:15) Further, the Scriptures are given by God with the goal that we come to salvation. (2 Timothy 3:15) These reasons are higher reasons than the human-level logic presented in the book. ***The book’s viewpoint is only man-centered with no reference to a real God.*** Yet the Bible itself contradicts man-centered thinking.

Though the book says that there are sources noted for the Scriptures (p 6-7), it does not note that this should give us confidence it was written with historical validity and accuracy.

The textbook states that the prophetic books were not actually written by the named prophet. (p 7) The basis given is that it was written in the third person and has materials after the prophet died. But this is not convincing. ***Someone may certainly choose to write in the third person and still be the author.*** Further, it is reasonable to think that some material could be appended after the writer died such as the record of Moses’ death likely being added by Joshua.

Throughout the textbook the concept is emphasized that the nation of Israel did not have written Scriptures (p 7). But the law was written, known, preserved and taught as seen in Deuteronomy 31:9-13, 24-26, 46. The textbook offers proof of its claim in that the book was found in Josiah’s day, but this contradicts the assertion, since evidently the Scriptures had been written down. The above assertion serves as the foundation for a major overlay that the Scriptures were written during the exile. Realize this assertion was based on a faulty foundation, so do not give it weight.

The Old Testament Scriptures were clearly known. Jesus refers to them. After His resurrection (in Luke 24:44), the Lord Jesus refers to the Law, Prophets and Writings (by referring to the first book of the Writings which is Psalms). These were “all the Scriptures” (Luke 24:27) a clearly known group of books. The textbook seems to want to sow confusion regarding the Christian Canon (p 11). However, Jerome distinguished the apocrypha from the rest of Scripture when translating into Latin (the Vulgate).

No basis is given for the assertion that 2 Peter was written in 125. It is just stated as a fact. ***If it was written that late, the writer was a fraud claiming to be Peter.*** As seen in later chapters, the textbook author does think this.

Continue to be alert to statements made as if they are facts even though no basis is given. Also, do not give room to undermining comments like implying that the apostles were not in agreement. (p 13)

Note that the following statement is made without providing a basis: “these traditions probably do not record actual historical connections” of the writers of the gospels being apostles or connected with an apostle. (p 25)

The book does not emphasize the supernatural character of ***the Scriptures in their being written over a 1500-year period by 40 authors and yet cohesively fitting together. This strongly argues that they are from one Author, God.***

Solid information is available regarding the source of the canon. Men like F. F. Bruce and David Gooding provide resources for those who wish to study these things further. Gooding’s writings are freely available online at Myrtlefield Trust’s website.

For your encouragement, the following are a few excerpts from F. F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents - Are They Reliable?* (Eerdmans; 2003)

“There are in existence over 5000 Greek manuscripts of the New Testament in whole or in part.” (p. 10) “Perhaps we can appreciate how wealthy the New Testament is in manuscript attestation if we compare the textual material for other ancient historical works. For Caesar’s Gallic War (composed between 58 and 50 BC) there are several extant manuscripts, but only nine or ten are good, and the oldest is some 900 years later than Caesar’s day. Of the 142 books of the Roman History of Livy (59 BC-AD 17) only thirty-five survive... Of the fourteen books of the Histories of Tacitus (c. AD 100) only four and a half survive; of the sixteen books of his Annals, ten survive in full and two in part. The text of these extant portions of his great historical works depends entirely on two manuscripts, one of the ninth century and one of the eleventh... The History of Thucydides (c. 460-400 BC) is known to us from eight manuscripts, the earliest belonging to c. AD 900, and a few papyrus scraps, belonging to about the beginning of the Christian era. The same is true of the History of Herodotus (c. 488-428 BC). Yet **no classical scholar would listen to an argument that the authenticity of Herodotus or Thucydides is in doubt because the earliest manuscripts of their works which are of any use to us are over 1300 years**

later than the originals. But how different is the situation of the New Testament in this respect! In addition to the two excellent manuscripts of the fourth century mentioned above, which are the earliest of some thousands known to us, considerable fragments remain of papyrus copies of books of the New Testament dated from 100 to 200 years earlier still.” (p. 11-12)

Chapter 2: From Then to Now, The Transmission of the Bible

We should have great confidence in the Scriptures in how God has provided that they have been faithfully transmitted to us. We can build most of the New Testament just from quotes found in early church writings.

The textbook includes some skeptical comments without giving a basis, such as “it is even possible that some of the psalms were written by David.” (p 20) There is no good reason to doubt the author of a psalm.

The book provides a low confidence level of 90 percent for the text of the New Testament. Dr. David Gooding points out that **98% of the New Testament documents agree**. Westcott and Hort are famous New Testament textual critics. As Dr. David Gooding notes, they said “after a lifetime study of the manuscripts available to them in those days, that less than two percent of the whole New Testament remained in any doubt. And of that two percent most were concerned with small matters, like, for instance, there being two words for ‘and’ in Greek. Sometimes some manuscripts will have the one word and other manuscripts will have the other word and they both mean the same thing.” (*Where Did the New Testament Come From?* on Myrtlefield Trust website)

Chapter 3: Inspiration

In commenting on 2 Timothy 3:16, the book claims that the point of the verse is that Scripture is “useful”, and that this implies there is no significance to saying it is “inspired.” (p 34-35) **The fact that all Scripture is “useful” does not diminish the forcefulness of Paul’s saying it is “inspired.”** In the flow of thought of the letter, he is urging Timothy to hold fast to the Scriptures as the one solid thing in a world of imposters (see 3:12-17). Thus, he is emphasizing the fact that “all Scripture is God-breathed.” The Scripture is indeed saying that all Scripture is accurate and perfectly reliable. It is an empty assertion to say that 2 Timothy 3:16 “makes no claim about accuracy or infallibility in history,

science or geography” (as if the Scripture are inaccurate in these areas). If it is “God-breathed,” it is accurate.

The book tries to build on this assertion. Since his assertion is unsound, we should not follow along to the next idea (p 35).

The book comes back to the unsound assertion that Scripture began to be seen as divine revelation in the sixth century BC, claiming this was an “idea” that developed then (p 35). Yet ***Moses and David certainly saw Scripture as revelation from God.*** Moses speaks of words coming from “the mouth of God.” (Deut. 8:3) Read Ps 19 and 119 to get a sense of how they saw the Scriptures. The book does not consider the Lord Jesus’ attitude and view of inspiration. He saw it as from “the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4) just like Moses did, for Christ was quoting from Deuteronomy.

The textbook claims Paul “did not read [the Bible] for its literal sense.” (p 37) ***While Paul did present an allegorical application in Galatians 4, in the same letter he gives a very strong literal interpretation, pointing out how Genesis 22:18 uses the singular rather than the plural for the word “seed.”*** (Galatians 3:16) Paul’s letters display a consistent literal reading of the Scriptures.

Though Origen took an allegorical approach to Scripture, this does not mean the majority in the early church did so. (p 37)

The book continues to say things with no basis, referring to “inaccuracies” and “historical mistakes” and “contradictory texts or historically inaccurate statements” (p 37) but giving no backup or even example. ***The book asserts that “these writers... knew that the facts were wrong,” yet it gives no examples of wrong facts.*** These appear to be unsubstantiated statements aimed to shake confidence in the reliability of God’s Word.

“Plenary inspiration” does not mean “the text was full of meaning... even when it was not factually correct.” (p 37) Plenary inspiration means that the complete Word of God is inspired. Perhaps the book wants to confuse here.

The book repeatedly speaks of “inconsistencies and inaccuracies” but does not give one example. (p 37) Instead the book keeps building on an unsubstantiated premise saying, “how can one claim that Scripture is infallible and demand a literal reading, when there are historical and factual errors?” (p 38) This repeated pattern seems to indicate an intent to cause doubt.

Yet the Scriptures have not been demonstrated to be inaccurate, but rather ***the Scriptures have shown themselves to be accurate repeatedly such that they should be approached as accurate until proven otherwise*** (“innocent into proven guilty”). Someone cannot claim a contradiction unless there is no plausible way both statements can be true. Solid answers have been provided for claimed contradictions, such as on the website “Got Questions” and in the book *The Historical Reliability of the New Testament* by Craig Blomberg.

The author is inconsistent when he scoffs that “this is of little help because we do not have the original text of any biblical book” (p 39) for in the previous chapter he pointed out how accurately the text has been transcribed and how many copies we have that allow us to have a solid basis for knowing what was written in the autographs.

The book points to alternatives to understanding that the Scriptures were inspired in the original writings. But there is no need to look for an alternative such as saying that the Bible “contains” truth or that the Bible “becomes” the word of God when it reveals God to the church (p 43) or that Scripture “contains a revelation from God... [that] comes in the midst of human experience”. These are inconsistent with what the Bible says about itself and what the Lord Jesus thought about Scripture. There is no need to come up with such ideas of inspiration because the Bible is factually accurate and historically accurate. The initial premise did not have a basis, so we have no need to follow what is built on this faulty foundation.

Chapter 4: The Pentateuch, Part 1

The book imposes several unsound premises on the Pentateuch. ***One major unsound premise is its claim that the Pentateuch is not historical based on the “genre” superimposed on the Scripture*** (p 52, 55). Yet, the claim is unfounded. It in fact comes across as silly. How could one read the extended genealogical record of Genesis 5 and conclude this was not written as history? Further, the Lord Jesus referred to Genesis 1 and 2 in the same sentence, giving no thought that they somehow contradicted. ***Christ spoke of Genesis 1 and 2 as authoritative declarations of how male and female came to be (Matthew 19) not as “poetic or symbolic narrative.”***

Another unsubstantiated premise is that the Pentateuch came from J, E, D and P sources. This was a man’s unproven “hypothesis” yet the book speaks of it as fact. (p 50) saying, “the earliest of these sources was composed sometime

around the tenth century BCE.” (p 51) No such document has been identified. **All of these supposed sources are conjecture.** When the book says, “most scholars” think this (p 50), know that this does not include scholars who defend the Bible as being from God’s mouth.

The book uses this hypothesis to assert the Scriptures were not written by Moses. “No single author wrote the books of the Pentateuch” (p 53) Jesus referred to it as being written by Moses (Mt 8:4, 19:8; Lk 20:37; Jn 3:14, 5:46). His testimony is a solid basis. The apostles likewise spoke of the Pentateuch being written by Moses (Acts 3:22, Rm 10:5, 1 Cor 9:9). It is unsound to **imagine that thousands of years later we have better knowledge than the Old Testament writers, Jesus and the apostles.** It is reasonable to say the books were written by Moses and still allow that Joshua added about his death (cf. p 50).

The textbook is out of date in referencing the Documentary Hypothesis. Regarding this Hypothesis, a scholarly review in 2000 says the following in summary. “The time has long passed for scholars of every theological persuasion to recognize that the Graf-Wellhausen theory, as a starting point for continued research, is dead. The Documentary Hypothesis and the arguments that support it have been effectively demolished by scholars from many different theological perspectives and areas of expertise.” (Duane A. Garrett, *Rethinking Genesis: The Sources and Authorship of the First Book of the Pentateuch*, Fearn, Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 2000)

The book continues the unsound idea of genre saying, “the stories of Genesis... may be true in a real sense even when they are scientifically and historically inaccurate” (p 55). In this Genesis is charged as “scientifically and historically inaccurate” but no basis or example is given. The author shows disrespect for God and His Word when he mocks the record in Genesis of Adam naming the animals (p 58). Yet the Lord Jesus and Paul quote from Genesis 2 as divinely authoritative, using it to exhort behavior that pleases God (Matthew 19, Ephesians 5).

The book says that “the story of what Christians call the fall (Genesis 3)... is not literal history.” (p 60) **However, sin coming upon all people due to Adam’s sin is the foundation to essential teaching regarding sin’s impact on mankind and God’s solution provided in Christ (Romans 5).** Though the book dismisses any significance of “how many days it took to create the world” (p 58), God emphasizes this when He establishes the Sabbath for Israel, saying the reason to honor the Sabbath is because “in six days the LORD made the heavens and

the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day.” (Ex 20:11)

The Bible itself interprets Genesis 1 to 11 as history and accurate.

The book claims that “when the author of this section of Genesis looked at the subjection of women to their husbands, he saw it as part of what had gone wrong with the world.” (p 61) There is no basis for this statement in the text. It also contradicts God’s design of male and female from before the fall. ***God’s design of man as the head of his wife is emphasized as God’s pattern for those redeemed in Christ as a reflection of Christ and His church (Ephesians 5:22-33) and is rooted in Genesis.***

Rather than thinking of other flood stories as leading one to dismiss Genesis, ***the fact that flood stories have been identified all over the world should give us confidence that the flood is actual history.*** The book refers to “inconsistencies” in the flood story, such as how Genesis refers to two of each kind in one place but seven of each kind in another place. (p 64) But Genesis is clear that the difference is whether they are clean or unclean animals.

Nowhere in Scripture does it say what the book says about the Canaan story being used to justify Israel exercising “dominance” over the other inhabitants of Canaan. Rather ***the Scripture makes it plain why the LORD told Israel to drive out the Canaanites – it was for their wicked behavior (Deut. 9:5), even sacrificing their little children to false gods.*** “By all these things the nations which I am driving out from you have become defiled. For the land has become defiled, therefore I have brought its punishment upon it, so the land has vomited out its inhabitants” (Lev 18:24-25) “When you enter the land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter to pass through the fire...” (Deut. 18:9-10) The LORD was very patient with these people. As prophesied to Abram, He did not judge them for 400 years until their iniquity was “complete.” (Genesis 15:16) The LORD similarly brought judgment on Israel in future years for their wicked ways.

The book makes no mention of the important promise of the land being inhabited by Abraham’s descendants, a promise repeated multiple times to Abraham and then to Isaac and Jacob. The book does not mention the important fact that Abram was justified based on faith (Genesis 15:6) which is essential in teachings in Romans 4 and Galatians 3.

The explanation of the reason for judgment on Sodom comes across as weak and exaggerated (p 69-70). Compare Scripture with Scripture. ***The stated realize for judgment on Sodom was “sexual perversion.” (Jude 7)*** God had designed male and female, and these men perverted this order of God.

The book disrespects Joseph as “arrogant and boastful” and claims he inflicts “mental anguish on” his brothers. (p 75) But Joseph is an excellent example of persevering in trusting and obeying the LORD despite great difficulties inflicted by others. He also is a beautiful illustration of Christ and of forgiveness.

Chapter 5: The Pentateuch, Part 2

The book again overlays a presumed genre on the Scriptures, calling it “legend” (p 80). Other Scriptures do not view these historical accounts as being fictitious.

The book overemphasizes points the Scriptures do not make. It claims, “the exodus makes God’s care for the oppressed a central element of the way God relates to the world.” (p 80) While God does care for the oppressed, this is not the focus of the book of Exodus.

Significant matters are missing from the textbook. ***No reference is made to Christ as our Passover (1 Corin 5:7) who was sacrificed as a substitute for us, to rescue from God’s judgment.*** This is a central focus emphasized throughout the Scriptures. John the Baptist announces Jesus saying, “Behold the Lamb of God” (John 1:29). Jesus was crucified on Passover, fulfilling this feast (Luke 22:15). Scripture should be interpreted by using other Scriptures.

The comments about the Red Sea seem to be an attempt to have these Scriptures be on the same grounds as “various myths.” (p 84). However, ***the Scriptures explain why God took Israel out of Egypt following this route.*** It was to avoid the Philistines. (Ex 13:17)

The Tabernacle and offerings are not emphasized by the book, though the Pentateuch spends many chapters on these important shadows of Christ (Ex 25-40; Lev 1-7). Isaiah 53 emphasizes that the LORD’s servant would be a sin offering for us. The book of Hebrews focuses on the Tabernacle and offerings. These point to Christ as the One who has provided a way of approach to God on the basis of His blood shed as a substitute for us. The book also ignores the important day of atonement (Lev 16) and feasts of the LORD (Lev 23, Deut 16) which also point to Christ.

The book claims the Ten Commandments assume “there are other gods.” (p 89) People thought there were other gods, but the LORD did not suggest there were. He is the only God, and they were to recognize that.

The book minimizes the command against homosexuality suggesting it is just a way of being different from the nations around them rather than being morally evil. (p 93) The rest of the Scriptures make it clear that God saw it as wicked, an abomination (Lev 18:22) deserving of righteous judgment (Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corin 6:9-11, 1 Timothy 1:8-11). **God does not just want Israel to be different for the sake of being different; God calls them to live righteously** as those who need to “be holy, for I am holy” as is emphasized in Leviticus (e.g. Lev 19:2).

The book does not point out that Israel’s refusal to enter the land was “unbelief” as is emphasized in these Scriptures, as well as in Psalm 95 and Hebrews 3-4. The Bible makes it clear that we must obey when God speaks.

The book represents Phinehas as unreasonable because a “couple comes to beg for mercy” (p 98) but he kills them. There is nothing indicating the couple was begging for mercy. Rather they were boldly committing sexual immorality in front of those who were repentantly mourning. (Num 25:6)

Though the book states that Deuteronomy “does not contain actual speeches given by Moses, and Moses did not write the book” (p 99), there is no real basis given for this. Similarly, **the assertion that “Deuteronomy was written hundreds of years after the death of Moses” is conjecture and leads to disrespect for the Scriptures.** Deuteronomy is not fraudulent as these comments suggest. The Lord Jesus referred to Deuteronomy as God’s Word written by Moses and authoritative (see for example Matt. 4:1-11, 19:8)

Chapter 6: Joshua to Nehemiah

In contrast to the book’s claim that the Pentateuch was written during the exile, Joshua already had “the book of the law” (Joshua 1:8) and was called to do “all that is written in it.” The book of Joshua emphasizes being strong to possess what God has promised, but this is not noted in the textbook.

The book says there are an abundance of “questions about the historical accuracy of the stories found in the book” (p 106) and yet gives no examples to back up this statement. In fact, **Jericho has been located and excavated and found consistent with the Biblical record.** See for example videos on YouTube on the Expedition Bible and Associates for Biblical Research channels.

The book comments on “mass killings” (p 109), while not providing Biblical background for the reason God was using Israel to remove the people. The author paints God and Israel as being evil, referring to the record as “disturbing” and “gruesome.” (p 110). However, the disturbing and gruesome behavior was really why God was judging these people after 400 years of patience with them. (Gen 15:16) They were utterly perverse in their ways. God was “vomiting” the people out of the land (which God owns) due to their vile actions, not just idolatry. (Lev 18:24-25; Deut 9:5, 18:9-10) **Archaeological findings have confirmed the vile practice of child sacrifice done by these people in Canaan.** See, for example, Expedition Bible videos on YouTube. **God is allowed to use people to judge. Later in history God uses other nations to judge Israel as recorded in the prophets.** See “God is Not a Monster” video on the Uplook channel of YouTube.

Gibeah is paralleled with Sodom in an illegitimate way. The book claims that “the story of Sodom is... not about homosexuality” but rather “about asserting power, not about which sex the people rape.” (p 116) While rape is wicked in any situation, the story of Sodom is about homosexuality as seen in how it is referenced in other Scriptures such as when Jude state that Sodom and Gomorrah were judged for having “given themselves over to sexual immorality, and gone after strange flesh.” (Jude 1:7) This is consistent with God’s comments on homosexuality elsewhere in Scripture as being an abomination. Note that archaeological finds align with the Biblical record of these cities being destroyed by fire and brimstone. See Expedition Bible YouTube channel.

There is much to be learned from Judges and Samuel but the textbook does not provide help in seeing this. The book claims there are “traditions” about David which are “difficult to reconcile as history.” (p 123) **The book dismisses these records as being historical on the basis that David is presented as a military leader as well as a musician. It certainly is possible for a person to be both.**

The book says “faithful kings rule forty years” (p 123) though this is nowhere stated in the Scriptures nor is it a particular pattern. It comments on how Elijah kills Baal’s priests but apparently not Asherah’s priests, saying “some speculate he spares them because many thought of Asherah as God’s consort.” (p 126) No basis is provided. Further, based on his fierce judgment on the false prophets of Baal, would Elijah be afraid to address that lie?

The book hints that the Scriptures are questionable regarding historical accuracy, yet Figures in the book illustrate that the Scriptures are rooted in

history. For example, the Scriptures speak of Baal, and archaeological finds agree that there was Baal worship (Figure 6.4 p 118). Archaeology aligns with Scripture as seen in the Moabite Stone regarding Omri (Figure 6.7 p 129) and the Black Obelisk showing Jehu (Figure 6.9 p 133). Ongoing archaeology continues to demonstrate the historical reliability of the Scriptures. Repeatedly the Scriptures have been proved to be accurate despite earlier accusations against it. Thus, it is only reasonable to think of the Bible as innocent until proven guilty (accurate until proven inaccurate). See for example videos on YouTube and other resources from Associates for Biblical Research and Expedition Bible.

The Scriptures present themselves as being historical such as in the genealogical records in the first nine chapters of 1 Chronicles.

The textbook does not point out the important Davidic Covenant in which God promises David that his son will reign on his throne forever. (2 Samuel 7 and 1 Chronicles 17) This covenant is foundational for understanding references to it in the Psalms and Prophets, as well as in the New Testament. The New Testament begins with the strong statement that Jesus Christ is “the Son of David” (Matthew 1:1) for He is the One fulfilling the promise of God.

Chapter 7: The Prophets

There is no sound basis for claiming the writings were not in fact written by the named prophet but were “reworkings” (p 142). ***If it were true, then the Lord Jesus Christ supported the fraud who wrote Daniel***, for He refers to Daniel as a “prophet.” (Matthew 24:15)

The book overdrives ideas to try to make the Bible look bad. For example, it says that the metaphor of Hosea’s unfaithful wife “has been used to support and enforce family and societal systems that oppress women.” (p 146) ***It seems the textbook is trying to push the reader to feel the need to be defensive.*** But these Scriptures such as Hosea are a beautiful display of God’s persistent love in pursuing Israel (and us) despite repeated unfaithfulness. This imagery is used elsewhere in Scripture picturing God’s persistent pursuit of Israel.

The assertion is unfounded that Isaiah is “from no less than three prophets who write in the name of Isaiah” (p 148). John (in 12:37-41) refers to Isaiah 6 as being written by Isaiah and immediately refers to Isaiah 53 as also being written by Isaiah. It is one book by one author. It is seen as one book in the manuscripts including the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The book explicitly denies that Isaiah prophesies Jesus. The book charges that Matthew was “inserting meanings” into Isaiah’s prophecies by applying them to Jesus. (p 149) This is a very serious charge against the Scriptures and a direct attack on Jesus Christ. The book confidently says the sign of Immanuel was not about Jesus, though the Holy Spirit led Matthew to directly state it was about Jesus who is “God with us.” (Matthew 1:22-23) The book boldly claims that Matthew gives the Isaiah text a “new meaning.” (p 149) So either Matthew is correct or the textbook author is correct.

The book broadly asserts “no Israelite prophet made direct predictions about Jesus.” (p 149) ***This statement is false. Isaiah is full of prophecies of a coming One which clearly point to Jesus. (Isaiah 9:6-7, 11:1-5, 42:1-7, 49:5-7, 50:4-7, 52:13-53:12) Daniel 9 prophesies the timing of when “Messiah” would come and that Messiah would be “cut off.”*** (Daniel 9:25) It is apparent that the book’s author is committed to unbelief as his religion, and so he refuses to allow the hand of God to be seen in fulfilled prophecy. But ***fulfilled prophecy gives wonderful confidence that Jesus is indeed the Christ of God.***

The book boldly claims that the “servant songs” such as Isaiah 53 are “clearly not about Jesus” (p 151). It accuses the New Testament authors of “reading new meanings into these texts” by seeing the poems as describing Jesus. Philip preached Jesus to the Ethiopian from Isaiah 53. (Acts 8) ***Read Isaiah 53 and see plainly that it is about Jesus Christ dying for your sins.***

This section of the textbook shows clearly that the textbook author refuses to believe that the Scriptures are from God and refuses to accept that Jesus is the Christ of God who fulfilled prophecies such as Isaiah 53. We should keep this in mind while reading all of the textbook. It is coming from an author who is committed to unbelief and so finds ways to try to undermine the Scriptures as being reliable and inspired by God.

The book overlays the unsound view that ideas were “developing” rather than that they were being given by God. ***It paints the prophets as contradicting each other, with no substance to this claim.*** It claims Zechariah “adjusts the expectations of Haggai” (p 162), asserting that Haggai was mistaken in his prophecy. But these two prophets were raised up by God to together stir up the rebuilding of the temple (see Ezra 5:1).

Figure 7.3 of the Ishtar Gate and Figure 7.4 of the Cyrus Cylinder are additional examples of the historical accuracy of the Scriptures. (p 159, 160)

Though the book refers to Zechariah 9 (p 162), it does not note the prophecy of Christ's coming in Zechariah 9:9 nor 12:10. "Your king is coming to you; He is righteous and endowed with salvation, humble and mounted on a donkey" which is just what Jesus did in riding into Jerusalem. **"They will look at Me whom they pierced" clearly refers to the fact that God's Son would be crucified but then would come back victoriously.** Both prophecies are pointed out in the New Testament as referring to Jesus. (John 12:15; Rev 1:7)

The book claims "Jonah is not a historical figure" (p 164). The textbook attempts to substantiate this claim saying that the book of Jonah presents Jonah as getting to Nineveh by an impossible route, saying "there is no sea route to this inland capital." (p 165) But **the book of Jonah does not say Jonah got to Nineveh by a sea route.** Jonah got in a boat to go the opposite direction.

The book contradicts the Lord Jesus who calls Jonah a prophet (Matthew 16:4) and refers to the record of Nineveh repenting as a real historical event (Matthew 12:39-41). Christ spoke of Jonah as a real person like Solomon who is a real person. (Matthew 12:41-42) Based on the book repeatedly making such statements that contradict Christ and the apostles, it appears the book's goal is that the reader will not have confidence in the Scriptures, in God or in the Lord Jesus. Jonah is also addressed as a prophet in 2 Kings 14:24-25.

The book says Jonah is a "critique of Israelite prophecy" and he "does not expect the Ninevites to abandon their worship of other gods, only to repent of their evil deeds." (p 166) There is not found in the book of Jonah. The book claims that "earlier prophets had predicted events of both condemnation of and restoration for Judah that had not come true" so Jonah is trying to correct their wrong thinking that led to those predictions (p 166). But **there are no failed predictions in the Scriptures that Jonah needs to try to explain.** Further, there is nowhere in the Bible where one prophet corrects the wrong thinking of another prophet. Both were led by the same God in what they said.

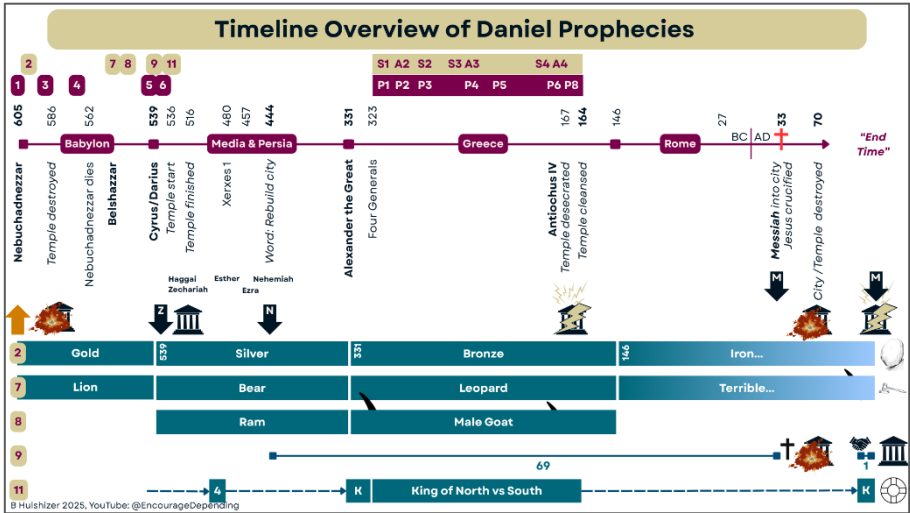
Regarding Daniel, the book confidently states it was written in the second century BC during the time of Antiochus IV. (p167) This has no basis, and contradicts what Daniel itself says about itself. If it were true, the writer of Daniel is a fraud who claimed to be writing during the sixth century BC. But Jesus did not think he was a fraud. Ezekiel was written much earlier and refers to Daniel.

But **Daniel was not written by a fraud. The only reason to say Daniel was written in the time of Antiochus IV is because Daniel is full of prophecies**

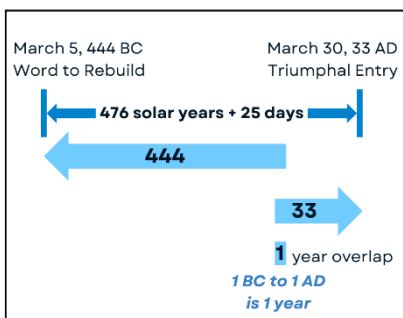
that came true perfectly such as the rise of the Greek empire, the fighting of the Seleucids and Ptolemies, and Antiochus IV's desecration of the temple (in Daniel 8 and 11). **The book's premise is that predicting the future is not possible (not even for God), and thus we should date the book after those "prophecies" happened in history.**

But Daniel's prophecies extended beyond the second century BC. He prophesied Messiah coming in 33 AD and being killed, and after that Jerusalem and the temple being destroyed. (Daniel 9:25-26) Messiah did indeed ride into Jerusalem as their Prince in AD 33 and then was crucified. After that in AD 70 the Romans destroyed the city of Jerusalem and its temple.

The below graphic shows that many of Daniel's prophecies extend past the 160s BC including the rise of Rome, Messiah coming, Messiah being killed, and Jerusalem being destroyed. In the second graphic it is seen that Jesus came at the time prophesied in Daniel 9.



Timeline of the First 69 of the 70 Weeks of Daniel 9



Based on Harold Hoehner "Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ"

B Hulshizer 2025
YouTube: @EncourageDepending

69 weeks x 7 = 483 years

One prophetic week is seven years

483 prophetic **lunar** years

x 360 days per **lunar** year
173,880 days

173,880.000

÷ 365.242 days per **solar** year
476.068 solar years

0.068 **solar** years

x 364.342 days per **solar** year
25.000 days

March 5 (of 444 BC) to March 30 (33 AD)
= **25 days**

Thus, Daniel is indeed a prophet who predicted the future, and so the basis for dating the book in the second century BC is proven false. ***The Lord Jesus called Daniel a “prophet”, not an imposter.*** He referred to yet-future events prophesied by Daniel and added further to those prophecies. (Matthew 24:15) It will build your confidence in the Scriptures to become familiar with the prophecies given through Daniel. See for example teaching on the EncourageDepending channel on YouTube.

Though the chapter is titled “Thus says the LORD”, the textbook author does not see the LORD saying anything. He does not give any sense that God has spoken through the prophets. It is merely ideas of men “developing.”

Chapter 8: Wisdom Literature and Esther

These books are presented as coming from a certain way men have thought called the “wisdom tradition” rather than as revelation from God. (p 176) ***However, God’s Word claims it came as led by God’s Holy Spirit, not by a mere human tradition. “Men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”*** (2 Peter 1:21)

The book asserts without a basis that “Job is probably not a historical person” (p 177). However, the book provides no good reason for this comment. In contrast, James and Ezekiel refer freely to Job as an example to imitate.

The book claims that “being the satan seems to be a task God assigns to various members of the heavenly court” (p 178) There simply is no basis for such a statement. It appears the book says it to try to undermine confidence in the Scriptures since “by the time of the New Testament, ideas about Satan have changed significantly, but throughout the Hebrew Bible satan does not refer to an evil being who has rebelled against God.” However, ***the Bible is clear that Satan is the same angel who deceived Adam and Eve in Genesis 3 and has opposed God throughout time. Revelation 20:2 refers to “the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan”.*** While there is progressive revelation from God, there are no contradictions as the author implies.

The book makes no reference to Job’s confidence in the afterlife as seen in Job 19:25-27. There is much to be learned from Proverbs, but the textbook does not provide particular help in seeing this.

When you read “most scholars” deny that Solomon wrote Ecclesiastes (p 182), keep in mind that ***“most scholars” means “most unbelieving scholars.”***

The book claims Esther is “fictional” (p 183) with no basis, saying it is a “clearly fictional tale.” (p 184) Yet ***Esther is rooted in history and has resulted in a Jewish feast still practiced today.***

Chapter 9: Psalms and Song of Songs

A significant bias is seen in that the book suggests there are 12 types of psalms yet does not mention Messianic Psalms. (p 192-194) Even if the book refuses to acknowledge that Jesus is the promised Messiah, ***it should have mentioned that Psalm 2 looks forward to the LORD’s Messiah ruling all the earth. It should at least acknowledge that Jesus quoted Psalm 22,*** and in reading this Psalm one sees what happened to Jesus when He was crucified. Psalm 110 is often quoted and clearly looks forward to One who is David’s Lord sitting at the right hand of God with the intent that He will rule the world.

Here, as in other places, the book paints some Christians as mistakenly representing the Old Testament as “legalistic” (p 195). Yet ***Paul speaks of the law in this way.*** (see for example Romans 7:5-6; Galatians 3-4)

Chapter 10: Between the Testaments

Between the testaments some of the prophecies given in Daniel are fulfilled, though not all of them. The book does not point this out. ***As noted above,***

Daniel's prophecies from the 500s BC extend through the destruction of the temple in AD 70 and into the future. They include the rise of Alexander the Great as the first king of the Greek empire, the splintering of that empire into four parts under his generals, and multiple details of the wars between the Seleucids and Ptolemies up through Antiochus IV (Daniel 8, 11). Some of these prophecies are briefly explained on the Encourage Depending channel on YouTube. This should give great confidence that the Bible is the Word of God for only God could tell the future accurately.

The Scriptures are seen as accurate through archaeological finds such as findings about Herod the Great (p 208) whom the Scriptures mention by name. The Bible is rooted in history.

The book suggests the gospel writers contradict each other related to when Jesus was born (Box 10.5 p 209). However, faithful scholars have plausible explanations for these matters. ***If there is a plausible explanation for a perceived contradiction, it cannot legitimately be considered a contradiction.*** For example, see the explanation offered regarding the supposed contradiction about the number of blind men recorded in different gospel accounts. <https://www.gotquestions.org/one-two-blind-men.html>

The book does not mention the many ways the Scriptures have been found to align with history. At one point skeptics of the Scriptures disputed the existence of Pilate, but eventually archaeological information caught up with the Scriptures and the Bible was demonstrated to be correct after all. See for example YouTube Bible and Theology Matters “Pontius Pilate Inscription.” A similar situation happened regarding the Scriptures’ reference to the Hittites. This supports an “innocent until proven guilty” disposition.

Chapter 11: The Apocrypha

Though the Apocrypha writings were translated, this does not mean they were viewed as Scriptures. In making a Latin translation (the Vulgate), Jerome called them “apocrypha” for this very reason, distinguishing them from the other books which are indeed Scripture.

Chapter 12: The Gospels

By this point in reading the textbook, one can see that the textbook does not give room for God in the Bible. It takes the perspective that the Bible was

written by men with “self-understanding” that are “interpretations” of men with no divine direction. (p 245) This is not what the Bible says about itself.

The book states that “the gospels are not eyewitness accounts; they do not come from people who were present when Jesus did or said things they record.” Yet no real defense is provided. (p 246) The gospels in fact are very solid in their historical accuracy. ***The book misrepresents the gospels as contradicting each other because authors see “different meanings.”*** (p 247) ***There is no real basis for such claims.*** A weak example is given of Matthew “removing” an “explanatory remark” from Mark “because for him, the story shows how to interpret such laws correctly not that the church can abandon them.” This is speculation.

While the gospels may be written to make a point, this does not mean they are not concerned with “historical accuracy” (p 247). ***A person can accurately tell an account, while still aiming to emphasize something related to the account.*** Without a sound basis, the book claims that the gospel writers wrote to “interpret” stories not to give “accurate accounts of facts” (p 248). This contradicts the introduction Luke gives in which he says he has done diligent research in order to give an accurate account of what occurred. He “investigated everything carefully... so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.” (Luke 1:1-4) For further details of the solidness of Luke as a historian, see the end of the comments on this chapter.

The basis for saying the gospels were not trying to be factual is not strong (p 248). The Luke record is likely a different occasion than that in Matthew and Mark, as it is different in details of what occurred.

The book consistently seeks to undermine confidence in the Scriptures though with little basis for the attacks. It speaks of “issues” (p 245) ***and the “search for the historical Jesus”*** (p 248) ***as if it is an elusive quest.*** It is an empty assertion that “having four [gospels] complicates questions about historical accuracy” (p 248) and that the writers “cared little for providing correct historical detail.” Though pressing the reader to conclude that the gospels contradict each other, no basis is given for this. Supposed contradictions have been addressed through the years. See for example the book *Cold-case Christianity* by J. Warner Wallace and *The Historical Accuracy of the New Testament* by Craig Blomberg, as well as the Got Questions website.

The “sources of the gospels” such as the “Q” idea is an idea thought up by modern writers.

It is most reasonable to consider that Matthew and John personally knew Jesus and were personally familiar with the accounts they record. The book does not allow this possibility.

Luke’s historical accuracy is emphasized in the following excerpts from F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents - Are They Reliable?* (Eerdmans; 2003)

“Luke inherited the high traditions of Greek historical writing, and had access to various excellent sources of information about the events with which he dealt, besides being himself present at some of the incidents which he narrated... he sets his story in the context of imperial history... Three emperors (Augustus, Tiberius, and Claudius) are mentioned by name (Luke 2:1, 3:1; Acts 11:28, 18:2); the Emperor Nero is also referred to, but not by his personal name - he is the ‘Caesar’ to whom Paul appealed (Acts 25:11) The birth of Jesus is fixed in the reign of the Emperor Augustus, when Herod the Great was king of Judaea, at the time of an imperial census... Names of note in the Jewish and Gentile world of his day appear in Luke’s pages; in addition to the emperors, we meet the Roman governors Quirinius, Pilate, Sergius Paullus, Gallio, Felix, and Festus; Herod the Great and some of his descendants - Herod Antipas the tetrarch of Galilee, the vassal-kings Herod Agrippa I and II, Berenice and Drusilla; leading members of the Jewish priestly caste such as Anna, Caiaphas, and Ananias; Gamaliel, the greatest contemporary Rabbi and Pharisaic leader. ***A writer who thus relates his story to the wider context of world history is courting trouble if he is not careful; he affords his critical readers so many opportunities for testing his accuracy. Luke takes this risk, and stands the test admirably. One of the most remarkable tokens of his accuracy is his sure familiarity with the proper titles of all the notable persons who are mentioned in his pages.*** This was by no means such an easy feat in his days... Luke had a further difficulty in that the titles sometimes did not remain the same for any great length of time; a province might pass from senatorial government to administration by a direct representative of the emperor, and would then be governed no longer by a proconsul but by an imperial legate.

Cyprus, for example, which was an imperial province until 22 BC, became a senatorial province in that year, and was therefore governed no longer by an imperial legate but by a proconsul. And so, when Paul and Barnabas arrived in Cyprus about AD 47, it was the *proconsul* Sergius Paullus whom they met (Acts

13:7)... The magistrates of Philippi, which was a Roman colony, are called 'praetors' in Acts, and they are attended by 'lictors'... (Acts 16:12, 20, 35). The strict title of these colonial magistrates was 'duumvirs'; but... Cicero says: 'Although they are called duumvirs in the other colonies, these men wished to be called praetors.' At Thessalonica, the chief magistrates are called 'politarchs' (Acts 17:6, 9), a title not found in extant classical literature but occurring in inscriptions as a title of magistrates in Macedonian towns, including Thessalonica.... The chief official in Malta is called 'the first man of the island' (Acts 28:7), a title vouched for in both Greek and Latin inscriptions as the proper designation of the Roman governor of Malta.... Herod Antipas, ruler of Galilee in the time of our Lord, seems to have been given the courtesy title of 'king' by his Galilean subjects (cf Mt. 14:9; Mk 6:14), but unlike his father Herod the Great and his nephew Herod Agrippa I he was not promoted to royal status by the emperor, and had to be content with the lesser title 'tetrarch.' Luke therefore never calls him king, but always tetrarch (e.g. Lk. 3:1, 19)." (p 81-86)

"The accuracy which Luke shows in the details we have already examined extends also to the more general sphere of local colour and atmosphere. He gets the atmosphere right every time. Jerusalem, with its excitable and intolerant crowds, in marked contrast to the busy emporium of Syrian Antioch, where men of different creeds and nationalities rub shoulders and get their rough corners worn away... Then there is Philippi, the Roman colony with its self-important magistrates and its citizens so very proud of being Romans; and Athens, with its endless disputations in the marketplace and its unquenchable thirst for the latest news - a thirst for which its statesmen had chided it three and four hundred years earlier (Acts 17:21; Thucydides iii.38.5; Demosthenes, Philippic 10). Then there is Ephesus, with its temple of Artemis..." (p 89)

"Now, all these evidences of accuracy are not accidental. ***A man whose accuracy can be demonstrated in matters where we are able to test it is likely to be accurate even where the means for testing him are not available.*** Accuracy is a habit of mind..." (p 90-91)

"Sir William Ramsay, who devoted many fruitful years to the archaeology of Asia Minor, testifies to Luke's intimate and accurate acquaintance with Asia Minor and the Greek East at the time with which his writings deal. When Ramsay first set out... he was firmly convinced... that Acts was a late production of the middle of the second century AD, and he was only gradually compelled to a complete reversal of his views by the inescapable evidence of the facts

uncovered in the course of his research.... ***He was not talking unadvisedly or playing to the religious gallery when he expressed the view that ‘Luke’s history is unsurpassed in respect to its trustworthiness’***; this was the sober conclusion to which his research led him.” (p 91)

Chapter 13: Four Views of One Jesus

The chapter builds upon an unproven assertion that the gospel “writers give differing interpretations to stories about Jesus” (p 259). Though the book talks as if this was proved in the previous chapter, it was not. The book claims the gospels are a “range of interpretations of the person and work of Christ.” (p 259) A view more consistent with how the Bible presents itself is that the Holy Spirit led God’s servants in presenting Christ in His fullness through four records. (see 2 Peter 1:20-21)

There is no basis for claiming Mark is just promoting things that “fit what the church came to say about Jesus” (p 265).

The book gives an unsound representation of law in relation to Christians in the comments on the sermon on the mount in Matthew. It asserts that “Christians have often said that Christ came to free people from keeping God’s law.” (p 270) This is a misrepresentation. ***The Scriptures teach that God’s righteous desires are fulfilled in us by the life of Christ in us by the Holy Spirit and not by our trying to follow the law which relied upon the flesh over which sin has gotten control*** (see for example Romans 5-8, Galatians, and 1 Timothy 1). This is not dismissing righteous living but acknowledging that we cannot live righteous by our own ability trying to follow the law. See brief teachings on Romans 5-8 on YouTube Encourage Depending channel.

Rather than the representation given by the book, ***the sermon on the mount demonstrates that we are not righteous, for our righteousness would need to exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees*** in order to be right with God. This helps the hearers realize their need for a Savior, for they have fallen short of God’s standard. Paul says similarly that the law was our “tutor to bring us to Christ” because it showed our unrighteousness. (Galatians 3)

Fulfilled prophecy gives great confidence that Jesus is the Christ of God! ***The book misses fulfilled prophecy, and claims that Matthew “finds new meaning” in the Old Testament prophecies.*** It asserts that the prophets did not think “they were talking about someone who was to be born when or how

Jesus was.” (p 272) It contradicts the purpose of Matthew and John in saying “those texts from the Hebrew Bible were not predictions that prove who Jesus was.” (p 274) “Of course, Matthew has redefined all expectations of God’s Messiah.” (p 276) ***The textbook is willing to attack the gospel writers.***

But the Old Testament Scriptures do very much point to Jesus. The whole flow of the Old Testament looks forward to the Messiah, not only in prophecies, but also in principles and pictures. The overarching force of the Old Testament looked forward to Jesus Christ. See the end of Appendix 2 for a few examples.

The book is disrespectful in its comments about Zechariah (p 277) and in the charge that Luke made up Mary’s song (p 278). The book also notes that the genealogies in Matthew and Luke differ, but it does not note that Luke’s genealogy is through Mary not Joseph. (p 281)

The book gives a false overlay of the story of the rich man and Lazarus, claiming that it is emphasizing “God’s solution especially targets people who are poor.” (p 283) This is not evident in the account in Luke 16. Rather in reading, the reader should be concerned about whether they are right with God in view of the grave danger for those who refuse to accept His message through the Scriptures.

The book does not mention the three parables in Luke 15 including the prodigal son, in which the Lord emphasizes God’s heart towards sinners who repent.

Regarding the gospel of John, the book makes assertions about authorship. ***The most sensible reading is that John the apostle wrote the book.*** The attempts at asserting otherwise lack substance. (p 288) The book does accurately point out that John emphasizes that Jesus is God. (p 289) This is certainly solemn to consider.

The book talks about John 3 and 4 with no emphasis on the call to believe in order to be saved from wrath and receive eternal life, though this is the point of these chapters. John 3:16 isn’t even mentioned, though it is a clear emphasis in John that “God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.” ***The book does not mention the central word “believe” until the last sentence. This word is used 100 times in John so it should be a central discussion point.***

The book claims that John inserted things in Jesus’ life so his persecuted readers could associate with him. This is founded on conjecture and leads to

disrespect of these Scriptures. “It seems unlikely that the ministry of Jesus... would have attracted the kind of organized response John reports in 9:22.” (p 293) “It seems unlikely that this episode recounts the actual response of leaders to Jesus’ ministry during Jesus’ lifetime.” ***It seems more sensible to believe the writer that wrote soon after Jesus lived, rather than an assessment of “likelihood” by someone 2000 years later. It actually seems likely to have Jesus resisted like this, since He was crucified soon after this.***

The book does not refer the reader to John’s stated purpose in 20:31. “These [signs] were written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that by believing you may have life in His name.” Based on this, one should read John differently than the way the textbook presents it.

Chapter 14: Acts

Despite the book implying that Luke was not historically accurate in writing Acts (p 300), Luke’s writing has in fact been demonstrated to be of the highest quality of historical accuracy. See F. F. Bruce comments under the Chapter 12 notes for some details. As F. F. Bruce writes: “Accuracy is a habit of mind” for Luke.

Figure 15.5 (p 326) shows an archaeological find that aligns with Acts’ reference to Paul being brought before Gallio on his first trip to Corinth as a missionary. Luke speaks of Gallio as a Roman governor. “There were long decades in which scholars said that no such Gallio was ever known in the Latin records. Luke had got it wrong; there was no such governor as Gallio. Then an inscription turned up which showed that there was a Gallio!” (David Gooding; “The Way the Scriptures have been Transmitted”, Myrtlefield Trust, p 12)

With Luke’s proven accuracy, we should not accept that Luke is biased, trying to “shape his reader’s views” (p 300) as he “shapes his stories” for his own goal (p 304). The assertion is unfounded that Luke “uses these speeches to express his views” and fills in the speeches “with points he himself wanted the readers to hear.” (p 300) These accusations do not have a basis.

The textbook implies that things did not really happen, but that “Luke has” them happen in his account (p 304, 312). ***The textbook author is putting himself above Luke as if he has greater understanding of what actually happened than Luke did. Yet the textbook is written 2000 years later and gives no solid basis for the assertions.*** The author claims he can explain why Luke is “telling

the story in this way.” Yet Luke makes it clear that he is recording an accurate account just like he did in his gospel account (Acts 1:1; Luke 1:1-4). The textbook gives no historical basis for the attacks on the historicity of Acts.

The book claims that Acts was “written several years after [Paul’s] death.” (Box 14.6 p 307) Yet it is more sensible to understand that Acts was written several years before Paul’s death, given how Acts ends with Paul in Rome under house arrest. ***The book asserts that Luke leaves off Paul’s final execution intentionally (p 313) but does not mention the possibility that Acts was written before Paul was executed.***

Chapter 15: The Pauline Letters

Despite the book pressing how difficult it is to understand the letters (p 316), believers have understood them for years. No doubt they will be difficult to understand if one is not willing to hear God speaking in them. The textbook asserts that the letters contradict each other, but the example of a contradiction regarding giving has no substance. (p 316)

While we should indeed understand the letters in their original context, the book overemphasizes this idea, extending it to the point of thinking that we cannot apply the letters to ourselves at all. (p 317) The book drives the idea of “culture-specific settings.” But in reading the letters, ***one finds that he can apply it to himself.*** Reading Philippians for oneself would illustrate this.

Note the geographical accuracy seen in letters like 1 Thessalonians as it refers to Thessalonica, Corinth, and Ephesus (Figure 15.4).

The book provides comments on the letters, but does not really note the point of the letters. For example, in reading 1 Thessalonians, one is impressed with how the gospel of Christ transforms lives. It is life-giving and life-transforming.

The comments on 1 Corinthians are natural-level comments that do not provide real benefit. But there is much benefit to be found. Take for example 1 Corinthians 15:3-5 where Paul summarizes the gospel that “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared...” Praise God for such a message of salvation from sins through the victorious Christ! This is not a mere “tradition” that Paul is “reciting” (p 330). This is God’s message!

No good reason is given for asserting 2 Corinthians is a composite (p 331).

The book offers an overlay on the letter of Galatians saying it “shows Paul’s frustration at the lack of progress” of the church in “thinking about” the issue of Gentiles in the church “without coming to agreement about it.” (p 334) Rather ***Paul’s burden in Galatians was for the gospel of Christ, that everyone’s basis of acceptance before God is Christ and Christ alone, entirely on the basis of faith*** (Gal 2:20-21). Paul was protecting against false teachers causing trouble in these Galatian churches.

Here as elsewhere the book advances the premise that “Paul thinks it is good for Jews to remain observant Jews when they join the church.” This is not found in Galatians. Rather Paul says that in Christ there is no Jew or Gentile (Gal 3:28) Our identity is Christ. All believers are in Christ. This is our unity.

The book inaccurately states that Paul says believers “rely on Christ’s faithful obedience to God as their means to a relationship with God.” (p 335) Rather, Paul says that we are right with God through the Son of God giving Himself up for us. (Gal 2:20). Faith in Christ who died as a substitute paying for sins’ penalty is how a person is justified. As he says in 1 Corinthians 15:3, the gospel is that Christ died for our sins, not that we are in right relationship with God through Christ’s faithful obedience.

The book continues the idea that “Paul maintains that the church community is most important, so the unity of the church takes precedence over all other commitments” (p 336) Rather Paul’s zeal is to defend the gospel of God that a person is justified by faith in Christ alone, not by works, and that a believer should now live in this new identity by the power of the Holy Spirit within him. “If we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!” (1:8) “When I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel...” (2:14) “I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.” (2:21) “It is for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery” (5:1) “Walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh” (5:16)

In commenting on Philippians, the book calls Euodia and Syntyche “leaders”, but the Scripture says nothing about their being leaders. (p 338) The book makes no mention of great verses in Philippians such 1:21 and 3:9-10. ***The book misses the point of chapter 3 that a believer has disposed of any claims they***

have in the flesh and only claims Christ as their righteousness before God.

This contrasts with the arrogance and self-exalting of false teachers.

Though the book makes much about slavery tension in the church, this is not noted in Philemon. (p 340) The timing of the book aligns with Colossians when Paul sends Onesimus and Tychicus carrying both letters. (Col 4:7-9)

The book puts an overlay on Romans claiming Paul is writing to try to win over the church in Rome. (p 342) There is no basis for this idea. There also is no basis for claiming the Jews who left had come back and that caused trouble. (p 345) ***Be encouraged to read the letter for yourself and see that it is an orderly presentation of the “gospel of God.”*** (Romans 1:1, 16)

The book’s presentation of “three images of salvation” is not an accurate handling of the flow of thought in the letter. (p 345) See brief teaching videos on the EncourageDepending YouTube channel to get a sense of the flow of Romans 1 to 8. It is also inaccurate to say “God allows Christ’s faithfulness to count for those who identify with Christ.” (p 345) This is not in Romans. Similarly, the book provides a poor explanation of reconciliation and redemption.

The book does not mention the essential teaching of how the believer has been transferred from Adam to Christ through dying and rising with Christ (Romans 5-6), such that now they can live by the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus which sets them free from the power of sin which has taken control of their natural life received from Adam (Romans 7-8).

The book suggests that Paul is confusing in saying “all Israel will be saved” (p 347). However, this can be understood by following the flow of thought in this text and comparing Scripture with Scripture.

In the book’s concluding comments for this chapter, it again drives the idea of letters being “situational” to the point that it claims that Paul “does not intend the specifics of his instructions to be immediately applicable to other situations.” (p 348) While there is some truth in this, it goes too far. ***Paul did expect others to apply what is written.*** He addresses 1 Corinthians to “the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours.” (1 Corinthians 1:2) ***Paul says that what he says to the Corinthians is “just as I teach everywhere in every church.”*** (1 Corinthians 4:17) He exhorts the Colossian church to pass on the letter sent to them, and “have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans.” (Colossians 4:16)

Chapter 16: “Disputed” Pauline Letters

The “dispute” about these letters is only in the modern area. It is not based on solid evidence. It is a significant problem if they were written by a fraud “in Paul’s name.” “Some of the letters written in Paul’s name were not actually written by Paul.” (p 353) The book acknowledges this is “deceiving the readers” yet says they are “no less authoritative for the church” (p 355).

The basis given has no real substance, asserting that Paul did not write them because of different vocabulary and style and their “outlook and theology are somewhat different.” It is possible that the same person could write with different vocabulary and style. The “outlook and theology” do not in some way contradict Paul’s other letters. For example, the theology of Colossians and Ephesians very much agree with that of Romans and Galatians. 1 Timothy aligns with 1 Corinthians related to church practices. Recognizing godly men as elders in the church as seen in 1 Timothy and Titus is what Paul practiced as recorded in Acts.

The overlay put on 2nd Thessalonians is not found in the letter.

The book says that the people in the first century knew who Paul was referring to as the “man of lawlessness” and thus it is a mistake to look for this man today (p 356). ***The Thessalonians did know what Paul was talking about because they had been taught the book of Daniel, not because this man “must be” a person “who lived in the first century”*** (p 357). A future rebellious man is prophesied by Daniel in Daniel 7, 9 and 11. The Lord Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 24 refers to Daniel’s prophecy of the “abomination of desolation” which is set up by the false prince during the last seven year period prophesied in Daniel 9:27. This man is the “man of lawlessness” referred to in Revelation 13 as “the beast” who people are required to worship and will have power for 42 months (3 ½ years, which is half of the 7 year period). Thus, the man referred to in 2 Thessalonians was “known” to the recipients in the sense that they understood that Paul was referring to the antichrist, not that they knew a person living in the 1st century to whom Paul was referring.

Colossians was written along with Philemon, for Onesimus was carrying Colossians with him (Colossians 4:7-9). Thus, if Philemon was written by Paul, Colossians shouldn’t be “disputed.”

The book explanation of Colossians is not solid (p 358). The book quotes “seek the things that are above” but with no connection to the risen Christ with whom Christians have risen to new life. By reading the letter, you can see that it was spurred by Epaphras coming and telling Paul about how the believers were being drawn away from the completeness they have in Christ and were turning to religious ordinances and practices. Be encouraged by the brief videos on the Encourage Depending YouTube channel.

The comments on Ephesians lack substance. (p 359) “Its author seems to have used some phrases and themes copied from Colossians to formulate his message.” (p 359) The more sensible explanation is that it was written by the same author, namely Paul. “By the time of Ephesians, Gentile church members had begun to wonder about the necessity of retaining their connections to the church’s Jewish heritage.” These ideas are merely conjectures without a basis. ***The book does not all present the letter of Ephesians for what it in fact teaches – the glorious place that believers have in Christ as part of God’s special plan for today, the church.***

1 and 2 Timothy along with Titus are charged as fraudulent with no basis. ***No basis is given for the claim that “these pseudonymous letters were probably written after Paul’s death.” (p 362)*** Yet the book builds on that assertion saying “they do not actually address the people named as their recipients.” These unsubstantiated statements are not academic.

The book claims that in 1 Timothy, the writer is “arguing that Gentile members of the church should not directly observe some parts of” the law (p 363). In fact, the letter says that the law as a whole does not apply to believers in the Lord Jesus. Rather its purpose is to show sinners their sinfulness. (1 Timothy 1) The supposed background to the letter is imagined with no basis.

The book misrepresents women’s role in the church saying, that in earlier letters “Paul does not place the restrictions on women that we find in 1 Timothy.” (p 363) However, the direction that women should be silent in the church is the same in 1 Timothy 2 as in 1 Corinthians 14.

The book claims that the leadership requirements are what “the surrounding culture recognized as appropriate,” yet there is nothing in the letter that indicates this is why the requirements are given. In fact, the Lord calls his people to be different from the surrounding culture. “Do not be conformed to this world.” (Romans 12:2) The elders were needed due to “many

rebellious people, empty talkers and deceivers” in the surrounding culture. (Titus 1:10)

The book claims the instructions for women are “repressive” and “Christians cannot apply them directly to our time.” “How Christians today embody the gospel must be different from what we read in the New Testament.” (p 363) These statements are a man’s opinion who decided they are “repressive.” ***This approach leaves people as the judge of what is right to do, rather than having God as the authority who has given us direction of what pleases Him.*** Our Creator’s design of male and female from the beginning is good, not repressive. Paul refers to the beginning in 1 Timothy 2, urging men to take the lead in church gatherings as God’s representative, just as the Lord had intended before the fall.

Paul did not think the instructions were a local solution, for he writes so Timothy would “know how one should act in the household of God, which is the church of the living God.” (1 Timothy 3:15)

Though the book does not allow for it, 2nd Timothy reads as Paul’s letter to Timothy when he was about to die.

The book asserts that “the directions given these various groups [in Titus] encourage each to conform to societal expectations” (p 366). ***Yet the actual call in Titus is for believers to be different from the Cretans who are immoral*** (Titus 1:12). They once lived like Cretans but now have been saved and called to a completely different kind of life (Titus 2:11-14).

Chapter 17: Hebrews and the General Epistles

The book’s author urges the reader to not think the Scriptures apply to them.

“These larger audiences do not suggest that these letters apply literally to all believers everywhere and always any more than the Pauline letters do.” (p 369) The book overlays the idea that the logic that the church “continues to wrestle with” things. (p 369) The Scriptures present them as revelation from God, not people wrestling with ideas and coming up with varying conclusions.

When the book says “most New Testament scholars” (p 370), we should insert the word “unbelieving” or “skeptical.” There are many scholars who do not align with the explanations given in this book, such as the assertion that the books were not written by the person who claims to have written it.

This would mean the letters were written by a fraud. Yet there is no basis for this serious charge.

A key word in the book of Hebrews is “better.” Christ is better in every way! But the book comments on Hebrews that we need to be careful to not think that “Christianity is better than other religions” since “such claims have been used to slaughter millions.” (p 372) So, the textbook guts the force of this letter. The clear point of Hebrews is that Christ is better than Judaism.

The purpose of Hebrews is to exhort confidence in Christ, and conviction to hold fast to the confession of Christ. But the textbook pushes believers to be on their heels saying, “the message of Hebrews is often distorted when used by those who perpetrate hate.” (p 372) Anything can be misused, but it is disingenuous to make this the overarching commentary on the beautiful letter of Hebrews.

The book pits James against Paul, yet the two are not opposed. It claims that “most NT scholars think that James phrases this statement [faith without works is dead] the way he does to oppose Paul’s assertion that justification... is by faith, without the works of the law” (p 374). The reality is that Paul teaches that a person is not declared righteous before God by religious works but only by faith in Christ who died for their sins. James is addressing that if a person indeed has faith, it will show in how he lives. His faith will transform his living. This point that James makes aligns with teachings of Paul, such as those in the book of Titus. “The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all people, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously, and in a godly manner... eager for good deeds.” (Titus 2:11-14)

The book again charges that 1 and 2 Peter and Jude were written by frauds, though with no real basis. (p 375, 377) **The fraud apparently was very bold, for he refers to being on transfiguration mountain with Jesus.** (2 Peter 1:16) It is reasonable to consider these as false accusations against the writers.

The book makes the statement that “Jude writes against people who do not keep enough of the law” (p 380) This would directly contradict other Scriptures such as Galatians. But **the basis given is that their “love-feasts” were related to “Mosaic food laws.” This is just conjecture. The love-feasts could be simply meals together or be related to the Lord’s Supper** (1 Corinthians 11:20) Yet the book adds another paragraph based on this conjecture, claiming “there are multiple ways of practicing the truth that are legitimate and fruitful.” (p 381) Yet

the letter actually appeals to the readers to “contend earnestly for the faith that was once for all time handed down to the saints.” (Jude 3)

The book rejects the possibility that John wrote the gospel of John and 1 John, though noting they have similar “vocabulary and outlook.” (p 381) It seems reasonable to allow that they were indeed written by John the apostle. The book overlays an imagined conflict in the author’s church, but there is no real basis for this claim, and the letter is much broader than this type of situation. (p 381) No reference is made to the stated purpose of 1 John given in 5:13, “these things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.” Great message!

Chapter 18: Revelation

The book charges that prophecy in the Bible is “predicting the past.” (p 390) The book claims the prophets are not foretelling the future. The book charges the prophets as posing as if they are telling the future, while the events about which they prophesy have already occurred. Thus, the prophets are charged as imposters. ***But the charge has no historical basis.*** It has no scholarly basis. The scholar simply refuses to allow that God can tell the future. In fact, the premise is shown to be false when considering the prophecies that have been fulfilled already. The book charges Daniel as being a fraud who wrote about the Greek empire rising in Daniel 8:5-8, since, according to the textbook, Daniel really was writing after Alexander the Great had already come and gone. (p 391)

Yet ***Daniel prophesied up through AD 70’s destruction of Jerusalem and beyond. So evidently Daniel was a prophet able to tell the future through revelation from God. Thus, there is no basis to claim he was writing after Alexander the Great.*** It is most reasonable to accept Daniel’s claim to be writing during the Babylonian empire in the 500s BC.

The book spends much time on genre, though it has no basis when compared with what Revelation says.

The book does not note how Revelation’s prophecies interconnect with all the Scriptures including the Davidic Covenant, Daniel’s prophecy of the last seven years of tribulation for Israel, God’s promised kingdom on earth, and Jesus’ end times teaching in Matthew 24. These fit together and give clarity to what is read in Revelation. For example, the references in Revelation to 42 months tie with the half of the final seven-year period presented in Daniel 9:27.

Due to not having Revelation understood as part of the whole of Scripture, the book does not provide clarity of the book and its flow. Without a basis, it claims “the primary embodiment of evil that John sees is the Roman Empire” (p 399). It also makes the unusual claim that John envisions the Parthians “as the power that God uses to bring down the Roman Empire” (Figure 18.4) Neither of these statements make sense when Scripture is compared with Scripture.

The book makes a claim that “this text says nothing about an antichrist” (p 408). ***While the word “antichrist” is not used, the book does very much refer to a man who is the antichrist.*** He is “the beast” presented in Revelation 13, which aligns with the “little horn” of Daniel 7, the false prince of Daniel 9, the arrogant king of Daniel 11, and the man of lawlessness of 2 Thessalonians 2. He and the false prophet are killed when Christ returns, as recorded in Revelation 19 and 2 Thessalonians 2:8.

APPENDIX 1:

Some Considerations related to Textbook Statements

Statement	Page	Consideration
Israel didn't have written Scriptures until King Josiah	7	Scripture must have been written since they found it. Moses and Joshua had it. Dt 31:9, Josh 1:8
2 Timothy 3:16-17 says Scripture is useful, not that it is inspired	34-35	Inspired is the basis for it being useful. Many Scriptures show the Bible is God-breathed. 2 Pt 1:21
Paul did not read Scripture for its literal sense	37	He speaks of Adam, the fall, Abram literally. Gal 3:16 is literal
The Scriptures have inconsistencies and inaccuracies, including historical and factual errors	37-38, 106	No basis given. Scriptures have proven accurate repeatedly. See Resources.
The Pentateuch is not historical. Genesis is "scientifically and historically inaccurate"	52, 55	Gen 5 genealogy reads as history. Jesus read Gen 1-2 as historical. Gives no basis to say inaccurate
Sodom was not judged for homosexuality	69-70	Jude says "sexual perversion... gone after strange flesh"
The Scriptures are "disturbing"	109-110	Using emotional pressure to get readers on the defensive
Moses did not write the Pentateuch	53, 99	Jesus said he did. Jn 5:46 No reason to think otherwise.
The named prophets did not actually write their books	142	Jesus would not affirm a fraud by calling Daniel a prophet Mt 24:15
Isaiah was written by three people	148	John 12:37-41 quotes Isa 6 and 53 as being by Isaiah; it is one book in Dead Sea Scrolls
No prophet "made direct predictions about Jesus"	149	Many prophecies fulfilled: where born, when come, how die. Micah 5:2, Dan 9:25-26, Isa 53
Isaiah 53 is "clearly not about Jesus"	151	Read Isa 53 and you see Jesus. Philip knew it was. Acts 8
Zechariah "adjusts the expectations of Haggai"	162	Zech and Haggai prophesied at same time; do not contradict

Statement	Page	Consideration
“Jonah is not a historical figure”	164	Jesus refers to him as historical like Solomon Lk 11:29-32
Daniel was written in the 160s BC not the 500s	167	Claimed because not believe predictive prophecy, yet Daniel prophecies fulfilled thru AD 70
The Scriptures are “developing” ideas of men	157, 167	They are God’s revelation. God has communicated.
“Job is probably not a historical person”	177	No basis. James and Ezekiel refer to him as real.
Esther is a “clearly fictional tale”	184	Based in history; led to a feast
With 12 types of psalms, none are Messianic	192-194	Ps 2, 22 and 110 clearly point to Messiah
“The gospels are not eyewitness accounts”	246	No basis given
The gospel writers wrote to “interpret” stories not to give “accurate accounts of facts”	247, 248	Read Luke 1:1-4 about his research intent and quality
The gospels were written to promote things that “fit what the church came to say about Jesus”	265	No real basis. Gospels were written within a couple decades of Jesus.
Christians say “Christ came to free people from keeping God’s law”	270	We are not under law because we can live by the Spirit inside. Rm 8
Matthew “finds new meaning” in OT prophecies	272	Prophecies clearly speak of Christ, e.g. Ps 2, Isa 53, Dan 9
The Hebrew Bible does not have “predictions that prove who Jesus was”	274	OT has clear Messiah predictions Ps 2, when come Dan 9:25-26, how die Isa 53, Ps 22
John did not write John	288	More reasonable to accept John the apostle wrote it
John inserted things into Jesus’ life that seem “unlikely”	293	Basis given not convincing; Jesus was persecuted even to death
Acts is not historically accurate	300	Has been verified by history and archaeology
NT letters were for culture-specific settings, so should not be applied to ourselves	317	1 Corin is to all believers everywhere. Paul says he taught the same in all churches. 1 Cor 4:17
Romans was written to win over the church to Paul	342	No basis. Romans presents God’s gospel clearly (1:1, 16)

Statement	Page	Consideration
Many letters written in Paul's name weren't written by Paul	353	No solid basis given
Thessalonians knew the "man of lawlessness" since he lived during the first century	357	They knew who Paul was referring to, because he had taught them from Daniel
Writer of 1 Timothy gave commands "repressive" to woman that Paul did not give in earlier letters	363	1 Timothy 2 aligns with 1 Corinthians 14 regarding women; Both are based on creation order
Should not think Hebrews says Christianity is better than other religions	372	The point of Hebrews is Christ is better. "Better" is a key word
James intentionally opposed Paul in saying faith without works is dead	374	Romans and James agree. Paul urges good works of believers like James does.
"Jude writes against people who do not keep enough of the law"	380	Basis not convincing. Love-feasts don't have to be Mosaic feasts.
Prophecy is "predicting the past"	390	Based on unbelief not history. Daniel prophecies fulfilled up thru AD 70. God knows the future
Revelation "says nothing about an antichrist"	408	The specific title is not used, but Rev 13 "beast" aligns with prophecies of antichrist such as 2 Thess 2, Dan 7, 9

APPENDIX 2: An Open Letter to Encourage Confidence in the Word of God

It will be helpful to you to realize that a Bible course or textbook may be biased against the Bible as God's Word, so you are not confused and discouraged. The author may only see God's Word on a natural level. I pray that your course and textbook is not like this. But in case it is, I'd like to give several broad encouragements and address some specific ways the Scriptures may not be honored as from God. I offer these encouragements from a shepherd's heart that loves you in Christ. The Lord Jesus loves you even more, so seek Him!

First, let me exhort you to stay on the high ground.

Do not feel backed into a corner. You can have great confidence in the Scriptures as "God-breathed" (2 Timothy 3:16) written by holy men who were "moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). There is a living God who is very big and capable of speaking what He wants through frail men, and preserving it in the Scriptures. Though the textbook may talk about the Bible as mere literature and ignore God when talking about God's Word, do not concede to this attitude. If we are talking about a book that explicitly claims to be God speaking, **we cannot ignore God** in discussing it. The removal of God from the "literature" removes the very heart of what is written, and this missing heart becomes very evident as comments are made which miss the very essence of what is written.

Realize there are **very good reasons for confidence** in the Word of God. For example, the Scriptures are amazingly consistent with themselves though written by 40 very different human authors who wrote the Scriptures over a 1500 year period. This **consistency** is nothing less than amazing, and it demonstrates that there truly is one Author, the LORD! Further, the Scriptures show they come from the living God by the abundance of **prophecy** that has already been fulfilled such as the destruction of Tyre (Ezekiel 26), four major kingdoms of men (Daniel 2 and 7), and the coming of Messiah to the day (Daniel 9:24-26). See the P.S. at the end of this letter for more. Further, the Scriptures have demonstrated **historical accuracy**. Many accusations have been made against some specific detail in the Scriptures such as the Hittites, Belshazzar, and Pilate (see for example Bible and Theology Matters "Pontius Pilate Inscription" on YouTube), but eventually an archaeological dig shows the Word was accurate all along. Thus, the Scriptures have shown themselves reliable, and so should be approached this way. Approach the Scriptures as "innocent until proven guilty."

Not only that, but Jesus Christ rose from the dead. The **resurrection** is a massive testimony to the truth of the Scriptures which He fulfilled in His coming and which He proclaimed as being true! Further, the Scriptures which testify of Jesus Christ as Savior of sinners have **transformed** millions of lives. They are divine!

So, start with the **broad first!** When there is some detail brought up that seems inaccurate, keep in perspective the broad known accuracy of the Scriptures. If I came across an oak tree in a forest, would I declare the forest to be an oak forest? No, I would look at the forest broadly first. This is an honest approach.

Second, notice how a relationship with a real God is missed.

The LORD is a personal God who desires a real relationship with us. This is woven into the fabric of the Scriptures. Yet you may find this completely missed! The book may talk about the prophets but ignore that they were not mere social reformers, but were calling Israel back to their God. (Hosea) It may talk about the Psalms but ignore intimate fellowship with the LORD (Ps 23, 37, 40, 42, etc). How unsound to talk about Proverbs but not mention the foundation of wisdom explicitly said to be the fear of the Lord (1:7, 9:10)! The book may discuss the gospels but fail to emphasize the main point that Christ died for our sins and rose again victorious to bring us to God (Mt 1:21, Lk 19:10, Isa 53, Jn 3:14-18, 1 Cor 15:3-5). The speeches in Acts proclaim Christ's resurrection and call for all to repent and believe on Christ for the forgiveness of sins, yet your book may ignore this heart of Acts (2:38, 10:43, 13:38-39). Similarly with the law that looked forward to Christ in the Passover (1 Cor 5:7) and sacrifices (Heb 9:23-10:22), the history books that contain the covenant with David looking forward to his greater Son (2 Sam 7, Rev 5:5), the epistles that teach the good news of salvation in Christ (Rom 1:16-18, 3:20-26, 2 Cor 5:17-21, Eph 1:13-14, 1 Tim 1:15), and Revelation that shows Christ exalted and God dwelling with man (5:1-9, 21:3-4). Don't miss the heart of the God of the Bible calling us to know Him!

Third, realize the Scriptures are overwhelmingly reliable!

Realize the manuscripts of the Scriptures are impressively reliable! We have **over 5000 Greek manuscripts of the New Testament** which is astounding compared with other ancient works such as Julius Caesar for which we have 10. Some of the NT manuscripts are **within 50 years** of the original writings, as compared with other ancient manuscripts whose earliest copies are a thousand years later. No classical scholar would have any doubt of the authenticity of the New Testament documents!

We are ***not guessing at what the original writings said***. By an orderly comparison of manuscripts, we are able to discern what was written with the exception of a very few areas. Westcott and Hort spent their lives doing this, and in the end they identified that less than 2% of the Scriptures had any remaining questions, and of these many related to things like two different Greek words for “and”. No significant doctrine is affected. The Dead Sea Scrolls had a scroll of Isaiah from 200 BC which was the same as the 900 AD Masoretic manuscript except for three words. We can have great confidence! Remember the broad reality of the authenticity of the Scriptures. Other historical records concur with Scriptural people and events such as Sodom, Ahab, Balaam, Belshazzar, Hezekiah, etc. Luke’s records are impressively detailed in their historical connection and have proved wonderfully trustworthy.

Realize that the Scripture was **progressively recognized as Scripture**. The canon was not assembled by a council as is often asserted. The Levites put the book of the law by the ark as being God’s Word (Deut. 31:24-26), so it is dishonest to suggest that the Israelites did not have written Scriptures until Josiah found them. Further, Daniel already had Jeremiah’s writings as Scripture within 75 years (Daniel 9). The canon was already known in Jesus’ day. He shows the Old Testament canon began with Genesis and ended with 2 Chronicles in his statement in Luke 11:51 (2 Chronicles is the last book in the way the Hebrew Scriptures are arranged). He refers to the three-part canon in Luke 24:44, as does Josephus. Councils just codified what was already accepted.

When you hear something that causes you to question the reliability of the Scriptures, ***write it down*** so that you can research it further. Be alert to vague statements and exaggerations that do not have substance but cause you to have uncertainty or be confused about how to view the Bible. If you take the time to prayerfully ***read the Scriptures yourself*** and communicate with honest believers who desire to know God and please Him, you will find answers to the questions and confidence in the Bible as being from God’s mouth.

Regarding specific ways the Scriptures are undermined, here are a few specific suggestions:

- 1. Ask what the Lord Jesus thought** (we should listen to One who rose again!)
 - a. He said to God His Father, “Your word is truth” John 17:17
 - b. Did He see Abraham and Moses as historical? Yes. John 7-8, Mark 12:26
 - c. Did He think ***Genesis 1 and 2 contradict*** as different accounts of creation? He quotes them back-to-back in one sentence in Matt 19:4-5

- d. Did He think the flood was real? Yes. Luke 17:27
 - e. Did He see **Jonah** as a real person? He called him a prophet! Mt 12:38-41
 - f. Did He think the Scriptures fit together? Yes! He showed Himself in all of them. Luke 24:27, 24:44
 - g. Did He think the Old Testament **prophets envisioned a personal Messiah**? Yes! The whole Old Testament! Luke 24:27, 24:44
- 2. Keep in view the broad** (solid realities as the starting point)
- a. The Scriptures ARE accurate! Don't get backed into a corner. See the Scriptures as innocent until proven guilty. They have been proven true many times, so this is a very sensible approach.
- 3. Assess what causes uncertainty** (avoid seeds of doubt sown without basis)
- a. Avoid a vague feeling of uncertainty. Realize information can be spun to sound negative. One textbook talks about there being more than 5000 NT manuscripts as if this is a negative thing!
 - b. Some discussions are quite hollow and meant to complicate.
 - c. Research accusations against Scripture (like the Bereans did in Acts 17)
- 4. Compare Scripture with Scripture** (understand them accurately this way)
- a. The Scriptures are consistent. They are not ideas of men developing over time, but progressive revelation from God. Paul saw it as essential to defend the gospel by showing it is consistent with Genesis (Rom. 4).
 - b. The Scriptures interpret themselves. We are not left guessing.
 - i. No **doctrine in Genesis** since it's a "story"? See Romans 5:11
 - ii. Am I left confused trying to decide **how to apply law today**? Romans 1 to 8, Galatians and 1 Timothy 1 give clear teaching related to the law.
 - iii. Did different people write Isaiah at different times in history (i.e., chapter 40 starts a **"second Isaiah"** written by a fraud)? This was contrived in the late 1700s with no basis. When the Dead Sea Scrolls were found they gave no sense that Isaiah was divided. John 12:38-41 quotes from Isaiah 6:9-10 and 53:1 as written by the same Isaiah.
- 5. Keep alert for Undermining Ways** (some have bias rooted in unbelief)
- a. **Unstated premises:** Some assert that we know **Daniel** was written around 165 BC, though it claims to be written in the 6th century BC. Behind this is a commitment to unbelief. The false premise is that the detailed prophecies of Daniel 8 and 11 could not have been written ahead of time because they obviously match what occurred in the Greek empire up through Antiochus IV. So unbelief assumes they must have been written after they happened. (What a compliment to God's ability to foretell events!) This logic is faulty. Daniel 9 prophesies the coming of Messiah into Jerusalem 173,880 days after the word to rebuild Jerusalem (which Jesus refers to in Luke 19:42 as "this your day"), Messiah's being cut off (Jesus was indeed crucified), and Jerusalem and the temple being

destroyed by the Romans after Messiah's death (as indeed occurred in 70 AD)! God is able to prophesy!

- b. **False perspectives:** Pictures are sometimes painted to set a false stage, such as suggesting the Pentateuch is a "legend" genre, thus not historical. The Lord Jesus disagrees. In Matthew 19:3-8 He refers to Genesis and Deuteronomy as historical and authoritative
- c. **Unfounded presuppositions:** A man made up the idea that the Pentateuch was from four different sources. Do not assume the supposed sources are real, even if the textbook lists dates for them. This is intended to allow people to dismiss Scripture as authoritative.
- d. **Exaggerations:** One copyist error may be emphasized giving the sense that they abound.
- e. **Natural thinking:** Attempts will be made to parallel the Scriptures with natural men's writings. When researched, they are quite thin. Contrasts are more evident than similarities. Keep the Holy Spirit in mind. He inspired and preserved the Scriptures, and He teaches us.
- f. **Beauty robbed:** How can we talk about the Psalms but not mention Psalm 23? Why no mention of Messianic Psalms? How can we talk about Isaiah but not the glorious prophecies of the coming Messiah?
- g. **Peripheral talk:** You may hear much talk about things with little significance, but little talk about the real and rich. All Scripture is written for our learning (Rom 15:4, 1 Cor 10:12). Christ showed Himself in all the Scriptures (Luke 24:45). Do not be lulled to sleep by much talk that avoids the real! Genesis presents the first man (Christ is the second!), sin, judgment, death of a substitute, the seed of the woman (prophesying Christ), and justification by faith. Does your textbook talk about these things? The purpose of the law is to show us our sin to lead us to Christ (Romans 3:20; Gal. 3:19-24). In the law Christ is seen through the Passover, tabernacle, veil, offerings, feasts, mercy-seat, priests, etc. Are the history books discussed without noting the Davidic covenant (2 Sam 7) which is so richly part of the Scriptures? Are the many Messianic prophecies pointed out in Isaiah (chp 9, 49, 53, etc)?
- h. **Missing Christ!** Do not allow empty talk to lead you to miss Christ Himself! He's there!

The Psalmist illustrates a wonderful attitude to the Scriptures in Psalm 1, 19 and 119. Similarly in 2 Timothy, Paul exhorts Timothy to be diligent to present himself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed of what he does in serving God because he has accurately handled the word of truth (2:15). In studying Scripture, our goal must be to act on it out of a desire to please our God. A personal relationship with God is essential! The Holy Spirit is real and

can open your understanding to see Christ in the Word and to grasp God's thoughts as you handle God's inspired Word honestly. Seek the Lord.

Written with much love in the Lord Jesus,

Bruce Hulshizer, 2026

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P.S. Some OT Prophecies about Jesus

From the time of the first sin, God promised that the seed of the woman would come and crush the head of the serpent. (Genesis 3:15) God showed how the way to be declared righteous by Him was on the basis of faith, as seen in Abram. (Gen 15:6) God gave the promise to Abraham that through his "Seed" (singular, i.e. a person) all the nations would be blessed. (Gen 22:18) The Law of Moses demonstrated the unrighteousness of men, and the sacrificial system showed that the only way to be forgiven is through a sacrifice dying for your sins. The tabernacle showed the way of approach to God was through the blood of a sin offering on the atonement cover, so that the holy God could then meet with men and see them as declared righteous (Ex 25; Lev 1, 16). The Passover lamb foreshadowed how the Lamb of God would intervene and die in our place so we can be delivered from the wrath of God (Exodus 12). The LORD promised to David that his son would sit on his throne and reign forever, and David saw that son of his sitting at the right hand of the LORD waiting to come back and rule (2 Samuel 7; Ps 110). The Psalmist's anticipated the LORD's Messiah who is God's Son ruling for the nations for God (Ps 2). The Prophets foretold that the son of David who would eventually reign, would first be born as a child, though He is the Son who has been given by God (Isaiah 9:6-7). He would come to Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). The King of Israel would ride into Jerusalem on the colt of a donkey in humility (Zechariah 9:9) But the Servant of the LORD would be mistreated as a criminal, ultimately bearing our sins as if they were His own in order to justify many (Isaiah 53). Messiah the Prince arrived 483 years after the word to rebuild Jerusalem, but would be cut off (Daniel 9:25-26). They would "pierce my hands and my feet" (Psalm 22:16) as He offered Himself to do God's will (Psalm 40:6-8). He would be buried with the rich and would be honored by God through resurrection, for the LORD will give him plunder to enjoy "because He poured out His life unto death and... bore the sin of many." (Isaiah 53:9, 12) He would sit at God's right hand as High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, until the time the LORD sends the Son of Man back to rule for God (Psalm 110; Daniel 7:13-14). At that time, God will bring Israel as a nation to repentance, and they will "look on Me whom they pierced" (Zech 12:10). He will bring about a new covenant with new life inside and "I will forgive their wrongdoing, and their sin I will no longer remember" (Jeremiah 31:31-34) At last days will come when God "will raise up for David a righteous Branch; and He will reign as king... in His days Judah will be saved..." (Jer 23:5-6)

Some Suggested Resources to Help You

1. **The Bible** – Read it yourself. Don't just listen to others talk about it.
2. **Faithful people you know** who have a demonstrated walk with God
3. **Regarding Archaeology:**
 - a. [Expedition Bible](#) on YouTube
 - b. [Associates for Biblical Research](#) on YouTube
 - c. [Titus Kennedy](#) on YouTube and his books
4. **Regarding the Canon and Historical Accuracy:**
 - a. *Where Did the New Testament Come From?* by Professor David Gooding – available for free on Myrtlefield Trust website
 - b. *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* by F.F. Bruce
 - c. *Historical Accuracy of the New Testament* by Craig Blomberg
 - d. *The Bible: Myth or Divine Truth* by Warren Henderson
 - e. *Can We Trust The Gospels?* By Peter J. Williams
5. **Regarding Claimed Contradictions:**
 - a. [Got Questions](#) website
 - b. *Historical Accuracy of the New Testament* by Craig Blomberg
6. **Regarding Daniel's Prophecies:** [Encourage Depending](#) on YouTube
7. **Other YouTube Resources:**
 - a. [God is Not a Monster](#) - Uplook
 - b. [Evidence for the Bible](#) - Mike Winger
 - c. [Progressive Christians Are The Modern Sadducees](#) - Mike Winger
 - d. [How Do We Know Who Wrote the Bible?](#) – Cross Examined
 - e. [Back Story about How We Really Got Our Bible](#) – Allan Parr
 - f. [Why You Can Rely On the Canon](#) – Dr. Krueger
 - g. [The Reliability of the Bible](#) – Genesis Apologetics



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