

"Contend Earnestly For the Faith" Part 11: *From God To Us*, chapter 1

Tuesday Night Bible Study, June 13, 2006

"...contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." – Jude 3

note: material in notes quoted from From God To Us followed by page # in parenthesis

--intro:

--In our study of false teachers, we've covered several key concepts: *a different Jesus*, salvation by works, over dependence on one source, and how we can be certain the Bible is truly from God (prophecy, history, archaeology). Over next several weeks we're going to explore how God's Word went from the Mind of God to the pages of the Bible.

--to explore this topic, I'll present an overview of the book *From God To Us: How We Got Our Bible*, by Norman L. Geisler & William E. Nix

--importance of faith...

--God could have written a banner across the sky for every eye to see, but instead He designed the method of communicating His message to us and the authentication of His message in a way that cultivates faith...

--Hebrews 11:5-6: "But **without faith it is impossible to please Him [God]**, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

--Hebrews 11:8-9: "By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise."

CHAPTER 1: THE CHARACTER OF THE BIBLE

--origin of the word Bible: The word "Bible" is derived from the Greek word "Biblia," which means "books." The Greek Christians of the second century A.D. called the sacred scriptures "ta Biblia," which means "the Books." "Biblia" comes from the name of a papyrus, the "byblos reed," used in ancient days for making books. The byblos reed came from Byblos, an important seaport and principle city of Phoenicia during the second millennium B.C.. Byblos is one of the oldest, continuously inhabited cities in the world, today called Jubayl, located near Beirut, Lebanon.

--8-fold structure of the Bible (11)

--**key characteristic of authenticity:** Christ is the central theme of the Bible... God revealing Himself to us... revealing His holy nature... His provision to bridge the gap between His holiness and our sinfulness to bring us into relationship with Him...

Old Testament	Law	Foundation for Christ
	History	Preparation for Christ
	Poetry	Aspiration for Christ
	Prophecy	Expectation of Christ
New Testament	Gospels	Manifestation of Christ
	Acts	Propagation of Christ
	Epistles	Interpretation and Application of Christ
	Revelation	Consummation in Christ

--**note about Acts: Propagation of the gospel** – world stage providentially set for propagation of the gospel at the time of Christ's life...

--Greeks had established the universal language of Greek

--also, scattering of the Jews led to translation of O.T. to Greek. The first Greek translation, *the Septuagint*, played instrumental role in the early missionary movement.

--Romans established transportation infrastructure which facilitated missionary work...

--providence alone is powerful evidence... how God's plan, as revealed in the Bible, fits the natural flow of history.

--Luke 24:25-27: "Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" 27 **And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.**"

--Hebrews 10:5-7: "...when He came into the world, He said: ... **In the volume of the book it is written of Me....**"

--Acts 26:22-23: "Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, **saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come** — 23 that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles."

-chapters and verses in the Bible:

--Stephen Langton, a professor at the University of Paris and later Archbishop of Canterbury, divided the Bible into chapters in 1227. Verses were added in 1551 and 1555 by Robert Stephanus, a Paris printer. Since that time Jewish scholars have adopted the same chapter and verse divisions for their scriptures (the Old Testament) (11)

--the inspiration of the Bible: (11-16)

--biblical description of inspiration

--2 Timothy 3:16-17: "**All Scripture is given by inspiration of God**, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

--not "poetic inspiration"

--Greek Word *Theopneustos* is translated "given by inspiration of God"

--literal meaning: "**God-breathed**" *Theos* = "God" / *pneuma* = "breath"

--1 Corinthians 2:13-14: "This is what we speak, **not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.** 14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned."

--2 Peter 1:20-21: "...no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but **holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.**"

--1 Peter 1:8-12: "Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith — the salvation of your souls. 10 Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, 11 **searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating** when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. 12 To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things which angels desire to look into. "

--theological definition of inspiration:

--divine causality: "God is the ultimate source and original cause of biblical truth." (13)

--not manmade ideas... "But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Galatians 1:11-12)

--prophetic agency: "The prophets who wrote scripture... were more than recording secretaries. They wrote with full intent and consciousness in the normal exercise of their own literary styles and vocabularies. The personalities of the prophets were violated by a supernatural intrusion. The Bible which they wrote is the Word of God, but it is also the words of men... The prophets were the immediate cause of what was written, but God was the ultimate cause." (13)

--see scripture references in previous section

--written authority: "the final product of divine authority working through the prophetic agency is the written authority of the Bible" (13)

--God didn't reveal truth to be debated and edited... Jesus said, "It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law." (Luke 16:17)

--in other words, the law must be kept perfectly... God doesn't grade on a curve... Jesus kept the law perfectly for us so that we can be saved by grace!

--only the original copies of the 66 books of the Bible (known as "autographs") were inspired (14-15)

--"A translation or copy is authoritative only to the extent that it accurately reproduces the autographs... Technically speaking, only the autographs are inspired, but for all practical purposes the present day English Bible, in that it is an accurate transmission of the original, is the inspired Word of God"

--Only minor scribal errors have crept into the copies of the original transcripts. Of all ancient books in existence, the Bible is considered the most pure in the preservation of the original: (181)

--second place to the Bible: Homer's Iliad
--15,000 lines with 764 in question = 95% pure

--the Bible:
--20,000 lines in the New Testament with 40 in question = 99.8% pure (0.2% variance among the 5,000 NT manuscripts)
--no doctrinal issues depend on the 40 lines in question
--redundancy is a built-in safety feature... key doctrinal issues depend on multiple cross-referenced passages
--the Old Testament is even more pure due to the strict rules followed by Jewish scribes
***we'll cover this subject in more detail in later chapters*

--example of scribal errors:

--passage: Jesus said, "Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." (Mark 10:24-25)
--Greek word for camel and rope are very similar
kamélos = camel
kamelos = rope

--God could have written the entire Bible Himself without human involvement, but instead He chose to work through imperfect humans. He could preach the gospel Himself to every single person, but instead He sent His Spirit to work through imperfect human preachers...

--2 Corinthians 12:9: Jesus said, "...My strength is made perfect in weakness."

--1 Corinthians 1:27: "But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty..."

--2 Corinthians 4:7: "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us."

--Romans 11:33: "**Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God...**"