

## "Contend Earnestly For The Faith" REVIEW PARTS 11 - 16

by Erik Olsen

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

### --the authors of Scripture:

--Scripture is the product of **God** working through the Old Testament **prophets** and New Testament **apostles**...  
--three groups involved... the Godhead (God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit), prophets, apostles

--Scripture is the foundation upon which the church is built... "built on the **foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ [God] Himself being the chief cornerstone**..." (Ephesians 2:20)

### --"Jesus Christ... the chief cornerstone..."

--profound yet often overlooked fact that God Himself put the first section of Scripture (the Ten Commandments) into writing

--picture the contrast between God's voice introducing Moses to the Ten Commandments and God's voice introducing Jesus Christ who alone fulfilled the requirements of the Ten Commandments... **from God writing the law on tablets of stone to God becoming a man to fulfill the law... this is the backbone of all Scripture, affirmed not only by the apostles and prophets but by the voice of God the Father from heaven!**

--Deuteronomy 10:1-2: "At that time the LORD said to me, '**Hew for yourself two tablets of stone** like the first, and come up to Me on the mountain and make yourself an ark of wood. 2 **And I will write on the tablets** the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke; and **you shall put them in the ark.**'"

--Matthew 3:16-17: "When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. 17 **And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."**

--the central theme of Scripture is God's plan to provide a way for the requirements of the law to be satisfied through Christ.

--Romans 3:19-22: "Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. 21 **But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed**, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God, **through faith in Jesus Christ**, to all and on all who believe."

### --"the apostles and prophets..."

--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.**"

--in a sense, the New Testament is an extension of the teaching ministry of the apostles and the fulfillment of the promise Jesus gave them...

-- At the last supper Jesus told the twelve disciples, "These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. But the Helper, the **Holy Spirit**, whom the Father will send in My name, **He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.**" (John 14:25-26)

--John 16:12-14 -- "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, **when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth...**"

--right before ascending back to heaven, Jesus told the apostles, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always [*through the presence of the Holy Spirit*]..." (Matthew 28;19-20)

--New Testament authors:

- original apostles who accompanied Jesus during His entire ministry on earth: Matthew, John, Peter
- the apostle Paul
- the apostle's assistants: Luke, Mark
- associates of the apostles: Jude, James

### --the collection and circulation of Scripture in the early church:

--after each New Testament document was written, they were circulated among the early churches who would each make a copy for their growing collections that started with the Old Testament Scriptures.

--Today we have 5,664 Greek manuscripts remaining from the early process of circulating copies of the New Testament among the early churches, thus making the Bible by far the most accurately preserved book of ancient times. Homer's Iliad is the second most accurately preserved.

<b>the Bible</b>	<b>Homer's Iliad</b>
<b>5,664</b> ancient Greek manuscripts (24,000 ancient manuscripts including other languages)	<b>650</b> ancient manuscripts
<b>50-250 year gap</b> between composition and oldest manuscripts in existence today	<b>1000 year gap</b> between composition and oldest manuscripts in existence today
20,000 lines in the New Testament with 40 in question	15,000 lines with 764 in question
<b>99.8% pure</b> (0.2% variance among the 5,664 Greek manuscripts)	<b>95% pure</b>

--the 0.2% variance among the New Testament manuscripts relate to trivial issues; no doctrinal issues are affected

--by the end of the first century all 27 New Testament books had been written and circulated. Over the next 300 years the church went through the process of developing a formal list – the "canon" – of the 27 books of the New Testament.

--because of the communication and geographical barriers and the battle against false teachers, it took 300 years for the universal church to all confirm and agree upon the authenticity of the 27 books of the New Testament. Just as the Holy Spirit inspired the composition of the New Testament, so He inspired its confirmation.

--by 150 A.D. all 27 books of the New Testament (except 3 John) were referenced in the writings of the early church fathers

--*Not only did the early Fathers cite all twenty-seven books of the New Testament, they also quoted virtually all of the verses in all of these twenty-seven books. **Five Fathers alone from Irenaeus to Eusebius possess almost 36,000 quotations from the New Testament.** Sir David Dalrymple claimed to have found among the quotations of the second and third centuries "the entire New Testament, except eleven verses." **We know of no other book from the ancient world which exists en toto by way of***

**thousands of individual and selected quotations of it.** It is an amazing fact that the New Testament could be reconstructed simply from quotations made within two hundred years of its composition. (From God To Us, pg. 157)

## --translations of Scripture into new languages:

--throughout the ages, new translations of the Bible have been needed for several reasons:

--languages constantly change; example of changes in the English language... KJV compared to NKJV in 2 Timothy 2:17:

--New King James: "And their message will spread like cancer..."

--King James: "And their word will eat as doth a canker..."

--newly discovered Greek manuscripts and organization of existing Greek manuscripts

--improved scholarship of the Greek and Hebrew languages – both of which are very complicated! (Tyndale performed his translation work shortly after the first Hebrew & Greek grammar and lexicon books were available)

--improved working conditions and coordination among scholars (contemporary translations are produced by large teams of scholars working in ideal conditions using modern technology, opposed to the initial translation work... for example, Tyndale worked alone under candle light in hiding while fearing for his life as the Roman Catholic Church sought to kill him because of his translation of the Bible into English)

--different types of translations for different reading levels: word-for-word translations v. dynamic equivalence translations

--by 200 A.D. the first major translation of the New Testament, the *Old Latin* translation, was produced

--in 400 A.D. the Roman Catholic Church commissioned St. Jerome to revise the *Old Latin* translation which then became known as the *Latin Vulgate* and served as the dominant translation in the Roman Catholic Church until the 20<sup>th</sup> century!

--the Roman Catholic Church forbid the translation of the the Bible into other languages to prevent people from reading the Bible on their own and discovering that what they taught was not in the Bible!

-- 1380: first English translation by John Wycliffe

--Wycliffe was called "the Morning Star of the Reformation", as he rebelled against the Roman Catholic churches control of the Scriptures in keeping them bound to the Latin language. Wycliffe blazed the first trail for people in England to read the Scriptures in their common language.

-- 1526: English translation of William Tyndale

--Tyndale provided the first English translation based on original Greek manuscripts rather than the Latin Vulgate

--the Roman Catholic church eventually charged Tyndale with heresy for translating the Bible into English and executed him by burning him at the stake.

--the exhaustive study of the New Testament documents by scholars throughout the ages has repeatedly confirmed their authenticity. Only 40 out of the 20,000 lines in the New Testament are in question, and the essence of those 40 lines are repeated in lines that are not in question. The most practical contribution of the New Testament scholarship is how to most accurately translate the meaning of the original Greek into the ever-changing languages of the world

## --THE TRANSLATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

--even if the entire world throughout all history only spoke 1 language (thus eliminating the need for the translation of the Bible), everyone would miss the true meaning of the Bible without "spiritual discernment" through the Holy Spirit! **The Holy Spirit makes perfect the imperfect process of translating the Bible into new languages!**

--1 Corinthians 2:13-14: "These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14 But **the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God**, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because **they are spiritually discerned.**"

--God could have bypassed language all together and somehow revealed His Word to the entire world instantaneously rather than working through the human process of translating and slowly spreading His Word throughout millenia... **but this human process is leading to a day when God will indeed bypass language!**

--Revelation 1:7-8: "**Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him**, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen. 8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

**--Jesus Christ is the essence of Scripture...**

--Jesus summarized the message of Scripture in three in three concepts: "Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47 and that **repentance** and **remission of sins** should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 And you are witnesses of these things. 49 Behold, I send **the Promise of My Father** [the Holy Spirit] upon you..." (Luke 24:46-49)

**--we are saved by Christ to follow Christ and become more like Christ**

--remission of sins through Jesus Christ

--repentance... turning to follow Jesus Christ

--the Holy Spirit through whom we have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and become more like Jesus Christ