

CHAPTER 1 - THE PROPHETIC WORD

The Bible is not a systematic treatise on Theology, or Morals, or History, or Science, or any other topic. It is a REVELATION of God, of the Fall of Man, the Way of Salvation, and of God's "Plan and Purpose in the Ages." It treats of-

1. **Four Persons**-God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, and Satan.
2. **Three Places**-Heaven, Earth and Hell.
3. **Three Classes of People**-The Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God.

The Scriptures were given to us piece-meal, "at sundry times and in divers manners." Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, during a period of 1600 years, extending from B.C. 1492 to A. D. 100. The Bible consists of 66 separate books; 39 in the Old Testament, and 27 in the New Testament. These books were written by about 40 different authors. By kings such as David and Solomon; by statesmen, as Daniel and Nehemiah; by priests, as Ezra; by men learned in the wisdom of Egypt, as Moses; by men learned in Jewish law, as Paul. By a herdsman, Amos; a tax-gatherer, Matthew; fishermen, as Peter, James and John, who were "unlearned and ignorant" men; a physician, Luke; and such mighty "seers" as Isaiah, Ezekiel and Zechariah.

It is not an Asiatic book, though it was written in that part of the world. Its pages were penned in the **Wilderness** of Sinai, the cliffs of Arabia, the hills and towns of Palestine, the courts of the Temple, the schools of the prophets at Bethel and Jericho, in the palace of Shushan in Persia, on the banks of the river Chebar in Babylonia, in the dungeons of Rome, and on the lonely Island of Patmos, in the Aegean Sea.

Imagine another book compiled in a similar manner. Suppose, for illustration, that we take 66 medical books written by 40 different physicians and surgeons during a period of 1600 years, of various schools of medicine, as Allopathy, Homeopathy, Hydropathy, Osteopathy, etc., and bind them all together, and then undertake to doctor a man according to that book, what success would we expect to have, and what accord would there be in such a medical work.

While the Bible has been compiled in the manner described, it is not a "heterogeneous jumble" of ancient history, myths, legends, religious speculations and superstitions. There is a progress of revelation and doctrine in it. The judges knew more than the Patriarchs, the Prophets than the judges, the Apostles than the Prophets. The Old and New Testaments are not separate and distinct books, the New taking the place of the Old they are the two halves of a whole. The New is "enfolded" in the Old, and the Old is "unfolded" in the New. You cannot understand Leviticus without Hebrews, or Daniel without Revelation, or the Passover or Isaiah 53 without the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

While the Bible is a revelation from God, it is not written in a superhuman or celestial language. If it were we could not understand it. Its supernatural origin however is seen in the fact that it can be translated into any language and not lose its virility or spiritual life giving power, and when translated into any language it fixes that language in its purest form.

The language however of the Bible is of three kinds. **Figurative, Symbolical** and **Literal**. Such expressions as "Harden not your heart, " "Let the dead bury their dead, " are figurative, and their meaning is made clear by the context.

Symbolic language, like the description of Nebuchadnezzar's "Colossus" Daniel's "Four Wild Beasts" or Christ in the midst of the "Seven Candlesticks, " is explained, either in the same chapter, or somewhere else in the Bible.

The rest of the language of the Bible is to be interpreted according to the customary rules of grammar and rhetoric. That is, we are to read the Bible as we would read any other book, letting it say what it wants to say, and not allegorize or spiritualize its meaning. It is this false method of interpreting Scripture that has led us to the origin of so many religious sects and denominations. There are three things that we must avoid in the handling of God's Word.

1. The **Misinterpretation** of Scripture.
2. The **Misapplication** of Scripture.
3. The **Dislocation** of Scripture.

The trouble is men are not willing to let the Scriptures say what they want to say. This is largely due to their training, environment, prejudice, or desire to make the Scriptures teach some favorite doctrine.

Then again we must not overlook the "**Parabolic Method**" of imparting truth. Jesus did not invent it, though He largely used it, it was employed by the Old Testament prophets. In the New Testament it is used as a "**Mystery Form**" of imparting truth. [Matt. 13:10-17](#). A mystery is not something that cannot be known, but something that for the time being is hidden. I hand you a sealed letter. What it contains is a mystery to you. Break the seal and read the letter and it ceases to be a mystery. But you may not be able to read the letter, because it is written in a language with which you are not familiar. Learn the language and the mystery ceases. But perhaps the letter contains technical terms which you do not understand, learn their meaning and all will be plain. That is the way with the Mysteries of the Scriptures, learn to, read them by the help of their author, the Holy Spirit, and they will no longer be mysteries.

This brings us to the great question-

Is The Bible God's Book Or Man's Book?

That is, did God write it, or is it simply a collection of the writings of men? If it is simply a collection of the writings of men, without any

divine guidance, then it is no more reliable than are the writings of men; but if God wrote it, then it must be true, and we can depend upon its statements. It is clear from the character of the Bible that it is not the work of man, for man could not have written it if he would. and would not have written it if he could.

It details with scathing and unsparing severity the sins of its greatest men, as Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David and Solomon, charging them with falsehood, treachery, pride, adultery, cowardice, murder and gross licentiousness, and presents the history of the Children of Israel as a humiliating record of ingratitude, idolatry, unbelief and rebellion, and it is safe to say, that the Jews, unguided and undirected by the Holy Spirit, would never have chronicled the sinful history of their nation.

How then was the Bible written? The Bible itself gives the answer.

"**ALL Scripture Is Given By INSPIRATION OF GOD.**" [2 Tim. 3:16](#).

I. What Are We To Understand By the "INSPIRATION" of the Scriptures?

We are to understand that God directed men, chosen by Himself, to put into writing such messages, laws, doctrines, historical facts, and revelations, as He wished men to know.

All Scripture (the Graphé writing), is given by **inspiration** (The op-neu-stos), that is, is-

GOD BREATHED.

That is, God Himself or through the Holy Spirit told holy men of old just what to write. The Bible, then, **IS** the Word of God, and does not simply here and there contain it. God is a **Person** and can both **Write and Speak**. He wrote the two "Tables of Testimony" on stone. [Ex. 31:18](#); [Ex. 32:16](#), and on the wall of Belshazzar's Palace. [Dan. 5:5](#), [Dan. 5:24-28](#). He talked with Moses on the Mount when He gave him the Specifications for the Tabernacle and its furnishings, and all the Levitical Law and order of service. He spoke at the Baptism of Jesus ([Matt. 3:17](#)), and on the Mount of Transfiguration. [Matt. 17:5](#), and one day when Jesus was talking to the multitude. [John 12:27-30](#). But God not only spoke directly to men, He spoke to them in the person of Jesus, for Jesus was **God Manifest In The Flesh**. [John 1:1-5](#), [John 1:14](#). [1 Tim. 3:16](#). Matthew and John's Gospels contain 49 chapters, 1950 verses, 1140 of which, almost three-fifths, were spoken by Jesus, and He claimed that what He spake, He spake not of Himself, but that the Father which sent Him, gave Him commandment **What He Should Speak**. [John 12:49](#), [John 12:50](#). We see then that God can both write and speak, and therefore can tell others what to write and speak.

II. Does the Inspiration of the Bible Extend to Every Part?

Yes. From the dry lists in Chronicles to the very words of God in Exodus, and through Christ. And more, it extends to **every sentence, word, mark, point, jot and tittle in the original parchments**. When Jesus said in [Matt. 5:17](#), [Matt. 5:18](#), That not one "jot" or "tittle" should pass from the Law until all be fulfilled, he referred to the smallest letter (jot) and the smallest mark (tittle), of the Hebrew language, thus indicating that even they were inspired, and were necessary for a complete understanding of God's meaning in His Word.

But how about the words of Satan, and wicked and uninspired men, the genealogical tables, and the account of the Fall of Man, the Flood and other historical portions of the Bible. They were inspired of **Record**. That is, the inspired penman or historian was told what historical facts to record and what to omit. To one who has read the Old Testament, and also profane history covering the same period, with its legends and traditions, and detailed descriptions, it is very clear that the writers of the Old Testament were divinely inspired to record only those things that would throw light on God's Plan and Purpose in the Ages.

III. HOW Were These Men Inspired to Write the Scriptures?

Were they simply thrown into a kind of "spell, " or "ecstasy, " or "trance, " and wrote under its influence whatever came into their mind. or did God through the Holy Spirit, **dictate to them the exact words to use?**

We know that thought can only be expressed in words and those words must express the **exact thought** of the speaker or writer, otherwise his exact thought is not expressed. We see then that inerrancy demands that the sacred writer be simply an amanuensis. This we see is what the Scriptures claim for themselves. In **11 Pet. 1:20; 11 Pet. 1:21**, we read that-"No prophecy of the Scripture is of any **private** interpretation." That is, no man has a right to say what the Scriptures, according to his opinion, means. Why? Because-

"The Prophecy came not in old time by the **will of man**, but holy men of God spake as they were **Moved by the HOLY GHOST**."

And this is confirmed by the fact that much that the Old Testament Prophets wrote they did not themselves understand [1Pet. 1:10](#), [1Pet. 1:11](#). They must then have seen mere amanuenses, recoding words that needed an interpreter. That they were mere instruments is shown by the fact that not all of them were good or holy men, as Balaam ([Num. 22:38](#); [Num. 23:26](#)), King Saul ([1Sam. 10:10](#); [1Sam. 10:12](#); [1Sam. 19:20-24](#)), the Prophet of Bethel ([1Kings 13:7-10](#); [1Kings 20:22](#); [1Kings 20:26](#)), and Caiaphas, [John 11:49-52](#).

That the Old Testament writers spake and wrote the exact words that God gave to them is clear from their own statements.. Moses declares that the Lord said unto him-"Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and **teach thee what thou shalt say.**"- [Ex. 4:10-12](#). The Prophet Jeremiah says-

"Then the Lord put forth His hand, and touched my mouth, And the Lord said unto me, Behold, **I have put My Words In Thy Mouth.**" [Jer. 1:6-9](#).

Ezekiel, Daniel, and all the prophets make the same claim. The expressions-"**The Lord Said**," "**The Lord Spake Saying**," "**Thus Saith the Lord**," etc., etc., occur 560 times in the Pentateuch, 300 times in the Historical and Prophetical books, 1200 times in the Prophets (24 times in Malachi alone), in all over 2000 times in the Old Testament, thus proving the statement of Peter, that Holy men of God spake **as they were moved by the Holy Ghost**.

But you say-"If this be true how do you account for the difference of style of the writers; for Isaiah's style is different from Ezekiel's or Daniel's, and Peter's from that of John or Paul?" This is easily explained. On the principle that when we wish a legal document written we choose a lawyer, or a poetical article a poet, etc., so God when He wanted to speak in symbols chose an Ezekiel, a Daniel, a John, or in poetry a David.

How are we to explain the fact that sometimes a New Testament writer in quoting from the Old Testament, instead of quoting literally paraphrases the quotation? For instance in [Amos 9:11](#) we read:

"In that day will I raise up the Tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old."

But when the Apostle James, in the First Church Council at Jerusalem, quotes this passage, he paraphrases it, saying-

"After this I will return, and will build again the Tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up." [Acts 15:16](#).

Why the change in the wording? Simply because the author of both passages was not Amos or James, but the **Holy Spirit**, and an author has a perfect right to change the phraseology of a statement he may make in the first chapter of his book, in the tenth chapter, if by so doing, without contradicting himself, he can make his meaning clearer.

That is an illuminating statement in [1Pet. 1:11](#), where the Apostle tells us that it was the "**Spirit of Christ**" that testified through the Prophets of His "Sufferings." That is, the "**Spirit of Christ**" took possession of the Prophets and through them forecast or prophesied his "Sufferings" on the Cross, as in [Isa. 53:1-3](#).

The question is often asked, "Is there any difference between Bible Inspiration and the so-called 'inspiration' of Poets, Orators, Preachers, and Writers of today?" In answering the question we must distinguish between "**Inspiration**," "**Revelation**," and "**Illumination**."

As we have seen "Bible Inspiration" is something totally different and unique from the inspiration of Poets, Writers and Public Speakers. It is an inspiration in which the **Exact Words of God Are Imparted to the Speaker or Writer by the Holy Spirit**.

THE "AGES" AS VIEWED FROM DIFFERENT STANDPOINTS

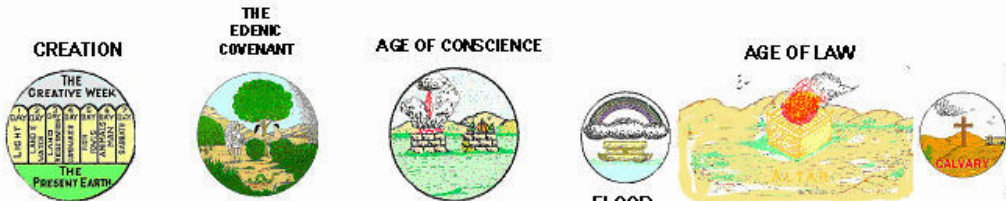
ETERNITY



AS THE JEWS SAW

"they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear" Luke 19:11

ETERNITY

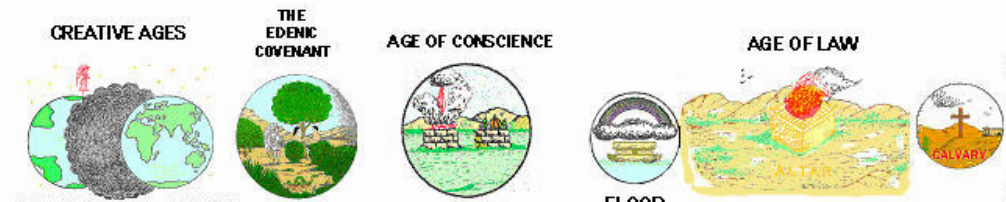


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PROBLEM - MISSAPPLIED SCRIPTURE "behold, the kingdom of God is within you" (Lu. 17:21) (THIS IS SPOKEN TO UNBE

ETERNITY



AS PREMILLENNIALIST

ORIGINAL CHAOTIC PRESENT
EARTH EARTH EARTH
2 TIMOTHY 4:1

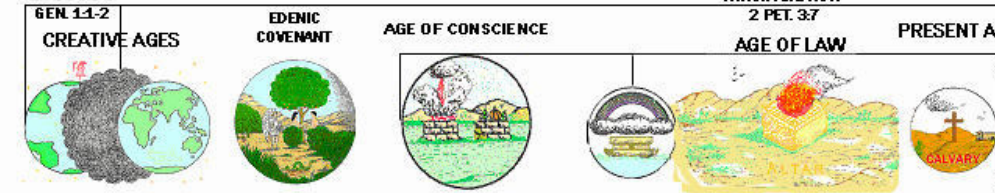
RIGHT POSITION "the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing an

ETERNITY

A
ALPHA
"AGES OF THE AGES"
COL 1:26

THE TRINITY AT WORK
HEB. 11:3; JOHN 1:1-3
HEB. 1:2

"THE WORLD THAT
THEN WAS"
2 PET. 3:5-6



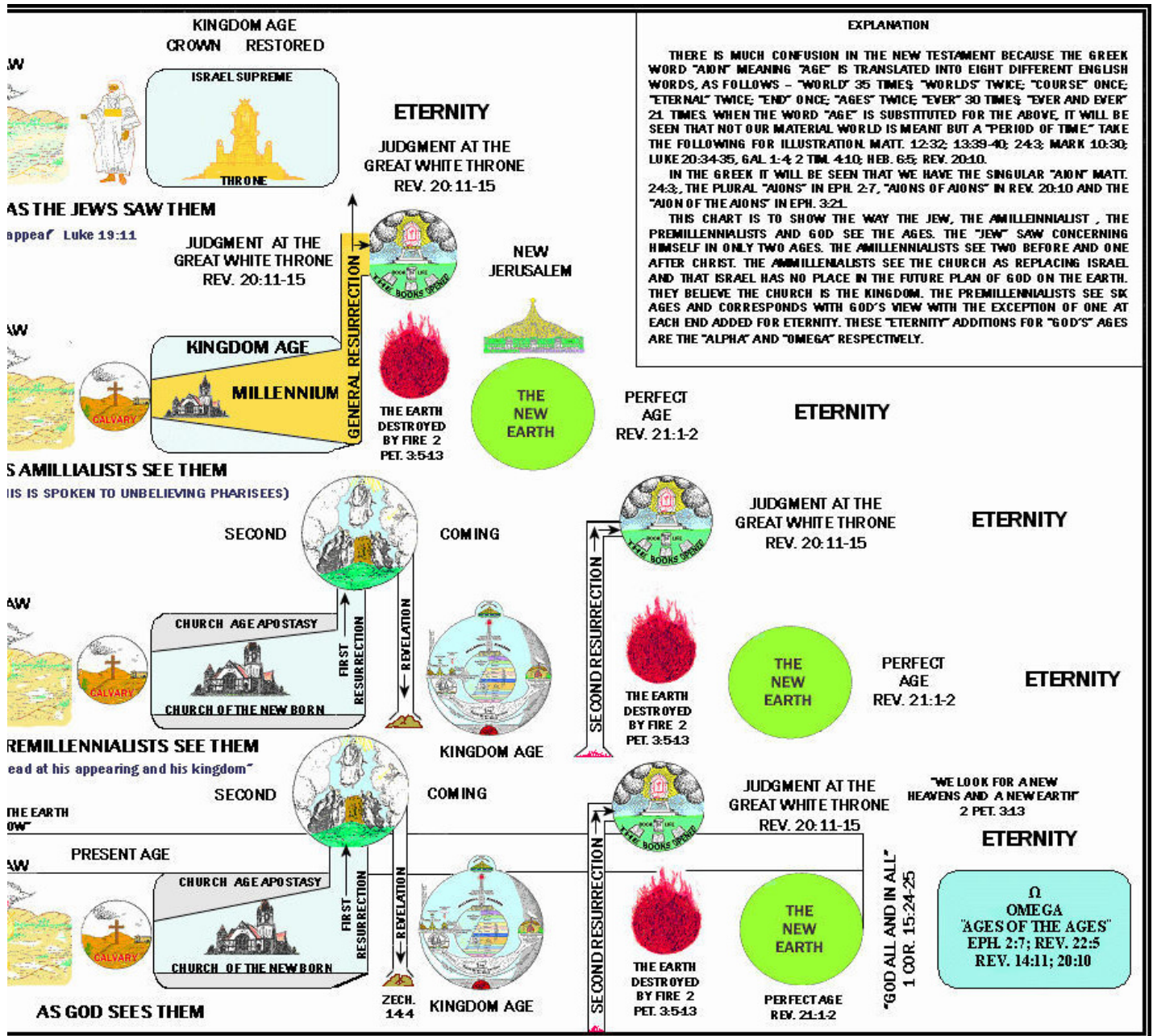
"THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH
WHICH ARE NOW"
2 PET. 3:7

ORIGINAL CHAOTIC PRESENT
EARTH EARTH EARTH

PRESENT AG
AS GOD SEES

Ages as viewed from different standpoints part A

(for a different view go to charts)



Ages as viewed from different standpoints part B

(for a different view go to charts)

"Bible Revelation" is the disclosure to men of things that they otherwise could never know. Things hidden in the mind of God such as His "Plan and Purpose in the Ages."

"Bible Revelation" ceased with the Book of Revelation. There has been no new revelation from God since then. When men today claim that they have received some new revelation they must be classed as imposters.

"Spiritual Illumination" is different from either Bible Inspiration or Revelation. It is the **Work of the Holy Spirit** in the Believer, by which he has his "**Spiritual Understanding**" opened to understand the Scriptures. [John 16:12-15](#). The "Natural Man" cannot receive the things of the spirit of God, "neither can he know them, because they are **Spiritually Discerned**. [1Cor. 2:11-14](#). The work then of the Holy Spirit in these days is not to impart some new revelation to men or to inspire them to write or speak as the Prophets and Apostles of old, but to so illuminate men's minds and open up their understanding of the Scriptures that their heart will burn within them as they compare Scripture with Scripture, and have revealed to them God's Plan and Purpose in the Ages as disclosed in His Holy Word.