

Christianity Clarified Volume 02

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[0 : 00] What is Christianity really all about? Here, in an ongoing effort to try and dispel some of the confusion, is Marv Wiseman, with another session of Christianity Clarify.

Human language is surely the ultimate and priceless means of communication among mankind. It is the principal means of conveying what is in the mind of one person to the mind of another.

When the sending mind originates a message and conveys it to the receiving mind, with both parties getting the same message, communication has occurred.

If a different message is perceived by the receiver than that sent by the sender, we call it a miscommunication. Surely this required preciseness sets forth the critical nature of words.

Words are the essence of communication, whether spoken, written, or conveyed in sign language. Jesus Christ is called the Word in John 1.1.

[1 : 05] This means He, the Logos, the Word of God, is the very essence of communication from God to man. God took that which He wanted man to know, wrapped it up in a human body, and sent it to dwell among men, thus to reveal the Father.

Language and the ability to communicate through it remains the greatest boon to the human race, as regards advancement in every field and every level.

It seems clear that human advancement was deliberately curtailed, even hindered, with the confusion of languages that God imposed upon His rebellious creatures at the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11.

Suddenly, people were no longer able to freely communicate with one another. A language barrier became a real impediment. God would graciously suspend that barrier 3,500 years later in Acts chapter 2, when He permitted the gospel to be preached so that those present would hear the message in their own language.

Pentecost appeared to be the temporal suspension of the language barrier imposed at the Tower of Babel. The prophet Joel spoke of this in the second chapter of his prophecy.

[2 : 25] With the Old Testament original autographs written in Hebrew and the new in Greek, God utilized the two most prominent languages among His people in that day.

While none of the original writings exist today, meticulous copies were lovingly and painstakingly copied by hand, employing thousands of copyists over hundreds of years.

Those branched into the hundreds of languages and dialects that exist today. There is scarcely a language anywhere, however remote, that does not have at least some portion of sacred scripture in their own tongue.

Is there any other writing of any time deemed worthy of this kind of translating and copying? Of course not. This may not of itself give proof the Bible is God's Word, but it unquestionably reinforces its uniqueness.

Never a book was written like this book. Never a book was copied like this book. Never a book was translated like this book. Draw your own conclusions.

[3 : 34] The Bible not only outstrips all other writings and copies printed and distributed, no other writing even comes close.

And while its unparalleled printing and circulation does not prove the Bible to be the Word of God, it certainly is a formidable evidence for it. After all, isn't that what one would expect if it is in fact God's Word?

Does it not strike us as expected for the very God of the universe to have authored a book and then to have it on the world's perpetual bestseller status?

In their 1976 textbook, Geisler and Nix report the Bible had been translated into more than 1,100 languages and dialects, representing more than 90% of the world's population.

By 1966, combined Bible societies had distributed 87 million copies each year, a cumulative total surpassing 2 billion portions of Scripture.

[4 : 46] By the year 2000, the United Bible Societies distributed over 633 million Scriptures worldwide, an amount exceeding 10 times the number just 25 years earlier.

The Gideons alone distribute 56 million copies without charge every year all over the world in multiple languages. Truth be told, the total of all copies of God's Word distributed is simply beyond calculation.

No one, no matter how hardened or opposed to the Bible he may be, can possibly deny the unparalleled numbers associated with the Bible in terms copied, printed, its multiple languages, and worldwide circulation.

Shakespeare, Milton, and all the other ancient classic works combined do not begin to equal the numbers posted by the good book. As stated at the outset, while this unequaled success in printing and circulation does not by itself prove the Bible to be the Word of God, it assuredly is an obvious indicator pointing in that direction.

To deny this, one needs to be embarrassingly biased against the Bible. And to such an one, we could only ask, What has the book of God done to you, other than to tell you the truth?

[6 : 10] Truth about God? Truth about man? Including you? It may be that therein lies the rub. There's a safe prayer, even for the unbeliever.

He can pray, telling God that, If the Bible is true, I am willing to be shown. And then, start reading and prepare yourself to weigh and carefully evaluate what you read.

Dr. Louis Sperry Chafer, founder and first president of Dallas Theological Seminary, made this careful observation. The Bible is a book such as man would not write if he could, nor could not write if he would.

None other than Jesus Christ himself has said, Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away.

With each passing day, the Savior has made good his word. Not that there have not been a multiple of attempts to make his word pass away, because there have been.

[7 : 20] Kings, dictators, and other despots have sought to completely eliminate the Bible from its very existence. Yet, the old book masterfully presses on, oblivious to the puny human efforts to bury it.

This pressing on we call the indestructibility of the Bible. The more it is banned and burned, the more it proliferates. It's as if in destroying one Bible, two are spawned in its demise.

It must have been terribly frustrating to the tyrants who tried to do it in. We count the indestructibility of the Bible as one of the evidence for its origin being of God.

And while we would not claim that its survival to date proves that it came from God, it certainly is a telling indication in that direction. What does the logic of the matter tell us?

It tells us that if, and I say if, the Bible did originate from God, it had better be indestructible. It is clearly unthinkable that God himself would provide the Bible to be his revelation to man, only to have it come to naught.

[8 : 35] What kind of a God would he be to have provided the Bible for man's information and not be able to preserve and protect it from extinction? It would appear the Almighty failed in one of his chief job descriptions.

Add to what Jesus said in Mark 13 about his word not passing away, another of several like quotes from the Old Testament as well, Psalm 119, It would seem that the word would require staying power to have been and remain settled in heaven forever.

And why would any even seek its destruction? Why not simply ignore the Bible if you won't embrace it? The Bible is viewed as an enemy by people who are evil.

What's the predictable thing evil wants to do to all enemies? Eliminate them. The Bible competes for influence in the hearts and lives of the same people appealed to by evil men.

The Bible is a competitor for the souls and allegiance of mankind. Getting rid of, Thus saith the Lord, makes the pronouncements of men more palatable.

[9 : 57] But man cannot rid himself of the book. It's God's book. And it enjoys God's protection, guaranteeing its amazing indestructibility.

To recall that significant quote by Dr. Lewis Barry Chafer once again, The Bible is a book such as man could not write if he would, and would not write if he could.

There's no disputing the fact that much of humanity over thousands of years has had a love affair with the Bible.

It's due, of course, to their love affair with the God of the Bible. The Bible is viewed like a prolonged love letter from the one whom their soul loves. These lovers of the book revere it as coming directly from God through man by the process of divine inspiration.

This conviction results in man loving and obeying its contents, being edified and encouraged by them, enlightened and warned by them, comforted and admonished by them.

[11 : 07] But their positive responses to the Bible are surely not universal. The old book has had and still has its detractors and deniers.

No literary work has been so vilified, discredited, depreciated, demeaned, ridiculed, rejected, mocked, banned, and burned as the Bible.

Its pages have been ripped from its binding and fed to flames the world over. Men have forfeited their life for smuggling Bibles into areas where it is forbidden.

Printers of it were imprisoned and teachers and preachers of it burned at the stake by those who hated it. Yet, printing presses worldwide continue turning out untold volumes in multiple languages, translations, and versions.

The more man attempts to destroy the Bible, the more it proliferates. This alone does not prove the Bible is the Word of God, but it certainly does point to that.

[12 : 08] How so? Well, does it not stand to reason that if the Bible did originate from God, and it was His purpose that it be His desired revelation made available to humanity, don't you think God's preservation and indestructibility of the Bible would be part of the plan?

Could the God of heaven be thwarted in realizing His desired intent that His Word would not fulfill His objective? The very idea that God wished to provide the Bible for humanity but is powerless to prevent man from destroying it and eliminating it is utterly preposterous.

Such would call for a very puny deity, hardly worthy of the name God. God surely must have been amused when Voltaire, the famous French philosopher and skeptic, announced in the 18th century, 100 years from now the Bible and Christianity will be extinct.

Well, all that happened was that Voltaire became extinct, while the Bible remained hale and hearty, continuing to provide the glorious gospel that Christ died for our sin, even Voltaire's.

And to add to what must have been God's amusement, the very house in which Voltaire lived was purchased by the Geneva Bible Society 50 years after his famous quote.

[13 : 37] And what was the purpose of the Geneva Bible Society? To print Bibles. God has both a sense of humor and a penchant for irony, would you not say?

No. Archaeological investigation has consistently proved to be a supporting ally of the Bible.

While honest archaeological science is not and should not be undertaken to verify the Bible because real science strives for an unbiased objectivity, nonetheless one dig after another has served to validate the claims of Scripture.

Despite the numerous charges over the decades offered by liberal critics of the Bible, one by one they continue to be buried as the spade of the archaeologist proceeds.

Names, places, events, and dates, too many to enumerate, insist on verifying what the Bible records, who was involved, what happened, and where. For years, critics insisted Moses could not have written the first five books of the Bible.

[14 : 49] Their reason was simple. Writing hadn't been invented when Moses lived. Eventually, the spade of the archaeologist was put to ancient Ur of the Chaldees, homeland of the patriarch Abraham.

To their surprise, they discovered clay tablets. The cuneiform language was unmistakable. There, written in the tablets, thousands of tablets, they found not merely writing, but shopping lists, deeds and legal documents, and intricate formulas utilizing mathematical principles of square root and cube root.

So, what did this prove? For one thing, it proved Moses, skilled in the advanced learning of the Egyptians, was a very likely candidate to have written the Pentateuch, since writing was well underway hundreds of years before he was born.

Time and again, archaeology has confirmed the historical accuracy of statements set forth in Scripture. And while the Bible does not need archaeological findings to verify itself, it does serve to silence critics and offers additional verification for the believer.

Dr. William F. Albright, considered dean of archaeologists and one who never professed Christianity, nonetheless offered the following conclusion following decades working in the field. [16:13] Quote, There can be no doubt that archaeology has confirmed the substantial historicity of Old Testament tradition. Unquote.

Quite a statement coming from one with no axe to grind concerning the Bible. This is but a small sampling of the multitude of like confirmations, coming from the research of unbiased scientists over the past 200 years.

One need not even have an open mind, but one that's just slightly ajar, will have to admit these and others like them constitute very serious food for thought to anyone looking for evidence about the historical accuracy of the biblical record.

Thus, saith the Lord, remains significantly unchallenged. Every season devoted to unearthing the sites of the Bible merely adds to the ever-increasing conclusion, the book had it right.

Most Bible scholars would agree that 2 Timothy 3, verses 16 and 17, set forth the intent and objective of the Bible as succinctly and straightforwardly as any passage could.

[17:37] Paul the Apostle, penning his final letter before his martyrdom, wrote these words to young Timothy, his protege, that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be mature, throughly furnished unto every good work.

Nothing of value is left untouched in these verses. Doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness pretty well covers the waterfront.

And then in verse 17, we are given the rationale for it all, and here it is, that the man of God, or as a purpose clause would state it, in order that, or to the end that, the man of God may be spiritually mature, that is, throughly furnished through and through, equipped, outfitted unto all good works. In other words, Paul tells young Timothy, and us, that God gave us his word to our profit, or benefit, so that in imbibing or taking in his word, we can know doctrine, that is, the teaching we are to absorb that will tell us right from wrong.

What needs to be changed or corrected in our thinking, so that we will be adequately equipped to do what we are supposed to do? There it is. That's it.

[19:17] It culminates in our behavior. But it begins with our belief. If we want to know how we are to behave, the Bible tells us it begins with how we are to believe.

Because believing right results in behaving right. Many mistakenly think it doesn't matter what you believe, only how you behave. Well, these not only put the cart before the horse, they have no horse.

We act out our faith in the deeds that we do, but it is our faith or belief that prompts our doing. So, where do we get our beliefs?

How do we obtain the faith or belief so as to be able to act out of it? Faith comes by hearing, and hearing comes by the word of God.

Romans 10. It goes back to the word of God. It always does. Because God put what he wanted us to know in a book.

[20:21] In addition to it being his love letter to humanity, it's also the manual setting forth standard operating procedures for functioning in this present world, while anticipating the one ahead.

For Christianity Clarified, this is Marv Wiseman. We have quoted a statement by Dr. Louis Barry Chafer in the insightful observation he made that the Bible is a book such as man could not write if he would and would not write if he could.

In the former case that man could not write the Bible if he would, we point to the unparalleled beauty given forth in Scripture, the employ of language, of expression, so profound in both prose and poetry.

The Bible possesses an exquisite literary quality that is so sublime, all others, including the bard himself, simply pale by comparison.

It appears the book is otherworldly. And it is. The source from which it originated is as otherworldly as you can get.

[21:46] Our most gifted human penmen through the ages could not compare with the unequalled majesty of Holy Writ, and the majority of them were eager and willing to confess that this is so.

And for the idea that the Bible is a book such as man would not write if he could, we point to the way Scripture paints humanity through its approximately 1,500 years of composition.

Mere human writers would have painted humanity with a less critical brush than does the Bible. Anyone who has perused this wonderful old volume must confess the human race is spoken about with raw honesty throughout its pages, often portraying a very uncomplimentary picture. The Bible simply tells the truth about man, and man's frequent response to it is denial or resentment, sometimes downright anger.

You've heard the expression, the truth hurts. Well, it does. The Bible deftly peels back the layers of humanity to reveal what's really in the human heart.

[22 : 59] It's not a pretty picture. Christ himself described man's heart condition in Mark 7 by saying, Now, are you ready for this? Jesus said, For from within, out of the heart of man proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness.

All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man. This is the description Christ gives of corporate humanity.

This is the truth the Bible records about man. And man is not prepared to absorb an indictment like that lying down. He denies this is an accurate description of his heart, maybe of others, but not of him.

But yes, my friend, it is an accurate description of us all. Thankfully, all of us don't manifest all of them at once, but yes, they are there.

If Jesus Christ says they are, and you say they aren't, whom do you think we should believe? For any who are fairly familiar with the Bible, you can readily attest to the statement that we have frequently referred to by Dr. Lewis Barry Chafer.

[24 : 31] The Bible is a book such as man would not write if he could, and could not write if he would. This is profoundly true. The old book simply transcends human capability in its expressions, its content, breadth and depth, its morality, its simplicity on the one hand, and its profundity on the other.

There is no volume of literature that exceeds it or equals it. But someone may ask, if the Bible enjoys such a stellar position among all writings, why has it engendered its great opposition? What is the basis for the ridicule and rejection of such a treasured volume of prose and poetry? While the Bible has endeared itself to millions throughout thousands of years, it has also garnered a great deal of opposition and hatred.

Not everyone loves the book. Again, for those somewhat familiar with the Bible, you must be struck by its truthfulness. It vividly describes life as we know it and see it all around us.

It tells us that man suffers from an enlargement of his ego. The Bible does not accommodate the human ego, but exposes it for being the very bane to mankind that it is.

[25 : 58] Simply put, the Bible has us pegged. It tells the truth about us humans, and often we tend not to like it, but even resent it.

Sometimes the truth hurts, but truth responded to in the right way is our greatest friend and ally. Rejectors of the truth, however, tell us the fault is in the book.

Pay it no mind. It's only a musty collection of religious writings penned by old bearded men in long robes who lived centuries ago. They were just ignorant, unscientific, and unsophisticated.

They may have had appeal in their day, but now they are hopelessly outdated and irrelevant. Well, these Bible deniers urge us to place the Bible on the refuse heap of other bygone things that have outlived their usefulness.

But the old book will not go quietly despite the efforts to discount it. Ignoring its critics, it merely goes on to remain that impregnable rock of Holy Scripture.

[27 : 10] It was said of Jesus in the Gospels that no man ever spake like this man. Well, the same can be said of the Bible. No book ever spake like this book.

Indeed, the Bible is a book such as man would not write if he could, and could not write if he would. That leaves only the one who did.

For Christianity Clarified, this is Marv Wiseman. Bearing in mind that the Bible is a book of progressive revelation, one's understanding and appreciation of the Scriptures is dramatically enhanced.

And what do we mean by progressive revelation? Principly just this. Doesn't it seem only logical that since the Bible was compiled over a span of 15 plus centuries, it was gradual in its making?

Think of it this way. From the first year that Scripture was inspired of God, enabling those beginning writings to be recorded, until its conclusion, 1,500 years later, there was involved a gradual, increasing disclosure of what God wanted revealed.

[28 : 35] And since the Bible is an accurate historical account of God and His dealings with man, we may surmise that God is revealed to man in more and more, shall we say, up-to-date ways than when originally begun.

As the Bible unfolds chronologically, an increasingly clearer revelation of God is made known to man. This means the apostles Peter, James, and John had a fuller revelation and understanding of God than did Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, simply because the latter three lived 1,500 years after the former three.

A most obvious example of how God's revelation progressed was in the divine requirement of animal sacrifice, imposed upon mankind in man's earliest years.

But with the revelation of God and His requirements progressing more and more, century by century, we arrive at the time when animal sacrifices have fulfilled their purpose and are no longer required.

Clearly, they were at an earlier time and clearly the need for them was discontinued. Why so? Because the purpose of animal sacrifice had been completed by the ultimate final sacrifice that was made in the person of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, God's own Son.

[30 : 06] God's requirement and demand from man progressed from that of mere animals to the supreme sacrifice of the One who was incarnated in human flesh.

Quite a dramatic step forward, wouldn't you say? Progressive to be sure. God used the principle of animal sacrifice to instill in the nation of Israel the very idea of substitution, that is, the innocent dying in the place of the guilty.

This is the very essence of Christianity, that of substitution. Christ died for our sins. This was not nearly so well understood when only animals were required for sacrifice, as it was later understood following the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, thus putting an end to the sacrificial system. It was very much in vogue before Christ died. Then, animal sacrifices became outmoded. Christians are often asked why they believe the Bible to be the Word of God, and how do we know that it is? Well, our best answer is that the Bible says it is the Word of God. But then we are told, well, that's using the Bible to prove the Bible. You can't do that.

[31 : 34] That's committing a logical fallacy called circular reasoning. Would you believe what a man tells you if he is a frequently proven liar?

If he told you something and you ask him for verification, only to be told that you should believe him because he told you so, well, that's crazy.

You can't ask a frequent proven liar if he is telling you the truth and then have any confidence in his answer. Well, that's true enough. We would agree.

But suppose we also had, in addition to the one of questionable integrity, thirty-nine other people who would deny or verify what the one in question told you.

What do we mean? Thirty-nine other people? Where did they come from? Well, the Bible. There were forty-some different writers composing their contribution of Scripture under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as they wrote over a span of sixteen centuries in three languages from three different continents, and most of these writers never knew or met their fellow penmen.

[32 : 50] Each of the forty constitutes a source independent from the other thirty-nine. Though distinct and separate one from another, yet with an uncanny accuracy and unmistakable coherence, they are locked together in their support and verification of each other, while there is no apparent effort or intent to even do so.

No doubt some die-hard skeptic could pronounce it an unusual coincidence. But for those who revere the book, it is seen as one more indication that we are dealing with a supernatural book, the contents of which were orchestrated and engineered by a master planner who knew full well what he was about.

No coincidence here. Logic and the mathematical probability forbid it. The Apostle Peter expresses it in his second letter, chapter one, when he said, Holy men of God spake as they were moved or born along or sustained by the Holy Spirit.

There is simply no other accounting for it that will satisfy the demands of even a half-open mind. Using the Bible to verify the Bible does not constitute circular reasoning.

The Bible is a book such as man would not write if he could nor could not write if he would. This we have often quoted from the pen of Dr. Louis Sperry Chafer, founder and first president of Dallas Theological Seminary in Dallas, Texas.

[34 : 28] We wholeheartedly agree with the good doctor. For Christianity Clarified, this is Marv Wiseman in Springfield, Ohio. Anyone spending serious time perusing the pages of the Bible will surely come to some inescapable conclusions about its uniqueness.

One of those likely conclusions is that this book and its themes simply has no bottom. One can forget about plumbing its depths or overtaking the sublimity of its heights.

We are dealing with a volume that speaks of a myriad of subjects that prompts investigation. Yet, upon doing so, in however an extensive study one may engage, the conviction is always there that one has merely scratched the surface.

There is more. So much more than has been ferreted out. This speaks of the inexhaustibility of the Bible. Yes, of course, there are the simple truths it contains.

So simple a child can understand and not err therein. But upon further examination of these so-called simple truths, they take on a character not seen at the outset.

[35 : 55] They deepen and widen and appear to take on a life of their own. You never really get to the end of anything when you engage the study of the Bible.

Having done so for more than five decades convinces us more and more that inexhaustible is a fitting description of it. But there should be no surprise about this if the Bible is what it claims to be and was given in the manner it says it was and came from the source it says it does, its inexhaustibility is expected.

We should be suspicious of it if it did not convince us there is so much more to be known, even regarding an in-depth study that engaged several hours.

Not only is there more to be learned about any subject undertaken, there is the feeling that there is more that remains than what you have been able to obtain. An ongoing examination of any subject in the Scriptures soon finds the searcher expanding the field of inquiry.

This is because there is a divine networking connecting the themes one is investigating to all the rest of the Bible. It isn't long until a student is simply awestruck by the amazing interconnectedness of the whole of Scripture.

[37 : 17] Everything in the book is intricately connected with everything in the book. It's great diversity, which in itself is truly remarkable, but seeing such diversity come together in an equally remarkable cohesiveness is simply beyond the ability of mere human authors.

Man simply has no satisfactory explanation for this, nor should he, if the Bible is as it claims to be, directly from God himself.

Again, should we not expect this all to be the case if indeed the Bible has originated as it says it did? For Christianity Clarified, this is Marv Wiseman.

The worldwide and multi-millennial influence of the Bible is simply indisputable.

Even its detractors are forced to acknowledge this book has impacted humanity as no other book. No document has ever surfaced among humans that has promoted so much goodness, warned against evil, illumined the intellect, comforted the grieving, and buoyed up the spirit of man and woman like the Bible.

[38 : 45] In fact, one is even hard-pressed to name a document worthy of second place, since the scriptures outstrip all others by such a large margin. The truths found in this book have prompted multiplied millions to put their trust in its integrity, and like millions to devote their time and treasure to the propagating of those truths worldwide, and even more multiplied thousands to gladly surrender their own lives which they loved not unto death, rather than deny or disgrace the Savior revealed in the Bible.

This book provides the very ground for jurisprudence in much of the civilized world. It constitutes the north star for human morality.

It is bread for the spiritual beggar, and only it can fill that inexpressible hunger that all of us human beggars long for. Jeremiah the prophet put it so well when he said, Thy words were found, and I did eat them, and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.

The psalmist echoed similar sentiments when penning the 19th and said, The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.

The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.

[40 : 18] The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever. The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold, sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

Moreover, by them is thy servant warned, and in keeping of them there is great reward. Name any other writing in any other setting that even begins to compare with these dictates.

Words of this book are chiseled in stone on government buildings throughout the western world, indicating not only their importance, but their permanence.

The great documents birthing our nation make constant reference to the Bible's profound words of wisdom. While its unparalleled influence worldwide does not in itself prove that it came from God, it unmistakably points in that direction.

And if, I say if it is from God, would you not expect it to have this kind of unrivaled influence? Ought it not deserve such an honored and cherished display?

[41 : 31] This is Marv Wiseman for Christianity Clarified. The charge has often been made that the Bible was written by mere men, not God, as Christians have long insisted.

And clarification is surely in order here. It is true that men did write the Bible. What is not true is the charge that men authored the Bible.

And the difference is enormous. The scriptures themselves make it quite clear throughout both Old and New Testaments that the author of the Old Book is none other than God himself.

The human instruments, which numbered about forty, were the vehicles or penmen God used in the physical composition of its several separate books.

While God could have personally penned the whole book, he graciously employed people, which provided a human dimension to the Bible that it would not have had had God produced it alone.

[42 : 38] Most of these human writers never knew the other contributors. While some were contemporaries, there were nearly fifteen centuries that separated the first writers from the last writers.

And geographically, they composed what God inspired them to write on three different continents, Asia, Africa, and Europe, and in Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic languages.

Their personal backgrounds were extremely diverse. Included were generals, politicians, and prime ministers, fishermen, kings, a physician, a tax collector, a rabbi, a servant, a shepherd, a carpenter, a fruit picker, cattleman, a builder, priest, and a tent maker.

And during the fifteen hundred years these forty-plus penmen were writing, some were in the desert, some were in a palace, and some were in prison. Hitherto should you encounter someone trying to depreciate the Bible by claiming it was merely written by men, by all means, provide the clarification, explaining how men did write it, but God authored the Bible.

The process by which the author engaged man, the writer, is called divine inspiration. It literally means God inspired or breathed into man the capability to accurately write what God wanted written, while omitting what God did not want written.

[44 : 17] While doing so, God utilized the several literary, stylistic differences, the personal vocabulary, and life experiences of the writers.

The result is our Bible composed and penned by men, but authored and orchestrated by God himself, constituting a book of the divine and also human dimensions.

Written by men? Yes, and we are glad it was. We identify with its humanness. Authored by God? Yes, and we are glad it was. We submit to its authority.

For Christianity Clarified, this is Marv Wiseman in Springfield, Ohio. For those who have spent even a minimal amount of time examining the scriptures, the continuity of the Bible and its diversity are simply staggering.

It is as amazing in its diversity as it is in its continuity. In fact, one could hardly conceive of a more diverse makeup than that true of the biblical writers.

[45 : 34] Author Josh McDowell, in his book, Evidence That Demands a Verdict, recounts the multifaceted background of those God inspired to be the Bible's penman.

There were approximately forty in all, historically occupying as many generations, over a sixteen hundred year period. They consisted of Moses, a political leader trained in the universities of Egypt, Peter, the fisherman, Amos, a herdsman, Joshua, a military general, Nehemiah, a cupbearer to the

king of Persia, Daniel, the prime minister in the courts of Babylon, Luke, the physician, Solomon, philosopher and king, Matthew, the tax collector, Paul, the rabbi and tent maker, and many others, but also in different places.

Moses was in the wilderness, Jeremiah was in a dungeon, Daniel on a hillside and in a palace, Paul was inside prison walls and walking throughout Asia Minor and parts of Europe, Luke, the physician while traveling, John in exile on the Isle of Patmos, others in the rigors of a military campaign, and at diverse times, in times of war, in times of peace, from different moods, some writing the heights of joy, others writing from the depths of sorrow and despair, three continents, Asia, Africa, Europe, three languages, Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek, and the subject matter involving hundreds of controversial topics such as the origin of man and the universe, the nature of God, the nature of man, sin, and man's redemption.

Yet, in the midst of all of this great diversity, there is a continuity and a harmony that is simply inexplicable from any human perspective.

What shall we say to these things? While it's true, once again, not in and of itself does the amazing diversity and continuity of the Bible prove that it is God's Word.

[47 : 54] Yet, can anyone honestly deny which way it all points? Are these not solid, convincing indicators that something really supernatural is afoot here?

The evidence is cumulative and compelling. Josh McDowell called it evidence that demands a verdict, and he authored a book by that title.

We heartily recommend it. For Christianity Clarified, this is Marv Wiseman in Springfield, Ohio. The breadth or scope of the Bible's content could more easily be defined by what it excludes than what it includes.

And what can be said about what it includes? How about beginning with, in the beginning, and concluding with, not an ending, but an ongoing into eternity?

And what's in between? Absolutely everything. That's a very broad, inclusive scope, is it not?

[49 : 12] Christ himself personified the scope of human history and his role in it when he stated in Revelation 22, I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

From creation to culmination, it's all here in the book. From the incredible origin of the gene pool God built into our first parents, resulting in the billions of human population who have already lived and died, to the untold billions yet to come, complete with the future climax of the ages, the Bible tells it all.

Its scope could not be greater nor more grand. It is replete with tragedy and triumph, success and failure.

Every virtue and vice capable of humans is played out in someone's life there in the Bible. The depths of despair and the euphoria accompanying the very blessing and beneficence of God are sprinkled throughout the pages of both testaments.

There is hardly a human predicament not described somewhere in it. Commingled with it all is the unmistakable, gracious, and sometimes judgmental intervention of the God who began it all.

[50 : 41] And while the scope transverses the whole of human history, there is no mistaking the center of it all. That center is a person.

The Redeemer. Yeshua HaMashiach. Jesus the Messiah. What the Redeemer is all about is, of course, our redemption.

That's what the Redeemer does. He redeems. This is what the manger of Bethlehem is all about. It's what the cross of Calvary is all about. And it's what the empty tomb is all about as well.

It's all there in the book. Skillfully woven together while encompassing 1,500 years. Transpired on three different continents, penned by 40-plus writers.

No subject deemed important to mankind has been omitted. God himself has seen to it. How's that for a comprehensive scope?

[51 : 42] Well, it's true. The Bible doesn't tell us all we would like to know. But it does tell us all we need to know and all that's good for us to know.

God has seen to that also. An essential component of the doctrine of biblical inspiration is referred to as verbal inspiration, meaning the scriptures given by God are projected through man via words or word by word.

Thus, the use of the term verbal inspiration is employed. Precisely how God did this with 40-plus individual writers is not clear.

Some mistakenly believe God dictated word for word as an executive dictates a letter through his secretary, referred to as the verbal dictation theory.

If this is the methodology employed, then why utilize multiple writers? One would have been sufficient, or at least only one, during each segment of time.

[52 : 55] Yet we note obvious stylistic differences between the various writers, vocabulary choices and personality that surfaces in their written expressions.

These allow for a divinely ordained human element to be incorporated into the writing. Yet, God so guarded the process that the words from human vocabulary and personality entered into the text without error.

Verbal or word-for-word inerrancy is essential to the concept of divine inspiration, because it is of words that sentences and paragraphs are formed, leading to entire books or letters.

If the very words are not inspired of God, that which the words convey cannot be inspired of God. Words mean things.

They are either divine in their origin and meaning, or they are merely human. If human, they bear no more authority than what other humans may write.

[54 : 03] Only under the direction of God himself can they be regarded as inspired and thus authoritative. Throughout Scripture, the phrase, The word of the Lord came unto me, saying.

It was not one singular word, but the writer was saying, The message of the Lord came unto me, saying. It was not one singular word, but the writer was saying, The message of the Lord came unto me.

But of what does a message consist? Words. Each individual component being a single word, which when combined with other words in a specific order constitute a message.

If we are going to insist upon the inspiration of the Bible, which is essential to biblical Christianity, we must view the divine record as verbally inspired of God.

Anything less is no inspiration at all, which means no authority at all. A viable Christianity requires a verbally inspired Bible.

[55 : 14] It is the words inspired of God that provides us with a Bible inspired of God. Nothing less will suffice for a Bible to have come from God through man.

Amen. The subject of the inerrancy of Scripture has been hotly debated in Christian circles, particularly during the past century.

Christians have been all over the map on this issue. As the word inerrancy implies, it has to do with whether the Bible is without error, and is merely another way of asking whether the Bible is inspired of God.

Because if it is indeed so inspired, then it is axiomatic that it must be inerrant, lest we charge God with being an error-prone deity.

Viewing God as being subject to error is a contradiction in terms. It ought then to be intuitively obvious that a revelation God would provide of Himself and this world would be an accurate revelation in all it affirms.

[56 : 24] An error lurking in the Bible anywhere constitutes potential errors everywhere. Christ said the word of God cannot be broken in John's Gospel chapter 10, meaning God's word cannot be compromised or neutralized.

What mere man among us could say something is error and something else is not? Such would then make man the judge of Scripture rather than Scripture the judge of man.

The folly of declaring the Bible to contain the word of God, but not be the word of God, is to make man the arbiter of what is or is not God's word.

Apart from the doctrine of inerrancy, the Bible must necessarily surrender its authority. An unauthoritative Bible is of no value. The very most that could be ascribed to an errant Bible is that it contains portions that seem to be credible, but we really can't be certain.

A Bible that lacks inerrancy can afford no comfort and no direction, because its very words and the message they convey are at best possibly true, but also possibly untrue.

[57 : 43] Who wants to build their life or direction for it upon that? Who wants to build their life and afterlife upon what may or may not be true?

Thankfully, we have an inerrant Bible, one containing a message worthy of being trusted, one eminently qualified to convey truthful and accurate information, one upon which we may stake our very life and death.

Mankind desperately needs such a revelation. With but one life to live and no ability to do it over, one life to live and a need to know how best to invest it, only an accurate, inerrant revelation from a trustworthy God will suffice.

This is precisely what we enjoy in the inspired, inerrant Word of God. The Bible is a book such as man would not write if he could and could not write if he would.

For Christianity Clarified, this is Marv Wiseman. Why is it that Christians insist on verbal inspiration being so essential?

[59 : 06] It's because words mean things. Specific words express preciseness. A preciseness essential for conveying meaning without ambiguity.

Original words conveyed by the Spirit of God in the Hebrew, Old, and Greek New Testament utilized the human vocabulary of each writer. But you may be sure the human writer could not write whatever he saw fit.

His being inspired by the Holy Spirit as a select penman did not allow him to insert any word he wished from his own vocabulary. Were this the case, divine inspiration was not needed.

Yet it was this very inspiration that assured the authority and accuracy only God could provide. This is what makes the Bible God's Word and not man's.

Were it only man's Word, it comes only with man's authority. For the Bible to possess the necessary authority, it must have been generated from the authoritative source himself.

[60 : 12] Nothing less will suffice if it is to be recognized, honored, and obeyed as the very Word of the living God. In every case, and there are many, where the Bible's authority is either denied or questioned, the message it carries must of necessity be denied or questioned as well.

The end result is the same. Don't take it seriously. It doesn't really say that. And even if it should say that, it doesn't mean that.

This is precisely where we are in much of modern Christendom. This helps explain the recent neutralizing and marginalizing of Christianity so rampant in today's culture.

Hebrews 4 describes the Word of God as our only offensive weapon, and it is called alive and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword. If verbal inspiration of the Bible is surrendered, you have just laid down your arms.

You are weaponless and powerless. With the erosion of the authority of the Bible, there is an accompanying decrease in the influence Christians have upon our increasingly secular society.

[61 : 28] The most tragic aspect of all this is not in the rejection of the Bible by unbelievers, which should not surprise us, but it is the rejection of some claiming themselves to be Christians.

Their position is likened to a saboteur who seeks to blend in with the enemy while contributing to their defeat from within, all the while wearing a benign smile, some of them from behind podiums as they lecture their liberalism in prominent seminaries.

According to them, the Bible thusly says nothing objective, nor does it demand anything from anyone. It is then reduced to a bland, impotent collection of interesting but unauthoritative literature.

The Bible deserves and demands better. Much better. On previous sessions of Christianity Clarified, we have repeatedly described the issue of authority as critical to biblical Christianity.

This means absolutely everything pertaining to the Christian faith rises or falls on the Bible's authority. The claim of biblical inspiration views the Bible as having come directly from God as he utilized human penmen.

[62 : 56] This means that the scriptures are without error, since he who inspired the writers is a God of perfection. This is referred to as the inerrancy of scripture, which insists the Bible is mistake-proof.

It is also plenary inspired, meaning it is fully or completely inspired of God. All throughout its parts, Old and New Testament, in their entirety.

No part of the Bible is somehow more the word of God than another. While we may read and find certain portions or verses to be more inspiring or more interesting than other parts, they are not nonetheless more inspired than other parts.

Nothing in the Bible is more the word of God or less so than another part. This is what plenary inspiration refers to.

The thoroughness of divine inspiration gives equal authority to all of scripture in all its parts. Thus, it is called plenary, full, or entire inspiration.

[64 : 18] For instance, most Christians would likely consider the New Testament above the Old as regards its authority. It isn't. The Old is of equal authority to the New.

Many misunderstand this concept simply because they see the New Testament as a fulfillment or completion of the Old. And it is. However, neither is more or less the word of God than the other. When Paul wrote Timothy, all scripture was inspired of God, he spoke of the Old Testament, since the New Testament, and the Old Testament. He spoke of the Old Testament. He spoke of the Old Testament.

This means that an obscure verse in Leviticus is as much God's word as is John 3.16. While the latter may be viewed as more strategic and significant in its implications, yet it is not more inspired than the obscure verse in Leviticus.

Any writing inspired or originated of God cannot be more so or less so. It is not a little inspired or a lot inspired.

[65 : 31] If it is inspired, it is the word of God carrying all of the authority of God, period. Such inspiration is essential if we are to have an authoritative record that God has revealed to us.

Simply knowing and understanding the basic structure and composition of the Bible will go a long way toward gaining a real working knowledge and appreciation of it.

To be sure, the Bible is not simply a formidable book. It is the formidable book in every way one views it. It is content, scope, purpose, authorship, etc.

And by virtue of its very size, it can appear intimidating, even overwhelming. So, if you ever despair of mastering the Bible, welcome aboard.

You needn't entertain fantasies about mastering the Bible. You won't. And no one ever has. In fact, those who know it best would be the last to claim they have mastered it.

[66 : 46] Their only concern is that they will have been mastered by the book. So, at the outset, let's consider a few simple facts about the Bible that ought to be common knowledge among all who regard the Bible seriously.

If you are able to appropriate these important items, they will not only serve you well in your reading of the Bible, but you will also constitute an elite core of believers who know these things.

The Bible's two main divisions consist of what is commonly, albeit mistakenly, called the Old and New Testaments. And while not wanting to quibble over details or split hairs, yet, in striving for accuracy, we need to make a correction.

A better term for designating the main divisions of Scripture is the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. The Old Covenant is first referred to not as the Old, but simply as the Covenant by Moses in Exodus 24.

At that time, there was no Old or New Covenant, only the Covenant. The Old Covenant did not become such until after the New arrived, ushered in by Jesus the Messiah, as made quite clear in Hebrews 8-10.

[68 : 13] It was the arrival of the New Covenant that made the original covenant designated as the Old. Let me illustrate. There have been what we have labeled two world wars, World War I and World War II.

But World War I was never designated such until after World War II was underway. Prior to World War II, what we now call World War I was never called that.

It was called the Great War. Little did we know that World War II would outstrip the so-called Great War in blood, treasure, duration, and every other way.

So it was the arrival of World War II that caused the Great War to be renamed as World War I. And so it was in the Bible. The Old became the Old when Christ died on the cross in fulfilling what He said the night of His betrayal.

This cup is the New Covenant in my blood. You've just heard another session of Christianity Clarified with Marv Wiseman. The New Covenant Our ongoing examination of the subjects surrounding the authority and inspiration of the Bible will cover vital issues with which every believer should be familiar.

[69 : 48] Sessions 41 through 60 will complete our investigation of the many important truths supporting the veracity of the Scriptures. Admittedly, this will be far from a thorough consideration of this bedrock subject.

Our desire is to merely give you a greater appreciation of some of the great truths that have driven the believers in Christ from the very first. Everything about Christianity, its past, present, and future,

is linked to this subject of the Bible.

All we will have to say in whatever future sessions there are of Christianity Clarified will stem from and be based upon this reality, the truth and authority of the Word of God.

Please join us for What Lies Ahead. For Christianity Clarified, this is Marv Wiseman thanking you for listening. What Lies Ahead