

THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST AND THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

By
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The supreme attributes of Jesus Christ, the perfect Son of God who knew no sin, offers all mankind the calm assurance that He alone deserves the authority bestowed upon Him by God the Father. The Triune God worked in concert as creator of the universe being the Originator, Designer, and the Executor of all that exists.¹ God's transcendent exclusivity of implementing His Master Plan at the moment of the first tick of time – merely spoken into existence – is subject to no other authority. As Lewis Sperry Chafer writes in *Systematic Theology*, because of God's "perfect trustworthiness, perfect wisdom, perfect purpose, infinite power, and infinite love," thankfulness that He cannot act apart from who He is should offer perfect peace to all who believe.² God has revealed Himself to mankind through creation, through the absolute authority of His Sacred Scriptures, and through His only begotten Son.

God the Father grants all authority to God the Son and directs the Holy Spirit.³ Christ the Son prayed earnestly to the Father while on earth accomplishing the work of His Father for His glory that all might believe as they witnessed the fulfillment of Sacred Scriptures. The disciples were instructed by Jesus to pray to the Father just as He did, and to wait expectantly for the answers to be revealed because of His supreme authority and power (John 16:23).⁴

¹ Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology, Volumes 7&8*, Grand Rapids, Kregel Publications, pg. 27

² Ibid, pg. 28.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

Christ's claim that "All power (authority) is given unto Me both in heaven and in earth" speaks that the Father alone has granted Him this power (Matthew 28:18; I Corinthians 15:25-28).

The exclusive truth of John 5:26-27 explains, "For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself; and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man". Only God can grant all authority and judgment.⁵

The co-equal, co-existence of three personalities within One Essence knew no beginning and knows no end. The resurrected Christ spoken of by Isaiah (53) and King David (Psalm 22) is the One to whom "...every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord for the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:11).

Albeit that all authority rests in Christ Jesus, the idea that theologians openly admit that they do not know for certain that God is who He says He is in the Word of God; that there are no absolutes today; that questions arise over the bodily resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth; as well as a multiplicity of other questionable theological debates, Christians would do well to acknowledge that doubt itself is sin: missing the mark. Jesus said, "...unless you believe that I am He, you shall die in your sins" (John 8: 24). To "miss the mark" of seeing truth in the Sacred Scriptures and deciding that readers cannot take the meaning literally is nothing short of what Satan did with Eve by asking, "Yea, hath God said... ?" (Genesis 3:1).

Doubting that Jesus has all power and all authority shakes the very foundation of the individual and leads to weakness and confusion in churches throughout the world. Double-minded professors in leading biblical institutions and compromising pastors of mega-churches are themselves every whit as confused as lost souls on Skid Row if they do not hold firmly to the

⁵ Ibid.

Apostolic teachings of the absolute truth. Countless Believers have willingly suffered severe persecution in order to protect the truth of the Sacred Scriptures from loss and to tell others of the Good News by humbling themselves even unto death (Hebrews 11:36-38).

Dr. Bob Wilkin spoke at the Fifteenth Annual Pre-Trib Study Group December 5, 2006, on “Post Modernism and Its Impact upon Theological Education.” He stated that in many colleges, universities, and theological seminaries that post modern agnosticism rules. For example, at the University of Denver, Carl Raschke, a Harvard graduate, teaches that *a rational faith is not faith at all; rather, faith is simply having a passion for God.*⁶ The bible tells us in Matthew 28:16-17 that when the eleven disciples went to Galilee after hearing the reports of eye witnesses of Christ’s bodily resurrection, they actually saw Him, worshiped Him, and yet some doubted. Jesus spoke to them and assured them that He had “...all authority in heaven and on earth “(18). Is it any wonder that doubt has survived among those like Raschke who have a passion for God yet refuse to take Him at His Word?

The writer of Hebrews writes “...faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (11:1). The authority of the Scriptures must take precedence over what mere men may believe and teach. It was reported that in his book, *The Next Reformation*, Rascheke claims “...the Bible contains errors;” and, “...it is not logically consistent.”⁷ As a student of the Word, it is vital to begin with the instruction of II Timothy 3:16 that, “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” Peter also instructs: “But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no

⁶ Notes, Dr. Bob Wilkin, “*Post Modernism and its Impact upon Theological Education*”, taken from Fifteenth Annual Pre-Trib Study Group, December 5, 2006.

⁷ Ibid.

prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God” (II Peter 1:20-21).

The Apostle Paul was moved upon by the Holy Spirit to write to the Corinthian Church and share these God-breathed words: “Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word [message] of reconciliation” (II Corinthians 5:18-19). Dr. Wilken pointed out in his dissertation that James K. A. Smith of Calvin College in his book, *Who’s Afraid of Postmodernism?*, states, “We can’t know God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself....The best we can do is – believe...we know nothing for sure...”⁸ If one declines to believe the authority of the Holy Scriptures, he will alter truth and teach others to do the same.

In *A General Introduction to the Bible*, Norman Geisler and William Nix remind the reader that the church is *built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets* (Ephesians 2:20).

⁹ The apostles were anointed spokesmen for God who received the word of the Lord Jesus that they would *receive power when the Holy Spirit came upon them* and they would be His *witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and throughout the world* (Acts 1:8). Only a short time before this was spoken by Jesus, some of the disciples/apostles doubted. It was only after the ascension of Christ when they tarried in the upper room, gave themselves to the study of the Sacred Scriptures, and earnestly prayed - that the Almighty fulfilled His promise. The time clock of God struck “Pentecost” and the Holy Spirit of God came from heaven upon them like tongues of fire - filling them with the power of the Third Person of the Triune God (Acts 2).

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the BIBLE* (Chicago, Moody Press, 1986),
pg. 212.

What happens to men and women of today who listen to God speak to them in the quietness of the night when He says, “Be still and know that I am God...” (Psalm 46:10)? They choose to believe or they choose to doubt. Those who choose to believe, go on with God - believing in the authority of Christ and the authority of His Word and teaching others to take God at His Word.

Josh McDowell and Bart Larson have co-authored a book entitled “Jesus A Biblical Defense of His Deity. Chapter four is entitled “Jesus Christ Possesses the Authority of God.”¹⁰ They point out that Christ’s authority is revealed in His willingness to reveal the authority of God within Himself by allowing others to worship (proskuneo) Him.¹¹ This is seen when the man was healed in John 9:38 and proclaimed, “Lord, I believe!” and he fell down and worshiped (past tense of proskuneo) Jesus.¹² His claim that He would be put to death yet He would resurrect after three days and three nights was in itself a claim of authority (Luke 24:46). Those with whom He spoke recognized that this man from Galilee spoke with authority (John 7:46).

The canon of Scripture in both the Old and New Testaments clearly states that only Jehovah God is worthy of worship (Exodus 34:14; Deut. 6:13; Psalm 2:11; Matthew 4:10; Luke 4:8). Although Satan longed for Jesus to worship him as stated in Matthew 4:8 & 9, the Son of God replied, “...It is written, ‘YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.’” The accounts in the bible of appearances of angels/messengers to mankind, were accompanied by the refusal to receive worship. Yet, the fallen cherubim in charge of the angelic choir asked to be worshiped by the very Son of God who held the right to be worshiped. Satan offered Christ everything that He had already created in the first place

¹⁰ Josh McDowell and Bart Larson, *Jesus A Biblical Defense of His Deity*, (San Bernadino, Here & Life Publishers, Inc.), (http://www.greatcom.org/resources/jesus_and_his_deity/chap04/default.htm)

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

(Genesis 1 & 2; Hebrews 1:2). Isaiah prophesied hundreds of years before the encounter that God would not give His glory to another (42:8); Satan should have memorized this Scripture along with those he quoted during the time of Jesus' testing - directed by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 4:1).

When the disciples realized the Man was Jesus walking on the water toward them on the Sea of Galilee, they worshiped Him (Matthew 14:33). The woman who came to Jesus at the home of Simon the leper in Bethany with a vial of costly perfume kept in an alabaster box, took the oil and anointed His head as He sat at the table; this act of worship has been remembered down through the ages (Matthew 26:6-13). After His resurrection, the disciples knelt at His feet and worshiped (Matthew 28:9). Jesus who fulfilled all Scripture to the letter concerning His conception, life, ministry, death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession never "missed the mark" and received their worship (Genesis 3:15; Galatians 4:4; Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:27), birth (Luke 2:7; Rev. 12:5; Isaiah 53; 61:1-3; Psalm 22).

The writer of Hebrews instructs the angels of God to worship (*proskuneo*) Jesus.¹³ John the Revelator saw Jesus the Lamb and God the Father being worshiped by myriads of myriads in heaven (5:11-14). Paul gives the plan for Christian worship of Jesus for the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2: 10-11). Jesus was the focus of worship when on the earth because He offered love in a world filled with hate, hope when all other hope was failing, and faith in the perfect attributes of God; as a result, His followers who worshiped Him in spirit and in truth - adored Him (Matthew 28:9).

¹³ Ibid.

The One true God/ the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is worshiped in the New Testament churches around the world.¹⁴ This is a testimony to the unchurched/ secular and pagan religious communities of every nation. Jesus Christ is Lord (I Corinthians 12:3). He is the head of the Church (Ephesians 5:33) of Jews and Gentiles who by faith have believed in Him and placed their faith in the resurrected Christ who revealed His authority to overcome death, Hell, and the grave; thereby, giving hope to all (Hebrews 2:9). While comforting Martha after the death of Lazarus, Jesus said, "...I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this (John 11:25-26)?" May there be a resounding "Yes!" among all believers. One day we shall see the glory of God (John 11:40).

Jesus was fully God and fully man as He lived thirty-three years upon the earth. This hypostatic union can be defined as "the second person, the preincarnate Christ came and took to Himself a human nature and remains forever undiminished Deity and true humanity united in one person forever."¹⁵ Mary held and nursed him as a baby; looked frantically for him at the age of twelve, and beheld Him hanging on the cross as He died for the sins of the world. As a man, Jesus did not take on Deity; rather, as God the Son, He took on a human body.¹⁶ The result of the nature of God and the nature of man dwelling together is the theanthropic Person who rightfully has all authority in heaven and in earth and is worshiped by creation.¹⁷ Christ will forever be the God-man.¹⁸ In this hypostatic union, Paul Enns points out that *Christ has two*

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, (Chicago, Moody Press, 1989), pg. 227.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

distinct natures: humanity and deity; the two natures do not intermingle; and He remains forever one Person.¹⁹

As the Redeemer of all mankind, Christ the man died as sinful humanity's substitute; Christ, the Son of God, bowed His head, suffered and died, and shed His blood, thereby providing redemption for the sins of the world: past, present, and future.²⁰ As a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek, Jesus the Man served as a human Priest while on the earth; as the risen Christ, He is our everlasting Great High Priest serving as Mediator between God the Father and man (Hebrews 5:6-10).²¹ To paraphrase Paul Enns, he explains Philippians 2:7 as this: Jesus Christ willingly *emptied Himself* by adding an additional nature with human limitations to *Himself in the form of a bond-servant, being made in the likeness of men, appearing as a man, and humbling Himself by becoming obedient unto death.*²² Christ has always been God and will forever be God.²³

He proved this by claiming His power and authority to resurrect from the dead.²⁴ While walking in Jerusalem beside the temple of Solomon, reconstructed by King Herod, He said, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19-21). He was referring to His own body rather than the physical structure known throughout the Roman Empire. In speaking of His own life, John 10:18 says, "I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again." Only God can make these claims and fulfill such supernatural promises.

Jesus Christ asked Peter, "Who do men say that I am?" Peter replied, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Jesus rightfully claimed the names, titles, and attributes of

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid, pg. 228.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid, pg. 229.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ McDowell and Larson, pg. 2 of notes.

God.²⁵ He predicted His death, the time of His resurrection, and spoke of things known only by God. When His authority was questioned by the chief priests of the temple, He asked them a simple question: Was John's baptism from heaven or from men? He promised to tell them by what authority He was doing the things of which they spoke if they would but answer truthfully. They said they did not know. Therefore, Jesus withheld telling them the source of His authority (Matthew 23:23-27).

The present generation is still asking the same question even after the closed canon of the bible has been written and made available to modern man. Rather than read and believe; agnostics prefer to search from one authority to another and languish in doubt and unbelief.

The described prophecies of the Old Testament Jesus fulfilled in His first coming number 300; concerning His second coming, 500. All were prophesied hundreds of years before the birth of Christ; and fulfilled to the finest detail in Jesus Christ, our Messiah.²⁶

At least two mathematicians have calculated the likelihood of one man fulfilling multiple prophecies. George Heron of France said for 40, the odds would be "1 in 10 to the power of 157;" Dr. Peter S. Ruckman says, "...for 60 prophecies to be fulfilled by a man claiming to be the Son of God, who died on a "tree" on Calvary, and rose the third day, the odds are astronomical: ...one out of ten to the 895th power: ...one over a one followed by 895 zeros."²⁷

Throughout the pages of the Old Testament, it is evident that the Holy Spirit moved upon men to write the original inspired Scriptures as God-breathed life into the Living Word - telling of the coming of the Messiah, the Christ (in Greek). Therefore, there are actually thousands of prophecies fulfilled by Christ and the Church – revealing the authority of the Sacred Scriptures.²⁸

²⁵ McDowell and Larson, pg. 2 of notes.

²⁶ <http://biblia.com/jesusbible/prophecies.htm>

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

Those who were waiting for the Messiah studied the Scriptures and appreciated the authority of Moses and the prophets of old. When Jesus invited His disciples to follow Him, Philip found Nathaniel and said, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote – Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph (John 1:45).”

To those who doubted His authority, Jesus claimed, “If you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for He wrote about Me (John 5:46).” Jesus gave Scripture authority when appearing in His glorified, resurrected body to the two people of Emmaus: “And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself (Luke 24:27).” He further proclaimed, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: everything must be fulfilled that is written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms (Luke 24:44).”

The ancestors of Jesus of Nazareth were recorded by Moses from Genesis 3:15 after the fall of man when Jehovah God spoke of the seed of a woman; and again in Galatians 4:4, Paul told of the birth of God’s Son, born under the Law. John records in Revelation 12:5, “And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to his throne.”

Abraham was promised by God that he would become a great and powerful nation and that all the nations on earth would be blessed through him (Genesis 12:3). He was told specifically that his son would be born of Sarah, his wife, and that the son’s name would be Isaac (Genesis 17:19). The covenant was then passed on to Isaac (Genesis 27:24). As prophesied, Jacob, the son of Isaac, received the birthright of first-born son from his “seconds-older” twin brother Esau (Genesis 25:23-26). The Abrahamic Covenant was extended to Jacob by God Himself and his name was changed to Israel in Genesis 35:9-12. Moses wrote in Numbers

24:17: “I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel...” The descendants of Abraham down through the ages to Jesus Christ are recorded in Matthew 1:1-16; in reverse order, in Luke 3:23-38.

Another prophecy says that the Messiah will come from the tribe of Judah in Genesis 49:10, “The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between His feet, until He comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is His.” The Messiah will be an heir to the throne of King David, according to Isaiah (9:7) who recorded, “Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over His kingdom establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.” The prophecy of Luke 1:32-33 will be completely fulfilled when the Lord returns with the saints and His kingdom will not end.

The Prophet Micah foretold that the ruler over Israel would be born in Bethlehem (5:2); Luke 2:4-7 and Matthew 2:1 confirm it hundreds of years later. Isaiah said that Immanuel would be born of a virgin (7:14) and fulfilled by Mary of Nazareth in Galilee, according to Luke 1:26-35.

The time of Messiah’s birth was given in Daniel 9:25 which says, “Know and understand this: From the issuing of the **decree** to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be “seven sevens” and sixty-two “sevens,” It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble.” Beth Moore in her ladies’ Bible Study of Daniel explains that the Jewish calendar is based on a 360 lunar year and was prophesied to begin when a decree by a ruler was made to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, Israel. The twentieth year of King Artaxerxes (his Greek name; found in Esther 1:1) sets the time clock with the date of the month

of Nisan / March 5, 444 B.C. by issuing a decree to do just that in Nehemiah 2:1.²⁹ The study of Scriptures reveals that 49 years are set aside to rebuild Jerusalem with the specifications of streets and a trench.³⁰ The next 434 years would last until the Anointed One or “Masiyah”, pronounced “Messiah,” would come. A 483 year period on the Jewish Lunar calendar would equal 173,880 days. March 5, 444 B.C. plus 173,880 days equals March 30, 33 A.D.: the triumphal entry of Jesus on the back of a donkey riding through the streets of Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives (Luke 19:28-40).³¹ Jesus foresaw what would happen in 70A.D and wept over the city (vs. 41-44) because, “...they did not recognize the time of [their] visitation” and He knew what awaited this generation in 70A.D. when the Romans would attempt to destroy them.”

Another **decree** was made by Caesar Augustus when Quirinius was governor of Syria that everyone in the known land would be taxed in the hometown of ancestry (Luke 2:1-3). Joseph of the lineage of King David, engaged to Mary, had been told by the angel of the Lord in a dream that she was carrying *a Son, conceived of the Holy Spirit, who would save His people from their sins*” (Matthew 1:19-25).

The prophecy of Hosea 11:1 was fulfilled in Matthew 2:13-14’s account. Hosea wrote, “When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son.” Matthew recorded the story of Joseph being warned by an angel in a dream to “...Arise and take the Child and His mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy Him.” Joseph recognized the authority of the angel of the Lord and immediately obeyed.

²⁹ Beth Moore, *Daniel, Lives of Integrity Words of Prophecy*, (Nashville, LifeWay Press, 2006), pg. 175.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

The prophecy of the slaughter of innocent children of Jeremiah 31:15 was fulfilled by King Herod who ordered all the baby boys two years old and under to be killed because he feared the loss of his throne to a newborn king, based on reports of the magi (Matthew 2:16-18). One wonders how many baby girls were also slaughtered in the rampage of the blood bath. Dr. Dave Olander of Tyndale Theological Seminary points out to students that this is the true picture of the Christmas story: parents packing up all of their belongings on the back of a donkey under the cover of darkness seeking another nation for safety, fleeing from soldiers wielding bloodstained swords, and listening to cries of anguish that cannot be quieted.³²

The Old Testament Scriptures hold details that appear as puzzle pieces neatly being fitted together for the picture of the Messiah that will bring peace to a troubled world. Another piece of prophecy concerning the long awaited One is found in Judges 13:5 which points not only to Samson (24) but to the Messiah that the child (the Christ child) will be a Nazarite unto God. After Herod's death, the angel visited Joseph again to let him know that it would be safe to return to Nazareth, their hometown, "...that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, 'He shall be called a Nazarene' (Matthew 2:23)."

The day of the triumphal entry of Israel's King dawned. Those who had held to the Scriptures and had studied Daniel, as he in turn had studied Jeremiah, Nehemiah, and the other prophets, probably knew the time had arrived - or else the day was near. Zechariah 9:9 was written hundreds of years before this day: "Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey." Isaiah's claim also pointed to this very day (62:11). Matthew 21:1-11 records that a young colt was borrowed for this fulfillment. People

³² Class notes from Dr. Dave Olander's classes.

were drawn to the streets waving palm branches, as was done before kings, with shouts of praise saying, “Hosanna!” “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!” “Blessed is the King of Israel!” Those who stood by afterwards began to ask questions about who this “King of Israel” actually was? The King of Glory was identified as being the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee.

Ezekiel 44:1-2 foretold that the outer gate of the sanctuary would be shut after the Lord God of Israel has entered by it. The Muslims sealed the gate of the Old City during the rule of Suleiman.³³ It is called “The Golden Gate” or “The Gate of Mercy” today and sealed with stones and cement with a Muslim cemetery placed in front of it in an attempt to keep a Jewish Messiah from passing through it.³⁴ They evidently do not know that the Jewish Messiah passed through it days before His crucifixion...and resurrection from the dead. One day soon, the ascended Christ will descend from heaven as the Prince of Peace and stand again on the Mount of Olives overlooking the eastern gate (Zechariah 14:4).

The authority of the Scriptures is born out in the many prophecies of the Man – Jesus Christ. He was betrayed by one whom He called friend for a mere thirty pieces of silver. This was prophesied in Psalm 41:9; Mark 14:10; Zechariah 11:12-13; and fulfilled in Matthew 26:15; 27:3-10.³⁵ The prophet Zechariah prophesied that the blood money of thirty pieces of silver would be returned to a potter’s field. This was fulfilled in Matthew 27:6-7.³⁶ Hundreds of years before Judas was born, King David penned the words of Psalm 109:7-8 foretelling that the

³³ <http://focusonjerusalem.com/easterngateinprophecy.html>

³⁴ <http://biblia.com/jesusbible/prophecies.htm>

³⁵ Ibid, pg. 3 of notes.

³⁶ Ibid.

betrayer's position would be filled by another. This was fulfilled as the apostles waited in the upper room before Pentecost came in Acts 1:18-20.³⁷

The prophecies and fulfillment concerning the Messiah of being falsely accused, being silent to His accusers, being spit upon and struck, being despised and rejected, having his clothes divided through gambling, and many finite details of His crucifixion, point to an Authoritative Source revealing a master plan known only by Him.³⁸ The Resurrected Savior of all mankind revealed His authority to those who believed by ascending in bodily form before those who gazed upon Him in Bethany (Luke 24:50-51). The angel of heaven spoke of the authority of Christ by revealing His second coming to earth to those who listened and believed (Acts 1:11).

When the Church was birthed on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ, the inspiration of God upon His Word was spoken through Peter – filled with the Holy Spirit – with ultimate passion (Acts 2). The Holy Spirit moved upon the Apostles to write the sacred message God gave to each of them; thus, the Christian Church was given a text book based upon the Person of the Old Testament and in complete agreement of the Law and the prophets from the first century A.D.³⁹

F. F. Bruce states that the early church found that the book of the Old Testament became *a new book* about Christ as they read and found that He truly had fulfilled the prophecies recorded in the pages of the Jewish history.⁴⁰

In so doing, the early Christians simple revealed what Christ had done Himself while on earth. As Jesus taught the people during the three years of His ministry in the Galilee region, He always referred to the Sacred Scriptures of Moses, King David, and the prophets by often stating,

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ F.F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture*, (Downers Grove, IVP Academic, 1988), pg. 53.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

“It is written...”⁴¹ After the death of Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the book became alive to believers of the reality of the Living Word of God because He taught them – among a host of other lessons - the sum of the law; in that, they were to love God and to love others even as they love themselves (Deut. 6:5; 19:18; Matthew 22:37-40).

Many different people of Old Testament history were identified with Christ by those who studied the Scriptures.⁴² Bruce reminds the reader that Christ was *the prophet like Moses* (Deuteronomy 18:15-19); He was the *Son of David* (II Samuel 7:12-16); Isaiah referred to Him as the *servant of Yahweh* (42:1); King David referred to Him as *the righteous sufferer* (Psalm 22:1); and, *the stricken shepherd* (Zechariah 13:7).⁴³ The writers such as Matthew were moved upon by the Holy Spirit to recall how Jesus used the lessons of the Old Testament and the references to His name to give the timeless message a contemporary Christian lesson as though that was the intent all along. The very words that Jesus spoke were equally as God-breathed as those of Moses and the prophets.

Peter’s own sermon on the Day of Pentecost was based on the prophecies of the prophet Joel (2:28-32), the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God (2:23), King David (Psalm 22; 16:8-11), and Ezekiel (36:22); as well as other Old Testament passages. Philip was able to use the words of Isaiah 53 as they were being read by the Ethiopian eunuch in order to introduce him to Christ (Acts 8:35).⁴⁴

The responsibility of the Apostles in sharing the truth of God’s Word to the generation of Jews and Gentiles who witnessed *the Word* becoming *flesh and dwelling among them* - only to be snuffed out; yet, resurrected - was indeed a challenge (John 1: 14; 19:30; 20:19). The early

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., pg. 56.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

church believed in the imminent return of Jesus Christ and looked forward to His coming because the Lord had taught them the signs of the times (Matthew 24). However, He withheld *when* all of the things written in His Word will culminate in His majestic return to catch His Bride away for the glory of the Father. Believers who await the coming of the Holy God of Israel – with gladness of heart, will be rewarded by Christ Himself (Hebrews 6:11).

Simeon, Anna, and John the Baptist watched for the Messiah’s first coming through the writings of the prophets of old, and testified that Jesus is the Christ (Luke 2:25-35; 2:36-38; Matthew 3:1-15). The generation heard God speak from heaven saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased” (Matthew 3:17). The absence of the multitude of Believers one day soon will speak volumes of the authority of Christ and the authority of Scripture to those left behind (I Thessalonians 4:16-17). People who refuse to accept the authenticity of the Logos; which is the divine Word of God found in John 1:1-14), prove themselves to be irrational in their thinking.⁴⁵ By refusing to accept the canon of Sacred Scripture, made up of the blending of the Old and New Testaments, unbelievers remain ignorant of the fullness of Christ revealed by His Word. Those who suppress the truth neither thank God, nor give Him glory (Romans 1: 21).

The Apostle Paul taught the Christians in Rome that he was not ashamed of the Good News of Jesus Christ because the power of God to save people from their sins is revealed (1:16). He warned that men are without excuse because, “...that which is known about God is evident within them, for God made it evident...since the creation of the world, His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen...” (1:19-20). Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

⁴⁵ Ibid., pg. 169.

In conclusion, Billy Graham and his association have made their tracts available called, “Steps to Peace with God.” Time after time they have been used by believers witnessing to unbelievers. The basic message is that people have inherited the sin nature of Adam and are separated from Holy God in their lost state. The authoritative Word of God is used to reveal their need of a Savior and of His willingness to save them by dying on the cross, shedding His blood, covering sin once and for all, then resurrecting from the dead three days later. Through faith, children and adults – drawn by the Holy Spirit - place their faith in Jesus Christ in order to cross over from being separated from God to being accepted by His grace. The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit and His work of regeneration begin immediately within the new believer; the fruit of the Spirit is the overwhelming evidence that all authority rests in Christ and in His infallible Word.

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taken from Fifteenth Annual Pre-trib Study Group, December 5, 2006.