

## 28. The Book of Psalms 19:7-9

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### ***Is God Real? (Part 5)***

a message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier  
(11-30-25)

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Find this week's sermon audio and video message [HERE](#).

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This morning, we find ourselves in Psalm 19 which we have used to launch us into a series I'm calling, "**Is God Real?**" or to put it another way—"*How can we know God exists?*"

Psalm 19 is one of the greatest passages in the Bible to answer that question.

As we said last time, God is a supernatural Being which means He exists outside or beyond the *natural* realm and therefore, the only way for us to know anything about Him is if He reveals Himself to us—which is exactly what He did!

Now when it comes to *how* God revealed Himself to mankind—He gave us two kinds of revelations about Himself: **I. Natural (General)** and **II. Special**.

**I. Natural revelation is God's revelation of Himself in Creation (Psalm 19:1-6).**

**II. Special revelation is God's revelation of Himself in Scripture. (Psalm 19:7-14)**

Now on to our second revelation:

#### **II. Special Revelation**

Special revelation is the personal, specific revelation of God to us of Himself through Scripture.

#### **Psalm 19:7–9 (NKJV)**

<sup>7</sup> The law of the Lord *is* perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the Lord *is* sure, making wise the simple;

<sup>8</sup> The statutes of the Lord *are* right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the Lord *is* pure, enlightening the eyes; <sup>9</sup> The fear of the Lord *is* clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the Lord *are* true *and* righteous altogether.

These are expressing different aspects or facets of God's Word. So last week, we started looking at:

#### **A. The Origin of the Word of God**

#### **Genesis 1:1–3 (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup> The earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. <sup>3</sup> **Then God said...**

Within the first few verses of the Bible, we learn that there is a God, that He is a powerful, intelligent Being who created everything and that He speaks—that He communicates.

Later we learn He desires to communicate with *us* and did so through His spoken Word—much of which was written down and became His Holy Scriptures (*‘writings’* i.e., the Bible).

## **B. The Uniqueness of the Word of God**

### **1. The Bible is Unique in that it was Inspired by God**

#### **2 Timothy 3:16–17 (NKJV)**

<sup>16</sup> All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God [*‘God-breathed’*], and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

As Christians we believe that the Bible is *God-breathed* and *inerrant*. Inerrancy simply means that the Bible does not have any errors of fact or any statements that contradict in the original manuscripts.

All apparent contradictions in Scripture are just that “*apparent*” and not *actual*—which logically flows from the idea that “*all Scripture is God-breathed*” (given by God).

If all Scripture has been given by God, and God is perfect and incapable of error—then it only stands to reason that the Scriptures are absolutely true, error free and perfect as God Himself is perfect. (Psalm 19:7)

### **2. The Bible is Unique in its Harmony and Continuity**

- a) The Bible is a composite of 66 books written by 40 different authors from all walks of life***
- b) It was written over a 1600-year period (1500 B.C—100 A.D.)***
- c) It was written on 3 different continents: Asia, Africa and Europe.***
- d) It was written in 3 different languages: Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek.***
- e) It was written at different times: David wrote in times of war and adversity, Solomon in times of peace and prosperity. It was written in times of freedom and in times of slavery.***
- f) It was written during different moods: Some writing from the heights of joy while others wrote from the depths of sorrow and despair.***
- g) Its authors wrote on dozens of controversial subjects: A controversial subject is one that would create opposing opinions when brought up and discussed.***

The biblical writers wrote on literally dozens of controversial subjects with perfect harmony and continuity from beginning to the end (Genesis through Revelation).

**The Bible may have been written through 40 different penmen  
—but it had one Author—the Holy Spirit!**

### **3. The Bible is Unique in its Translation and Circulation**

When the printing press was invented in 1455 by Johannes Gutenberg—the Bible was the first major book to be printed. From that time the Bible has been printed more, circulated more, translated into more languages and read by more people than any other book in history.

The Cambridge History, which is a series of books, says that there is no book that even comes close to the circulation of the Bible—it has no equal. In fact, you could take #2, 3, 4, and 5 and add them together and it wouldn't equal the circulation of the Bible—and 2 of those 4 are *about* the Bible—one being Pilgrim's Progress.

This doesn't mean that in a certain month or week some other book hasn't sold more copies than the Bible—but year in and year out the Bible has consistently sold more copies than any other book by far.

The Bible has been translated into more languages than any other book ever written in the history of the world—close to 2300 languages.

The Bible is also the most quoted book in the history of the world, and it is, by far, the most influential book ever written.

#### **4. The Bible is Unique in its Survival through Time**

##### ***a) In its Manuscript Survival***

*What is a manuscript?* A manuscript is any surviving handwritten copy of an ancient document that predates the invention of the printing press. Before the printing press the Bible (along with all other books) had to be copied by hand to be reproduced.

The Bible as well as other pieces of classical literature was written on material that would perish. They didn't have paper, so they used to write on papyrus reeds that grew near the Nile River in Egypt and on parchment (animal skins) and clay tablets—but primarily on papyrus.

Now these things would last maybe a hundred years or so and then they would rot away, especially in a damp climate, and so, they would have to be constantly re-copied to preserve them through time.

Many of the ancient manuscripts have perished simply because nobody bothered to re-copy them.

The Bible was meticulously copied by Jewish scribes and Christian monks who dedicated their entire lives to carefully copying the text of the Scriptures into new copies that were accurate and trustworthy.

When we compare the number of manuscripts of the Bible with any other piece of classical literature—the Bible is absolutely unique.

Today there has survived 24,000 partial and complete ancient handwritten manuscript copies of the New Testament not to mention the thousands (20,000?) of manuscript copies that exist of the Old Testament.

The closest piece of literature to the Bible is the Iliad by Homer with 643 manuscripts.

When it comes to survival through time the Bible is absolutely unique—there is no close second.

Dr. J. Harold Greenly says,

*“...the number of manuscripts in the New Testament is overwhelmingly greater than those of any other work of ancient literature.”*

Another expert, Bernard Ramm speaks of the reverence and painstaking way with which the Jewish scribes copied the Old Testament Scriptures, he said,

*“The Jews preserved it (the Scriptures) as no other manuscript has ever been preserved....they kept tabs on every letter, syllable, word and paragraph. They had special classes of men within their culture whose sole duty was to preserve and transmit these documents with practically perfect fidelity—these were the scribes, lawyers and massorettes. Who ever counted the letters, syllables and words of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero or Seneca?”*

*How accurately did these Jewish scribes copy the Old Testament Scriptures?*

The Old Testament was completed around 400 BC—the closest manuscript that we had before 1947 dated to 916 A.D. that’s a 1300-year interval.

*Could we really trust that a manuscript that dated 1300 years after the Old Testament was finished was trustworthy?*

Well, those fears were put to rest starting in 1947 with the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls—

One historian relates what happened—

*“The Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered when a Bedouin shepherd boy named Mohammed, who was looking for a stray goat, discovered several large clay pots containing ancient scrolls on the floor of a cave above Wadi Qumran. After some delay, several scholars were shown the manuscripts by dealers in antiquities. When it was determined that these manuscripts were extremely old, scholars began their search in earnest.”*

From 1947 to 1967 the caves in the area were searched and 40,000 fragments from 11 caves were found from which 500 books have been reconstructed. They had been hidden in these caves by a group of Jews known as the Essenes who lived in the Qumran community just north and west of the Dead Sea.

Many of these manuscripts were extra-biblical (not in the Bible) but they did find every book of the Old Testament except the book of Esther which apparently wasn’t available to them. Among these manuscripts they found a complete scroll of Isaiah dating back to 125 B.C. which was 1000 years earlier than the one we previously had which dated back to 916 A.D.

When scholars compared these two manuscripts, they discovered that they were practically identical except for some minor variations in the spelling of some of the words.

→ As I said, 24,000 partial and complete handwritten copies of the New Testament have survived dating back as far as 130 A.D.

When you put that next to the time the New Testament was finished being written—about 100 A.D. that is an interval of only 30 years!

The closest work of antiquity to the New Testament is Homer’s Iliad, written about 900 B.C. and the earliest copy we have is 400 B.C.—and interval of 500 years.

Sir Frederick Kenyon, director and principle librarian of the British Museum, second to none in authority when it comes to issuing statements on ancient manuscripts said,

*“The interval then between the dates of the original composition and the earliest extant (surviving manuscript copy) becomes so small as to be in fact negligible; and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the authenticity and general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established.”*

Once again, the Bible is unique in its survival through time in the way of:

**a) Manuscripts**

**b) In various translations of the New Testament into other languages**

This also is unique to the New Testament when compared with other works of ancient literature.

The New Testament was translated into Syriac, Latin, Coptic (Egyptian) and others—all together we have about 25,000 manuscripts of the New Testament translated into various languages other than Greek, the language it was written in.

**c) In the quotes from the early church fathers**

The Encyclopedia Britannica published an interesting fact—it said you could take all the manuscripts that we have of the New Testament and every Bible in the world and burn them all, and you could still reconstruct the entire New Testament from the quotes of the church fathers (church leaders who lived from 100—350 A.D.)—all but 11 verses!

Men like Justin Martyr, Eusebius, Tertullian, Polycarp etc. These men in their commentaries on the Bible, in their correspondence with one another and in their letters to different churches quoted the New Testament more than 86,000 times.

And their writings have survived to this day—in fact, you can buy a 37 or so volume set of books which contain these writings and read them for yourself.

**d) Unique in the way of lectionaries**

These were portions of the New Testament the early church used as Sunday school lessons—we have thousands and thousands of these! All of these sources of New Testament documents have allowed biblical scholars and textual critics to go back and verify that the New Testament we have today is the same one that the early church had 2000 years ago.

Geisler and Nix in their General Introduction to the Bible say,

*“The Bible that has come down to us through history when looked at in the light of any discrepancies or variations from one manuscript to another computes to a text that is 98.33% pure.”* (Much of the variations are simply changes in the spelling of words over time)

This is unparalleled in literary circles—that in itself is a miracle!

Sir Frederick Kenyon—

*"One word of warning already referred to must be emphasized in conclusion—no fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith rests on a disputed reading." Then he concludes by saying—"It is reassuring at the end to find that the general result of all these discoveries (manuscripts) and all this study is to strengthen the proof of the authenticity of the Scriptures, and our conviction that we have in our hands, in substantial integrity, the veritable Word of God."*

So far, we've seen that the Bible is unique:

1. In that it was inspired by God.
2. In its harmony and continuity.
3. In its translation and circulation.
4. In its survival through time.
5. **The Bible is Unique in its Survival through Persecution**

No book in history has been hated more, has been banned, burned, and persecuted more than the Bible.

**a) The Edict of Emperor Diocletian**

In 303 A.D. The Roman Emperor Diocletian made an edict that the Bible was to be destroyed from off the face of the earth—anyone caught with a Bible was to be tortured and killed.

The next Emperor, Constantine issued another edict that the Roman government pay to have 50 copies of the Scriptures produced and used in the churches of Constantinople!

**b) The Prediction of Voltaire**

Voltaire the famous French atheist who died in 1778 made an infamous prediction—he predicted that within 100 years of his death the Bible would disappear from the Earth.

Ironically, 50 years after his death the Geneva Bible Society bought his house and used his own printing press to produce thousands of Bibles for distribution—

**1 Peter 1:24-25 (NKJV)**

<sup>24</sup> ...*"All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away,* <sup>25</sup> *But the word of the LORD endures forever..."*

**Matthew 24:35 (NKJV)**

<sup>35</sup> "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

H.L.Hastings—

*"Infidels for eighteen hundred years have been refuting and overthrowing this Book and yet it stands today as solid as a rock. It's circulation increases and it is more loved and cherished and read today than ever before. Infidels with all their assaults make about as much impression on this book as a man with a tack hammer would*

*on the Pyramids of Egypt. When the French monarch proposed the persecution of the Christians in his domain, an old statesman and warrior said to him, 'Sire, the Church of God is an anvil that has worn out many hammers.' So the hammers of infidels have been pecking away at this Book for ages, but the hammers are worn out and the anvil still endures. If this Book had not been the Book of God, men would have destroyed it long ago. Emperors and popes, kings and priests, princes and rulers have all tried their hand at it; they die and the Book still lives."*

So far, under the main point of **'Special Revelation'** (the Word of God) we've looked at:

**A. The Origin of the Word of God**

**B. The Uniqueness of the Word of God**

**C. The Transforming Power of the Word of God**

One of the most dramatic examples of the Bible's divine ability to transform lives involved the famous mutiny on the Bounty.

"Most of us have heard the story of the Mutiny on the Bounty, but few of us have heard how the Bible played a very vital part in that historical event.

The Bounty was a British ship which set sail from England in 1787, bound for the South Seas. The idea was that those on board would spend some time among the islands, transplanting fruit-bearing and food-bearing trees, and doing other things to make some of the islands more habitable.

After ten months of voyage, the Bounty arrived safely at the island of Tahiti, and for six months the officers and the crew gave themselves to the duties placed upon them by their government.

When the special task was completed, however, and the order came to embark again, the sailors rebelled. They had formed strong attachments for the native girls, and the climate and the ease of the South Sea island life was much to their liking. The result was mutiny on the Bounty, and the sailors placed Captain Bligh and a few loyal men adrift in an open boat. Captain Bligh, in an almost miraculous fashion, survived the ordeal, was rescued, and eventually arrived home in London to tell his story. An expedition was launched to punish the mutineers, and in due time fourteen of them were captured and paid the penalty under British law.

But nine of the men had gone to another distant island called Pitcairn Island. There they formed a colony. Perhaps there has never been a more degraded and debauched social life than that of that colony. They learned to distill whiskey from a native plant, and the whiskey, as usual, along with other habits, led to their ruin.

Disease and murder took the lives of all the native men and all but one of the white men named Alexander Smith. He found himself the only man on an island, surrounded by a crowd of women and half-breed children. Alexander Smith found a Bible among the possessions of a dead sailor.

The Book was new to him. He had never read it before. He sat down and read it through. He believed it and he began to appropriate it. He wanted others to share in the benefits of this book, so he taught classes to the women and the children, as he read to them and taught them the Scriptures.

In 1808, 20 years after the mutiny on the Bounty, a ship from Boston discovered the community on Pitcairn Island. When the captain of the ship returned to America he took news of the only mutineer to survive and of what he called, "The most perfect Christian society that he had ever seen."

A miniature Utopia was discovered. The people were living in decency, prosperity, harmony, and peace. There was nothing of crime, disease, immorality, insanity, or illiteracy. How was it accomplished? By the reading, the believing, and the appropriating of the truth of the Word of God!"

**The Bible has power to transform lives if it is read and applied.**

Now it's true that all of this doesn't prove the Bible is God's Word, but it certainly proves it is unique when placed next to any other piece of literature in the history of the world!

Any thinking person who is searching for the truth would be a fool not to consider a book with these credentials!

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If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower— please, reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

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