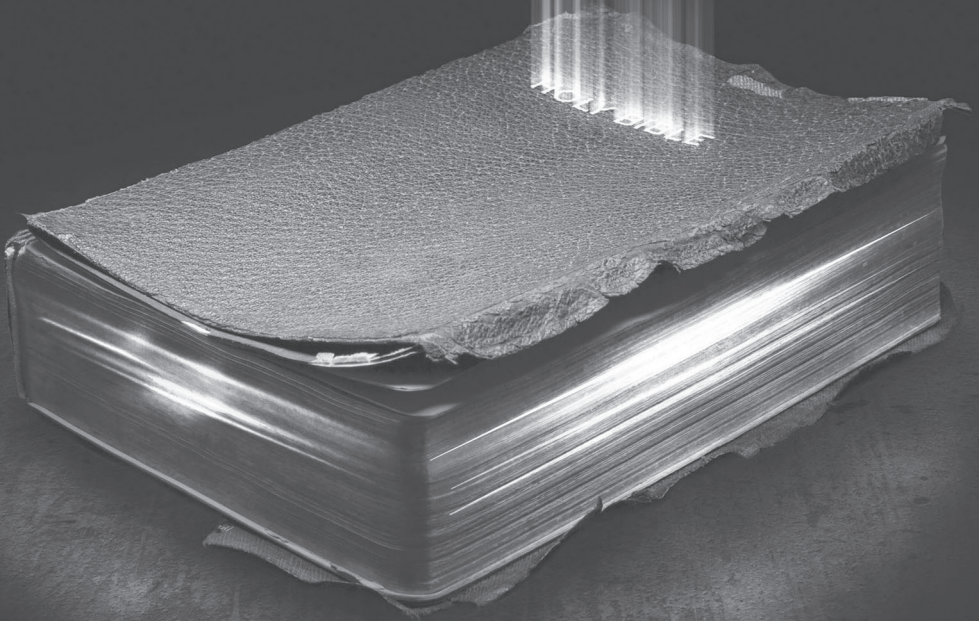


THE WORD

2015

MINISTERIAL SYMPOSIUM



NINE THEOLOGICAL ESSAYS
ON THE WORD OF GOD



APOSTOLIC ASSEMBLY OF THE FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS

THE WORD

2015 Ministerial Symposium

Nine theological essays on the Word of God.

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**APOSTOLIC ASSEMBLY
OF THE FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS**

DEPARTMENT OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

PRESENTATION

Joyfully we present to the bishops, pastors and members of the Apostolic Assembly the book **“2015 Ministerial Symposium: Nine theological essays on the Word of God.”**

The 2014 General Convention agreed upon holding a symposium so as to study the need of creating a doctrinal principle on our faith in God’s Word.



“A symposium is an activity in which a select group of experts in a determined field of knowledge present diverse aspects or problems on a central theme before an audience during a specific time.”

With this aforementioned definition, the General Board of Directors approved to host nine Apostolic pastors to present essays on the Word of God. The central theme examined was the place of God’s Word in our church, and in the faith of believers for a little over three thousand years since the beginnings of the people of Israel up to the Apostolic Assembly in the 21st Century.

Each essay’s edition and translation has been the contributor’s responsibility; we have saved resources in this manner.

Our Bishop President John Fortino appointed a commission to analyze the nine essays presented. This commission will prepare a proposed-initiative for a new Apostolic doctrinal principle, and it will be presented at the 2016 General Convention.

The Christian Education Department accepted to release this book as its own publication. This book will become course material at the International Apostolic Bible College. Our sincere gratitude to all the writers and to all the participants of the Apostolic Songwriting Challenge. Throughout the Ministerial Symposium the ten finalist hymns were debuted (five in English and five in Spanish).

Our prayers are for this book to be a blessing to all our pastors and congregation in the United States and in all the nations.

Bishop Ismael Martín del Campo,
Organizing Committee President.
2015 Ministerial Symposium

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HOLY BIBLE
REFERENCES
COMMON PRAYER

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Pastor Eduardo H. Iglesias,
M. A. Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico.

Throughout the history of humanity, questions have surged concerning the meaning of life. Why are we here and what is our purpose? These questions have been followed by: is there a God and how can we know if this is true? Questions are at the very heart and being of who we as humans are. Only by questioning are our doubts, fears and concerns addressed. It is at this stage of interrogation that we truly open ourselves to receive a revelation of purpose. It is that purpose for meaning that drives us to an understanding that creation and humanity are not accidents, a causal effect of primordial sludge, or the end product and result of years of evolution. Rather, what happens in each person is what happened to the people of Israel in the wilderness after their exodus from Egypt; God revealed

Himself. Since the beginning, God spoke to His creation and made known his will to individuals from time to time. But it wasn't until He heard the cry of His people prompting Him to send Moses as the deliverer, that He made himself known to a group of people (Exodus 3:7). It is during this self-revelation that God makes known His desire to interact with a people through a covenant that would establish not only duties and responsibilities but rights and privileges as well (Deut. 7). For the author, Michael A. Fishbane, Judaism is founded on the belief of "Covenantal Monotheism" as found in this same chapter of Deuteronomy. God had declared Himself to be the only God and as such would enter into covenant with these Hebrews as his chosen people.¹ This covenant or "alliance" as defined by Hans Kung, is said to be obligatory and unbreakable as both parties entered into it willingly.²

The Word of God as we know it, didn't exist in the times of the exodus because it was being written as it was happening by those who experienced these events. It is through this documentation of events that we have in written format God's desire to create a people separated from the physical and spiritual contaminants of this world. His desire was for His chosen people to serve and love Him above everything else and love each other as a true representation of what He had intended for humanity all along.

¹ Michael Fishbane, *Judaism: Revelation and Traditions*, 1 edition (San Francisco: HarperOne, 1987).

² Hans Kung, *El Judaismo: Pasado, Presente, Futuro*, 1st. ed. (Madrid: Editorial Trotta, 2007), 55.

What we have today as the Holy Scriptures are attributed to the different time periods in the history of humanity and their interaction with God. In order to better understand the background of this written word of God, we must look at how it came to be through a meticulous study of what Professor Frederick J. Rae explains is based on four elements. These elements are 1) History, 2) Geography, 3) Religious Development and 4) Context.

History is divided into eight parts. The first three include Prehistoric, Patriarchal and Mosaic, which encompass the periods of tradition and legend, the founding fathers and the time when God revealed Himself to His people. The remaining five periods include the Israelite's conquest of the Promised Land, the kingdom of David and his son Solomon and their interactions with other peoples followed by the separation and creation of the Northern and Southern Kingdom, the exile in Babylon and finally the Restoration of the Israelites to Jerusalem.³

The second element of geography is seen as important in understanding the stories behind each story. A broader picture is painted when knowing why Israel and the surrounding nations are called the Bible Land. The terrain of many Bible stories is relevant in describing the situation and condition of the peoples that inhabited those lands.

³ F. J. Rae, "How to Study the Bible," in *The Abingdon Bible Commentary*, Frederick Carl Eiselen, Edwin Lewis, and David G. Downey, eds., (The Abingdon Press, 1929) don Press, 1929), 5.

The importance of geography is seen in the conquest and division of Canaan among the 12 tribes.

Religious development encompasses the idea of revelation that is slowly advancing until it comes to full fruition. This gradual increase is a human condition, as God cannot grow more as God. Rather, humanity's understanding of God increases and grows at the rate of God's allowing a peoples understanding of him to grow "For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little" (Isaiah 28:10).

The final element is that of context, which includes knowing the circumstances surrounding each event in the Bible. Context takes into account the moral condition of the people at the given time within that story. Context also includes an understanding of other things such as literary and cultural that points to what is being said immediately and what the Bible as a whole says as well.⁴ It is in understanding these elements that we are able to study the Holy Scriptures and better understand what these say to us today. This paper is an attempt, although not exhaustive, to address the importance of the Holy Scriptures in the Old Testament for arriving at Biblical truth. Unless otherwise noted, the Bible passages are from the King James Version of 1611.

⁴ Ibid., 6-7.

From the moment that God chose Moses, He also appointed his servant to begin the process of writing down all of God's actions and desires concerning His creation. Among those first writings came the law of God or Decalogue (Ten Commandments) that stipulated and governed interactions concerning God and people. The underpinnings of these laws were based on love; love of God and neighbor. The importance of the Law is seen when Israel became God's people through covenant. God offered his protection, blessings, and provisions to Israel contingent on their keeping the stipulations found within the covenant. Merriam-Webster defines law as:

a (1) : a binding custom or practice of a community : a rule of conduct or action prescribed or formally recognized as binding or enforced by a controlling authority. (2) : the whole body of such customs, practices, or rules. (3) : common law, b (1) : the control brought about by the existence or enforcement of such law (2) : the action of laws considered as a means of redressing wrongs; also : litigation (3) : the agency of or an agent of established law c : a rule or order that it is advisable or obligatory to observe d : something compatible with or enforceable by established law e : control, authority.⁵

When used as a proper noun as “the Revelation of the will of God set forth in the Old Testament” Law is capitalized. Being that the Law was given to the Hebrews, it becomes necessary to understand its importance among the people of God.

⁵ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/law>. accessed October 20, 2015.

The Law is comprised of the first 5 books written by Moses. These books are also known as the Pentateuch or The Torah.

The names associated with these books, which we have come to know in our common language are not actual translations from the Hebrew texts but are rather the central themes of each book as adopted by the oldest Greek translation of the Old Testament known as the Septuagint. The first 5 books are:⁶

1. Genesis: is named due to the first words found “In the beginning.”
2. Exodus: comes from the first line mentioned as “The names.”
3. Leviticus: as “And He called.”
4. Numbers: comes from the central theme “In the wilderness.”
5. Deuteronomy: the first few words become “The words.”⁷

The Torah comes from the Hebrew root: Yara, to instruct and to teach.⁸ This law was given to Moses by God on Mount Sinai and delivered in written format.

⁶ <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/septuagint>. accessed October 25, 2015.

⁷ <http://www.jewfaq.org/torah.htm>. Accessed October 25, 2015.

⁸ <http://torahclub.ffoz.org/info/what-is-torah.html>. accessed October 25, 2015.

The Ten Commandment as found in Exodus 20:2-17.

- I. “I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”
- II. “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.”
- III. “Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.”
- IV. “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.”

- V. “Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.”
- VI. “Thou shalt not kill.”
- VII. “Thou shalt not commit adultery.”
- VIII. “Thou shalt not steal.”
- IX. “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.”
- X. “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour’s.”

When the 10 commandments were given they comprised what Jews know as the “written Law”. Based upon these ten written commandments, the wise sages interpreted what each law meant and expanded on the explanation of those commands that were not written by Moses. This interpretation came to be known as the “oral Law” thus resulting in the idea that two Torahs were given: one was the Written Law and the other the Oral Law. For Jews the Law and its interpretation play a vital role in their daily lives. This daily living was to be a separation from the neighboring peoples and a call to live for God and serve him in reverence while maintaining their own distinct ways as stipulated by both oral and written law. The seriousness of having a religious life is seen through the

strict code of ethical conduct and rituals adhered to by those following Mosaic Law. The 10 commandments are composed of 4 laws that speak about one's relationship with God, while the last 6 commandments address how one is to love one's neighbors. When Jesus said, "upon these two hang all the law and the prophets" he was referring to the underlying framework upon which the Law was established: love (Matt. 22:40).

The Purpose of Torah (law) was to guide the people through legal applications that would regulate their daily interactions within their personal lives, their neighbors and God. We see that throughout history many civilizations have adapted certain forms of this law that in its simplest form sets parameters for conduct and mutual care of all those living within the confines of this same civilization.

Within Judaism, the importance of Torah is seen in how it is structured and named as the most important authority second only to God being the most high authority then followed in third place by the interpretations of the sages. It was these sages that interpreted the Law and created what one Rabbi calls 365 negative commandments and 248 positive commandments given to Moses to correspond to the 365 days of the solar calendar and the 248 body parts of a man for a total of 613 commandments.⁹ These commandments are given with one singular goal; to study and practice one's duty.

⁹ Jacob Neusner, *Judaism: The Basics* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 80.

What is otherwise known as the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) is comprised of three divisions: The Torah, the Prophets (Nevi'im) which is made up of four books of the former Prophets and 14 books of the Latter Prophet, and the writings (Kethuvim), which are further separated into history, wisdom, and poetry books and psalms.¹⁰ It is interesting to note that Daniel is not considered one of the prophets but rather is included among the Writings. This is due in part to how the sages have interpreted Daniel's visions as divine inspirations and not as a prophet sees dreams.¹¹ These three sections make up the whole of the Hebrew Scriptures known by the acronym T/N/K or TaNaK.¹²

Between the Hebrew Scriptures and the Christian Scriptures exists a slight difference; the order of the books are not the same as well as the number of books registered in each text. The 24 books in the Hebrew Scriptures differ in number from the 39 books found in Christian Scriptures due to the manner in which each belief defines differently what a book is. Some books are considered as several by Christians while these same books may only constitute a singular digit for an observant of Judaism.¹³

¹⁰ The Jewish Publication Society, *The Jewish Bible: Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures--The New JPS Translation According to the Traditional Hebrew Text: Torah * Nevi'im * Kethuvim*, 1st ed. (Jewish Publication Society of America, 1985).

¹¹ http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/1735365/jewish/Why-Isnt-the-Book-of-Daniel-Part-of-the-Prophets.htm. accessed October 20, 2015

¹² Neusner, *Judaism: The Basics*, 13.

¹³ <http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/TaNaK>. Accessed October 20, 2015.

It is interesting to note that what some might see as overbearing and encroaching upon their lives as Law, is really meant to protect each from the other. St. Paul systematically defines why the law was given in the first place and makes mentions of the “temporal framework” that gave way to Christ as fulfillment of the law (Romans 10:4). As an expert in legal affairs, St. Paul presents in Galatians 3:19-25 the revelation of the function and power that the Law exerted as a “pedagogue” or tutor to lead God’s people on the paths of knowing what was right and wrong.

“¹⁹Why, then, was the law given at all? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was given through angels and entrusted to a mediator.²⁰ A mediator, however, implies more than one party; but God is one.²¹ Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law.²² But Scripture has locked up everything under the control of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.²³ Before the coming of this faith, we were held in custody under the law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed.²⁴ So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith.²⁵ Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian” (NIV).

What does the Torah (law) teach about itself?

The Law offers innumerable riches to those who keep it as found in the following verses:

- “To offer burnt offerings unto the LORD upon the altar of the burnt offering continually morning and evening, and to do according to all that is written in the law of the LORD, which he commanded Israel” (1Ch 16:40).
- “Only the LORD give thee wisdom and understanding, and give thee charge concerning Israel, that thou mayest keep the law of the LORD thy God” (1Ch 22:12).
- “For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments” (Ezr 7:10).
- “And they stood up in their place, and read in the book of the law of the LORD their God one fourth part of the day; and another fourth part they confessed, and worshipped the LORD their God” (Ne 9:3).
- “But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night” (Psalms 1:2).
- “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple” (Ps 19:7).

- “Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD” (Ps 119:1).
- Those who choose not to follow the Law of the Lord seal their own fate as well.
- “But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD God of Israel with all his heart: for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin” (2Ki 10:31).
- “And it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself, he forsook the law of the LORD, and all Israel with him” (2Ch 12:1).
- “Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel” (Isa 5:24).
- “That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD” (Isa 30:9).
- “How do ye say, We are wise, and the law of the LORD is with us? Lo, certainly in vain made he it; the pen of the scribes is in vain” (Jer 8:8).

- “Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have despised the law of the LORD, and have not kept his commandments, and their lies caused them to err, after the which their fathers have walked” (Am 2:4).

What do the prophets (Nevi'im) teach about the Holy Scriptures?

The Seven Major Prophets as found in the Hebrew text:

Joshua	1 & 2 Kings	Ezekiel
Judges	Isaiah	
1 & 2 Samuel	Jeremiah	

The Twelve Minor Prophets as found in the Hebrew text:

Hosea	Jonah	Zephaniah
Joel	Micah	Haggai
Amos	Nahum	Zechariah
Obadiah	Habakkuk	Malachi

The prophets gave warnings to the people of God that instructed them in living rightly before all. Hebrews testifies to the fact that God had spoken through the prophets of

old (Heb. 1:1). In the Bible the prophets were called many things and identified as being the Lord's spokesperson. The true prophet is:

1. A man of God (1 Samuel 2:27).
2. A servant and messenger of the Lord (Isaiah 42:19).
3. Called a seer (Isaiah 30:10).
4. A man of the Spirit (Hosea 9:7).
5. A watchman for the people (Ezekiel 3:17).

Prophets were to speak only what God had placed in their mouths as His message to the people. The office of the prophet was an important one as such for the Israelites because of the direct line of contact with their God.

- “For the Lord God does nothing without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets (Amos 3:7 [ESV]). “For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21 [ESV]).
- God speaking through Hosea: “I spoke to the prophets; it was I who multiplied visions, and through the prophets gave parables” (Hosea 12:10 [ESV]).

- “Which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures” (Romans 1:2 [ESV]).
- “As he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old” (Luke 1:70 [ESV]).
- “And he said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place” (Revelation 22:6 [ESV]).

After the resurrection, Jesus appeared to two travelers on the road to Emmaus. Having expressed their doubts aloud about how their hope had been placed in this Jesus whom many thought was the Messiah, these two disciples were confronted by this same Jesus whom they supposed to be dead. Many times by habit, one reads the Holy Scriptures without direction and without much interest. Some would say to read the Bible daily is a habit that needs to be put into practice, but to read without being intentional only amounts to fulfilling a quota. There is neither knowledge nor wisdom gained in this exercise when done in a careless fashion. The case in point is what Jesus said to these two disciples. “Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:25-27).

What did the prophets say of Jesus? And why would anything said be of importance? The following passages point to the circumstances that surrounded the birth, life, death and resurrection of the Messiah.¹⁴

Genesis gives details concerning the coming Messiah birth.

- 3:15 Born of the seed of a woman.
- 12:3 Descendant of Abraham
- 28:14 Descendant of Isaac and Jacob

Isaac becomes a type and shadow of Jesus as the sacrificial offering.

Exodus

- In chapter 12: Jesus as the Messiah is the Passover Lamb.
- In chapter 16: Jesus as the Messiah is the Manna that came from heaven.
- In chapter 17: Jesus as the Messiah is the rock that Moses struck.

¹⁴ For more information on the prophecies told and fulfilled, visit: <http://www.messiahrevealed.org/everlasting-life.html>. accessed October 30, 2015.

Leviticus

- In chapter 1-7 and 16 Jesus is our High Priest.
- 16:7-9 Jesus is our scapegoat.

Numbers

- 24:17 The coming Messiah would be a King.
- 21:8-9 The bronze serpent is a type and shadow of Jesus crucified and lifted up.

Deuteronomy

- 32:43 Prophetically the Messiah would be worshipped by angels.

Joshua

- 5:13-15 Joshua is a type and shadow of what the Messiah would be as one that leads us into the Promised Land and as a savior.

Judges

- The Messiah is typified as the righteous Judge.

Ruth

- 4:12-17 the Messiah would be a descendent of Boaz and Ruth the Moabite.
- 2:1 The kinsman redeemer is a type and shadow of Jesus, the one who buys back the rights and properties lost.

1 and 2 Samuel

- 1 Sam. 2:10 the Messiah would be exalted by God.
- 2 Sam 7:12-16 The Messiah is descended from King David.

1 and 2 Kings

- The Messiah is the Wisdom of Solomon.
- Elisha is a type and shadow of the miracles performed by the Messiah.

1 and 2 Chronicles

- 1 Chronicles 5:2 The Messiah's lineage comes from the tribe of Judah.

- 2 Chronicles 9:22 Solomon is a type and shadow of the wisdom of Jesus.

Ezra

- 4: Ezra is a type and shadow of the Messiah as the re-builder of not only the temple but of our lives.

Nehemiah

- Nehemiah is a type and shadow of the Messiah as the one who rebuilds the walls of protection.

Esther

- Mordecai is a type and shadow of the Messiah as a protector of the people.

Job

- Job is a type and shadow of the Messiah, through the unjust sufferings of the righteous and the great rewards of faithfulness.

Psalms

- 2:7 The Messiah is foretold to be the Son of God.
- 16: 8-10 The Messiah would resurrect.
- 23: 1-6 The Lord is our good Shepherd.

The Messiah would be:

- Despised and put to death (Psalms 22:6-8).
- Hated (Psalms 69:4).
- Would sit at the right hand of God (Psalms 110:1).
- Would be a high priest after the order of Melchizedek (Psalms 110:4).
- Rejected of the Jews (Psalms 118:22).

Proverbs

- 8:22-23 The Messiah would be from everlasting to everlasting
- 8:22 The wisdom of God
- 30: 4 The son of God

Song of Solomon

- The Messiah is both the Lover and Bridegroom.

Isaiah

The Messiah is:

- 7:14 Born of a virgin, called Immanuel.
- 9:6 is both God and man.
- 11:1-2 Contains within Himself the 7 spirits of God.
- 35:5-6 Has the power to heal.
- 40:3 is preceded by a forerunner.
- 42:6 is the light to the Gentiles.
- 49:7 despised by the nation of Jews.
- 50:6 is bruised for our iniquity.
- 53:10 becomes that sacrifice for sin but shall prosper in the end.

Jeremiah and Lamentations

- 23:5 The Messiah is the righteous Branch
- 23:6 The Messiah is our righteousness

Ezekiel

- 34:23-24 Predicted that the Messiah would be a descendant of David.

Daniel

- 2:34 The stone was a type and shadow of Christ that destroys the world's kingdoms.
- 3:23 Is revealed as the fourth man in the fiery furnace.
- 7:13-14 Saw the Son of Man reigning forever.
- 9:26 Saw the death of the Messiah.

Hosea

- The prophet becomes a type and shadow of the Messiah as the bridegroom to an adulteress and in a symbolic appeal of love seeks her out to bring her home.

Joel

- 2:28-32 The Messiah would pour out His Spirit upon all humanity.
- 2:32 The prophet saw salvation available to all through the Messiah.

Amos

- 8:9 Predicted that darkness would fall at the death of Messiah.

Obadiah

- The underlying message in this book: the Lord is The Mighty Savior.

Jonah

- Is a type and shadow of Jesus the Messiah in the earth for only 3 days.

Micah

- Predicted that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem of Judea and would be the Eternal One.

Nahum

- Typifies the Messiah as the avenger of God's elect.

Habakkuk

- 3:3 The Messiah would return in all his glory.

Zephaniah

- The Messiah is typified as the Restorer of the Remnant.

Haggai

- 2:6-9 The Messiah is foretold as visiting the Second Temple.

Zechariah

- 6:12-13 The Messiah would fill the office of both Priest and of King
- 9:9 The Messiah would ride upon a donkey into Jerusalem
- 11:12-13 The Messiah would be God
- 12:10 Predicted that the House of Jerusalem would look upon Him whom they had pierced.

Malachi

- 3:1 The Messiah would appear at the temple.

- 4:5 One who would come in the spirit of Elijah would precede the Messiah.

Jesus reminded these two disciples that everything written in the Old Testament had to do with Him and how His birth, life, death and resurrection had demonstrated that He truly was the Messiah. “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:21 [KJV]).

Those prophecies cover every aspect of humanity from the rise and fall of entire nations and kings and kingdoms, events that would affect both Israel and the world, future inventions, the increase of science, the falling away of God’s people, the need for a savior, future events, and the coming Kingdom of God and the New Jerusalem. But the underlying message given by the prophets of old was the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Herein is presented without a shadow of a doubt who we as Apostolics believe Jesus Christ to be; the embodiment of Scriptures and the Fulfillment of prophecy as God incarnate, now sitting on his throne as the One true God. Without these prophecies inspired by the Holy Spirit, Christianity would be in the dark concerning the coming Christ and the hour of His visitation. That is why the Apostolic Assembly holds to the conviction 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 perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Since God is the inspirer of these writings, there is great confidence in knowing that what we hold today in our hands as the Bible has endured throughout millennia and has come to us in the same power as when it was spoken.

What do the Writings (Kethuvim) teach about the Bible?

Book of Psalms	Ruth	Daniel
Proverbs	Lamentations	Ezra-Nehemiah
Job	Ecclesiastes	1 & 2 Chronicles
Song of Solomon	Esther	

The Writings within these books speak of the hardships and difficulty associated with life. These are stories based on suffering, loss, trials, and difficulties and include advice, morals and ways of living in accordance with the will of God. The purpose for inclusion of these stories is made clear by what St. Paul stated in scripture:

- “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Romans 15:4).

- “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come” (1Co. 10:11).

A detailed overview of what these twelve books contain will confirm this thought.¹⁵

- Psalms is a compilation of poetry and prose concerning human emotions and concerns about their place in life. Psalms is translated as praise and informs its readers on the purpose and content within its pages.
- Proverbs are King Solomon’s wise counsel and advice in ethical living.
- Job is the story that brings to the fore the concepts surrounding the suffering of the just. Many thoughts have developed due to this book that speak of Divine providence and justice and the existence of evil.
- Song of Solomon is another of King Solomon’s writings, which describe the love of God toward his people portrayed in the love between a man and woman.
- Ruth is the story of a Moabite woman who loses everything in a foreign land and returns with her mother-in-law Naomi as a proselyte to Judaism. In her new-

¹⁵

<http://ohr.edu/judaism/survey/survey3.htm>. Accessed October 25, 2015.

found land, she marries Boaz who became a kinsman redeemer to her family and together bare a son who would count among his descendants King David.

- Lamentations is written by the prophet Jeremiah as an eyewitness account of the destruction of Jerusalem, the Temple and the exile.
- Ecclesiastes is King Solomon's expression the meaningless of a life dedicated to earthly possessions. In this book, the author expresses that the meaning of life is found in the fear of God and in doing his will.
- Esther is the developing story of a young maid who would be queen. The difficulties faced by her and her people are chronicled here and serve as a testament of the power of God to deliver His people through that of intercession and trust in Him.
- Daniel is credited with laying the foundation for the study of Torah (law). In his book, he writes of his experiences as a Hebrew held captive in a strange land.
- Ezra is credited with writing the book of Nehemiah as well and covers subject matter that includes the return of the Israelites to Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the Second Temple. Ezra is also responsible for establishing the public weekly reading of Torah.

- 1 & 2 Chronicles is a historical account of daily events and encompasses the times between the Creation and the building of the Second Temple.

What language and words are used to express belief in the Holy Scriptures?

The writings teach that God's Law is perfect, trustworthy, right, radiant, pure, enduring, firm and righteous (Psalms 19:7-9). The writings also teach that the Bible is true since God is neither man nor the son of man and is incapable of lying (Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29). The words used by these inspired writers are descriptive in the sense that they speak of the nature and attributes of God. Not only do the key adjectives and nouns speak of God but also of His Word interchangeably.

The Word of God is authoritative:

- “Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, all my words that I shall speak unto thee receive in thine heart, and hear with thine ears. And go, get thee to them of the captivity, unto the children of thy people, and speak unto them, and tell them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear” (Eze. 3:10-11).
- “I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear” (Isaiah 43:23).

The Word of God is Eternal:

- “Your word, LORD, IS ETERNAL; it stands firm in the heavens” (Psalms 119:89 [NIV]).
- “All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal” (Psalms 119: 160 [NIV]).

The Word of God is infallible:

- “So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it” (Isaiah 55:11 [NIV]).

The Word of God is inerrant:

- “Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar” (Prov. 30:5-6).

The Word of God is profitable:

- “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success” (Joshua 1:8).

The Word of God is compared to:

- “How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” (Ps. 119:103).
- “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Ps. 119:105).
- “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts” (Jer. 15:16).
- “Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?” (Jer. 23:29).

There are many words that describe what the Word of God becomes to each of us and how that Word has touched our lives. These are but a few examples found in the Old Testament concerning the expressive nature of words to define the impact created by God's Word. Only by studying the Bible does one gain insight into the mind of God and his purpose for humanity. Through personal study, God is made known to each and through His Spirit truth is attained. It is this truth that serves as the framework for the Apostolic Assembly's doctrine and disciplines and explains why we are “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone” (Ephesians 2:20), because as John

8:2 says, “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” Without this truth, we would be lost to the “doctrines” that engulf the world today (Heb. 13:9). There would be no true revelation of who Jesus Christ is and we would be lost in our sins. For those who say we are under grace and no longer need the law forget we need a reference point to know where we are going. Without the Old Testament as a spiritual compass, we would have no knowledge of our direction in life. It is this history that points to God who at a given moment in history, revealed himself to His creation and offered humanity an opportunity to once more enter into a relationship with Him. That relationship would be the means by which humanity could cleanse itself and present herself as the Bride of Christ (Revelation 21:9). The truth we are walking in today is none other than Jesus Christ who has revealed himself to the world and has promised to one day return again for his own. This line-of-sight created first by the prophets and then the apostles is why we as Apostolics know we are in the truth. It is this truth that has made its way into our hearts and has become a lifestyle that differs dramatically from other religious organization’s creeds, doctrines and disciplines. We have been “called out of darkness, into His marvelous light” (1 Pet. 2:9).

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JEWISH CONCEPT OF THE SCRIPTURES

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Introduction: It is in Judaism where we find information for a deeper understanding of the Scriptures, and it is in the Torah where we, as Apostolics, adhere to the same strict monotheism. We pose the following questions:

1. What does Judaism teach about the Torah?
2. How was the Canon of the Torah developed?
3. What did Judaism teach about the Scriptures during the exile, the time of Jesus, and thereafter?
4. What does Judaism teach about the Sacred Scriptures today?
5. Finally, what essential truths does Judaism teach that are consistent with the Apostolic doctrine?

Through this dissertation, I'll have the opportunity to present historical data, which have been enshrined as witnesses to the way God has preserved important information. In preserving the information, we can learn and rediscover, like so many have, God's will concerning his word and the literary process that has served as a guide for multiple nations. It is through the accounts found in the Torah that guide us to understand the purpose of God concerning what the foundation for the Church is and Jesus Christ as God.

“The God who reveals his glory to humanity is the creator. Everything that exist is the result of that extraordinary action, and the whole of nature manifest the creative power of God.”¹

Although the emphasis of this dissertation is about Judaism and the Torah, it is necessary to briefly mention what is known today as the Old Testament. In it, everything we know about creation is revealed in nature. In the midst of that nature, human beings are actively constructing cultures and societies with idolatrous inclinations, and continuously given over to passions manifesting their own lust. It is in God's created environment where it pleased Him to begin His spiritual plans.

The place where human beings were sunk in idolatry and sin, is also precisely where God forged his plans for redemption for the human race. The call of Abraham to follow God is one of the most often mentioned events, both by Jews and

¹ Samuel Pagan, *El Misterio Revelado: The Mystery Revealed Spanish* (Abingdon Press, 2002), 66.

Christians, and used as the starting point towards the formation of the great nation of Israel.

Like the story of Abraham, there are others that formulate the principal theme of the book of Genesis. Through Genesis we are introduced to a traditional theological interpretation of the beginning of all things, but it also introduces us to the supreme creator, our God. It is the first chapter of Genesis that serves as a precursor for all the wonderful works created by God that would later clarify to all generations God's created order from age to age; the sun, moon, stars, the universe and all the constellations known and unknown.

In Genesis chapter one, the creation of man is the climax of the history of creation. Man is created in the image and likeness of God to govern, but above all, to fulfill God's wonderful plan. A plan for man created in the image of God, which later resulted in man's disobedience and fall, is revealed in the Pentateuch, as well as, redemption through the blood, his providence and sovereignty over the Nations. God reveals himself both as Creator and Lord over history, Sustainer of the universe and his Holy people, Israel. Through the pages of the Old Testament we can know the whole history of the people chosen by God.

“Without the Old Testament, the New Testament would become a misinterpreted book, a plant without its roots to dry out and die.”²

² Gordon J. Wenham, *Exploring the Old Testament, Volume 1: A Guide to the Pentateuch* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2008), 8.

In his earthly Ministry, Jesus emphasized everything that was written had to come to pass. A clear expression of this is found in the words of Jesus, “And he said unto them, These are the words which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.”³ Although this is the third passage in the chapter that speaks of the prophetic fulfillments (see 6-9; 25-27), it is the first time that the verb “fulfilled” is used. The Old Testament contains the testimony of the cross and the resurrection, therefore, such acceptance confirms that what is written in the Old Testament had its fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

The New Testament evangelist, Matthew, expressed this truth on several occasions in his gospel concerning the childhood of Jesus and the public ministry and passion of the master “But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?” In that hour Jesus said to the crowd, “Am I leading a rebellion that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me. But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled.” (Mathew 26:54-56).⁴

The four Gospels make mention of the importance of the Old Testament as a precursor to events that would be fulfilled

³ Hendrickson Publishers, *Large Print Thinline Reference Bible-KJV*, Lea Slp Lr edition. (Hendrickson Publishers, 2010), Luke 24:44.

⁴ *Ibib.* (Mt 26:54–56). Sociedades Bíblicas Unidas

in Jesus. The insistence of writers related to these events were “to ensure compliance with the writings” attributed the importance of the Jewish scriptures. It is clearly understandable that all events relating to the redemptive work of Jesus would not have any value if they had no compliance with the prophecies concerning the suffering servant in which would be God’s plan regarding the redemption of a world lost in sin.

“Christians, like Jews and Muslims, share the conviction that God has spoken to us.” For the Christian faith, Jesus Christ is the highlight of this auto communication from God. The Bible testifies that before the incarnation, God had spoken unto our fathers, on many occasions and in various ways, through the prophets (Heb. 1.1). Of this divine revelation, the same prophets attest a firm testimony, which is certain to announce that what comes out of the mouth of the Lord, and not of the false prophets, visions of their imagination (Jr. 22;16). That they have dared to enter their message with these words: thus speaks Yahweh.”⁵

1. WHAT DOES JUDAISM TEACH ABOUT THE TORAH?

In Judaism, the study of the Torah is one of the major commandments. It is so important to their studies that many

⁵ Armando Levoratti, *Comentario Bíblico Latinoamericano Antiguo Testamento I. Pentateuco Y Textos Narrativos*, 1st. edition. (Editorial Verbo Divino, 2005), 3.

Rabbis teach that a day of Torah study is worth more than 1,000 sacrifices in the temple. Another of the sacred writings of Judaism is The Talmud, which teaches that man was created for the study of the Torah (Sanhedrin 99b).

Every good Jew should set aside a time, whether day or night, to study the Torah. In fact of the sacred writings of Judaism is the Talmud also tells us that “the night was created for the study of the Torah”. Our sages taught that the Torah is one of the things that sustains the world, a Rabbi said that “if it weren’t for the Torah, the sky and the Earth would cease to exist”. “The one who studies TORAH everyday Ensures a place in heaven.” Nida 73a

The word TORAH means “teaching,” “instruction,” and “direction.” It comes from the word YARAH, which means “hit the target,” “train,” and “teach.” Therefore, the TORAH teaches and instructs us that we can always hit the target. Among the primary teachings is that by three things is the world sustained: by the Law, the temple, and works of mercy. This basic education is further elevated by the triple function of the synagogue as a “House of study” (for the learning of the Torah), “House of prayer” (for the worship of God), and the “House of meeting” (for the needs of the community).

Contemporary Judaism often speaks of four fundamental pillars of the Jewish faith, each interacting as a major force in the framework of the association: (1) the Torah as a law of

life as the written Torah is understood in the light of the oral Torah, (2) God, a unit (one), spiritual (not a body), and eternal, (3) people (Israelites Jews) called by God to be as members of a family, a corporate personality, a community of faith, and (4) land (today known as the land of Israel), a link that goes back to Abraham, the “father of the Hebrew people” (Genesis 17:7-8). The first time that the word TORAH appears is in the book of Genesis: “because Abraham obeyed me and kept my requirements, my commands, my decrees and my laws, (TORAH).” Genesis 26:5

Scholars of Judaism say that all the wisdom of the universe is hidden in the 304,805 letters of the Torah. The Torah is of such importance within Judaism that it is taught that by studying the Torah, we are not only reading what God has said, but we are also having an encounter with God.

“If you know a lot of Torah do not proud yourself because you were created for this.” Rabbi Yohanan Ben Zaccai

The Jews have traditionally been careful to put into practice the promises of the Torah, especially in times of crisis and calamities. “So in the Torah the Patriarchs frequently approach God in their personal prayers. Abraham, for example, prayed to God to not destroy Sodom since he knew that the destruction of the entire population would destroy both the just and the unjust as guilty.”⁶

⁶ DAN COHN-SHERBOK, *The Jewish Faith* (London: SPCK PUBLISHING, 1993), 154.

Judaism uses the TORAH in four different ways:

- It refers to the first five books of the Bible: Genesis (Bereshit), Exodus (Shemot), Leviticus (Vayikra), Numbers (Bamidbar) and Deuteronomy (Devarim). The term used in Greek is “Pentateuch”.
- It refers to all of the TaNaK (known as “the Old Testament”).
- It refers to all the Jewish law (the Halakha): the written Torah and the Oral Torah.
- For us who believe in Jesus the word TORAH refers to the entire Bible, from Genesis to Revelation.

In addition, we know when it means one thing or the other by the context, of the sacred writings of Judaism is article “the” is not usually being used. So if we say: “I am studying Torah” it means that I am studying any teaching of the Scriptures, but if we say: “I am studying the Torah” it means that I am studying some portion of the five books of Moses.

“And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my

voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord.”⁷

Israel was called upon to become the God’s chosen people. In the dialog we find that part of the call implied obedience and commitment to God’s instructions. On that historic day in the life of Israel, the interaction that we find is a mutual commitment to reach certain spiritual magnitude that would enhance the nation to be a Kingdom of priests and a Holy nation. It is obvious that the “message makes reference to specific events and historical accounts. However, its aim is to present the testimony and the faith of a people. The purpose of the biblical texts is to not make a detailed account of the events in Israel, but also to preserve, affirm, and celebrate the faith of that community”.⁸

As we have already observed, the Word establishes the purpose of God for his people. In addition to the Covenant

⁷ *Biblia de Jerusalén Latinoamericana*. Pg. 92 (2007). (Ex 19:3–8). Bilbao: Desclée de Brouwer.

⁸ Werner H. Schmidt, *Introducción al Antiguo Testamento* (Salamanca, Spain: Ediciones Sígueme, 1999), 23.

that God made with the people, it also gave them the Torah. The whole law or commandments expressed in concrete terms the nature of the relationship of God with his people. That is why many call the Ten Commandments the book of the Covenant. You can say that the law is universally applicable, because from the beginning, the law passed all their national boundaries applying to Israel and foreigners. Even their own enemies were covered under the law. (Exodus 23:4-5).

With great reverence, the Jews call it the Torah, or the Law, as the basis of their faith and their religious system. For them, other parts of the Old Testament are important, but the Torah occupies a place apart as the foundation of the revelation of God. The Torah (in Hebrew, “law” or “doctrine”), in Judaism is the cornerstone of the Jewish religion and the law. The Scrolls are considered more holy and they are loved by the pious; All the synagogues hold several rolls, each of which may be protected by a cover of rich fabric and decorated with silver ornaments. +A special Holiday in honor of the Torah, known as Simhath Torah (Hebrew, “rejoicing in the law”), is held in the synagogue by singing, marching and dancing to the rolls. The term Torah is also used to refer to the whole corpus of the Scriptures of the Jews, together with comments on them. The Torah was traditionally considered as the primary revelation of God and his law to humanity. It is considered as valid for all time.

Judaism was the first religion to teach monotheism, or belief in one God. This belief is the basis of Judaism and is summed

up in the opening words of the Shema, recited three times daily: “Hear Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one” (Deuteronomy 6:4). Their faith is that God’s Providence extends to all people, but most important is that God entered into a special covenant with the ancient Israelites. They do not believe that they were elected for any special privilege, but rather, to bring God’s message to humanity with their example. The belief in a Messiah has been a source of optimism for Jews.

The importance of the Torah in Judaism:

- The Pentateuch or Torah (“T”) is the first section of the Bible which includes the first five books of Moses. In this literature, we are told the origins of the universe and humanity, and the beginning history of the people of Israel is also presented. Of particular importance are the stories of Abraham and Moses.
- The five books are: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Traditionally, they have been attributed to Moses as the original author.
- The Pentateuch is the result of centuries of oral traditions that were gathered slowly over time in written form to take the various literary forms manifesting today. The stories found in the Torah reveal differences in literary styles, various theological perspectives, and different historical periods.

2. HOW WAS THE CANON OF THE TORAH DEVELOPED?

The canon have a triple purpose for the people of Israel. “First, it defines and maintains disclosure to avoid confusion with subsequent reflections on it. It aims also to prevent relief from changes or alterations. Finally, it gives believers the opportunity to study the revelation and live by its principles and provisions.”⁹

The word canon seems to result from a Hebrew word *caneh*, it means reed, or measure, and hence, rule, or regulation. Translated from the Greek word *kanon*, meaning rod or cane. From there it came to have the meaning measure, and/or a standard. It seems that the two meanings (standard and list) are present in the word as applied to books that are in the Bible. In the end, in its application to the sacred books, it came to have the meaning of an approved list, or an authorized list as well with the requirements to be included in the Old Testament although the Canon contains a developed process focusing on an exact date over a period of time of which we could designate, figuring out the exact date of its publication is nearly impossible. The argument about the exact date of the canon has been, and will remain of continuous debate. The discoveries of the Dead Sea scrolls have unleashed heated conversations regarding creation and many other theories.

⁹ Samuel Pagan, “El canon del Antiguo Testamento,” en *Descubre la Biblia* (s/l: Sociedades Biblicas Unidas, 1998), 155.

One of them is known as the documentary theory. Thus, it has called as such to the attempt in attributing multiple authors.

The Canon “is the collection of religious writings which acquired great moral and spiritual authority for the Jewish community, regardless of the ideological, theological and sectarian affiliation of the group. It is essentially a clear record, precisely defined, of writings of divine revelation directly and indirectly to humanity. Understand the process of the canonization, the revelation of God can be understood as it pertains to his people, Israel and humanity.”¹⁰

It is with uncertainty as to when the Jews began to gather the sacred books to create today’s collection. What we do know with confidence is that Jews possessed books that were considered as sacred and upheld them with great veneration. Regarding the Jewish canon of the sacred books, it has been ignored when the canon closed. For some it would be in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah; for others, in the era of the Maccabees. The truth is that the Jews had in the first century of our era, a collection of sacred books which were considered as inspired by God, and contained the revelation of His divine will transmitted to men. In addition to the “writings” of the Torah, Judaism has spoken of an “oral” Torah tradition.

These are the comments and the ordinances that put into effect the legal provisions contained in the Pentateuch. This

¹⁰ Pagan, *El Misterio Revelado*, 139.

oral Torah, allegedly revealed to Moses, has been preserved in Israel by the tradition of the fathers of the faith in the volume known as the Talmud. Among the different hypotheses that stand out are the hypothesis of fragments, hypothesis of complements, documentary hypothesis and a few others that have resulted in more specific examination of the text.

The reason for the theories was to prove that the Torah had been formed by independent documents and that they were later combined by processes which gave it his training as we know it today. According to the opinion prevailing in those who believe in these theories, is that “there are three sources in the Pentateuch, in addition to Deuteronomy. The older documents are distinguished, among other things by difference in the employment of the divine names. Yahvistic (j) from the beginning used the divine name Yahweh; the elohista (e) uses the designation Elohim, and it makes the ultimate source, called priestly (p).”¹¹

There are many places in Sacred Scripture that demonstrate that the Hebrews took special care to preserve certain books written by Moses, Joshua, Samuel and other great men of the Israeli villages before the exile. On several occasions, God commands Moses to put in writing the laws, both civil and cultural (Exodus 17.14; 34,27;) Numbers 33.2; Deuteronomy 31, 9-14). He also wrote the book of the Covenant (Exodus 24.4; Deuteronomy 27.8; CF. Exodus. 20, 22-23, 19).

¹¹ Armando Levoratti, *Comentario Bíblico Latinoamericano Antiguo Testamento I. Pentateuco Y Textos Narrativos*, 1st. edition. (Editorial Verbo Divino, 2005), 333

The Mosaic Law, given by the great legislator to the chosen people, was later augmented with new laws and adapted to the needs of the times.

This law, designated by the Hebrews under the name of “Torah”, always possessed great authority amongst them. Joshua, the successor of Moses, added new laws and ordinations, “by writing them in the book of the law of God” (Joshua 24,25). To Samuel the Prophet, “Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the LORD” (1 Samuel 10.25). King Hezekiah sent to collect the judgments of Solomon (Proverbs 25.1). But it is above all in the time of King Josiah, (640-608 B.C.) when it begins to make appeal to the authority of a written text, whose character of sacred code seems that it had been officially recognized.

Before the reign of Josiah, it is not stated that the Mosaic Law had enjoyed a “canonical” authority that was universally recognized. According to the testimony of Sacred Scripture, before the reign of Josiah, many worship practices were not compliant with the requirements of Leviticus (cf. 2 Chronicles . 23, 4-15). However, after the high priest Helcias found in the Temple of Yahweh “the book of the law” (cf. 2 Chronicles. 22-23; 34, 35), things changed radically. It is not known if the book found has been identified with the whole Pentateuch, or rather just Deuteronomy. But the fact is that, from now on, “the book of the law” was now considered as something very sacred and the collection of the laws given by God to Israel.

The prophets, Isaiah (Is 30.8; 34.16) and Jeremiah (Jr. 36, 2-4.27-32) wrote his prophecies. And the work of Jeremiah the prophet undoubtedly was inspired by the Spirit during the reign of Josiah. This same prophet has citations of previous prophets (Jr. 26, 18s; 49, 14-16 = Mi. 3.12;) Abd. 1.4), which seems to indicate that there already existed collections of prophecies.

After the exile arises some important testimonies from which we can deduce that almost all protocanonical books were already gathered in collections and were considered as canonical. The Biblical texts from this period help us understand three kinds of sacred books: the law (Torah), prophets (Nebi'im) and the writings or Hagiografa (Ketubim), known as the TaNaK or Hebrew Bible.

The first testimony in this regard is that of the book of Nehemiah (c. 8-9). It is narrated that Ezra, priest and scribe, read and explained the Law of Moses in front of the village (444 BC). After listening to his reading, the people promised with an oath to observe it, which seems to indicate that they recognized the Pentateuch canonical authority.

The Prophet Daniel says the following “was studying in the books the number of the seventy years... said Yahweh to Jeremiah prophet” (Daniel 9:2; Cf. Jeremiah 25:11; 29:10). This shows quite clearly that at that time there was already a collection of sacred books.

“We know that it was not intended that these writings were merely understood as historical accounts in the modern term sense, but more that well offered his stories, stories and statements, we understand today theologically, as the manifestation of his convictions about its reason to exist as a people, the peoples, pain and evil in the world “, their victories and defeats, all seen within the framework of faith in their God, YAHWEH.”¹²

3. WHAT DID JUDAISM TAUGHT ABOUT THE SACRED SCRIPTURES DURING THE EXILE, DURING THE TIME OF JESUS AND AFTER?

During the exile.

To talk of Judaism as a terminology of the religious belief of a village, would not do justice to the meaning of the genuine commitment of an entire nation and its acceptance of the system of teachings as a guide in their daily living. Judaism implies not only religion, but a whole culture with its components: historical, social and political. Another important factor that is found is the commitment of its citizens to adhere to something received from God through scripture that they fought against empires with the purpose of nationalizing Israel under Judaism.

¹²

Assoc for Hispanic Theological Education, *Introduccion Al Antiguo Testamento AETH: Introduction to the Old Testament Spanish AETH* (Abingdon Press, 2003), 47.

“There were, of course, those who felt that the future of Judaism was along the lines of aggressive nationalism. The men of this opinion had been the bone behind the revolt of the Maccabees, who had taken it beyond a mere struggle for religious freedom and turned it into a war for national independence.”¹³

The Babylonian exile brought certain modifications in Jewish religious life. Although we should note that in accordance with the teaching of Judaism there is a set of beliefs about the acceptance that the Jew may find salvation. Deprived of the land, the temple and the worship and priestly ministry, Judaism began to adopt a non-sacrificial religion. The Jews began to gather in houses for the reading of Scripture, prayer, and instruction. Here the oldest roots of the synagogue can be traced. Now the “lip sacrifice” (prayer and penitence) rather than “blood sacrifice” (sheep and goats) became the center of a life of virtue. In one of the most important decisions taken when they led away captive into Babylon was to take the foundation of their faith. They took with them the Torah, in particular (Deuteronomy 6:4-25), because Israel was sure of their divine vocation and mission.

In the 5th century, Ezra the scribe, the “father of Judaism” enacted religious reforms, appealing to the Torah. The priesthood was cleansed and intermarriage treated under the principles of law applied to every detail of life. Exposed to the

¹³ John Bright, *A History of Israel*, 4th ed. (Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 462–463.

scorn and derision of those nations who hated them, they formed a circle of faith and mutual trust in God. They cultivated the peculiarity that distinguished them in the midst of their enemies and has characterized them since then.

Their experiences led them to adapt to their circumstances and embrace, as never before, those valuable spiritual possessions which had been transmitted to them by their ancestors. They built their identity on the basis of their faith in the Torah. Little by little, many Jews came to believe that here was the only proof of who was a true Jew; vigorous, firm obedience to the teachings of the Torah. Pain and up rootedness, produced intense spiritual and literary activity which kept them active in the faith serving God and trusting his promises to one day return to Israel.

DURING THE TIME OF JESUS AND LATER.

It was in the time of Jesus where we can see the influence of the Torah. The Hebrew Bible was the Guide and Foundation of the spiritual life of Israel. It was during this time where the synagogue and the Sabbath day arose. It was during this time where religious sects were formed. The Essenes, Pharisees and the Sadducees.

The Pharisees were characterized by their legalism and zeal to the teaching of the Torah. The Sadducees formed this group among the nation's elite. Its members were from the

nobility, priests and intellectuals and as such did not accept the basic beliefs of the Torah. They did not accept the resurrection and although they were a very small minority, their teachings had a strong influence in the days of Jesus Christ.

“The Essenes were considered as the eschatological people of God, believing that their compliance with the law would bring divine intervention in the form of a war that would bring an end to all the Governments of the Earth; Therefore, the admission into the sect required a novitiate of two or three years, the renunciation of private property and, often, to the marriage vows. Once accepted the new Member, worked in agriculture and built handicrafts, but primarily he was dedicated to the study of the Scriptures. They had community meetings and practiced daily ablutions and soul-searching.”¹⁴

When we arrive to the time of Jesus, and later, Judaism was a term used for the first time in the inter-testamentary period by Greek-speaking Jews to distinguish Hellenism, who were Jews that practiced and lived an exemplary life. Their piety, love for the poor and helpless, and their contempt for material goods were all manifestations of a Jewish practitioner of Judaism. Although he (Jesus) taught and practiced some of the teachings of the predominant groups in Israel he was not associated with these groups.

¹⁴ Flávio Josefo, *Las guerras de los judíos* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013), 6.

“However, there is no testimony in the NT that relates to Jesus with ties to any community in particular. Jesus appears visiting the Temple in Jerusalem at a time that other Jews flocked to the capital for the holidays (which were not held according to the esenio calendar), and his attitude toward the law, in some free aspect, was barely satisfied to the ultra-strict enforcement of the Essenes... The impotence of the Gospels to relate Jesus to some specific group probably represents one more picture in accordance with the historical situation.”¹⁵

Now, in practice the spiritual leaders, as well as the fellow citizens of the Apostle Paul, gave much importance to the celebration of worship at the temple and the celebration of spiritual festivals such as the Day of Atonement and Passover.

“Even from India were fabrics brought for the garments of the high priest on the Day of Atonement; the twelve jewels pectoral in his chest were the most precious stones in the world. But, above all, the amount of victims (bulls, calves, sheep, goats, and pigeons) required for the service were great in number! Every day many animal victims were offered as public sacrifices of the community. During the feast of the Passover many were offered as burnt offer-

¹⁵

Raymond Edward Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New Haven, Conn.; London: Yale University Press, 2007), 137.

ing every day two bulls, one RAM and seven lambs, and a goat as atoning sacrifice. Also private sacrifices were offered every day. They were offered to atone for countless transgressions, exactly fixed, carrying with it pollution; with those sacrifices people recovered legal purity. True hecatombs were offered on special occasions. Herod, sacrificed three hundred oxen when the temple was completed.”¹⁶

As part of the Jewish worship, established during its activities, the prominent use of the singing of the Psalms, prayer and instruction became apart of the synagogue service. The worship of the synagogue and the rabbinic teaching continued running along with the newly built Temple. During nearly seven centuries, Jews came to Jerusalem to participate in worship, sacrifices, and other activities carried out in the temple, while they also worshipped in the synagogues where there were Jewish communities.

These synagogues were established by a Pharisee named Johanan Ben Zakkai who was responsible in the preparation of the rabbis to be the guardians of the Torah. Their teachings were transmitted by word of mouth until the oral law (Mishnah) was written around the year 200 BC. In the year 500 BC the Talmud was completed, a rabbinical commentary on the

¹⁶ Joachim Jeremías, *Jerusalén en Tiempos de Jesús. Estudio Económico y Social Del Mundo Del Nuevo Testamento*. 2nd. Edición. (Ediciones Cristiandad, 1980), 73.

Mishnah containing more than 6,000 pages and references by more than 2,000 academics, making the Talmud the core document of Rabbinic Judaism. Presently, it continues to have an important place in the formation of Jewish philosophy.

4. ¿WHAT JUDAISM TEACHES ABOUT THE SACRED SCRIPTURES IN THE PRESENT?

Judaism has a system of law, known as Halacha, the regulation of the civil and criminal justice, family relationships, personal ethics and manners, social responsibilities - as aid to the education of the needy, and the community institutions, as well as worship and other religious practices. Some laws, once considered being very important, for example, laws governing the offering of sacrifice and most of the rules of ceremonial contamination and purification, have not been practiced since the destruction of the second temple in Jerusalem in the year 70 BC.

Individual practices still widely observed include food (kosher) laws, rules relating to the marital relationship, daily prayer, study of the scriptures, and the recital of many blessings, especially before and after meals. The Sabbath and festivals are observed both in the home and in the synagogue, an institution only for prayer and instruction that became the model for the Church in Christianity.

On the Sabbath, sunset of Friday to Saturday, it is observed to refrain from working and attending a synagogue service.

Friday night is marked at home by lighting a lamp or candles by the women of the family, the recital of the Kiddush (a blessing ceremony that affirms the sanctity of the day) with a glass of wine, and the blessing of children by parents. The end of the Sabbath is marked by ceremonies called Havdalah. There are many ceremonies laid down in the Word of God celebrated in commemoration of the events of triumph. They also have festivals of sadness, represented in the feasts of Hanukkah, Purim, and the fast of the ninth of Av (Tisha be - Av), which commemorates the destruction of the temple. This question would take many pages to engage with the great teaching of contemporary Judaism. Their insistence to keep their faith and traditions has characterized them by their desire to transmit to future generations their history as God's chosen people.

5. WHAT ESSENTIAL TRUTHS DOES JUDAISM INSTRUCT THAT ARE IN KEEPING WITH APOSTOLIC DOCTRINE?

In the context of Scripture, a doctrinal point that Judaism teaches according to the apostolic doctrine is the oneness of God. "Hear, Israel: Jehovah our God, the Lord is one". (Deuteronomy 6:4) They, like us, have a true conviction that there is only one God. Historically better known as monotheism, this is the fundamental principle of Judaism.

Another teaching that they emphasize is the life of Holiness. They, like us, feel that Holiness must be a lifestyle characterized by the practice of love and the values set in the

Word of God. The economic system they practice is also very similar to that which the Church practices. Tithing has been part of the spiritual life of Israel.

The final judgment. The tenth doctrinal point of our Church is something which is very similar in the teaching of Judaism. God rewarded those who keep the commandments of the Torah and those who trespass, after many reprimands and warnings, God punishes. They believe in being rewarded in the afterlife and punishment is being separated from the future world. “And the Lord said to Moses: to him that sinneth against me, this grieved me from my book.” see, because, now, it leads to this village where I told you; here’s my angel will go ahead of you; but on the day of the punishment, I will punish them their sin.” (Exodus 32:33-34)

There are many practices that the Jews have that are reminiscent of the apostolic faith. Their songs and manifestations of joy during their worship are very similar to our services. Their faith in the one true God and their insistence of conserving their spiritual culture is something that resembles our rich apostolic culture.

CONCLUSION

Despite the changing phases of its history and the essence of the religious teaching of Judaism, Israel continues to be significantly and steadily, firmly rooted in the Scriptures. Isra-

el's obedience and faith are reflected in Deuteronomy 6:4 to 12. Judaism has distinguished itself as one of the groups who practice a monotheist ethical religion. Their fever to preserve their beliefs because of their obedience, and practice of the above-mentioned texts, has led them to distinguish themselves by their courage and vigor as a people chosen by God.

The Apostle Paul was perhaps one of the Jews who most distinguished himself in his practice of Judaism. Through his words in Philippians, "but I also have to rely on the meat... as for zeal, a persecutor of the Church; as for the justice that is in the law, blameless" (Philippians 3:4-6), we can see that he was a zealous practitioner of Judaism before being called to serve Christ. He was perhaps the greatest missionary and preacher in the history of the Church. He was the author of more than half of the New Testament and his spiritual experiences were unique, since he was the only one to see the resurrected Christ several times and be elevated up to the third heaven.

Something that should cause us admiration was his desire to consult the Torah even after being a preacher of the Gospel. While in prison he writes to Timothy to ask him to bring the books, mostly scrolls. "What scrolls were these? They were personal copies of the Old Testament scrolls. I should note here that despite all his extraordinary achievements, the elderly Apostle still believed that he could take advantage of the study of the word, "That were known as the Torah. Examples of a nation that, like us, received the word to forge

their way of life and proclaim their faith today.”¹⁷ I have already explained, though briefly, that the whole nation adopted the message of the Torah to distinguish itself from other Nations and that some of their doctrines we practice today.

For many centuries, the Jews have tried to extract the essential characteristics of a biblical verse that calls Israel “O man, what is good; and what does the LORD REQUIRE OF YOU, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8) and one that keeps them hoping to coexist with God in the Promised Land:

“ I,... that says to Jerusalem: be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah: will be rebuilt, and its ruins written; that says to the depths: dry, and your rivers shall dry; it says of Cyrus: he is my shepherd, and shall comply with all I want to say to Jerusalem: will be built; and the temple: will be founded”. (Is. 44:26-28).

God Bless Israel,
Bishop Felipe Lugo.

¹⁷

Harold L. Willmington, *Auxiliar Biblico Portavoz (Spanish Edition) (Spanish) Hardcover January 10, 1996, 0004- edition. (editorial portavoz, 1996), 13.*

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THE SACRED SCRIPTURES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

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INTRODUCTION

When I was studying at Knox Presbyterian Seminary, Dr. Steve Brown¹, one of my professors utilized this brilliant and humorous story to explain the singularity and extent of our theological exegesis.

- *“The famous Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson (his intelligent companion) decided to leave the metropolis and visit nature to rest. Once on the cusp of the mountain, they decided to rest and spend the night there. After a good dinner, they went to bed and soon fell asleep. Some hours*

¹ Steve Brown. <http://www.keylife.org> (accessed August 20, 2015).

later, Holmes was awakened by a loud noise and touched the arm of his faithful friend. And asked: "Watson, look up at the sky and tell me what you see. Watson replied: "I see millions and millions of stars." Holmes asked: "And what does that fact tell you?"

- *Watson began to meditate and after a few minutes he said: "Astronomically, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Astrologically, I observe that Saturn is in Leo. Chronologically, I deduce that the time is approximately a quarter past three. Theologically, I can see that God is omnipotent and that we are small and insignificant. Meteorologically, I suspect that we will have a very sunny day tomorrow ... "What does it say to you, Holmes? asked Watson.*
- *Holmes was silent for a minute and replied: "Watson, 'my dear friend', to me it says that if we can see the stars, it is because someone has stolen the tent."*

While Watson took the time to discuss the stars and planets, he forgot an important detail that while they slept someone had stolen their tent; this was the first thing Holmes emphasized.

So in the study of doctrines, and in our case, the study of the infallibility of the Word of God. We can go very deep,

and even become mesmerized by arguments and details, leaving aside a very simple but important detail: “When the Bible speaks, God speaks.”²

In the same line of thought, Dr. Brown told us that there are theological explanations that need more explanation and so on. The most important thing is not to lose the focus of what God wants through His written Word. We can debate, and that’s fine, but let the divine purpose of the written Word be clear to us.

- *2 Timothy 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

INSPIRATION AND THE AUTHOR

When we talk about inspiration, the fact that behind all the sacred writers, was a mastermind who designed everything immediately comes to mind, made it all made sense and displayed for our edification. Now if divine inspiration is the flag that all who believe in biblical inerrancy waves, then, indisputably the Author of that inspiration should be the focus and center of our faith.

² Mike Riccardi. Looking at the summit: Mohler and inerrancy, <https://evangelio.wordpress.com> (accessed July 15, 2015).

- *John 10:22 And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. 23 And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch. 24 Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. 25 Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. 26 But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. 27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. 30 I and my Father are one. 31 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. 32 Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? 33 The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. 34 Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? 35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; 36 Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? 37 If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. 38 But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.*

Undoubtedly, these verses are extremely powerful to enhance the oneness of God and the manifestation of God in flesh. This caused the religious leaders of the time to become infuriated with the Lord Jesus Christ, to the point of wanting to kill Him. This passion they had against Jesus, was a passion that originated in the assertion of the infallibility of Scripture. If they (the leaders of the time) accepted Christ's words as inspired by God, then they had to obey and to bow down before Him. However, the biggest problem for them was they had divorced the Sacred Scriptures from the Author.

- *Isaiah 29:13 Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:*

I believe it is transcendental for XXI century Apostolics to be fully committed to the verbal acceptance (jot and tittle)³ of the divine inspiration. But I also believe that our love for biblical inerrancy increases as our love for the author of Scripture increases.

As John Owen said, "Without the Holy Spirit, it could be that we may also burn our Bibles."⁴ Implying that the inspiration of Scripture is crucial to bring the letter to life. The Apostle Paul reflected

³ The Holy Bible: King James Version (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), Matthew 5:18.

⁴ John Owen, El Espíritu Santo. http://www.iglesiareformada.com/Owen_ES_1.html (accessed August 1, 2015).

*this when he said. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."*⁵

JESUS AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

Returning to the story in the book of John, especially these two verses that I will quote, the Lord Jesus emphasizes three very interesting aspects. First, in its defense, uses a passage from the Old Testament. Second, He speaks of Scripture as a living unit, as a unit of thought. Third, He speaks of Scripture as a whole that can not be broken. Let's see:

- *34 Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? 35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken;*

- I. Citing Psalm 82 verses, he establishes an incredible connection between His time and the past, between the Old Testament and His Words. For our Lord, Scripture was an organic whole. All Scripture is inspired by God. There are no traces of inerrancy anywhere. Jesus affirms the verbal inerrancy of Scripture noting that "it is written". For Jesus, the "Scripture" is

⁵ The Holy Bible: King James Version (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), 1 Corinthians 2:14.

synonymous with the “Word of God”. And everything is based on a God who is true and who can not lie.⁶

2. He then mentions Scripture as a single unit, he does not fraction it nor does he divide it. Scripture can not be broken because it comes from God. A sound doctrine of God, will give importance and weight to our doctrine of the Sacred Scriptures.

The public ministry of Jesus was sustained by His commitment and absolute confidence in the Scriptures. We see this in His temptations, at the beginning of His public ministry. Jesus responded to Satan’s attacks by saying three times, “It is written ...”⁷

The public ministry of Jesus was inaugurated by His unwavering commitment to the authority of the Word of God. It was enough to respond to all challenges or questions by saying: “It is written ...”

On the cross, His great consolation was to explain that He went to His death “as it is written of him.” He was betrayed that “scripture might be fulfilled.” Repeatedly throughout his Passion, the New Testament indicates these things were happening so that the Scriptures be fulfilled. Even His agonized

⁶ Numbers 23:19 *God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?*

⁷ The Holy Bible: King James Version (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), Matthew 4:4, 7, 10.

cry on the cross comes from Psalm 22. After the Resurrection, nothing has changed. On the road to Emmaus, He opens Scripture in all its fullness to reveal Himself to His disciples.⁸

It is absolutely clear in the pages of the Gospels, that for Jesus, Scripture was the unwavering authority of the Word of God.

3. He ends by declaring the authority of the Scriptures, although He used the singular, He says that ... *the Scripture cannot be broken* ... giving to understand that the Scriptures are reliable and the truth in any circumstance

In Luke 2, we are given the story of Jesus as a young man in the temple, sitting amongst the teachers, listening and asking questions. Luke concludes this chapter by pointing out that Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men, Luke 2:52.

In Hebrews 5, the author says that Jesus learned obedience. He was not excluded from the process of maturation and the learning process which is part of being human.⁹

⁸ The Holy Bible: King James Version (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), Luke 24:1-8.

⁹ Isaiah 53:3 *3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. 4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*

The Lord Jesus Christ in His humanity was not isolated from the maturation process of growth and development. He was not excluded from the discipline to listen and learn. Unlike us, He was without sin and therefore did not suffer from a fallen mind. However, there was a gradual maturation process in His human development. He grew in wisdom. His human life was a total commitment to an inerrant text that could not be broken. Day by day and week by week, He opened His ears to listen and their hearts to receive.

THE TESTIMONY OF CHRIST

I. The evidence of Christ.

That life of obedience and submission, took Him to practice and teach what He had already accepted. Every time Jesus uses passages from the Old Testament, they are the product of total dependence and absolute reliability of what was written. Therefore the daily and constant use of these “verses” is one of the strongest evidences we found on the inerrancy of the Bible. Indeed, the Bible is inspired by God. Wherever the Lord Jesus Christ quoted Scripture, and He did it quite often, He did as having full authority and recognition that it had come at the hands of men inspired by the Holy Spirit.

According to Matthew 5:18, Christ said that not one jot or tittle of the law will be unfulfilled. If accuracy and inspiration extend to each of its letters, Christ was obviously affirming the inspiration of totality of the Sacred Scriptures.

In John 10:35 Christ, as we have seen, affirmed that “Scripture can not be broken,” it cannot fail. Time and time again the New Testament affirms an exact fulfillment of the Old Testament.

Text	Citation
Matthew 1	22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.
Matthew 4	14 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying...
Matthew 8	17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.
Matthew 15	7 Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, 8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.
Matthew 19	7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? 8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.
Matthew 21	4 All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, 5 Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.
Matthew 22	29 Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.
Matthew 27	9 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value;

These references are typical of what is disseminated throughout the New Testament in its totality. Even when He affirms a dispensational change or modification of a rule of life, the authority and inspiration of the original declarations of Scripture are not disputed at all as in the case of Matthew 19 (Moses and divorce).

The annotations from the Old Testament extend to any important section and often are books that are most discussed by liberal critics, such as Deuteronomy, Jonah and Daniel, for example:

OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT
Deuteronomy 6:16 Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God, as ye tempted him in Massah.	Matthew 4:7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.
<p>Daniel 9:27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.</p> <p>Daniel 12:11 And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.</p>	Matthew 24:15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)
Jonah 1:7 And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah.	Matthew 12:40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

It is impossible to question the inspiration of the Old Testament without doubting the character and veracity of Jesus Christ. It is for this reason that the denial of the inspired Word of God leads to the denial of the Oneness of God and His manifestation in the flesh.

Jesus Christ not only affirms the inspiration and the infallible accuracy of the Old Testament, but He predicted the writing of the New Testament. According to John 16: 12-13, the disciples were to receive the truth from the Holy Spirit after Christ had ascended to heaven. Christ established that the disciples would be witnesses to the truth, and gave them the authority in its pronouncing and dissemination of the truth.

- *Matthew 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*
- *Luke 10:22 All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him. 23 And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see:*
- *John 15:27 And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.*

- *Acts 2:37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*

JESUS AND THE SCRIPTURES

When we speak of Scripture as a whole, we need to find a theological formula that irrefutably describes what we are speaking of. In other words, we can not speak of “the whole” without understanding the parts. Otherwise, we would never come to understand, not even what little we already know. Eventually the reader of the Sacred Text will understand that everything they are reading, is actually referring to one person, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the center of everything we read, He is the object of our worship, and the reason for everything we do. If we understand this, man will become so passionate of the Bible, it will be hard to stop reading it. You read about Jesus, and that closeness, makes man’s life meaningful. So that the benefits of inerrancy are countless, while disbelief leaves a feeling of emptiness and anxiety. Just like a puzzle when you see all the pieces scrambled, you do not even know where to start, and it’s very frustrating. Until we begin to join each piece with its piece that everything starts to make sense, and until

we finally unite all the pieces. And it is precisely at that point where the finished image appears. The image was there, it was complete, even before starting to put the pieces in place, what happens is that in was in pieces for man can begin to join them. Christ is the central figure of the Holy Scriptures, the center of our lives, and only when we have a clear picture of the pieces, it is then that we will come to know Christ. This is something that takes a long, long time, but the final product makes us understand that it is worth the whole process.

- *John 5:39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.*
- *Luke 24:44 And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.*
- *Matthew 1:22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.*
- *Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

Whoever believes in Jesus Christ has no choice but to also believe in the faithfulness and inspiration of Scripture. Scriptures that are grounded in history and in the reality of a people, who not only received, but believed them and put them to practice to receive the benefits that come from obedience to them, and the consequences of not obeying them. Jesus Christ Himself testified to the authority of Scripture, and the divine inspiration of the same. Not only do we see the Lord referring, using texts and giving importance to the Old Testament, we also see the Lord still emphasizing the importance of each word.

- *Matthew 5:17* Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. *18* For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.
- *Luke 16:16* The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. *17* And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.

Many times the Lord Jesus Christ used the phrase: “Have you never read?” to highlight the importance of His apology but based on verses from the Old Testament. Thus indicating that the Old Testament texts were inspired and were worthy

of trust to their daily lives. At the same time, the Lord confirmed the stories and historical figures, giving them credibility and a safe space in the biblical scenario.

- Matthew 19, Moses and divorce.
- Matthew 24, Daniel and the end times.
- *Luke 11:51 From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.*

Also in a magisterial manner, it gives place to the Pentateuch and places it within the canonical books. Jesus Christ used these stories because He had absolute confidence in the authority and reliability of them. In other words, He used them without worry, to the point that He interlaced them through His words and teachings, such as: Mark 12: 24-27, referring to Deuteronomy 6: 4 and 5.

Jesus Christ taught that Scripture is sufficient to lead men to salvation and that all errors come from carelessness of the study of the Scriptures and not understanding them well.

- *Luke 16:29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.*

Ken Boa, writes about the earthly ministry of Christ as follows: “Summing it all up, only about 50 days of the ministry of Jesus are recorded in the Gospels. The minimum term of the ministry of Jesus equated to three years, or 1,080 days (360 days per year); that means 0.416 percent (in other words, a little less than half of one percent) of all the time that Jesus was evangelizing is recorded in the Gospels. Imagine many teachings, many conversations and sermons during His ministry which has never been heard of.”¹⁰

We can summarize that during His earthly ministry, the Lord Jesus Christ We can summarize that during His earthly ministry, the Lord Jesus Christ constantly used the Old Testament. A tenth of all His words are quotes or references to the Old Testament. Jesus Christ was fully convinced of the authority of Scripture. He criticized the Pharisees and scribes, but never their faith in the authority of Scripture. The many quotes used in the Old and New Testaments, are strong evidence of our Lord Jesus Christ and the apostles, of the inerrancy, infallibility and inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures.

THE APOSTLES AND THE SCRIPTURES

The message of the New Testament focuses (1) on the person who gave Himself for the remission of sins¹¹ and (2)

¹⁰ Kenneth Boa. *Talk thru the Bible: A unique reference tool to help you easily understand each book of the Bible* (Carol Stream, IL.: Tyndale House Publisher, 1981), 14.

¹¹ The Holy Bible: King James Version (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), Matthew 26:28.

the people (the church) who have received His salvation. Thus the central theme of the New Testament is salvation.¹²

The names Old and New Covenants were first applied to the two relationships into which God entered into with man, and then to the books that contained the record of these two relationships. “The New Testament is the divine treaty by the terms of which God has received us (rebels and enemies) and now, at peace with Him.”¹³

Since we have established the concept of Jesus in regards to the Holy Scriptures, we now approach the concept of the apostles, Jesus’ followers, in regards to the Sacred Text. The early Church never questioned the inspiration of Scripture.

Acts 1:16 Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.	Acts 4:25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?
Acts 7:38 This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:	Acts 28:25 And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers,

¹² Charles Caldwell Ryrie. *Ryrie Study Bible, Expanded Edition* (Moody Publishers, 2012), p. 1498.

¹³ J. Greshem Machen. *The New Testament: An Introduction to its Literature and History*, edited by W. Juan Cook, The Banner of Truth Trust (Edinburgh, 1976), p. 16.

When they cited the Old Testament passages they did so with the conviction that they were part of the Sacred Canon. We do not look (or read) of any New Testament writer doubting the infallibility of the Scriptures, rather we see (or read) them talking as if they were part of their daily lives and that they accepted them in full.

All verses from the Old Testament are regarded as God's Word, especially those of the apostles. For the apostles, as for Jesus, the gospel is the fulfillment of all that was announced in the Old Testament.¹⁴

<p>Acts 3:22 For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.</p>	<p>Acts 13:34 And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David.</p>
<p>Acts 7:36 He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years. 37 This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear.</p>	<p>Acts 13:47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.</p>

The apostles and early Christians fully confirmed the historicity of the biblical accounts. The Scriptures were the ultimate authority for the early Church. Half of the sermons of the Book of Acts consist of citations from the Old Testament.

¹⁴ I. H. Marshall. *Acts of the Apostles: The Tyndale Commentaries of the New Testament*, ed. R. V. G. Tasker; vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), 292, 93.

- Acts 2:14-36, the powerful message of the Apostle Peter.
- Acts 7:2-50, the eloquent defense of Stephen.
- Acts 13:16-41, the formidable speech of the Apostle Paul who was with Silas in the synagogue of Antioch of Pisidia.

Just for reference, the epistle to the Romans contains 75 citations from the Old Testament, and the book of Hebrews contains 99 citations.¹⁵ The book of James also confirms the credibility and historicity of stories in the Old Testament, for example: James 2:21, 25; 5:11, 17, 18.

The apostle Peter, in the same way, speaking of the Word of God and the spiritual milk, and constantly quotes the Old Testament, 1 Peter 2: 2 and 2 Peter 3: 5.

Just as the Lord Jesus Christ, the apostles esteem the Scriptures as the Word of God, and never doubt its veracity, and much less the divine inspiration of the same. For them they were inspired and approved by God. Even the Apostle Paul's letters that were already in circulation among the first brothers were corroborated by the Apostle Peter as inspired as he places them at the same height as the Scriptures.

¹⁵ For a complete list of Old Testament verses utilized in the New Testament, go to: <http://mb-soft.com/believe/tsh/ntot.htm> (accessed September 12, 2015).

- *2 Peter 3:15 And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; 16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.*

This is something extraordinary to read when we consider that the writer was still alive. The Apostle Paul's letters were read amongst the brothers, and I can almost imagine them exchanging thoughts, ideas, and concepts and weave them with Pauline concepts. Only by accepting and understanding the divine inspiration, could they do such a thing.

On the other hand, the disciples it would have been impossible to recall and write such profound truths after the years since they heard them from the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus appeared to Paul was in Damascus him and gave him some particular revelations.¹⁶ At the same time, he gave him the right to reproduce and write the received information.¹⁷ The only way this would be carried out, is the same Spirit who inspired the Holy Scriptures, would also remind them.

¹⁶ The Holy Bible: King James Version (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), Galatians 1:11, 12, 15, 16.

¹⁷ The Holy Bible: King James Version (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), 1 Corinthians 2:13, 16; 2 Corinthians 2:17.

- *John 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*
- *John 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: 27 And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.*
- *John 16:12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. 15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.*

And in this same line of thought, the Apostle John understood that all he was to receive, is part of the revelation and divine inspiration. There is no other way to explain the reception of such prophecies, that as the years pass, it seems as though we are reading the weekly newspaper. All this further confirms, his inspiration by the Holy Spirit.

- *Revelation 1:1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:*

Not only the Apostle John, but the other disciples understood that such wisdom, or words had a different source. They were talking (writing) but they also recognized that a supernatural inspiration that caused them to speak and write as they did.

- *1 Corinthians 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*
- *1 Peter 1:10 Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: 11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. 12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.*

All the New Testament writers did not write in their own name but in the name of God. It is perfectly legitimate to derive the authority of the Bible by itself.¹⁸ Historically, the church fathers were always in favor of the divine and verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. Not a single citation in the first 8 centuries of history of the Church doubted the divine inspiration of the Bible, apart, of course of the enemies of the faith. Also, the reformers and the confessions and creeds of importance to the Protestant world of that time of the Reformation affirm the authority and inspiration of the Bible.¹⁹

CONCLUSIONS

We do not have all the answers to all citations and arguments raised against the inerrancy of Scripture, but we have faith. In the end, we recognize with Paul that we know very little, and the depth and wisdom of God are limitless. While we recognize that there are challenges and problems that we can not explain, that does not confuse us. Because rest in the wisdom of God. *Let God be true, but every man a liar.*²⁰ The Pharisees also believed that Scripture could not be broken, they were the “defenders” of the Sacred Scriptures of their

¹⁸ The Holy Bible: King James Version (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), John 8:13-14.

¹⁹ Lewis Sperry Chaffer. *Systematic Theology: Tome I, Volume I, Bibliology* (Dousman, WI.: Publicaciones Españolas, 1986), p. 97.

²⁰ The Holy Bible: King James Version (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), Romans 3:4.

time. They believed in the sovereignty of God and the authority of God.²¹ When man clings to the doctrine of inerrancy, the man decreases, and God increases. Despite their nature and their blind piety, the Lord Jesus Christ approved the use of the sacred text they used when quoting Scripture, “...*All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do...*” Matthew 23: 1-3.

It would be a great tragedy if we defend the doctrine of inerrancy, but at the same time we do not love the Savior and His people as we should. Would we not be negating with our actions what we profess with our lips? A real commitment to the inerrancy of the Bible will be revealed in a lifestyle, the life of Christ. The Savior that teaches that Scripture cannot be broken is the same Savior who modeled a life of submission to the Word of God that was seen in service.

We are called to hold on to the written revelation of God. May God grant us the grace to hold on to it, not in a professional and cold manner, but as men of God, so that when we talk and preach, people might say: “There is a lot of God in this man, and little of himself.” Let me close with this great Pauline statement that underpins our faith, and that frees us from the shadow of a doubt.

²¹ Manuel Lopez Lira. <http://hacialameta.net/quienes-eran-los-fariseos/> (accessed August 28, 2015)

- *Romans 11:33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! 34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? 35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? 36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.*

For love of The Word,
Bishop, J. Fortino

Ο δὲ οὐδὲ τῆς μητρὸς τῆς Δαρείου οὐδὲ τῆς γυναικὸς ἢ τῶν ἡμέλεισεν. Ἀλλὰ λέγουσιν τινες τῶν τὰ Ἀλεξάνδρου γραφά-
 τῆς νικτὸς αὐτῆς, ἣ ἀπὸ τῆς διώξεως τῆς Δαρείου ἐπαῆρκεν,
 σκηνήν παρελθόντα αὐτὸν τὴν Δαρείου, ἣτις αὐτῷ ἐξηρημένη
 εἶχε γυναικῶν αἰμωγὴν καὶ ἄλλον τοιοῦτον θόρυβον οὐ πόρρω
 κτηνῆς· πυθέσθαι οὖν αἵτινες γυναῖκες καὶ ἀνθ' ὅτου οὕτως
 παρασκηνοῦσι· καὶ τινὰ ἐξαγγεῖλαι, ὅτι ὁ βασιλεῦς, ἡ μήτηρ τε
 καὶ ἡ γυνὴ Δαρείου καὶ οἱ παῖδες, ὡς ἐξηγγέλθη αὐταῖς ὅτι τὸ τόξον
 τοῦ Δαρείου ἔχεις καὶ τὸν κίνδυνον τὸν βασιλικὸν καὶ ἡ ἀσπίς ὅτι κε-
 ραῖται ὀπίσω ἢ Δαρείου, ὡς ἐπὶ τεθνεῶτι Δαρείῳ ἀνοσιμώζουσιν.

Ταῦτα ἀκούσαντα Ἀλέξανδρον πέμψαι πρὸς αὐτάς Λεοννάτον,
 τῶν ἐταίρων, ἐντειλάμενον φράσαι ὅτι ζῆν Δαρείου, τὰ δὲ ὅπλα
 καὶ τὸν κίνδυνον ὅτι φεύγων ἀπέλιπεν ἐπὶ τῷ ἄρματι καὶ ταῦτα ὅτι
 ἔχει Ἀλέξανδρος. Καὶ Λεοννάτον παρελθόντα ἐς τὴν σκηνήν
 ἔειπε τε περὶ Δαρείου εἰπεῖν καὶ ὅτι τὴν θεραπείαν αὐταῖς ζυγγωρεῖ
 Ἀλέξανδρος τὴν βασιλικὴν καὶ τὸν ἄλλον κόσμον καὶ καλεῖσθαι βα-
 σιλίσσας, ἐπεὶ οὐδὲ κατὰ ἔχθραν οἱ γενέσθαι τὸν πόλεμον πρὸς Δα-
 ρεῖον, ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀρχῆς τῆς Ἀσίας διαπεπολεμηῖσθαι ἐνόμωσεν.

6 Ταῦτα μὲν Πτολεμαῖος καὶ Ἀριστόβουλος λέγουσι· λόγος δὲ
 ἔχει καὶ αὐτὸν Ἀλέξανδρον τῇ ὑπεραίᾳ ἔλθειν εἰσω ξὺν Ἡφαιστίωνι
 μόνῳ τῶν ἐταίρων· καὶ τὴν μητέρα τὴν Δαρείου ἀμφιγροῦσασαν ὅσπερ
 ὁ βασιλεὺς εἶη αὐτοῖν, ἐστάλθαι γὰρ ἄμφω τῷ αὐτῷ κόσμῳ, τὴν δὲ
 Ἡφαιστίῳ προσελθεῖν καὶ προσκυνῆσαι, ὅτι μείζων ἐφάνη ἐκεῖνος.

7 Ὡς δὲ ὁ Ἡφαιστίων τε ὀπίσω ὑπεχώρησε καὶ τις τῶν ἀμφ'
 αὐτῆν, τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον δεῖξας, ἐκεῖνον ἔφη εἶναι Ἀλέξανδρον, τὴν
 μὲν καταιδεσθεῖσαν τῇ διαμαρτίᾳ ὑποχωρεῖν, Ἀλέξανδρον δὲ οὐ φά-
 ναι αὐτῆν ἁμαρτεῖν· καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖνον εἶναι Ἀλέξανδρον. Καὶ ταῦτα
 ἐγὼ οὐθ' ὡς ἀληθῆ ὅτε ὡς πάντῃ ἄπιστα ἀνεγράψα. Ἀλλ' εἴτε
 οὕτως ἐπράχθη, ἐπαινω Ἀλέξανδρον τῆς τε ἐς τὰς γυναῖκας κα-
 τοικτίσεως καὶ τῆς ἐς τὸν ἐταῖρον πίστεως καὶ τιμῆς· εἴτε πιθανὸς
 δοκεῖ τοῖς συγγράψασιν Ἀλέξανδρος ὡς καὶ ταῦτα ἀν πράξας καὶ
 εἰπὼν, καὶ ἐπὶ τῷδε ἐπαινω Ἀλέξανδρον.



MARTIN LUTHER

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES:

FROM THE EARLY CHURCH TO THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION

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INTRODUCTION

The apostle Paul makes the following declaration: “The same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2). The Amplified Version reads as follows: “The things [the doctrine, the precepts, the admonitions, the sum of my ministry] which you have heard me teach in the presence of many witnesses, entrust [as a treasure] to reliable *and* faithful men who will also be capable *and* qualified to teach others.” The apostle Paul’s desire was that the message he preached and taught would be communicated faithfully from generation to generation through faithful men. In the same manner, the apostle Peter shared his concern in his epistle: “I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease

to have these things always in remembrance” (2 Peter 1:15). Both of these great men were interested in seeing the gospel message transmitted by their disciples and to future believers.

Famed historian Justo Gonzalez vividly illustrates how the Scriptures came to us. “Even in the darkest times of the life of the church, there were those Christians who loved, studied, kept, and copied the Scriptures, and thus bequeathed them to us.”¹

In this document, we will examine the manner in which the transmission of Biblical truth was faithfully carried out by the early church fathers. We will also look at the role the Catholic and Orthodox churches played in the development of the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures until the Protestant Reformation, at which time a monumental change in the way Scripture was handled took place.

PART I: THE EARLY CHURCH FATHERS

- a. Clement of Rome
- b. Ignatius of Antioch
- c. Irenaeus of Lyons
- d. Clement of Alexandria
- e. Tertullian of Carthage

¹ Gonzalez, Justo L. *The Story of Christianity Volume I* (Harper: San Francisco, 1984), xvi.

Although there are various lists of church fathers, such as the Greek Fathers and the Latin Fathers, we will concentrate our efforts on those mentioned above. The Greek Fathers wrote in Greek while the Latin Fathers wrote in Latin. Some of the church fathers lived in close proximity to the time of the apostles while others were separated by time and distance. In addition to the early church fathers, we have the Syriac Fathers who were less well known and wrote in Syriac. They included Aphrahat, Ephrem the Syrian, Isaac of Antioch, and Isaac of Nineveh. They reflect the theological documents from the East. The Desert Fathers were early monastics who lived in the Egyptian desert. Although they didn't write as much, their information is still relevant. They included Anthony the Great and Pachomius.

Because of their close proximity to the original New Testament church, the early church fathers represent a strong and authoritative voice for us today as we look into their view of the Holy Scriptures. It is important for us to know what these church fathers believed and taught about the Holy Scriptures. In addition, it is important for us to know how they viewed the Holy Scriptures and what adjectives they used to describe them.

The early church encountered many challenges. Some of the main challenges were the persecution of the leaders and believers, the death of all of the apostles, and the rise of false teachings and heresies.

- **Persecution.** With the fall of Jerusalem and the dispersal of the Christians, Christianity started to spread

out in every direction of the Mediterranean world and beyond. Persecutions under Nero and other Roman emperors did not deter the church, it made it bolder as it did in the book of Acts.

- **The death of the apostles.** It is believed that Peter and Paul were martyred in Rome under the reign of emperor Nero around the time that Jerusalem was under siege. According to Mark Noll, Christianity was being transformed from a religion shaped in nearly every particular by its early Jewish environment into a religion advancing toward universal significance. Theological discussions were turning away from problems posed by the system of Jewish morality to issues framed by Hellenistic philosophy or Roman conceptions of order. Noll also mentions that the means by which the church came together in the face of external and internal pressure can be summarized simply as creed, canon and episcopacy.²
- **Heresies.** Gnosticism and Marcionism were two of the main doctrinal aberrations that the early church fathers confronted in the 2nd century. They did so with tenacity and by appealing to the Holy Scriptures.

² Noll, Mark *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity* (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI, 1997), 27-31.

How the church responds to these challenges would shape the historical and theological development of the church for years and centuries to come. However, it would also lead to the schism between East and West as well as the development of church councils and the concentration of power around a few bishops at the most important centers of Christianity, such as Rome, Alexandria and Antioch.

The writings of the early church fathers are important for two reasons:

1) Because of their close proximity to the time of the original apostles. Some of them had not only seen the apostles but were also familiar with their writings to the churches. Those that weren't close in proximity and distance such as Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian of Carthage were united in the same spirit and commitment to the Holy Scriptures.

2) They are the earliest responses of the church to the testimony of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection after the New Testament church. Therefore, they would be crucial evidences of the credibility of the writings of the apostles and the life of Christ. In addition, their testimony would prove which documents were genuine and which were spurious. At a time when copies of the entire Scriptures were rare or nonexistent, they were faithful to the writings of the apostles and the gospel message as relayed by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

CLEMENT OF ROME

Clement lived from A.D. 30 to 100 (all dates are approximate). He was probably a Gentile and a Roman. He seems to have been with Paul at Philippi (A.D. 57). He was the first to affirm the Apostolic authority of the clergy. Most scholars see this authority as more fraternal than authoritative. A large amount of his writings were done in Rome. From the apostle Paul, and his companion Luke, he had no doubt learned the use of the Septuagint. His knowledge of the Greek language made him especially adept at understanding it. However, his copy of that version didn't always agree with the Received Text, as the reader of his letter will perceive. He was a co-presbyter with Linus and Cletus, and probably succeeded them in the government of the Roman Church. After the death of the apostles, it appears that Clement was the natural representative of Paul.

His letter to the Corinthians is considered the earliest authentic Christian document outside the New Testament. Tradition unanimously attributes it to Clement. The *First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians*, as it is also called, is preserved in the British Museum in London, England. It is found in the writings of Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl. iii, 15*), of Origen and others.

The purpose of the letter was to restore the peace in Corinth, where they had removed the presbyters from the church. There are other letters attributed to him such as the 2nd epistle of Clement, the Epistles on Virginity and False Decretals, but all of them have proven to be spurious documents written in his name.

In reading through this original document, it is surprising how many Scriptures he makes reference to, both from the Septuagint and also from the New Testament, which at that time was starting to circulate, although not in a complete form.

In chapter 1 of the *First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians*, Clement makes reference to the Scriptures: “Who did not admire the sobriety and moderation of your godliness in Christ? Who did not proclaim the magnificence of your habitual hospitality? And who did not rejoice over your perfect and well-grounded knowledge? For ye did all things without respect of persons, and walked in the commandments of God, being obedient to those who had the rule over you, and giving all fitting honor to the presbyters among you.”³

We have another example in chapter 2 of the same epistle: “Content with the provision which God had made for you, and carefully attending to His words, ye were inwardly filled with His doctrine, and His sufferings were before your eyes.”⁴ And also: “Adorned by a thoroughly virtuous and religious life, ye did all things in the fear of God.

³ Clement of Rome. (1885). *The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians*. In A. Roberts, J. Donaldson, & A. C. Coxe (Eds.), *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus* (Vol. 1, p. 5). Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company.

⁴ Clement of Rome. (1885). *The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians*. In A. Roberts, J. Donaldson, & A. C. Coxe (Eds.), *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus* (Vol. 1, p. 5). Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company.

The commandments and ordinances of the Lord were written upon the tablets of your hearts.”⁵

In reading through the entire epistle, there are numerous quotes of the Holy Scriptures, both from the Old and the New Testament. He was also a close follower of Paul, which leads us to believe that he had a strong view of the power and legitimacy of the Scriptures and railed against those that were attempting to hijack the truth by means of heresy and or unbelief.

In summary, it appears that Clement of Rome follows in the tradition of the great apostle Paul. He uses very similar language about the Scripture. It also helps that he had been close enough to Paul to have heard him. His faith is unwavering and had not yet been tainted by the philosophies and heresies of the latter part of the first century of the church.

IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH (A.D. 30-107)

As the second (or third) bishop of Antioch, one of the most important churches of the day, he was certainly one of the most prominent Christians of the time immediately succeeding the apostles.

⁵ Clement of Rome. (1885). The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians. In A. Roberts, J. Donaldson, & A. C. Coxe (Eds.), *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus* (Vol. 1, p. 5). Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company.

Though most famous for being one of the church's earliest post – New Testament martyrs, his letters also served to record the rapid development of church hierarchy. In those days, there was a great need to establish credibility and the best way to achieve it was to be connected in some way to one of the apostles. Ignatius stood firm for the proclamation of the tenets of the gospel. He wrote extensively, his most famous work being the Epistle to the Romans. There are 15 epistles that bear his name, although 8 are considered spurious. Almost nothing is known about him except for his anticipated martyrdom, which he mentions in the epistle to the Romans and also in the letter to Polycarp. He voluntarily went before Trajan at Antioch and was condemned to wild beasts. It is said that on his road to martyrdom, he wrote 7 letters, which reflected the thought and life of the beginning of the 2nd century.

His famous words, which he wrote in his letter to the church in Rome: “Allow me to become food for the wild beasts, through whose means it will be granted me to reach God. I am the wheat of God, and am ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of Christ.”

In the *Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians*: “Study, therefore, to be established in the doctrines of the Lord and the apostles, that so all things, whatsoever ye do, may prosper both in the flesh and spirit; in faith and love...”⁶

⁶ Ignatius of Antioch. (1885). The Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians. In A. Roberts, J. Donaldson, & A. C. Coxe (Eds.), *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus* (Vol. 1, p. 64). Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company.

In the *Epistle of Ignatius to the Philadelphians* – Do not err, my brethren. If any man follows him that makes a schism in the Church, he shall not inherit the kingdom of God. If any one walks according to a strange opinion, he agrees not with the passion [of Christ].⁷ And also: But the Gospel possesses something transcendent [above the former dispensation], viz., the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ, His passion and resurrection. For the beloved prophets announced Him, but the Gospel is the perfection of immortality.⁸

The Syriac Version of the Ignatian Epistle

The Syrian Christians spoke a language known as Syriac, closely akin to Aramaic. They produced a Bible translation (the Peshitta), commentaries, and other works expounding and defending the Christian faith. In these documents in the Syrian version, Ignatius argues for the finality of Scriptures and the important role of Jesus' ministry: "When I heard some saying, If I do not find it in the ancient Scriptures, I will not believe the Gospel; on my saying to them, It is written, they answered me, That remains to be proved. But to me Jesus Christ is in the place of all that is ancient: His cross, and death, and resurrection, and the faith which is by Him,

⁷ Ignatius of Antioch. (1885). *The Epistle of Ignatius to the Philadelphians*. In A. Roberts, J. Donaldson, & A. C. Coxe (Eds.), *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus* (Vol. 1, p. 80). Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company.

⁸ Ignatius of Antioch. (1885). *The Epistle of Ignatius to the Philadelphians*. In A. Roberts, J. Donaldson, & A. C. Coxe (Eds.), *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus* (Vol. 1, p. 84). Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company.

are undefiled monuments of antiquity; by which I desire, through your prayers, to be justified.⁹

IRENAEUS OF LYON

Irenaeus was the most important defender of essential Christian doctrine in the second century. He was especially effective in combating the heresy of Gnosticism, a cult that stressed secret knowledge (*gnosis*) as the way to salvation. Irenaeus contended with the gnostic leader Marcion, who taught that the Old Testament and New Testament reveal two different Gods. Irenaeus powerfully refuted Marcion by demonstrating the interrelationship of the two Testaments.¹⁰

He was the bishop of Lugdunum in Gaul, which is now Lyons, France. His best known book, *Against Heresies* (c. 180) enumerates heresies and attacks them. Irenaeus wrote that the only way for Christians to retain unity was to humbly accept one doctrinal authority through episcopal councils. He also proposed that the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John all be accepted as canonical. His novel approach for proposing their acceptance was an appeal to nature to tell the life of Christ: “For, since there are four zones of the world in which we live,

⁹ Ignatius of Antioch. (1885). The Epistle of Ignatius to the Philadelphians. In A. Roberts, J. Donaldson, & A. C. Coxe (Eds.), *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus* (Vol. 1, p. 84). Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company.

¹⁰ Cabal, T. (2007). Notable Christian Apologist: Irenaeus. In C. O. Brand, E. R. Clendenen, P. Copan, & J. P. Moreland (Eds.), *The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith* (p. 1866). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

and four principal winds, while the world is scattered throughout the world, and the 'pillar and ground' of the church is the gospel and the spirit of life; it is fitting that she should have four pillars, breathing out immortality on every side, and [kindling human life anew]. From which fact, it is evident that the Word... He who was manifested to men, has given us the gospel under four aspects, but bound together by one Spirit."¹¹

In his book *Against Heresies*, Irenaeus explains how the Valentinians pervert their scriptures to support their opinions. In so doing, he elevates his view of Scripture. "Such, then, is their system, which neither the prophets announced, nor the Lord taught, nor the apostles delivered, but of which they boast that beyond all others they have a perfect knowledge. They gather their views from other sources than the Scriptures; and, to use a common proverb, they strive to weave ropes of sand, while they endeavor to adapt with an air of probability to their own peculiar assertions the parables of the Lord, the sayings of the prophets, and the words of the apostles, in order that their scheme may not seem altogether without support. In doing so, however, they disregard the order and the connection of the Scriptures, and so far as in them lies, dismember and destroy the truth. By transferring passages, and dressing them up anew, and making one thing out of another, they succeed in deluding many through their wicked art in adapting the oracles of the Lord to their opinions."¹²

¹¹ Noll, Mark, 35.

¹² Irenaeus of Lyons. (1885). *Irenaeus against Heresies*. In A. Roberts, J. Donaldson, & A. C. Coxe (Eds.), *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus* (Vol. 1, p. 326). Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company.

“For this is the very greatest impiety. We should leave things of that nature to God who created us, being most properly assured that the Scriptures are indeed perfect, since they were spoken by the Word of God and His Spirit; but we, inasmuch as we are inferior to, and later in existence than, the Word of God and His Spirit, are on that very account destitute of the knowledge of His mysteries.”¹³

In general, Irenaeus of Lyon saw the importance of sorting out the true from the false. He valued truth above all, and skillfully used the Scriptures to attack the false heresies that were prevalent at that time. He set the groundwork for the publication of the Muratorian Canon, the first list of authoritative Christian writings very similar to the New Testament we use today. This was in response to Marcion’s publication of his own severely limited and heavily edited version of the Scriptures.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA (c. 150 – c. 215 A.D.)

Very little is known about his personal life. It is believed that he was born in Athens and became a pupil of Pantaenus in Alexandria. He later became a teacher himself and his greatest contribution was confronting the errors of Gnosticism while at the same time elevating the doctrines of Christianity to reach the intellectuals and the learned of his day by seeing in

¹³ Irenaeus of Lyons. (1885). *Irenæus against Heresies*. In A. Roberts, J. Donaldson, & A. C. Coxe (Eds.), *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus* (Vol. 1, p. 399). Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company.

Christianity the fulfilment both of the Old Testament Scriptures and of Greek philosophy.¹⁴ He wrote three books to expound on his views.

In his *Exhortation to the Heathens*, Clement declares the superiority of Scripture: “But let us bring from above out of heaven, Truth, with Wisdom in all its brightness, and the sacred prophetic choir, down to the holy mount of God; and let Truth, darting her light to the most distant points, cast her rays all around on those that are involved in darkness, and deliver men from delusion, stretching out her very strong right hand, which is wisdom, for their salvation.”¹⁵

He also attempted to show the importance of the Christian faith. “Away then, away with our forgetfulness of the truth!” he exhorted. “Let us remove the ignorance and darkness that spreads like a mist over our sight, and let us get a vision of the true God.”

In *The Instructor*, he equates the Word or Logos with Christ. “But the Word is keen-sighted, and scans the recesses of the heart. As, then, that is not light which enlightens not, nor motion that moves not, nor loving which loves not, so neither is that good which profits not, nor guides to salva-

¹⁴ Cross, F. L., & Livingstone, E. A. (Eds.). (2005). In *The Oxford dictionary of the Christian Church* (3rd ed. rev., p. 367). Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

¹⁵ Clement of Alexandria. (1885). *Exhortation to the Heathen*. In A. Roberts, J. Donaldson, & A. C. Coxe (Eds.), *Fathers of the Second Century: Hermas, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus, and Clement of Alexandria (Entire)* (Vol. 2, p. 171). Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company.

tion. Let us then aim at the fulfilment of the commandments by the works of the Lord; for the Word Himself also, having openly become flesh, exhibited the same virtue, both practical and contemplative. Wherefore let us regard the Word as law, and His commands and counsels as the short and straight paths to immortality; for His precepts are full of persuasion, not of fear

Wherefore let us regard the Word as law, and His commands and counsels as the short and straight paths to immortality; for His precepts are full of persuasion, not of fear.¹⁶

On the writing of the Septuagint, the Greek Old Testament, in his *Miscellanies or the Stromata*: “For the Macedonians being still in possession of Asia, and the king being ambitious of adorning the library he had at Alexandria with all writings, desired the people of Jerusalem to translate the prophecies they possessed into the Greek dialect. And they being the subjects of the Macedonians, selected from those of highest character among them seventy elders, versed in the Scriptures, and skilled in the Greek dialect, and sent them to him with the divine books. And each having severally translated each prophetic book, and all the translations being compared together, they agreed both in meaning and expression. For it was the counsel of God carried out for

¹⁶ Clement of Alexandria. (1885). The Instructor. In A. Roberts, J. Donaldson, & A. C. Coxe (Eds.), *Fathers of the Second Century: Hermas, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus, and Clement of Alexandria (Entire)* (Vol. 2, p. 211). Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company.

the benefit of Grecian ears. It was not alien to the inspiration of God, who gave the prophecy, also to produce the translation, and make it as it were Greek prophecy. Since the Scriptures having perished in the captivity of Nabuchodonosor, Esdra the Levite, the priest, in the time of Artaxerxes king of the Persians, having become inspired in the exercise of prophecy restored again the whole of the ancient Scriptures.¹⁷

It is admirable to see how these early church fathers were able to stand against heresies and in favor of the truth of Scriptures under such severe circumstances. There were very few copies of the Holy Scriptures, no study books, or concordances. Even then they stood firm and defended the gospel truth as they had learned it from others.

TERTULLIAN

Perhaps the best known of all the defenders of Christianity was without a doubt *the Apologetics* attributed to Tertullian of Carthage, in which he unleashes all of his talents and resources as a lawyer. All the apologists affirm the injustice of the accusations against the Christians, as well as the judgments and condemnations during the persecutions.

¹⁷ Clement of Alexandria. (1885). *The Stromata, or Miscellanies*. In A. Roberts, J. Donaldson, & A. C. Coxe (Eds.), *Fathers of the Second Century: Hermas, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus, and Clement of Alexandria (Entire)* (Vol. 2, p. 334). Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company.

In his majestic book *The History of the Christian Church*, Philip Schaff describes how the early Christian apologists defended themselves from the withering attacks of the heathen philosophers. They stood “ready always to give an answer to every man that asked them a reason of the hope that was in them” (1 Peter 3:15). They had to add to their simple practical testimony “the Christian apology against non-Christian opponents.” These are the first examples of Christian apologetics.¹⁸

Tertullian, on the issue of women being veiled, speaks about the use of reason and tradition, when Scripture is not present: “If, for these and other such rules, you insist upon having positive Scripture injunction, you will find none. Tradition will be held forth to you as the originator of them, custom as their strengthener, and faith as their observer. That reason will support tradition, and custom, and faith, you will either yourself perceive, or learn from some one who has. Meanwhile you will believe that there is some reason to which submission is due.”¹⁹

Also, “From what and through whom, and when, and to whom, has been handed down that rule, by which men become Christians?” For wherever it shall be manifest that the true Christian rule and faith shall be, *there* will likewise

¹⁸ Schaff, Philip *History of the Christian Church Vol. I* (Scribner: New York, 1869), 197.

¹⁹ Tertullian. (1885). The Chaplet, or De Corona. In A. Roberts, J. Donaldson, & A. C. Coxe (Eds.), *Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian* (Vol. 3, p. 95). Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company.

be the true Scriptures and expositions thereof, and all the Christian traditions.”²⁰

Again from *The Prescription against Heretics*, he speaks about the priority of truth “Let me return, however, from this digression to discuss the priority of truth, and the comparative lateness of falsehood, deriving support for my argument even from that parable which puts in the first place the sowing by the Lord of the good seed of the wheat, but introduces at a later stage the adulteration of the crop by its enemy the devil with the useless weed of the wild oats. For herein is figuratively described the difference of doctrines, since in other passages also the word of God is likened unto seed. From the actual order, therefore, it becomes clear, that that which was first delivered is of the Lord and is true, whilst that is strange and false which was afterwards introduced.”²¹

In summary, the early church fathers quote the Old Testament just like the apostles and treat the Holy Scriptures with the same reverence and respect. Clement of Rome assigns to the Scriptures of both Testaments the fullest inspiration; they are “the true sayings of the Holy Ghost.”²²

²⁰ Tertullian. (1885). *The Prescription against Heretics*. In A. Roberts, J. Donaldson, & A. C. Coxe (Eds.), P. Holmes (Trans.), *Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian* (Vol. 3, pp. 251–252). Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company.

²¹ Tertullian. (1885). *The Prescription against Heretics*. In A. Roberts, J. Donaldson, & A. C. Coxe (Eds.), P. Holmes (Trans.), *Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian* (Vol. 3, p. 258). Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company.

²² Pope, W. B. (1879). *A Compendium of Christian Theology: being analytical outlines of a course of theological study, biblical, dogmatic, historical, volumes 1-3* (Vol. 1, p. 178). London: Beveridge and Co.

PART II: DEVELOPMENT OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES THROUGH THE CATHOLIC AND ORTHODOX CHURCHES

How did the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures develop afterwards through the Catholic and Orthodox churches?

The effect of the church councils was to standardize doctrine and have just one point of view throughout the church. Because of the many heresies that threatened the early church, the early church fathers hastened to solidify doctrinal beliefs and the canon was established. It was initially started in response to the Marcionian doctrine of selectively picking and choosing which books of the New Testament to adopt and which to take out. It was not done quickly but rather took years to take hold. The Gospels and the writings of Paul were the first to be accepted and soon the others were included. The value placed on Scripture in those days was incalculable. Great care was taken to copy meticulously the earliest manuscripts and to transmit them faithfully to the next generation of believers.

In his book, *History of Christian Thought*, Justo Gonzalez dwells on the important issue on why the faith of the apostles was abandoned little by little. He asks: Can we not see the development of Christian thought from the day of Pentecost to the days of Chalcedon as a vast though unconscious apostasy in which the original gospel was abandoned in favor of seeking vain philosophies and dogmatics. He then states that

this seems to simplify the issue. The early church needed to adapt the message to a Hellenistic world and to a philosophy which was alien to Christianity. In the process, the gospel lost its original purity as it adapted itself to Greek and Roman culture. The church was no longer the same church that had been persecuted and with little political power. It now had social and political power, which changed dramatically the way Scriptures were viewed.²³

When emperor Constantine professed the Christian faith, the church entered into a new era. Christianity became the favored religion instead of the persecuted religion. The state took upon itself the role of defining and defending theological orthodoxy. C.F. Henry states that in every church epoch, it is the fate of the Bible that decides the fate of Christianity. If the Bible is erroneous, eschatology and pneumatology have no firm basis; all doctrines depend on the truth of Scripture. If criteria exist anywhere or anytime that are superior to Scripture, then Scripture does not and cannot finally decide anything.²⁴ We would do well to heed this warning as we study the importance of the Holy Scriptures in these perilous times.

²³ Gonzalez, Justo L. *Historia del Pensamiento Cristiano Tomo I* (Editorial Caribe: Miami, FL, 1992), 365.

²⁴ Henry, C. F. H. (1999). *God, revelation, and authority* (Vol. 4, p. 380). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

In time, this led to a schism between the Eastern and the Western segments of Christianity, to what is now known as the Catholic and Orthodox churches. The controversy between the East and the West was highlighted by the difference in interpretation of the Holy Scriptures and the expression of that Word in the realm of liturgy and episcopal authority. In the West, the emperor had the last word. Not only in civil and administrative issues, but also in doctrinal themes. Debates were won with the approval of the emperor and not necessarily by who was right or wrong.

Another important issue that led to the separation between East and West was the Henotikon of Zeno. This was an edict that emperor Zeno proclaimed in 482 A.D. Henotikon means Edict of Reunion. The theological issue being addressed was the dual nature of Jesus Christ and more specifically, how humanity and divinity are joined in Jesus. The Council of Chalcedon had previously approved a declaration to settle the issue.

Although the issue being addressed was not very important in the West, in the East, it became a very serious controversy for it also had political overtones. For Zeno, the definition of faith approved by the Council of Chalcedon was not valid. He argued that the churches should be restored to unity, and that no symbol or definition of faith should be accepted, except what was approved at Nicea and Constantinople by the holy fa-

thers. Since Pope Felix II did not believe that Zeno had the authority to issue this edict, the level of tension was raised, which led to the schism between the East and the West.²⁵

THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH

The 12th century became a major dividing line for medieval Christianity for the following reasons:

1. The schism between East and West is a major issue that divided medieval Christianity.
2. There was a major increase in scholasticism, not only among scholars and theologians but also among the middle class. Among them were Anselm and Thomas Aquinas²⁶.
3. Rejection of the Ransom theory of atonement in favor of the Satisfaction Theory. This was a change in theology which paved the way for a change in the polity of the church under the Lollards and John Wycliffe. This would not have been possible earlier.²⁷

²⁵ Bettenson, Henry, ed. *Documents of the Christian Church* (Oxford: London, 1963), 89-91.

²⁶ Bettenson, Henry, ed. 137-38; 139-151.

²⁷ Bettenson, 138-139.

4. Moving away from superstition (in the sacraments and church hierarchy). This was championed by the Lollards and John Wycliffe. One of his major contributions was his acceptance of the Bible as the sole rule of faith, interpreted without any historical perspective²⁸

CONCLUSION

By the time of the Protestant Reformation, the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures was firmly embedded in the life and culture of the church. The only problem was that only the Church had the right and privilege to interpret Scripture. Very few people had the opportunity to own and much less read the Scriptures. The image of a Bible chained inside the church vividly represented the shackles that had been placed on the Holy Scriptures.

Johannes Gutenberg's invention of the printing press in the mid 1400s made it possible for the Bible to be given out to the masses, thus opening the floodgates that set forth the Reformation and allowed a fresh and more relevant view of the Holy Scriptures than had been experienced ever before in church history.

Fraternally,
Bishop J. G. Zúñiga

²⁸ Bettenson, 175-179.



THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

FROM THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION
TO MODERNITY

The Authority of the Scripture

Bishop Felipe A. Salazar,
General Secretary

Introduction

This historic symposium will determine how to deal with the fact that our church, the Apostolic Assembly, does not have in its Constitution a precise statement or doctrinal point of what it believes about the Bible. What is found in the Constitution of the Apostolic Assembly are, at best, a few statements that are correct, but given the controversies of the day, these statements are lacking in necessary clarity. The first is, “The Word of God is our rule of faith, and is the highest and final authority (Matthew 24:35).”¹ The second statement is “The

¹ *Constitution of the Apostolic Assembly of the Faith in Christ Jesus*, (Rancho Cucamonga, CA 2015) p. iv

Apostolic Assembly respects and acknowledges the Bible as the Word of God, the Supreme Book, and the Law to which all ministers, members, and this Constitution must adhere.”²

Considering the controversies surrounding the Bible in many academic circles, and considering the additional fact that our church has placed a high emphasis on the academic study of the Scriptures employing seminaries that are more liberal in their understanding of Scripture, the time has come to state with absolute clarity what our church has confessed since the beginning that the Bible, as given to the Apostles and Prophets, is perfect. What we at one time simply assumed to be true cannot be taken for granted today. This position, that the Bible is inerrant, has been the incontrovertible teaching of the universal church for 1800 years. It has only been in the last two hundred years of church history that this fundamental doctrine has come under attack.

In his book, *The Battle for the Bible*, Doctor Harold Lindsell begins with this statement:

“Of all the doctrines connected with the Christian faith, none is more important than the one that has to do with the basis of our religious knowledge. For anyone who professes the Christian faith the root question is: From where do I get my knowledge on which my faith is based? The

² Constitution of the Apostolic Assembly of the Faith in Christ Jesus, (Rancho Cucamonga, CA 2015) p.66

answers to this question are varied, of course, but for the Christian at least it always comes full circle to the Bible. When all has been said and done, the only true and dependable source for Christianity lies in the book we call the Bible.”³

The story of Doctor Lindsell serves to illustrate the danger that entire denominations are facing today. Doctor Lindsell wrote *The Battle for the Bible* because Fuller Theological Seminary, which he helped found, had, in practice, set aside their confession of the inerrancy of the Scriptures. Fuller Theological Seminary, that had previously required their professors to confess their acceptance of the principle of the inerrancy of the Scriptures, began to allow their professors to teach at the seminary without a commitment to this central teaching. It was out of his concern that the seminary had changed its position that Doctor Lindsell resigned his position with the seminary and eventually wrote this book expressing his concerns for what he considered to be a serious threat to the evangelical faith. The debate regarding the inerrancy of the Scriptures has only increased since then.

Doctor Lindsell’s introductory statement is important because it succinctly states the issue before the church. Is the Bible an absolutely reliable source of knowledge for the Christian? The Apostolic Assembly, since its inception, has believed it is. In fact, that belief has been the bedrock of our doctrinal

³ Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1981), p57

positions. In the past, when questions have arisen regarding our faith and doctrine, the Bible has been the only authority that the church used to resolve those issues. Our forefathers searched the Scriptures looking to every word and its meaning to draw their conclusions; every word, every sentence they considered true; whatever it said was considered right.

Currently, thirty-five years after the publication of his book, seminary after seminary and denomination after denomination have succumbed to the academic assault of the Bible; the number of churches and seminaries that faithfully hold to the teaching of inerrancy has greatly diminished. This possibility is one this Symposium must eliminate for the Apostolic Assembly.

The Scope of this Study

In this study, there will be an analysis of two specific events in church history: the Pre-Reformation and Reformation. The study will consider the life of some of the key reformers. From these eminent persons in church history it will determine that there are two ways in which truth has been challenged historically. The first is by adding to God's Word from other sources of equal authority (addition); and the second, by stating that portions of the Scriptures are not true (subtraction). Either of these two approaches, in effect, have the same result: they diminish the authority of the Word of God. This analysis will endeavor to support the idea that the reformers considered the elevation of the church's authority to the sta-

tus of absolute as playing a fundamental role in the church's moral and spiritual decline. To elevate any authority (be it the church, tradition or councils) to the level of the Bible, is to in effect diminish the Bible's authority. This study will advance the idea that to officially adopt a view of the Scriptures that allows for errors is to open the door to the eventual erosion of the Bible's authority. Finally, there will be an application of the lessons that were learned to the Church (the Apostolic Assembly), and a suggested statement that might be included in the Constitution of the Apostolic Assembly regarding the Word of God.

Brief History of the Reformation

For the first eighteen hundred years of church history, the vast majority of Christians considered the Bible to be the perfect and inerrant Word of God. There was no debate over the authority of the Scriptures. The major theological discussions of the time were over canonicity, which was to confirm what books were to be included in the sacred volume called the Bible. The Reformation struggle was not to restore the understanding that the Bible is without error; it was in part, to overturn the idea that the church had the same authority as the Scriptures. The question was not one of authority it was one of sufficiency. What was the scope of the Pope's and the Ecclesiastical Council's authority? Was the Bible the sufficient rule of Faith and doctrine or were there other competing absolute authorities? Was the Bible the final authority in all matters of faith and practice or were there other equal

authorities? The answer by the Roman Catholic Church to that all-important question was, “No. The Bible is not the sole authority.” Father J. Brian Bransfield author of the article, *Bible at Core of Catholic Teaching*, starts the article by stating, “People ask if everything Catholics believe is found in the Bible. The answer? Both “yes” and “no.” The Church “does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the Holy Scriptures alone” (Catechism of the Catholic Church [CCC] no. 82 Dei Verbum 9). The Catholic Church accepts the Bible’s authority, but it rejects its sufficiency.⁴

The Catholic Church believed then, and believes today, in the concept of **dual authority**. Dual authority indicates that there are two sources of authority for the Catholic Church: one is the Bible and the other is the church. Roman Catholicism teaches that the Church through the Papacy and church councils can establish traditions and doctrines that are equal in authority with the Scriptures. Some believed then and still claim that because the Catholic Church wrote the Bible it has total authority to establish doctrine. This teaching is obviously a monumental error that has had devastating consequences on the church. The problem with Catholicism has never been a low view of the scriptures. In fact, they hold that the scriptures are inerrant. Doctor Lindsell affirms this when he highlights two things Catholics do not believe of the

⁴ Father J. Brian Bransfield, “Bible at the Core of Catholic Beliefs”, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, accessed October 25, 2015, <http://uscbb.org/bible/understanding-the-bible/study-materials/articles/bible-at-core-of-catholic-beliefs.cfm>

Scriptures. Contrary to what many evangelicals believe today, he says Catholicism does not believe that,

“the Holy Spirit ‘secured the writers from error only in matters of faith and morals. . . ’ [In other words, they reject the idea that the scriptures are only true in part.] . . . The other view that the Roman Catholic Church repudiated was mechanical dictation.”⁵

Catholicism rejects the idea that inerrancy was limited in its scope. They believe that all Scripture is inerrant, not just part of it. They also believe that when the Holy Spirit was inspiring the writers of the Bible they were not robots of sorts, writing in some kind of spiritual trance outside of their personalities. They believe that the writers of the Bible wrote the Holy Scriptures, the perfect Word of God, within the confines of their personalities and capacities. They confess that the Bible is correct in all matters small and great. However, the Catholic Church additionally argues that nowhere in the Scriptures does the Bible teach that the Bible is the sole authority of the church so they elevated the church’s authority to be equal with the scriptures. In making this claim, and by elevating the dictates of the Popes and of the Ecclesiastical Councils to the level of the Scriptures, the clear result was the lowering of the authority of the Scripture, the damaging of the status of the Christian faith, and the introduction of doctrines and practices that have no basis in the Scriptures.

⁵ Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan 1981), p.54

How does one lower the Bible's authority?

The Bible's authority is lowered when the Bible is said to contain errors. Another way of saying this is to say that the Bible is only correct in "matters of faith and practice". In this case, reason (the arguments used to show Scripture has erred) is exalted over the Scriptures and the Scriptures become subject to fallible human thought. The second way the Scriptures' authority is lowered is when the church says that the God-inspired-Scriptures are equivalent to the inspirations of men. The latter is the error that the Catholic Church committed.

During the Renaissance, the reformers understood that foundational to any reform the church would undergo was the principle of the sufficiency of Scripture; hence, the foundational cry of the reformation "**Sola Escritura.**" The doctrinal corruption of the church and the moral corruption of the church leadership was a consequence of the idea that the church had authority on par with the Scriptures. The corruption was a result, not the problem. The church lost credibility with the reformers because of its use of papal authority and church councils to justify errant doctrines and practices that contradicted the Scriptures. Throughout church history, the Bible was the rule by which all teachings and practices were judged to be either right or wrong. It has not always been the sole rule, as in the lamentable case of Catholicism, but it has been a perfect rule.

Saint Jerome (342AD to 420AD)

One thousand years before the reformers, during a time known by church historians as the time of the Church Fathers, lived a man named Jerome. History knows him as Saint Jerome. Jerome lived from 342AD to 420AD and is most prominently known for having translated the Bible to the common language of the people. In the time that Jerome lived, several factors influenced him to translate the Bible into the people's language.

First, he lived in a time when the books of the Bible had not yet been compiled into one book. The canon of Scripture was still being compiled. Second, some of the translations of the Bible had been translated with small variations from the original texts. A number of those variations (interpolations) had been interjected accidentally, while others had been added intentionally to favor a particular teaching. Third, most of the people in the Roman Empire did not know how to read. The place where the people heard the Scriptures read was in church. Fourth, books were very expensive because they were hand written so few people owned books. Fifth, while most of the people in the Roman Empire understood Greek, the people in the western part of the Roman Empire only spoke Latin. Jerome was concerned that all the people understood the Scriptures when they were read. Although there were other Latin Bibles circulating at the time of Saint Jerome, his Latin Vulgate version became the most accepted version and eventually the official version of the Roman Empire. The word vulgate derives from the word

“vulgar” which simply means “common”. Jerome translated the Bible from the original Hebrew and Greek into Latin to give the common man understanding of the Scriptures.

One thousand years after Jerome, the Bible was still being read to the people in Latin. The problem was that Latin had died as a form of communication among the people. Jerome’s intention had long ago been lost. The people once again sat in church and heard the Scriptures read in a language they did not understand.

John Wycliffe (1331 – 1384)

A massive factor that contributed to the darkness of the Middle Ages in which the Reformers were born, was the loss of the Scriptures. At that dismal time preceding the Reformation, the people once again heard the Word without understanding. This period of time for the common man must have been like the time described by the Prophet Isaiah in Mathew 4:16, “The people . . . sat in darkness.”

John Wycliffe was born in 1331 into a relatively wealthy family. He was one of those men that would lose his life to bring the Word to the people. He was a brilliant and intellectually gifted man. Most of the reformers were brilliant men. Thomas Cranmer from England, John Knox from Scotland, Martin Luther from Germany, Huldrych Zwingli from Switzerland, and John Calvin from France were all learned men who loved the truth more than they loved their own lives.

At the early age of thirty, John Wycliffe became a professor at Oxford University. He earned his doctorate in 1372. The access to the Scriptures and Biblical insight that his university education afforded him began to change his understanding of basic Catholic doctrines. When John Wycliffe began to study the New Testament, he compared the simple life of the New Testament believers to that of the luxurious, and at times licentious, lifestyle practiced by the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. The contrast greatly troubled him. Furthermore, and perhaps more significantly, his studies of the New Testament eventually led him to an understanding of the doctrine of Justification by Faith and not by works. Wycliffe's understanding of this doctrine was very similar to what Martin Luther would come to understand during the reformation period. Having come to a clearer understanding of salvation he must have grown concerned that the common people did not have the Scriptures available to them as he did in order to understand these truths. He grew troubled by the fact that the religious authorities of his day were not faithfully communicating the Gospel as the Bible taught it. Consequently, John Wycliffe led the effort to translate the Scriptures into English, which he finished in 1380. Wycliffe was deeply motivated to translate the Scriptures into English for at least three reasons: First, as a result of the church having lost the scriptures the church was morally corrupt and needed the healing balm of the Scriptures. Second was the idea that each person is responsible before God for their lives. And third, was the truth that the Scriptures are the sole authority over the church. In his study

of the Church of England, Herbert Workman describes Wycliffe's commitment to the sole authority of the Scriptures when he writes:

“Wycliffe sweeps away the whole mass of tradition, doctrine, and ordinances which set themselves as of equal or superior value to Scriptures, nor would he allow that what the pope decrees in matters of faith must be received, observed, and carried out as if it were Gospel. Such a claim would make the pope into Christ. Scripture alone is the standard of papal authority,”⁶

Wycliffe's commitment was not only to the sole authority of the scriptures over popes and councils but also to the inerrancy of the scriptures. Church historian, Benjamin Hart, helps us to understand that Wycliff considered the Scriptures authoritative because they were perfect. They reigned supreme over all church authorities, which he understood were imperfect.

‘[Wycliffe] said. The Bible is ‘one perfect word, proceeding from the mouth of God,’ and is ‘the basis for every Catholic opinion.’ Wycliffe's thinking broke sharply from medieval scholasticism, which considered church tradition as co-equal in authority with Scripture;

⁰⁶ Herbert B. Workman, *John Wyclif A Study of the English Medieval Church* (Vol. 1&2. Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1966) P. 152.

many saw the Church as the primary authority, a view articulated by Guido Terreni, when he said that ‘the whole authority of Scripture depends upon the church.’ Wycliffe said this was wrong, and that in fact the opposite was the case: ‘In Holy Scripture is all truth.’⁷

Wycliffe’s reference to the Bible as “one perfect word” is extremely insightful. When Wycliffe describes the Bible as “one perfect word,” he sees the Scripture in its entirety, as being perfect. In his mind every word and line of the Bible was perfect because those were the very words of God. Wycliffe understood that ignorance of the Scripture was the primary reason people remained in spiritual bondage, and he was willing to confront Catholicism with his conviction. He saw Scriptures as the only true authority and the only means for liberating the people from their spiritual darkness. He viewed the Scriptures as the emancipating principle.

In 1376, John Wycliffe wrote a document called *De Civili Dominio*. In this document, among other things, he argued that: One, The King, not the Pope, had authority over worldly matters within his jurisdiction and the Pope only had authority over spiritual matters. Two, The Pope himself was subject to the Word of God and not above it. Three, Church leaders should live humbly and not in luxury. Four, The Scriptures should be available to all the people.

⁷ John Stacey, *John Wyclif and Reform* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964) P. 80-81.

This document was well received by many in the ruling class, but was rejected by the hierarchy of the Church and those loyal to it. Two of Wycliffe's points in *De Civili Dominio* are of particular interest to this study: First, The truth that the Bible has authority over the Pope, and Two, The people should have the Scriptures available in their own language. Once again, we see Wycliffe's conviction that the Scriptures were the liberating force. If the people were to be freed from their spiritual and moral decadence, the Scriptures were the key.

Wycliffe's focus on the Scriptures as the sole authority led him to an understanding of salvation that was far from the Roman Catholic teaching. Author G.M. Trevelyan highlights this fact:

“Wycliffe developed, as to the forgiveness of sins, a theory entirely different from that held by the Church. He did not believe that either penance or confession was necessary. Confession, however, he held to be good and useful, provided it was voluntary and made to a suitable person; best of all, it might be made in public as a sign of genuine repentance. But compulsory confession to a priest, who might be the most unsuitable of persons, he considered bad.”⁸

⁸ George Mcauley Trevelyan, *England in the Age of Wycliffe* (4ed. London, New York, Bombay and Calcutta: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1912; reprint, New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1966) P. 140-141.

Fundamental to the changing of Wycliffe's understanding of the doctrines of salvation was reestablishing the sole authority of the Scriptures. Before he could see truth clearly, the issue of sole authority had to be resolved. Once it was, the error of the soteriology of the Catholic Church became clear. Wycliffe's firm convictions about the sole authority of the Scriptures and his consequent discovery of truth eventually led him to translate the Scriptures in English. Of his motivation for translating the Scriptures Wycliffe said, "It helpeth Christian men to study the Gospel in that tongue in which they know best Christ's sentence."

In 1377, a year after the publication of *De Civili Dominio*, Pope Gregory XI issued a Papal Bull condemning John Wycliffe's document. Wycliffe was arrested in 1378. The Catholic Church brought him to trial two times on the charge of heresy. The first time he was brought to be judged for heresy, Pope Gregory XI brought him to trial and almost certainly would have burnt him at the stake; however, Pope Gregory XI died and the trial was postponed. The second time he was brought to trial, a great earthquake occurred on the very day of his trial, and the people who were judging him ran out of the courtroom fearing for their lives. Again, his life was spared by what seemed to be an intervention from God. He died some years later of a stroke, but not before he saw the Scriptures translated into the language of the people.

John Huss (1369 – 1415)

Not all who believed that the Bible was the highest authority and the perfect Word of God escaped via divine intervention. Some were tried in the fire. Similar to those referred to as “others . . . of whom the world was not worth”,⁹ John Huss would pay the ultimate price for his commitments to the Scriptures and Christ.

There was a great price for standing for the Word of God and speaking against the false doctrine and errant practices of the Catholic Church during the Reformation. Approximately 100 years before the birth of Martin Luther, John Huss was born. John Huss was born in Bohemia, which was part of the Holy Roman Empire. As a young man, he was a brilliant student at the University of Prague. He studied languages, theology and was a powerful preacher. However, his preaching was condemned because it was contrary to Catholic dogma. Although not very well known, this man served to demonstrate the firm conviction these men had to the Scriptures. History records that the men of the Reformation were men of strong convictions. It also serves to demonstrate the absolute authority the church exerted during the Middle Ages, as well as the dark places it was willing to pass to preserve its power and authority over the Word of God.

John Huss wrote and preached against the very problems Martin Luther would address one hundred years later.

⁹ King James Version of the Bible, 1960. Hebrews 11:36-38

Like Luther, he was a Catholic priest and grew greatly dissatisfied with the false teachings and the immorality he saw in the Catholic Church. In essence, his dissatisfaction with the doctrines and the practices of the church leadership was the result of rediscovering the perfect Word of God as preserved in the Bible. For John Huss, the Bible opened his eyes to the truth. In 1409, Pope Alexander III called John Huss a heretic for his bold stance in preaching the Word of God and against the church's teachings. Pope Alexander called for him to be immediately brought before a church council. After some cautious delay, he eventually presented himself before the Council of Constance because the Holy Roman Emperor had assured him safe passage to and from the trial. Huss's acceptance of the call to go to Constance was based on his deep conviction of what he taught was right because it was founded on Scripture, which he considered absolutely authoritative. When he arrived at Constance, the guards that escorted him turned on him and he was immediately arrested. He was placed in a dungeon for eight months under absolutely wretched conditions. When he was finally called to present himself before the council, he was in a bad physical state; nevertheless, he attempted to present a defense for his teachings. As he began his defense, he was immediately stopped and was told to recant his teachings. He responded that he would be glad to reconsider his teaching if it could be proven that what he was teaching was not biblical. Huss's convictions were solely based on Scripture. They had no dependence on church teaching or tradition. John Huss was immediately sentenced to death,

and the next day he was burned at the stake. The martyrdom of John Huss began a movement called “the Hussites which exists until today.” It is interesting to note that before the Reformation ever began Martin Luther was called a Hussite. John Huss’ revolutionary preaching, for which he was burned at the stake, did not gain wide acceptance or spark the Reformation. It did, however, spark a change among his people. The fact that John Huss’ ministry did not have a wider impact may have been in part because the manuscripts at the time were hand copied; and although they were copied and enjoyed wide distribution in Bohemia, they did not receive wider circulation. Some scholars think Huss might have become a mighty force one hundred years before Luther, but the technology had not yet evolved like that in Luther’s day, and that made an immense difference. In 1440, the invention of the Guttenberg Printing Press changed that reality by the time Martin Luther was born.

Martin Luther

The Protestant Reformation essentially changed western civilization. There is no doubt that the monumental figure of the Protestant Reformation is Martin Luther. Martin Luther was born into a Catholic home on November 10th 1483. He was born of middle class parents. His father was a bronze worker. When Luther was a child, his father noted that he had a brilliant mind. Luther’s father saw him as a means for the family to ascend the social ladder, so he sent him to the best schools he could afford in hope that Luther would become a lawyer. Luther excelled in his studies. It seemed that

the dreams of his father would be realized as he attended the University of Erfurt from 1501 to 1505.

We know of the moment that changed the direction of his life forever because he wrote about the experience. Luther mentioned that in 1505, he says that while on a trip to his hometown in Stotternhiem, Germany, he was caught in an electrical storm. During the storm, a lightning bolt nearly struck him, knocking him off his horse. At that moment of terror he cried out, “St. Anne, help me and I will become a monk”. Luther perceived the lightning bolt as a sign of God’s fury and judgment. That same year he became an Augustinian monk and joined a monastery. The Augustinian Monastery was not a place of comfort; it was a place where men lived austere lives. During his stay in the monastery, Luther exceeded his fellow monks in self-discipline. He excelled in the deprivations and severe mortifications he inflicted on himself. He lived with a sense that his sinfulness was too great. He spent great amounts of time in confession, meticulously examining himself and confessing his sins at the confessional. He felt no peace with God. In fact, the terror he felt on the day he cried out to Saint Ann seemed to accompany him until his conversion experience. He was ordained into the priesthood in 1507. He earned his bachelor’s degree in 1508. In 1512, he was awarded his Doctorate in Theology.

Luther’s spiritual breakthrough and conversion happened while studying the book of Romans at the University of Wittenberg. While reflecting on Romans 1:17, “For therein is

the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”,¹⁰ he had an epiphany. He described his experience in these words, “Then I began to understand the righteousness of God through which the righteous are saved by God’s grace – namely, through faith . . . Now I felt exactly as though I had been born again, and I believed I had entered Paradise through widely open gates.”

This revelation from God’s Word completely transformed Luther’s life and it became the impetus for his revolutionary ministry. Inseparably linked to the Reformation are the five “Solus.” They express the heart of the Reformation and the reason for it. The five “Solus” of the Reformation were *Sola Scriptura* (The Scriptures Alone); *Sola Gratia*, (Grace Alone); *Sola Fide* (Faith Alone); *Solus Christus* (Christ Alone); and *Soli dei Gloria* (for God’s Glory Alone). The five solas expressed five truths that drove the Reformation: One, that the perfect Word of God, the Bible, is the sole and absolute authority in all matters of faith and doctrine. Two, that grace, not works, is the only way for man to obtain righteousness before a perfect God. Three, that faith is the only means to be saved. Four, that Christ, not the church, is the only mediator between God and man and is the giver of salvation. And finally, that biblical salvation is not man-exalting through works, rather, it is God-exalting because through the plan of salvation God laid out for mankind. In it God alone receives the Glory. The first “Sola”

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King James Version Bible, Romans 1:17

(Sola Escritura) was the foundational “Sola” that made possible the following four “Solos”. In other words, the Reformation occurred because Luther and the other reformers restored, in their time, the Word of God to its rightful place. Once the sole authority of the scriptures was established, light was shed upon the errant teachings of the Catholic Church and the truth that had been hidden by the church tradition for many years surfaced.

The catalyst for the Reformation was the nailing of the 95 Thesis of Luther to the doors of the Wittenberg Castle. Contrary to what some might think, the nailing of the 95 Thesis on the gate of the Wittenberg Castle was not a dramatic act of defiance but rather an invitation to debate and dialogue. The document itself was not very long, it was only 95 sentences. Historian Bruce W. Gore notes that the 95 Thesis was put on the wall of Wittenberg Castle in a place where it was customary for others to post invitations to debate. He further notes that the 95 Thesis was written in Latin, a language that only the highly educated could read. The 95 Thesis was read by a man that could read Latin. He immediately took down the thesis, without Luther’s permission, and took it to the printing press. Within two weeks, Luther’s 95 Thesis spread through all of Germany. The Gutenberg Printing Press played a central role in the spreading of Luther’s message; something that was not available during the ministry of John Huss.

Luther's High View of the Scriptures

Luther's view of the Scriptures is important because it is foundational to the reforms he brought to the church. Sylvester Prierias took center stage in the controversy that swirled around Luther's 95 Thesis. The Catholic Church responded to the crisis Luther created by commissioning Sylvester Prierias to draft the official theological response to the 95 Thesis. His position, on the authority of the Scriptures was clear. He said, "He who does not accept the doctrine of the church of Rome and the Pontiff of Rome as an infallible rule of faith, from which the Holy Scriptures, too, draw their strength and authority, is a heretic."¹¹ Sylvester Prierias' statement was clear. The Scriptures themselves drew their "strength and authority from the church. Luther's writings were denominated heretical. However, Luther's position was also clear. In 1533 Luther said, "The Word of God is the greatest, most necessary, and most important thing in Christendom".¹² In response to the question, what was different about Luther's approach to the Scriptures? Heiko Oberman said that it was, "the notion of absolute obedience to the Scriptures against say authorities; be they popes or councils."¹³ Luther viewed the Scripture's authority as absolute. The question is why did Luther give

¹¹ Heiko A. Oberman, *Luther: Man Between God and the Devil*. Trans, Eileen Walliser-Schwarzbart, (New York:Doubleday, 1992, orig. 1982), p. 193

¹² What Luther Says: An Anthology, Vol.2, (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), p.913

¹³ Heiko A. Oberman, *Luther: Man Between God and the Devil*. Trans, Eileen Walliser-Schwarzbart, (New York: Doubleday, 1992, orig. 1982), p. 204

the Scriptures authority over all other authorities? The answer from his writings is because he, like Wycliffe before him, viewed the Scriptures as perfect and man's thoughts as fallible. This was clear from the defense Luther gave of this position when he stood before his accusers at the Diet of Worms. On that occasion he said:

“Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason, for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradict themselves, I am bound to the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. I cannot do otherwise, here I stand. May God help me, Amen.”¹⁴

Doctor Lindsell highlights Luther's belief that the Scriptures were perfect when he writes quoting Martin Luther:

“This I have learned to do: to hold only those books which are called the Holy Scriptures in such honor that I finally believe not one of the Holy writers ever erred.” Luther endorsed this view of Augustine and himself said, “The Scriptures have never erred” (XV: 1481). “The Scrip-

¹⁴ Stephen J. Nicols, *Martin Luther: A Guided Tour of His Life and Thought* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing Company, 2002), p. 41-42

tures cannot err.” (XIX: 1073). “It is certain that Scripture cannot disagree with itself.” (XX: 798). “It is impossible that Scripture should contradict itself, only this so appears to the senseless and hypocrites.” (XI: 356). “One little point of doctrine means more than heaven and earth, and therefore we cannot suffer to have the least jot thereof be violated.” (IX: 560). “For it is established by God’s word that God does not lie, nor does his word lie.” (XX: 798).¹⁵

When Luther referred to the Scriptures, he used powerful phrases that help us understand how he viewed the Bible, phrases like: “have never erred”, “cannot err”, “cannot disagree with itself”, “impossible that Scripture should contradict itself” when he refers to the Scriptures. So when Luther looked to the Scriptures he saw something that was entirely holy and right: He saw the Words of God.

Does this mean that Luther did not struggle with the Scriptures? Did Luther ever grapple with problem texts? Was he so blinded by his perspective that the Bible was God’s Word that he refused to acknowledge difficulties in the Scriptures? The answer to that is no. Luther was a brilliant man of meticulous scholarship. He did see that there were texts that posed problems. How did Luther deal with these texts? The

¹⁵ Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1981), p.57
Lindsell quotes Martin Luther

simple answer is that he attributed the anomalies to copyist's error, or to his lack of understanding. In other words, the error was human, not divine. Regarding this matter, Lindsell quotes Luther's response to those who were too quick to say the Bible was wrong:

“When Luther found an apparent discrepancy with respect to chronology, he refused to side with, ‘those rash men who in the case of a Bible difficulty are not afraid to say that the Scriptures is evidently wrong. I conclude the matter with a humble confession of my ignorance, for it is the Holy Spirit who knows and understands everything.’”¹⁶

Like Luther, John Calvin viewed the Scriptures as inerrant.¹⁷ When addressing Bible difficulties, he first affirmed that the Scriptures were without error and then proceeded to explain the irregularity. Again, when Luther read the Bible he was hearing God speak. “Let the man who would hear God speak, read the Scriptures.”¹⁸

¹⁶ Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1981), p.57
Edward A. Downey Jr. quotes Theodore Elgelder

¹⁷ Edward a Dowey, Jr., *The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology*, (New York, Columbia, 1052), p.91

¹⁸ What Luther Says: An Anthology, Vol.2, (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), p.62

Conclusion:

From the analysis on the lives of these reformers we have learned that the reformers rejected the two ideas that they saw as threatening the authority of Scripture. First, they rejected the idea that the Scriptures were subject to or equal to the church. Second, they rejected the idea that the Scriptures erred, calling those who dared to do so “rash men.” The authority of the Scriptures is of paramount importance to the entire kingdom. John Wycliffe, John Huss, Martin Luther, John Calvin and others were willing to stand against the immense pressures exerted upon them by the Popes and the Catholic Church. If necessary, they were willing to offer their lives for truth. They were men of conviction. They refused to bend because they believed that truth is the greatest cause; it is worth living for and, if necessary, dying for. John Piper in his article, “Martin Luther: Lessons from his life and labor” says that the reformers in essence rediscovered that “the Word of God comes to us in a form of a Book”.¹⁹ He is right. That was the discovery. God’s words are in a book, a perfect book.

As Apostolics, what lessons can we glean from this study, particularly, in light of the fact that we have gathered at this historic symposium to consider the creation of a statement affirming what we believe about the Bible? First, from the reformers we learn that truth is worth standing for against all external pressures. The Apostolic Assembly must resist all external pressure, whether they are ecclesiastical or academic,

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Weblog post. *DesiringGod*. John Piper, n.d. Web. 1 Nov. 2015.

to lower our view of the Scriptures. Second, from the reformers we learn that the Scriptures alone are above all other authorities. We learn that we should not diminish the Bible's authority by elevating other authorities (official decrees, constitutions, or ecclesiastical bodies) to be equal to or above the Scriptures. On this matter, our Constitution is clear when it says, "The Apostolic Assembly respects and acknowledges the Bible as the Word of God, the Supreme Book, and the Law to which all ministers, members, and this Constitution must adhere".²⁰ This statement of the Constitution is correct. Third, The Bible is perfect because it is the Word of God. This was true for the reformers. The reformers took great courage from the fact that they considered the Bible to be perfect as opposed to the church, which is not perfect.

There is a concerning discussion happening today in seminaries and denominations about the Bible. It revolves around the idea that the Bible has errors. In fact, in some classes that have been given to Apostolic Pastors and Bishops the professors have openly challenged the class to study Scripture without the assumption that the Bible is perfect. This is potentially problematic because the Apostolic student who studies the Scriptures has always done so with the underlying assumption that the scriptures do not err. The Scriptures today are under subtle attack, and we must take a stand on the side of the Scriptures. To stand for the Scriptures is to stand in a safe place. Some time ago, a highly educated Apostolic young lady

²⁰ *Constitution of the Apostolic Assembly of the Faith in Christ Jesus*, (Rancho Cucamonga, CA 2015) p.66

has had the privilege of attending and graduating from Harvard University with great success was asked how a liberal seminary education had affected the way she perceived the Scriptures. This student's response was that when attending a very liberal university, the attacks on the Bible were so evident that it was easy to detect the errors and reject them. However, after having graduated, when this student transferred McCormick Seminary, less liberal seminary, "the attacks on the Bible were much more subtle and more difficult to detect." I thought this student's comment was very insightful. The attack on the Scriptures is at first subtle, then eventually grows with intensity. It is first slightly liberal, then increasingly more liberal. Once the concession is made that the Scriptures have some errors, the challenges to the Scriptures' authority will grow. Lamentably, this has happened in some of the oldest denominations that come from the Reformation. Once they lost their belief in the absolute inerrancy of the Word, the floodgates were opened.

Our Apostolic heritage is one that has, throughout its history, sustained a high view of Scripture. Not varying from the classical Protestant view of the Scriptures, we affirm the reformers' perspective and declare that we also, against the pressures being exerted today, confess that the Holy Bible is perfect. We believe that the Bible is true in all matters it addresses, and that there is no greater authority on earth. Finally, I want to propose to this symposium a possible statement about the Word of God:

We believe that the Bible, in its entirety, is the perfect word of God. We affirm that it was originally given by God, through inspiration, to the holy men who wrote it (1 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21) We further affirm that these men, when writing, were kept from error in all matters great and small (Amos 3:8; Exodus 4:12,15). The Bible is, therefore, the final authority in all matters of doctrine, faith and practice because it echoes perfectly the words of a perfect God. We further affirm that the Bible has been preserved by the providence of God throughout the ages for the edification of the church and for the evangelization of the world. The Bible is truth (2 Samuel 7:28; Psalms 119:89,160; Proverbs 30:5-6; John 17:17-19; Colossians 1:5).

Bishop Felipe Alvarez Salazar



THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

IN THE EVANGELICAL & PROTESTANT CHURCH (CENTURY XX & XXI)

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This paper will preliminarily and tentatively lay out its arguments on biblical inerrancy, infallibility of Scripture, modernism, postmodernism, and Pentecostalism by using the following structure: 1) The Controversy Among Liberal-modernists and Fundamentalists over the inerrancy and infallibility of the Holy Scripture 2) Neo-orthodox Theology vs. Liberalism/Fundamentalist 3) Pentecostals' Theological Position and Perspective Over The Protestant Controversy 4) How should the Apostolic Assembly doctrine of the Bible respond to the present context? 5) How does the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures respond to Post Modernism and other movements at present? 6) What do living theologians teach about the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures?

During the 20th and 21st century, Modernism with its philosophical, scientific, and Biblical Criticism has Biblically, historically, and theologically co-opted how American Protestantism views the authority, inspiration, inerrancy, infallibility, and revelation of the Holy Scriptures. This essay will examine the relevancy of the controversy for early and contemporary Apostolic Pentecostals' understanding of themselves in relation to the Word of God. This understanding can help inform contemporary Apostolicism in their engagement with post-modernity.

In 1900, America and the world were being thrust into modernity with its many geopolitical, philosophical, theological, macro technological events on life (Darwin, Barth, Bonheoffer, Marx, Freud, Schleiermacher, and Wellhausen). This was evident in the individualism, philosophical imaginary, and religious consciousness of America's Protestantism. Religion Historian R. G. Robins *Pentecostalism in America* said:

The term modernism encompassed the changing [moral] values and mores of the day along with its social adjustments and technological wonders. But in the realm of ideas, particularly those relevant to religion, it denoted the fruition of a century of challenges to traditional assumptions in science, philosophy, and religion. In the science, Darwinism presented natural selection, not creation by divine fiat, as the origin of the species, and scientific naturalism dis-

missed the supernatural out of hand. In the social science, historicism stressed the historical nature of all phenomena, undermining religious claims to unchanging or transcendent truth, while the new discipline of sociology hinted at the socially, contracted nature of belief systems themselves.¹

In America, the notion of a Puritan theological religious city on the hill was now being challenged and hijacked by the age of Enlightenment with its rationalism, relativism, and skepticism. The new social sciences were opening the door for evolution, humanism, and individualism to infiltrate and influenced the religious, theological, and moral fibers of an America in whom God's word and mammon were equally trusted (American Manifest Destiny and Imperialism/Expansionism). Liberationist Theologian Leonardo Boff defines modernity as a "historical and social movement that arose in the sixteenth century, whose main subject was the emerging bourgeoisies, who pursued a project of conquering the world economically, politically, and culturally. The soul of modernity lies in the will to power (domination) based on an individual's performance"² In other words, the spirit of modernity is for humanity to live a completely self-centered life with no regard for a Christ-centered existence.

¹ R. G. Robins, *Pentecostalism in America* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010) p. 57

² Virgina Fabella, Virginia and R.S. Sugirtharajah eds. *Dictionary of Third World Theologies*. (Leonardo Boff,) Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2000, p. 147-148

The Pentecostal theologian Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh* characterized modernity at the turn of the century:

At the dawn of the twenty-first century---what I call our late modern world—is no less complex than it has been historically. It has been complicated, however, by several factors arising over the last few centuries. These include the challenges raised by modern science, by our increasing awareness of the diversity of religion, and by our present transitional situation between modernity and its aftermath (post modernity) ³

Yong believed that America's theological task was being challenged and that it was also walking on a slippery slope because it was entering into a complicated philosophical and scientific modern era. Yong asserted that modernity brought with it more uncertainties than resolutions on the theological front. The rise of modern science and the growing awareness of religious pluralism manifested these uncertainties.

The Controversy Among Liberal-modernist, Protestant Fundamentalist over the inerrancy and infallibility of the Holy Scripture

Chronologically, the controversy with Liberal-modernist started when the consensus of mainline Protestant churches

³ Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* (Baker Academy: Grand Rapid Michigan, 2005) p.17

sheltered and challenged liberalism and higher criticism for interrogating the inerrancy, infallibility, and validity of the Bible. From the Evangelical consensus in the early 1900s, a new group of Northern Mainline Protestants (Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterians) established a religious conservative defense. As a result of the schism spilling over into America's Protestant religious life in the North, a new group of conservatives called the fundamentalist was birthed. Liberal modernism through enlightenment rationalism, philosophy, and science dared to question the fundamental core beliefs of Evangelicalism.

One can ask the question: What was at stake behind these Biblical issues over the inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture? Was there an underlying issue that Northern Protestants were not mentioning? Or was this controversy over who was going to have the power to control socially, economically, and politically the welfare future course of these religious American institutions? Where were Northern/Southern African American, and the Southwest Hispanic Evangelical churches during these troubling theological debates? The historian R. G. Robins stated in his work on the Fundamentalist controversy that the majority of mainline Protestants, particularly in the North, sought to accommodate the developments reconceiving the ancient verities in the light of new discoveries and adapting them to the modern worldview”⁴ These Fundamentalists were being theologically challenged and threatened by Liberalism/higher criticism and its hermeneutical science. Fundamentalists were the conservative

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R.G. Robins, *Pentecostalism in America* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010) p. 57

wing of Protestantism, who held a strong theological conviction and position on the inerrancy, infallibility, and the sacredness of Scripture. They wholeheartedly beheld to *Sola Scriptura* as the single rule of faith and Christian practice in orthodox Protestantism. According to Gary Dorrien in his book, *The Remaking of Evangelical Theology (What is Evangelicalism?)* on

The rise of an evangelical movement that speaks so insistently about the “perfect errorlessness” of the Bible was prefigured in the scholastic apologetics of seventeenth-century Protestant orthodoxy, but in its modern context, fundamentalist evangelicalism is a by-product of the rise of modern historical consciousness... How could biblical authority be defined and secured in the light of modern scientific, historical, and philosophical criticism? The answer that emerged from what came to be called the fundamentalist movement was that biblical authority couldn't be secured at all from the affirmation of biblical inerrancy. If the Bible contains any errors, it cannot be God's Word; and if it is not literally God's verbally inspired Word, it cannot be a secure source of religious authority. With unsurpassed intellectual energy and spiritual passion, the descendants of Old School Reformed orthodoxy at Princeton Theological Seminary defended this position at the outset of the fundamentalist reaction and thereby established the defining basis of fundamentalist evangelicalism.⁵

⁵ Gary Dorrien, *The Remaking of Evangelical Theology (Introduction: What is Evangelicalism?)* Westminster John Knox Press (1998) p. 6

Liberal modernism was the theological child of Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) the ultra rationalist who started the school of Romanticism, which sought to counter Emmanuel Kant's Enlightenment. However, Schleiermacher favored a communal experiential, philosophical, scientific, and theological position that used a higher criticism framework as its foundation. Liberal modernist advocated for higher criticism because the Bible had to be read with a social, historical, literary context that uses a scientific hermeneutical lens. In short, higher criticism was implemented to move a defense against the inerrancy and infallibility theological argument presented by the Protestant Fundamentalist at the turn of the century. In academia the advanced theological study of higher criticism was:

Simply the application of general historical principles of the Bible This utilization of general historical principles, however, necessarily presupposed that the Biblical documents are human and that in so far as they purport to report events, it is possible to ask whether those reports are true. The question. Is that report true? However, itself presupposes some standard of judgment, and this standard is necessarily influenced by present knowledge and science.⁶

⁶ Van A. Harvey, *A Handbook of Theological Terms (Their Meaning and Background Exposed in Over 300 Article)* A Touchstone Book, Published Simon and Shuster 1992, p. 42-43

Renowned Old Testament Biblical scholar Julian Wellhausen (1844-1918) authored of the controversial “Documentary Hypothesis.”⁷ In his formulating the Documentary Hypothesis (DH), Wellhausen believed that the patriarch Moses did not pen the Torah/Pentateuch on Mount Sinai through God’s revelation, rather four redactors or sources called J, E, D, and P. The redactor called J for (Jahwist) wrote around 950 B.C.E in the Southern Kingdom at Jerusalem. The redactor E was called (Elohist) wrote around 850 B.C.E. in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. The D source or redactor was called (Deuteronomist) who wrote around 600 B.C.E. in Jerusalem during the religious reform. The P source or redactor (Priestly), who wrote around 500 B.C.E, was a Jewish priest during Judah’s Babylonian exile.⁸ With the Documentary Hypothesis and higher criticism continued to find many other historical and theological discrepancies and inconsistencies in the Bible. Van. A. Harvey’s higher critics say,

That (1) the first five books of the Old Testament were not written by Moses but was the product of other hands; (2) The book of Isaiah is not one but at least two books; (3) the book of Daniel was not written in the period it describes; (4) The Fourth Gospel [John] differs radically from the first three Gospels and can-

⁷ *A Basic Vocabulary of Biblical Studies For Beginning Students: A Work in Progress*, Fred L. Horton, Kenneth G. Hoglund, and Mary F. Foskett, Wake Forest University, 2007)

⁸ Umberto Cassuto, *The Documentary Hypothesis*. Jerusalem: Shalem Press (2006). p. 167.

not provide a dependable framework for the life and thought of Jesus; (5) the authors of Matthew and Luke probably copy the work of Mark (see Synoptic Problems); (6) it is impossible to reconstruct the history of Jesus' ministry; (7) Paul probably did not write several of the letters attributed to him.⁹

These are some of the theological red flags and issues that Fundamentalists had to contend with higher critics. Fundamentalists recognized that higher criticism placed a huge cloud of doubt over the inerrancy and infallibility claims covering the Holy Scriptures. Was it ironic for Protestant Fundamentalists to treat higher criticism with a hermeneutics of suspicion? Harvey maintained Liberal modernists held the following theological tenets:

(1) An eagerness to discard old orthodox forms if they were judged to be irrational in the light of modern knowledge or irrelevant to what was regarded as the central core of religious experience; (2) a confidence in the power of man's reasoning when guided by experience; (3) a belief in freedom; (4) a belief in the social nature of human existence [social Gospel]; (5) a faith in the benevolence of God and the goodness of creation [Universalism/neglecting sin, wrath, and

⁹ Van A. Harvey, *A Handbook of Theological Terms (Their Meaning and Background Exposed in Over 300 Articles)* A Touchstone Book, Published Simon and Shuster 1992, p. 42-43

hell]. Consequently, Liberal Protestantism enthusiastically endorsed critical scholarship confident that it can only benefit faith and tried to establish points of contact with science, philosophy, and all forms of human reasoning ¹⁰

Higher Criticism led Liberal Protestants to favored the theological position that the Holy Scriptures were errant, not inspired, and fallible. Also it denied the Christian teachings of the Virgin Birth, Jesus' resurrection, atonement, sin, wrath, hell, and the authority of the Holy Scripture. Charles Augustus Briggs, higher criticism Professor in Hebrew at Union Theological Seminary, and a groundbreaking pioneer in the Protestant Liberal-modernist movement: "higher criticism had now definitively proven"¹¹ that many of the Old Testament books were not written by its authors. He maintained "the Old Testament was merely a historical record, and one which showed man in a lower state of moral development, with modern man having progressed morally far beyond Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Judah, David, and Solomon."¹²

Briggs viewed the Bible as marked with error and believed the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy held at Princeton Theological

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 144

¹¹ Gary Doreen, "A Commend of Heresies". *The Making of Liberal Theology – Imagining Progressive Religion 1805–1900*. Westminster John Knox Press (2001). pp. 358–60.

¹² Ibid, p.358-359

Seminary to be “a ghost of modern evangelicalism to frighten children.”¹³ He was appalled at the scared tactics theological stance taken by Princeton Seminary over the error-less-ness doctrine of Scripture.

Ironically, in Yong’s view, the theological controversy on Scripture was a “Modern response” between conservative fundamentalist and liberal modernist. “The former sought to ground theological claims on universal-human experience, whereas the latter founded theology on the revealed and inerrant truths of

Scripture.”¹⁴ One can make the argument that even though both fundamentalists and liberal-modernist were each on the opposite side of the theological spectrum, they were both children of the Enlightenment. They both debated according to modern rules of argumentation and were product of the “rise of modern historical consciousness.”¹⁵

Russell P. Spittler’s insightful and intuitive article, *Are Pentecostal and Charismatics Fundamentalist?* paints a wonderful portrayed of the early 1900 to 1930’s fundamentalist in America. In writing about the Fundamentalist having to push back and

¹³ Ibid, p. 358–60.

¹⁴ Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* (Baker Academy: Grand Rapid Michigan, 2005) p.296

¹⁵ Gary Dorrien, *The Remaking of Evangelical Theology (Introduction: What is Evangelicalism?)* Westminster John Knox Press (1998) p. 6

present a theological defense against Liberal-modernist, Spittler described the Fundamentalist intellectually refuting the historical and scientific notions of higher/Biblical criticism:

Fundamentalist reacted in an intellectual style. Essays in the Fundamentals took on a mildly apologetic tone, and they were focused on issues that imperiled the truth of the Bible. The approach was argumentative, logical, and rational. The implicit assumptions included a definition of inspiration requiring a flawless biblical text that yielded an internally consistent theology. The Bible presented inerrant factual truth whenever it made any statement on any topic. Even incidental biblical references to nature or history were taken to be factually true. At worst, there might remain “apparent discrepancies.”¹⁶

Historically, leading the fundamentalist-modernist fight was Princeton Theological Seminary, as stated earlier; Princeton upheld that Scripture was divinely inspired and errorless. Liberal-modernist at Union Theological Seminary held Scripture as errant, fallible, and not divinely inspired. These seminaries with their world-class faculty hotly debated the issues of Biblical Authority, Biblical inerrancy, and Biblical infallibility in the period of 1880-1910. In the chasm and great de-

¹⁶ Russell Spittler, *Are Pentecostals and Charismatics Fundamentalist? A Review of America Uses of These Categories*. Journal Title: *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture*. Columbia, S.C. University of South Carolina 1994, p.103-116.

bates Princeton's apologists and theologians like Benjamin. B. Warfield and John Gresham Machen fought against the liberal schools of Higher criticism and modernism. Robins maintained Princeton theologians Warfield and Machen "synthesized a realist philosophy and systematic theology into in impressive defense of Christian orthodoxy." Both men did not tolerate no dichotomy between the real and unknowable and the mental world. They emphatically defended absolute reality, revelation, and truth rooted on an inerrant Bible.¹⁷

Neo-orthodox Theology vs. Liberalism/Fundamentalist

Out of the controversy between liberalism and fundamentalist Neo-orthodoxy evolved. The father of Neo-orthodoxy was Karl Barth (1886-1968). Barth stepped into the Protestant scene with a new synthesized and Christological theology that opposed Friedrich Schleiermacher, father of Liberalism. Also, he was in opposition to the school fundamentalism because they did not like to be challenged critically, historically, and scientifically on inerrancy and infallibility of the Scriptures. Ironically, even though a theological dichotomy existed between both Liberal-modernist and Neo-orthodox theologies, these two schools of thoughts both had critical biblical scholarship as a common denominator. On the other hand, Barth agreed with the fundamentalist that the sickness of the church was

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Robins, R G Pentecostalism in America (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010) p. 58

theological atrophy.¹⁸ In other words, Barth conviction was that liberal modernism was the core weakness of theological orthodoxy. The Barthianism doctrine vehemently believed that the sciences of higher criticism had proven many inconsistencies within the sacred text; this was attributed to the canonical writings being naturally handled, redacted, and penned by inadequate and imperfect human agencies. In *The Scripture and Myth of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, Richard Wiekart concluded that Karl Barth believed that the Scripture was a testimony of God, but he denied the historical event of the resurrection. "Barth considered the Bible a testimony to the history of God... not a record of events in the world."¹⁹ Therefore, the event of a risen Jesus was un-historical. He went on to say that there was no need to bother whether the supernatural happenings in the Bible were likely to have happened "²⁰ Supporting Wiekart's position concerning Barth, Harvey depicts in his handbook that Neo-Reformed Theology was relentless in their pursuit of both Liberal-modernist theology, and the fundamentalist theology. Harvey critically had this to say of the Protestantism/Neo-Reformed Theology

The neo-Reformed theologians [Neo-orthodox] accepted fully the new science and were quite willing

¹⁸ Russell Spittler, *Are Pentecostals and Charismatics Fundamentalist? A Review of America Uses of These Categories*. Journal Title: Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture. Columbia, S.C. University of South Caroline 1994, p.103-116.

¹⁹ Richard Weikart, *The Scripture and Myth of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, University of Iowa (1993); p.12-25

²⁰ Ibid, p.12-25

to concede that the Word of God was veiled in an all-too-human form, that Bible contains myth, legends, and historical errors of all sort. They were not all unwilling to regard the Virgin Birth, Miracles, and resurrection stories as primitive ways of expressing the divine significant of Jesus.²¹

By 1918, Barth Neo-orthodox movement taught the “dialectical theology” which countered Schleiermacher’s theology that taught that God could only be known through man’s own experience and reasoning. Liberal-modernist also taught that God could only be understood “by the confidence in the power of man’s reasoning when guided by experience.”²² In the “dialectical theology” which was a reaction to Protestants liberalism, Barth emphasized grace and revelation not man’s reasoning as a way God can be self-revealed in Jesus Christ to humanity. Neo-orthodox embraced the dialectical theology” because it taught the following theological principles including: “emphasizing the infinite tensions, paradoxes, and basic ambiguities inherent in Christian existence, and holding, against rationalism, that God is unknowable to humans except through divine grace and revelation.”²³

²¹ Van A. Harvey, *A Handbook of Theological Terms (Their Meaning and Background Exposed in Over 300 Article)* A Touchstone Book, Published Simon and Shuster 1992, p. 164

²² Ibid, p. 144

²³ <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/dialectical+theology>

Gary Dorrien *The Remaking of Evangelical Theology* succinctly frames Karl Barth theological position. He says, “I speak of neo-orthodoxy as a position at the left edge of the modern evangelical continuum. I define this position primarily as a theological perspective in which scripture is regarded not as revelation itself, but as a witness to revelation that can become the Word of God through the movement of God’s Spirit.”²⁴ In short, Dorrien unpacked what was prototypical Barthian’s neo-orthodox theology. In the same vein, Professor Bernard Ramm, an evangelical theologian from American Baptist Seminary of the West (GTU) persuasively reveals that Barth did not believe that God’s word was revelation. On the contrary, Ramm believed that for Barth “Scripture is not revelation” and “it is not the Word of God in any direct way.”²⁵ It’s like Barth creating a dualism between Scripture and God’s revelation. He is Biblically and theologically deconstructing 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and 2 Peter 1:20-21. What theologically troubled Ramm about Barth’s “dialectical theology” was the fact that Barth had no regard for inerrancy and infallibility of the Holy Scripture. For example, Ramm said, “Karl Barth asserted that Holy Scripture is that Word of God which, by the Spirit, can “become” the Word of God, the Word of God’s redemptive truth and grace in Jesus Christ, to one who hears in faith.”²⁶ What is

²⁴ Gary Dorrien, *The Remaking of Evangelical Theology (Introduction: What is Evangelicalism?)* Westminster John Knox Press (1998) p. 10

²⁵ John D. Morrison, *Barth, Parthian, and Evangelicals: Reassessing the Question of the Relation of Holy Scripture and the Word of God*. Digital Commons @Liberty University (2004) p. 209

²⁶ Ibid, p. 213

perplexing about Barth's dialectical tension is that God does not inspire the Scriptures if it needs to "become" the Word of God. Ramm's critique of Barth is that he is trying to theologially bake his cake and eat it too. In other words, is it the Word of God or is it going to become the Word of God? Harvey alludes that beside the "dialectic theology", the neo-orthodox theological perspective had three more important theological components to Barth's theology:

That there is an infinite qualitative difference between God and man; (2) that sin is the attempt to obscure that difference, whether by religious experience, mysticism, or moral idealism; (3) that the realization that there is this gap and that it can only be bridged by God and not by man is itself saving faith. Each of these three theses constituted a full-scale assault on Liberal Protestantism and, indeed the prevailing tendency to interpret Christianity as the highest product of Western culture.²⁷

Just like Karl Barth another outstanding neo-orthodox theologian broke into the theological scene and his name was Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945). Bonhoeffer was highly influenced by Barth's theology and came to reject liberal theology because of its focus on human religion.

²⁷ Van A. Harvey, *A Handbook of Theological Terms (Their Meaning and Background Exposed in Over 300 Article)* A Touchstone Book, Published Simon and Shuster 1992, p. 163

Bonheoffer was a German Lutheran pastor and scholar, martyred for his anti-Nazi activists against Germany's Third Reich. Bonheoffer was a vocal instrumental figure and member of the Confessing Church who spoke out against the injustices done by Hitler's dictatorship. Bonheoffer grew up in Germany admiring and embracing Karl Barth's "dialectic theology" and as a Lutheran he highly scrutinized the Scriptures because of his strong belief in higher biblical criticism. Bonheoffer was consistent with neo-orthodoxy because he denied the following theological Christian tenets: "Bible contains myth, legends, and historical errors of all sort.... unwilling to regard the Virgin Birth, Miracles, and [the] resurrection stories as primitive ways of expressing the divine significant of Jesus"²⁸ However, Bonheoffer's well admired and revered alike by the fundamentalist, liberal modernist, and neo-orthodox because of his Christocentric, "epistemological dualism"²⁹ and theological writings many fundamentalist, Liberal-modernist, and neo-orthodox admired and revered him alike. What was Bonheoffer's theological position on the inerrancy and infallibility of the Holy Scripture? Bonheoffer took the theological position that the Bible was just like any other book. He believed the Bible was fallible and unreliable historical book. Bonheoffer *In Christ*

²⁸ Ibid, p. 164

²⁹ *Epistemological dualism*: the philosophical position that our conscious experience is not of the real world itself but of an internal representation, a miniature virtual-reality replica of the world. Indirect realism is broadly equivalent to the accepted view of perception in natural science that states that we do not and cannot perceive the external world as it really is but know only our ideas and interpretations of the way the world is. <http://dictionary.babylon.com/epistemological%20dualism/>

the Center openly critiques Scripture. He interjects “the Bible remains a book like other books...but it is through the Bible, with all its flaws, that the risen one encounters us. We must get into the troubled waters of historical criticism.”³⁰ Wiekart in, *The Troubling Truth About Bonheoffer’s Theology*, dismisses the notion that Bonheoffer was not truly orthodox when it came down to Biblical inerrancy. However, Wiekart persuasively put Bonheoffer’s doctrine of the scripture on its heels because in a section in the article “Inspired but Inaccurate” Wiekart said:

In a 1925 essay, Bonheoffer wrote that even if biblical critics proved that the person of Jesus is unhistorical in the empirical sense this would not affect the content of God’s revelation, since His truth is revealed even through fallible words spoken or written by human instruments, such as the apostles. ‘By all means we must ascertain the fallibility of the [Scripture] texts and thereby recognize the miracle, that we always hear the Word of God from this human word.’³¹

According to Wiekart, Bonheoffer viewed scripture truth as revealed through fallible words spoken or written by human instruments. Evidently Bonheoffer’s theological position on Biblical inerrancy and infallibility has been put on display because

³⁰ Dietrich Bonheoffer, In *Christ the Center*, Harper San Francisco (1978) p. 73-74

³¹ Richard Wiekart, *The Troubling Truth About Bonheoffer’s Theology*, Christian Research Journal, Volume 35, number 06 (2012). Christian Research Journal go to: <http://www.equip.org>

he clearly demonstrates that there is fallibility of Scripture. Reading into Wiekart critique of Bonhoeffer it seems that it did not matter to Bonhoeffer if the Word of God was inspired or inaccurate at the same time. Elsewhere, Bonhoeffer said that the Bible is filled with material that was historically unreliable. Even the life of Jesus is “overgrown with legends” and myth”³² that it is impossible to know the life of the historical Jesus. It is a well-documented fact by church historians that Bonhoeffer’s lectures and writings were immersed and highly influenced by Karl Barth the neo-orthodoxy king. Wiekart believes that Bonhoeffer was a perplexing and paradoxical theological figure because he had many different schools of thought pulling and tugging at his intellectual, philosophical, and theological abilities (Schleiermacher, Kant, and Barth).

Finally, Bonhoeffer shows off his true theological colors in reference to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. He puts into question the resurrection of Jesus as historical or a religious event. Bonhoeffer had this to say concerning the centerpiece of the gospel of Christ. He says, “Empty or not empty, it remains a stumbling block. We cannot be sure of its historicity. The Bible itself shows this stumbling block, when it makes clear how hard it was to prove the disciples had not stolen the body. Even here we cannot escape the realm of ambiguity.”³³ Overall, neo-orthodox like Barth and Bonhoeffer

³² Richard Weikart, *The Scripture and Myth of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, University of Iowa Fides et Historia 25,1 (1993); p.12-25

³³ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Christ the Center*, trans. Edwin H. Robertson (New York 1978), p. 112.

fer held a moderate stance for their liberal and conservatives theological counterparts. Neo-orthodoxy was a moderate response standing between fundamentalist and liberalism confident that God's grace and salvific self-revelation in Jesus Christ was able to move throughout human history, and through an all-to-human blemished text.

Pentecostals Theological Position and Perspective Over The Protestant Controversy

At the turn of 19th century, Pentecostalism a radical theological movement that did not reacted against the controversial debates between Protestants Liberalism and Fundamentalist. The reason Pentecostals did not react to the controversy and the debates was because Pentecostalism was a primitive religion still trying to theologically and hermeneutically discover their own identities. This is why Pentecostals were passive spectators and not active participators during the Protestant Fundamentalist controversy over inerrancy, infallibility of the Scriptures, and Biblical Criticism. Russell P. Spittler's in his article historically provides his audience with a theological lay of the land during the turn of the century:

Pentecostalism, Fundamentalism, and neo-orthodoxy--roughly in that historical sequence --can be viewed unrelated reactions to the state of affairs of religion and culture at the close of the nineteenth century. The movements all arose separately, and each mani-

fested a different respond to such currents as the rise of scientism, religion liberalism, biblical criticism, and the social gospel along with the perceived (by some) triple threat of Darwin, Marx, and Freud. Cultural development such as urbanization and immigration, also contribute to the turmoil.³⁴

When the Protestant Fundamentalist was doctrinally defending the Scriptures from the Liberal Modernist, neo-orthodox was developing, synthesizing, and upholding a moderate theological position between fundamentalism and liberalism. Spittler reveals in his article that these movements all grew up relatively around the same time, but they separately established a different theological reply to modernism. As for the Pentecostal movement, I would just like to use my theological imagination and say that by 1900, Pentecostalism was in God's last providential trimester, and ready to give birth in 1906 in the Azusa Street Revivals in the power and Spirit of the Lord. The reason Pentecostals movement did not partake in the Protestant doctrinal schism was because they were in a neonatal state still being breast fed by the Spirit. Frankly, even if Pentecostals had a robust theology at the turn of the century, they would have not being allowed to have metaphorically a dog in the fight over Scriptural inerrancy and infallibility. The author Vinson Synan provides an ideal picture describing the Pentecostals sentiment on the fundamentalist controversy:

³⁴ Russell Spittler, *Are Pentecostals and Charismatics Fundamentalist? A Review of America Uses of These Categories*. Journal Title: Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture. Columbia, S.C. University of South Caroline 1994, p.103-116.

While the rest of Protestantism wrestled with the great fundamentalist controversy over Darwin's evolutionary theory during the twenties, observed the fray from the outside. Although "fundamentalist to a man," the Pentecostals did not play an active part in the controversy...because they were never an integral part of the fundamentalist camp.³⁵

Another reason why Pentecostals did not take part in the controversy was because Protestant Fundamentalist perceived Pentecostals to be heretical, unschooled, and untrained religious folks. Pentecostals were considered and perceived by Protestant fundamentalists as an unsound hybrid religious people that endured discrimination, ridiculed, and stigmatized by the mainline churches. The Protestant fundamentalist thought of themselves as orthodox and purist, they considered Pentecostals to be unbiblical, unorthodox, and unconventional tongue-taking religious fanatics. Vinson Synan had this to say about Pentecostals humble beginnings:

The early history of the Pentecostals in society was in reality story of mutual rejection. The Pentecostals rejected society because they believed it to be corrupt, wicked, hostile, and hopelessly lost, while society rejected the Pentecostals because it believed them to be insanely fanatical, self-righteous, doctrinally mistak-

³⁵

Vinson Synan, *The Holiness Pentecostal Tradition Charismatic Movement in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapid, Michigan, 1971 and revised 1997) p. 207

en, and emotionally unstable. In such an atmosphere it was inevitable that much prejudice, hostility, and suspicion would mar the relationship of the early earliest Pentecostals to society at larger.³⁶

Pentecostals at this time were not fighting or struggling over doctrine, but were rashly fighting for acceptability, dignity, and respectability in a racist and segregated “Jim Crow” America. Many writers documented extensively these issues of religious bias and prejudice orchestrated by fundamentalist and liberal-modernist toward Pentecostals. According to Grant Wacker *Heaven Below* “And though a vast gulf, both cultural and theological separated the Holy Ghost revival from emerging liberal-modernist impulse and mainline Protestantism, both traditions distinguished themselves by emphasizing the nearness and in salvific power of God’s spirit in history.”³⁷ Harvey Cox professor of religion at Harvard Divinity historically documented a more condescending account against Pentecostals from the hands of fundamentalist and liberal-Modernist in the turn of the century:

Conservative theologian, H. A. Ironside, fired off the most influential antipentecostal barrage 1912. In a book entitled: *Holiness and False and the True*, he asserted of the “Pentecostals superstition and fanaticism of the

³⁶ Ibid, p. 187

³⁷ Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below (Early Pentecostal and American Culture*. Harvard University Press Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, English (2003) p. 4

grossest character find a hotbed in their midst.” Still another fundamentalist, G. Campbell Morgan trumped all of the other by declaring that Pentecostalism was “the last vomit of Satan.”³⁸

Even though Pentecostals were experiencing sentiments of hatred and marginalization the movement felt it had to take a passive resistance approach against these mainline Protestant fundamentalist and liberal-modernist. Furthermore, Pentecostal movement was in no shape or form taking up an intellectual, philosophical, or scientific argument to combat the Protestant fundamentalist and liberal-modernist controversy over the inerrancy and infallibility. Robins argues that Pentecostals were too busy practicing a brand new Christianity. He said they had:

Felt no compunction to frame their arguments in the categories of science and philosophy. They dwelt in plainfolk America, and plainfolk Americans had spent a couple of centuries discrediting intellectual and cultural elites, their approbation was generally avoided, not pursued...Since Pentecostal presupposed inner spiritual experience as the most valid path to certainty about religion truth, and since the distant world of the academy held little persuasive force either for them or for those they hoped to reach, nothing prevented

³⁸

Cox Harvey, *Fire From Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality And The Reshaping of Religion In The Twentieth Century*. De Capo Press, (1995) p.7

Pentecostals from continuing to preach and practice a brand of Christianity³⁹

According to Jose Francisco Martinez from Fuller Theological Seminary in his intuitive and insightful book *Los Protestantes* shares with us a Spirit-filled Pentecostal narrative that was extraordinarily rich but yet humble in its early days of the movement. Martinez in his book tells us about how the first Pentecostal community was socially and economically impoverished, but powerfully and spiritually rich. These Pentecostals did not make the “class assumption of other Protestant about [their] church structure.”⁴⁰ Yet, Martinez recognizes how industrious and innovative these disenfranchised Pentecostals were because they built and founded their own Spirit-filled churches carving out their own worshipping spaces in a religious chauvinistic strange land. Martinez was moved how people with so little resources could have accomplished so much for the kingdom for God. Martinez believed that these Pentecostals communities went far and beyond exceeding their expectations in a hostile American environment. Martinez fleshes out these impressive social, economic, and religion achievements by saying the following:

³⁹ Robins, R G *Pentecostalism in America* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010) p. 57

⁴⁰ Juan Francisco Martinez, *Los Protestantes: An Introduction to Latin Protestantism in the United States* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2011) p. 139

Latino Pentecostals demonstrated that they did not need the resources of Euro-American Protestants to develop their own churches, only the power of the Holy Spirit. Not only did they not need these resource, they could also question the valve of some of them. Latino Pentecostals could meet in tents or simple buildings where God’s presence was “real.” ... Pastors could preach with the power of God without seminary education and might even do it better because they were not encumbered by their education... Latino Pentecostals also became culture creator and “contextual theologians.” They developed their own liturgy and wrote their own hymns of faith, hymnal that reflected their own culture, experience, and worldview.⁴¹

Spittler maintains that the relationship between Pentecostal and Fundamentalist Protestants mainline churches was a theologically rocky one. Spittler recognizes that Pentecostals were thought by their religious counterparts to be fanatical and insane tongue-taking individuals that were only moved into frenzy by a supernatural experience in the Holy Ghost:

Tongue-speaking fanatics were not welcomed under the church spires on Main Street. Such exclusion forced early Pentecostals, or “Apostolic,” as they called themselves, to meet on their own. Eventually, they

⁴¹

Ibid, p. 140

found each other and gave birth, however reluctantly, to Pentecostals denominationalism.⁴²

Pentecostals were people who powerfully believed and grew up by faith trusting in the literal, naked, and unadulterated Word of God. Even though theological terms like inerrancy and infallibility were not used or found in the Pentecostals lexicon, they still lived under the authoritative Word of God. Pentecostals wholeheartedly believed to be a continuation of the primitive church in the Book of Acts. Pentecostals Biblically acknowledged the apocalypses, eschatology, pietistic holiness, healing, miracle, atonement, water baptizing, prophecy, speaking in tongue, casting out demons, and evangelizing the world. For Spirit-filled, tongue talking, holiness, baptized in Jesus name Pentecostals, the Word of God was God's salvific self-revelation in Jesus Christ to humanity. The doctrine of the Scripture for Pentecostals played an integral part in the developing, forming, and shaping the movement from its induction into American Protestantism. In conversation with Daniel Ramirez, historian from the University of Michigan, he shared his perspective over the Apostolicism during the theological schism between fundamentalist and liberal-modernist. Ramirez stated:

The Northern Presbyterian and Baptist dominations and missionary boards were involved in a strange and

⁴² Russell Spittler, *Are Pentecostals and Charismatics Fundamentalist? A Review of America Uses of These Categories*. Journal Title: Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture. Columbia, S.C. University of South Carolina 1994, p.103-116.

very high social and economic stakes. African Americans Protestant did not join the battle, as they were too busy surviving lynching in the South and [were trying to] built a viable community in the North (Great Migration). Mexican Apostolic had no institutions to fight over, so [they] went AWOL in the battle. Ideas should not be viewed in isolation but rather in the light of their social location. What mattered for socially marginal Apostolic was the efficacy of the Word of God. Importantly, as former Catholics many of them had been denied access to Scripture in Spanish until their conversion to Protestantism. So they were still in a honeymoon with the Scriptures.⁴³

My prayers are that the Apostolic Assembly continues to have a “honeymoon with the scriptures” because it was the Word of God that our patriarchs and matriarchs built their apostolic houses on. One is reminded of the parable of Jesus, in Matthew 7:24-29, where the Lord is exhorting his audience on the importance of listening and living out his words. Jesus compared that experience to people who are wise because they built their house (lives) upon a rock, which is Jesus himself, the builder and chief cornerstone. Pentecostals should understand that the schism between fundamentalism and Liberalism in 1900 over inerrancy and infallibility are still being fought today in American church denominations, seminaries, and religious life. Dorrien stated that:

⁴³

Daniel Ramirez, Personal Conversation on 10/10/15 at Princeton, New Jersey.

The real-world fallout from the rift between theological liberalism and evangelicalism has prompted periodic calls over past generation for serious theological dialogue between advocates of these positions. In 1972, evangelical pastor Richard Coleman declared that ‘the time has come, in fact its long past, to take completely seriously the growing and deepening division between liberal and evangelical Protestant.’ ‘Nearly every American denomination has been racked by controversies and protest movements rooted in the polarization between theological liberals and evangelicalism, he noted, yet very little dialogue between these positions ever took place.’⁴⁴

For Pentecostals to comprehend the rupture between fundamentalism and liberalism and how polarizing it has been for American religious life, they only have to turn back the pages of Pentecostal history to 1916. In that year, the Pentecostal world was also shaken up by how Trinitarian Pentecostals fought Oneness Pentecostals over the orthodoxy of the Godhead and Baptismal Formula. That chasm produced two different theological wings of the same Pentecostal movement.

44

Ibid, p.185

How should our Apostolic Assembly doctrine of the Bible respond to the present context?

Our Apostolic Assembly doctrine of the Bible should respond to the present context by first acknowledging what the Holy Scriptures says concerning these eschatological times. The prophet Daniel prophetically provides a word for our time and season. He said: "...even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased" (Daniel 12:4, KJV). The time of the end, and where many ran to and fro was the time of the Enlightenment/modernity, where the church and faith became subjected to reasoning. During the time of Enlightenment going forward knowledge has increase and religion has been restricted to rationality. The apostle Paul weighs in as a response to these unprecedented times and seasons. Paul said:

[Be] Rooted and built up in him, [Christ] and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through *philosophy and vain deceit*, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”⁴⁵

Another safeguard of the Apostolic Assembly doctrine of the Bible to this context would be if the body of Christ would

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Colossians 2:7-8 KJV

take heed to what Paul said to the church of Corinth. He said: “⁴⁵ Casting down imaginations, [reasoning and rationality] and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5 KJV). The Greek word for “imagination” is *logismos*, ⁴⁶ which according to Strong Concordance Greek Lexicon means: “A reasoning such as hostile to

Christian faith.”⁴⁷ The two times (Romans 2:15) that Paul uses the word *logismos* there is a negative connotation to its biblical usages. The Apostolic Assembly doctrine of the Bible exhorts the Body of Christ to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3 KJV).

A perfect academic historical account and a response to the Apostolic Assembly doctrine of the Bible, takes us back to the ideological and theological debate between reasoning vs. faith, and Reformation vs. Renaissance, where two towering theological figures squared off. These two theological giants were Desiderius Erasmus and Martin Luther. According to Dorrien, these two met one day to argue about their Biblical and theological differences. In their discussion, “Luther said Erasmus, ‘the difference between you and me. Erasmus, is that you sit above scripture and judge it, while I sit under scripture

⁴⁶ <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?Strong's=G3053&t=KJV>

⁴⁷ *ibid*

and let it judge me.⁴⁸ In other words, the Apostolic Assembly doctrine must allow scripture to be “the final court of appeals”⁴⁹ to have the last word, while not subjecting the scripture to reasoning and not allowing our intellectual rationality to be the sole authority.

How does the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures respond to Post Modernism and other movements at present?

The way the doctrine of the Holy Scripture in the Apostolic Assembly in the Faith of Christ Jesus responds to Post Modernism and other movement at present is by first trying to define and understand what really is post-modernity. We know post modernity is a falling-out from modernity-enlightened men, but with a human relativistic new centered.

Postmodernism” is the general term for a series of developments in literature, art, philosophy, and intellectual life as a whole. To some extent, postmodernism entails a questioning approach to doctrines and theories, as well as a belief that diversity and contradiction are inevitable (and even desirable)⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Gary Dorrien, *The Remaking of Evangelical Theology (Introduction: What is Evangelicalism?)* Westminster John Knox Press (1998) p. 187

⁴⁹ Ibid, p 187

⁵⁰ <http://literatureintranslation.about.com/od/definitions/g/Postmodernism.htm>

The Apostolic Assembly needs to respond by treasuring what God said to Joshua right after God's people entered the Promised Land. God said: this book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou may observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success (Joshua 1:8 KJV). For the welfare and survival of the Apostolic Assembly, the promise(s) given to Joshua are presently alive and relevant to us in a Post Modern world.

Another respond to Post Modernism is for the Apostolic Assembly to earnestly contend for knowing and maintaining the truth because truth will make us free (John 8:32) from the ideological and theological mess modernism left the church with. In a Post-Modernist world words like truth and reality are subjective to the individual's rationalism, skepticism, and relativism. Since the time of the Enlightenment, the orthodox teaching of the Holy Scripture have been distorted, poisoned, and interrogated by higher criticism, philosophy, and science. During the Enlightenment, absolute religious faith and truths were placed under the microscope of reasoning and suspicion. In turn, reasoning and skepticism would bow down to worship the god of modern religion whose all-to-human teaching were written on the tablets of moral ethics, philosophy, and the sciences.

There were three catastrophic historical events that took place in modernity which are still haunts the church (Body of

Christ) in Post Modernism are: 1) Charles Darwin's theory of evolution with its DNA on natural selection, which questioned the authority of the Biblical account of creation. 2) Men like Rene Descartes, John Locke, David Hume, Emmanuel Kant, etc., just to name of few enlightened thinkers, used philosophy to interrogated the Biblical authority of the Word of God, and decisively intended to define the meaning of man's life and the reasons for his existence. 3) With faith being replaced by reasoning/skepticism, and the Scripture done away with its all-to-human fragmented canon, man's moral compass became more enslaved to human depravity. And man's intellectual ego was now governed by man distorted ethos. This placed in doubt the Bible's authority over man's morality, and man was free to venture out to a Post Modern age without the fear of God. In how does the doctrine of the Holy Scripture in the Apostolic Assembly in the Faith of Christ Jesus respond to Post Modernism and other movement at present is for the church to safeguard the doctrine of God's revelation in Christ because the Word of God became flesh and dwelled among us and we are still in post modernity beholding his glory (John 1:14 KJV). Due to the fact that in a post-modern world truth and reality have being questioned by a hermeneutics of suspicion, the Holy Scripture testifies that God was manifested in the flesh (1 Timothy 3:16), and God was not just a man, but he is also the truth, life, and the way (John 14:6 KJV). The theology of the Apostolic Assembly is rooted in the "Euangelion/gospel" life, death, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Last but most importantly, a powerful respond to post moder-

nity would be for the Apostolic Assembly to continue to do mission and evangelism outside the gate and on the margins. Jesus stated in the gospel to his disciples that the poor would always be among you.⁵¹ The missiologist Orlando Costas believed that contextualize evangelization on the periphery was key to the kingdom of God in Jesus Christ because,

If evangelization starts on the periphery of society, [among the poor just like it did in Azusa 1906] if it works from the bottom up the good news of God's kingdom is vividly demonstrated and credibility announced as a message of liberating love, justice, and peace. When [Where] the gospel makes 'somebody out of the nobodies of society, when it restores the self-worth of the marginalized, when it enables the oppressed to have a reason for hope, when it empowers the poor to struggle and suffer for justice and peace, then it is truly good news of a new order of life---the saving power of God (Romans 1:16).⁵²

What Costas is saying is just like what happened in the synoptic gospels of Mark. 1:14-15, Matthew 3:13-15, and Luke 4:14-15 were God's power was vividly illustrated concerning the earthly ministry of Jesus, who used the boondocks of Galilee as a base to launch the kingdom of God to the world. This

⁵¹ 1 Corinthians 1:27-28 (KJV).

⁵² Orlando E. Costas, *The Evangelistic Legacy of Jesus*,. *Liberating News: A Theology of Contextual Evangelization*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1989. P. 62

theology of Contextual Evangelization is in line with what St. Paul said to the disputers of this world: “But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise and God hath chosen the weak things [poor] of the world to confound the things which are mighty” (1 Corinthian 1:27-28 KJV).

What do living theologians teach about the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures?

As demonstrated in the paper, the strain brought about by the Enlightenment, liberal theology, and higher criticism with its opposition to Biblical inerrancy and infallibility became the dominant view even among the Evangelical tradition that found it difficult to substantiate Biblical inerrancy. Today, that battle rages on within Evangelicalism and other religious movements. The “battle for the Bible” must define the Apostolic Assembly. It must continue to uphold biblical inerrancy in a 21st Post-Modern century. The Apostolic Assembly must be in dialogue with those who hold the traditional “Fundamentals” (Jesus’ dual nature, virgin birth, physical resurrection, inspiration, revelation, coming of the Lord and Biblical inerrancy). Among living theologians that hold to a high view of Scripture and espoused to Biblical inerrancy are: John Frame, David K. Bernard, Richard Wiekart, and Amos Yong just to name of few.

Reform and Pentecostal theologies most basic conviction are to Sola Scriptura. John Frame, Professor of Systematic

Theology, Reformed Theological Seminary and Amos Yong, Professor of Theology and Missions at Fuller Theological Seminary are just two of the living theologians who are truly known as Biblicist. Both theologians John Frame and Amos Yong high view of Scripture can be observe especially in the following writings. Frame's *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief* and in such articles as "In Defense of Something Close to Biblicism: Reflections on Sola Scriptura and History in Theological Method." Yong's "The Bible, Disability, and the Church" and "Renewing Christian Theology." And "The Spirit of Creation." Their writings equally present a view of inerrancy, infallibility, and validity of the Bible.

Overall, Frame and Yong's systematic theologies are excellent in maintaining that all "Scripture is inspired." I also have great admiration Reform theologian Richard Wiekart and Pentecostal David Bernard's Oneness Biblical views, even though on the rare occasions, but not always, I take exception to their works. What draws me to these theologians are their convictions that the Bible is the Word of God, and upholding the factual and historical Jesus with His incarnation. On the resurrection, they ardently teach and write about the resurrection of Jesus as a historical transforming event in God's economy. Above all, these theologians believe the Bible is God breathed and divine revelation and able to perfectly furnish humanity unto all good works (2 Timothy 3:17 KJV). Finally, what every student of the Bible needs to bring to their remembrance especially in this troubled-theological-Post-Modern world are the words of Martin Luther to Desiderius Erasmus. Where

“Luther said to Erasmus, ‘the difference between you and me. Erasmus, is that you sit above scripture and judge it, while I sit under scripture and let it judge me.’⁵³ Let us cherish and treasure these wise words Apostolic Assembly.

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⁵³ Gary Dorrien, *The Remaking of Evangelical Theology (Introduction: What is Evangelicalism?)* Westminster John Knox Press (1998) p. 187

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THE HOLY SCRIPTURES and AZUSA STREET

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In this chapter, the main questions we will address are:

1. What do Pentecostals believe about the Holy Scriptures?
2. What did early Pentecostal Pioneers teach about the Holy Scriptures? (ex. William J. Seymour & Charles Parham)
3. How is our understanding of the Holy Scriptures different from that of the Protestant Reformation?

Pentecostalism or Classical Pentecostalism is a renewal movement within Protestant Christianity that places special emphasis on a direct personal experience of God through the baptism with the Holy Spirit. The term Pentecostal is derived from Pentecost, the Greek name for the Jewish Feast of Weeks. For Christians, this event commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the followers of Jesus Christ, as described in the second chapter of the Book of Acts.

Pentecostalism adheres to the inerrancy (Biblical inerrancy, as formulated in the “Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy”, is the doctrine that the Bible “is without error or fault in all its teaching”¹; or, at least, that “Scripture in the original manuscripts does not affirm anything that is contrary to fact”)² of Scripture and the necessity of accepting Christ as personal Lord and Savior. It is distinguished by belief in the baptism with the Holy Spirit as an experience separate from conversion that enables a Christian to live a Holy Spirit-filled and empowered life. This empowerment includes the use of spiritual gifts such as speaking in tongues and divine healing—two other defining characteristics of Pentecostalism. Because of their commitment to biblical authority, spiritual gifts, and the miraculous, Pentecostals tend to see their movement as reflecting the same kind of spiritual power and teachings that

¹ Geisler, N.L. and Roach, B., *Defending Inerrancy: Affirming the Accuracy of Scripture for a New Generation*, Baker Books, 2012.

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_inerrancy

were found in the Apostolic Age³ of the early church. For this reason, some Pentecostals also use the term Apostolic or Full Gospel⁴ to describe their movement. A term that is currently being stated and accepted is “we are Apostolic in doctrine and Pentecostal in experience”.

Pentecostals include Protestant Christians who believe that the manifestations of the Holy Spirit are alive, available, and experienced by modern-day Christians. Pentecostal Christians may also be described as “Charismatics by some, though most Pentecostals and Apostolics do not refer to themselves as charismatic.”

The manifestations or gifts of the Holy Spirit were seen in the first century Christian believers (Acts 2:4; I Corinthians 12:4-10; I Corinthians 12:28) and include signs and wonders such as the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, the gift of faith, gifts of healing, miraculous powers, discerning of spirits, prophecy and tongues and interpretation of tongues.

³ The Apostolic Age of the history of Christianity is traditionally the period of the Twelve Apostles, dating from the Great Commission of the Apostles by the resurrected Jesus in Jerusalem c. 33 until the death of the last Apostle, believed to be John the Apostle in Anatolia c. 100.

⁴ The term Full Gospel is often used as a synonym for Pentecostalism and Charismatic Christianity, Protestant movements originating in the 19th century. Early Pentecostals and Charismatics saw their teachings on baptism with the Holy Spirit, spiritual gifts, and divine healing as a return to the doctrines and power of the Apostolic. Because of this many early Pentecostals and Charismatics call their movement the Apostolic Faith or the Full Gospel.

The term Pentecostal, therefore, comes from the New Testament experiences of the early Christian believers on the Day of Pentecost. On this day, the Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples and tongues of fire rested on their heads. Acts 2:1-4 describes the event.⁵

Acts 2:1-4 –“When the Day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ²Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. (NIV)

The Holy Scripture is a collection of 66 books written over multiple centuries by those inspired by God to do so. It is the primary witness to the Orthodox Christian faith, within Holy Tradition and often described as its highest point. It was written by the prophets and apostles in human language, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and collected, edited, and canonized by the Church. Above all, the Bible is a faith document that Pentecostals adhere to as the absolute truth and the final revelation given to man by God himself. By nature God is a God of revelation and the Bible reveals God and his plan of redemption to and towards humanity.

⁵ <http://christianity.about.com/od/glossary/g/pentecostal.htm>

The Nature of Scripture:

The Scriptures both *are* the word of God and are *about* the Word of God, Jesus Christ. They are God's revelation of himself, the word of God in the words of men. The Bible is a witness to the revelation of God, and it is a part of the active and living Holy Tradition of the Church. Thus, if Tradition is the life of the Church, then the Scripture is the primary language of that life.

The Scripture—both Old and New Testaments—is fundamentally about Christ. It is Christocentric and Christological.^{6,7} The whole Bible presupposes the Incarnation and Resurrection of Christ. Indeed, the very purpose in writing the New Testament was because Christ had already risen from the dead—with the death of the Apostle James, the Church realized that the eyewitnesses were not always going to be with them, therefore the preaching of the eyewitnesses was written down.

The preaching of the apostles preceded the Scriptures of the New Testament, so we must understand the Scripture as an expression and extension of that preaching; the word of

⁶ Christology (from Greek Χριστός *Christós* and -λογία, *-logia*) is the field of study within Christian theology which is primarily concerned with the nature and person of Jesus as recorded in the canonical Gospels and the epistles of the New Testament.

⁷ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christology>

God had already gone out and established the Church, which served as the communal context for the Scripture's composition and canonization. Humanity naturally tends to preach before it makes a written record.

Reformed theology uses the term "word of God" in two ways, one written with an uppercase "W" and the other, with lowercase "w." The Word of God (uppercase "W") is, first and foremost, God's eternal Wisdom personified. It is who speaks at creation's beginning saying "let there be light..., and there was light. It is this Word through whom God called things into being, named and addressed them. It is this Word who became flesh in Jesus of Nazareth, and addressed us as beloved of God.

The second way the Reformed tradition uses the term "word of God" is with a lower case "w", which refers to all of the speech about Jesus Christ. First and foremost among this usage of the term "word of God" is the Bible itself. "It is the word of God written."⁸

The Integrity of Scripture:

Because the Bible is a faith document, we must respect its integrity as the final revelation of the Orthodox Christian faith. We do not recognize any other writings as canonical Scriptures other than those listed in the Holy Bible. Though the Bible does not constitute an all-sufficient summary of rev-

⁸ www.mapc.com/worship/sermons/1998/10/18/the-role-and-purpose-of-scripture-in-the-christian-life

elation, no new revelation has been given. Even if another document were to be unearthed which scholars all agreed came from the hand of Paul or Moses, it would not be added to the canon. Likewise, if an existing part of the canon were undeniably proven not to be from its traditionally ascribed author, it would not be removed from the canon. Therefore we accept the Scriptures just as they are recorded within the Holy Bible.

The Purpose of Scripture:

Holy Scripture exists for the reason that the Apostle John gives in John 20:30-31:

And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. (KJV) That is, the Bible is written so that we might believe and be saved.⁹

What then is the role or purpose of the Bible in the Christian life? First, it is God's gift to us to reveal Jesus Christ, the living Word of God, who has come for our salvation. It is also, number two, a reliable guide to the life of faith. It is God's word to the extent that it reveals to us not only who God is, but who you and I are to be, and how we are to behave. It is not just a story about Jesus. It is your story and my story as

⁹ http://orthodoxwiki.org/Holy_Scripture

well. It is the one sufficient guide to the life of faith and practice. In it you and I will find all that we need to know about God, about who we are and who God wants us to be, all that we are destined to be.¹⁰

Pentecostalism is an evangelical¹¹ faith¹², emphasizing the reliability of the Bible and the need for the transformation of an individual's life through faith in Jesus.^[4] Like other evangelicals, Pentecostals generally adhere to the Bible's divine inspiration and inerrancy—the belief that the Bible, in the original manuscripts in which it was written, is infallible.¹³ Pentecostals emphasize the teaching of the “full gospel” or “foursquare gospel”.

The term foursquare refers to the four fundamental beliefs of Pentecostalism:

¹⁰ http://orthodoxwiki.org/Holy_Scripture

¹¹ Evangelicalism, Evangelical Christianity, or Evangelical Protestantism is a worldwide, transdenominational movement within Protestant Christianity, maintaining that the essence of the gospel consists in the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ's atonement. Evangelicals are Christians who believe in the centrality of the conversion or “born again” experience in receiving salvation, believe in the authority of the Bible as God's revelation to humanity and have a strong commitment to evangelism or sharing the Christian message.

¹² <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evangelicalism>

¹³ Biblical infallibility is the belief that what the Bible says regarding matters of faith and Christian practice is wholly useful and true. It is the “belief that the Bible is completely trustworthy as a guide to salvation and the life of faith and will not fail to accomplish its purpose. Some equate ‘inerrancy’ and ‘infallibility’; others do not.”

1. Jesus saves according to John 3:16
2. Baptizes with the Holy Spirit according to Acts 2:4
3. Heals bodily according to James 5:15; and
4. Is coming again to receive those who are saved according to I Thessalonians 4:16–17.

Our second question: What did early Pentecostal Pioneers teach about the Holy Scriptures? (ex. William J. Seymour & Charles Parham)

History of Pentecostalism in America

The Azusa Street Revival was a historic Pentecostal revival meeting that took place in Los Angeles, California and is the origin of the Pentecostal movement.¹⁴ It was led by William J. Seymour, an African American preacher. It began with a meeting on April 9, 1906, and continued until roughly 1915. The revival was characterized by ecstatic spiritual experiences accompanied by miracles, dramatic worship services, speaking in tongues, and inter-racial mingling. The participants were criticized by the secular media and Christian theologians for behaviors considered to be outrageous and unorthodox, especially at the time.

¹⁴ Corcoran, Michael. “How a humble preacher ignited the Pentecostal fire”. Cox News Services. Retrieved November 19, 2011.

Today, the revival is considered by historians to be the primary catalyst for the spread of Pentecostalism in the 20th and 21st century.

In 1905, William J. Seymour, the one-eyed 34-year-old son of former slaves, was a student of well-known Pentecostal preacher Charles Parham and an interim pastor for a small holiness church in Houston, Texas.¹⁵ Neely Terry, an African American woman who attended a small holiness church pastored by Julia Hutchins in Los Angeles, made a trip to visit family in Houston late in 1905. While in Houston, she visited Seymour's church, where he preached receiving the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in others tongues, and though he had not experienced this personally, Terry was impressed with his character and message. Once home in California, Terry suggested that Seymour be invited to speak at the local church.¹⁶ Seymour received and accepted the invitation in February 1906.¹⁷

Charles Fox Parham is a prominent figure in the history of the Pentecostal movement. He is the founder of the first Pentecostal church known as the Apostolic Faith Church. During the late 19th and early 20th century, he led a Bible School in Topeka, Kansas, where the baptism in the Holy Spirit was

¹⁵ Cloud, David. "AZUSA STREET MISSION". Retrieved 2007-05-24.

¹⁶ Hayford, Jack W.; Moore, S. David (2006). *The Charismatic Century: The Enduring Impact of the Azusa Street Revival* (August 2006 ed.). Warner Faith. ISBN 978-0-446-57813-4.

¹⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Azusa_Street_Revival

emphasized as a key factor in one's walk of faith. In 1890, he attended Southwest Kansas College in Winfield, studying religion and then medicine.

After he suffered a recurrence of rheumatic fever that nearly killed him, he returned to his evangelistic pursuits. He earned a minister's license from the Southwest Kansas Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and when he was 20 he became a temporary pastor at the Eudora Methodist Church near Lawrence, Kansas. But Parham was often at odds with his Methodist superiors. Conflicts arose because Parham's theology veered in the direction of the Holiness movement, a revivalist offshoot of Methodist theology with tenets that included sanctification, baptism by the Holy Spirit, and divine healing.

By 1895, Parham broke with Methodism—in fact, all denominationalism—for good. He started his own independent evangelical ministry in Kansas, where he held revival meetings that emphasized personal salvation. He also advocated a return to the fundamental teachings of the Scriptures, or “primitive Christianity.”¹⁸ He taught a literal interpretation of the Scriptures. He believed and taught that whatever you seen written in the word of God is for us today. It should be believed and practiced by us.

Over the Christmas holiday of 1900, Parham asked his students to study the Bible to discover the biblical evidence

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<http://biography.yourdictionary.com/charles-fox-parham>

for the baptism in the Holy Spirit. A series of revival prayer meetings began on January 1, 1901, where many students and Parham himself experienced a Holy Spirit baptism accompanied by speaking in tongues. They concluded that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is expressed and evidenced by speaking in tongues.

William Joseph Seymour: Information about Seymour's early years is generally sketchy. The family's religious affiliation appears to have been Catholic as the children were registered and baptized in the local Catholic Church. There is a suggestion that Seymour had prophetic visions early in his life and would later emphasize the need for "special revelation" from God. Larry E. Martin in his book titled "*William J. Seymour a History of the Azusa Street Revival*" gives the best historical and geographical overview of Seymour's birthplace and family history.

In 1900 Seymour moved to Chicago, the center of the Divine Healing Movement under John Alexander Dowie. Around 1901 Seymour moved on to Cincinnati, Ohio. It is suggested that, while in Cincinnati, Seymour attended "God's Bible School" started by Martin Wells Knapp. The school taught holiness, divine healing and premillennialism which directly aligned with Seymour's belief system. He was feeling a tug on his life to become a full-time minister of the gospel, but was reluctant to make the move. He succumbed to smallpox and was blinded in one eye. He believed that it was God's judgment for resisting the call into ministry.

Seymour believed that healing and miracles were a part of the Pentecostal experience and to be expected where the presence and power of God were moving. Amazing healings and miracles regularly occurred at the Azusa Street Mission during the outpouring. Although Seymour was not primarily a “healing evangelist” he regularly taught on divine healing as the will of God. A September 1906 sermon listed the four foundational teachings of salvation, sanctification, physical healing based on the atonement, and being filled by the Holy Spirit.¹⁹

In answering our third question: How is our understanding of the Holy Scriptures different from that of the Protestant Reformation? We will first see a panoramic view and brief background on the Protestant Reformation.

“The **Protestant Reformation** was a major 16th century European movement aimed initially at reforming the beliefs and practices of the Roman Catholic Church. Its religious aspects were supplemented by ambitious political rulers who wanted to extend their power and control at the expense of the Church. The Reformation ended the unity imposed by medieval Christianity and, in the eyes of many historians, signaled the beginning of the modern era. A weakening of the old order was already under way in Northern Europe, as evidenced by the emergence of thriving new cities and a determined middle class.

¹⁹<http://healingandrevival.com/BioWSeymour.htm>

“In 1517, in one of the signal events of western history, Martin Luther, a German Augustinian monk, posted 95 theses on a church door in the university town of Wittenberg. That act was common academic practice of the day and served as an invitation to debate. Luther’s propositions challenged some portions of Roman Catholic doctrine and a number of specific practices.

“The movement quickly gained adherents in the German states, the Netherlands, Scandinavia, Scotland and portions of France. Support came from sincere religious reformers, while others manipulated the movement to gain control of valuable church property.²⁰ “The term Protestant was not initially applied to the reformers, but later was used to describe all groups protesting Roman Catholic orthodoxy.”²¹

Prominent figures in the Reformation

Martin Luther (1483–1546) — In 1517, nails his 95 Theses onto a Wittenberg Church door. These theses were Latin propositions opposing the manner in which indulgences (release from the temporal penalties for sin through the payment of money) were being sold in order to raise money for the building of Saint Peter’s in Rome.

²⁰ <http://www.theopedia.com/protestant-reformation>

²¹ [The Protestant Reformation](#) at U-S-History.com.

Huldreich Zwingli (1484–1531) — A Swiss theologian and leader of early Reformation movements in Switzerland who vigorously denounced the sale of indulgences^{22, 23} in 1518.

John Calvin (1509–64) — Calvin was a French theologian and reformer who fled religious persecution in France and settled in Geneva in 1536. He instituted a form of Church government in Geneva which has become known as the Presbyterian Church. He insisted on reforms including: the congregational singing of the Psalms as part of church worship, the teaching of a catechism and confession of faith to children, and the enforcement of a strict moral discipline in the community by the pastors and members of the church. Geneva was, under Calvin, essentially a theocracy.

John Knox (1513–1572) — An ardent disciple of Calvin, Knox established Calvinistic Protestantism as the national religion of Scotland. He left a powerful political legacy within the Calvinist or Reformed branch of Protestantism, a political legacy known as Presbyterianism.

²² Far too many people do not understand indulgences. First and foremost, an indulgence costs absolutely nothing. Pope Paul VI said: “An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain defined conditions through the Church’s help when, as a minister of redemption, she dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfactions won by Christ and the saints” (*Indulgentiarum Doctrina 1*). An indulgence is a removal of the punishment from sin.

²³ <http://acatholiclife.blogspot.com/2005/07/what-are-indulgences.html>

Henry VIII (1491–1547) — In 1533, Henry was excommunicated by the pope for marrying Anne Boleyn and having the archbishop of Canterbury sanction the divorce from his first wife, Catherine. In 1534, Henry had Parliament pass an act appointing the king and his successors supreme head of the Church of England, thus establishing an independent national Anglican church.²⁴

Theological Issues of the Reformation

The theology of the Reformers departed from the Roman Catholic Church primarily on the basis of three great principles:²⁵

- Sole authority of Scripture,
- Justification by faith alone, and
- Priesthood of the believer.

Sola Scriptura (*by Scripture alone*) was one of the watchwords of the Reformation. This doctrine maintains that Scripture, as contained in the Bible, is the only authority for the Christian in matters of faith, life and conduct. The teachings and traditions of the church are to be completely subordinate to the Scriptures. Roman Catholicism, on the

²⁴ <http://www.theopedia.com/protestant-reformation>

²⁵ Eerdmans' Handbook to the History of the Christian Church, Tim Dowley editor, p. 364ff. See also, The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge (1911), s.v. The Reformation, Vol. IX, p. 419.

other hand, holds Scripture and Tradition to be of the same inspired *Deposit of Faith*.

Sola Fide (*by faith alone*) was the other watchword of the Reformation. This doctrine maintains that we are justified before God (and thus saved) by faith alone, not by anything we do, not by anything the church does for us, and not by faith plus anything else. It was also recognized by the early Reformers that Sola Fide is not rightly understood until it is seen as anchored in the broader principle of **Sola Gratia**, by grace alone. Hence the Reformers were calling the church back to the basic teaching of Scripture where the apostle Paul states that we are “saved by grace through faith and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God,” Eph. 2:8.

The third great principle of the Reformation was the **priesthood of all believers**. The Scriptures teach that believers are a “holy priesthood,” 1 Pet. 2:5. All believers are priests before God through our great high priest Jesus Christ. “There is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus,” 1 Tim. 2:5. As believers, we all have direct access to God through Christ, there is no necessity for an earthly mediator. The Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox concept of the priesthood was seen as having no warrant in Scripture, viewed as a perversion and misapplication of the Old Testament Aaronic or Levitical priesthood which was clearly fulfilled in Christ and done away with by the New Testament.

As a result of these principles, the Reformers rejected the authority of the Pope, the merit of good works, indulgences, the mediation of Mary and the Saints, all but the two sacraments instituted by Christ (Baptism and the Lord's Supper), the doctrine of transubstantiation²⁶, the mass as a sacrifice, purgatory, prayers for the dead, confessions to a priest, the use of Latin in the services, and all the paraphernalia that expressed these ideas.

Even though the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches fall within Orthodoxy as most would define it, much of their teaching beyond the basic tenets is regarded as erroneous by conservative Protestants. In fact, they would say much of it is clearly to be regarded as false teaching which has perverted the gospel of God's grace in Jesus Christ. In general, evangelical Protestants see the Reformation as simply a call back to biblical Christianity.²⁷

In conclusion: these are some of the main points Pentecostals believe about the Scriptures:

I. The Scriptures are divinely inspired by God.

²⁶ Transubstantiation (in Latin, *transsubstantiatio*, in Greek μεταρσίωσις *metousiosis*) is, according to the teaching of the Catholic Church, the change by which the bread and the wine used in the sacrament of the Eucharist become, not merely as a sign or a figure, but also in actual reality the body and blood of Christ. The Catholic Church teaches that the substance, or reality, of the bread is changed into that of the body of Christ and the substance of the wine into that of his blood.

²⁷ <http://www.theopedia.com/protestant-reformation>

2. The Scriptures are inerrant and infallible.
3. The Scriptures are to be interpreted first and foremost literally, not figuratively nor spiritually.
4. What is read in the Scriptures is still applicable for today's day and age. The gifts of the Spirit, miracles, signs and wonders did not end with the Apostolic Age. Nor did the speaking in tongues and being filled with the Holy Spirit.
5. The Pentecostal Protestant faith includes the belief in faith or divine healing. They believe medicine and doctors play an important role in staying healthy, but that God is the ultimate source for all healing. Many other Christian denominations do not believe in, or practice, divine healing.²⁸
6. Baptism in the Holy Spirit is evident when a Pentecostal Protestant begins miraculously speaking in a language unknown to the speaker. All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the normal experience of all in the early Christian

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<http://www.newsmax.com/FastFeatures/pentecostal-protestant-beliefs-christians/2015/04/02/id/636031/>

church. With it comes the endowment of power for life and service, the bestowment of the gifts and their uses in the work of the ministry (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4,8; I Corinthians 12:1-31). This experience is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth (Acts 8:12-17; 10:44-46; 11:14-16; 15:7-9).²⁹

7. The Scriptures or the Bible is not meant to simply be a book to be mentally and academically read. The Bible is life; it's alive and active and should be prayerfully read and applied to every aspect of our life.

²⁹

<http://www.religionfacts.com/pentecostalism/beliefs>



William J. Seymour

HOLY
BIBLE



THE WORD OF GOD: THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

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Introduction:

In this essay we will highlight the foundational position that God's Word has in the birthing of the contemporary Pentecostal movement (which now reaches 700 million Pentecostals in the whole world), and the birthing of the Apostolic movement (with 35 million Apostolic believers globally).

We shall also trace a line in the Apostolic Assembly's life and thought, which shows the dynamic and **instrumental** function, the Holy Scriptures have had among us.

And we shall signal our distinctive faith in the Bible as the **perfect** Word of God, which explains and distinguishes the constant growth of our congregations, in all contexts.

I. Pentecostalism: Founded on a literal faith in God's Word.

1. Contemporary Pentecostalism born in the literal interpretation of the Bible, in a type of absolute faith in God's Word.

As it is well known today, Charles F. Parham, a Methodist minister, founded in Topeka, Kansas, the Bethel Bible School in a rented building from the American Bible Society of October 1900. It was a typical Holiness Movement school, where the only textbook was the Bible and its thematic study through the search of similar verses. There, Parham led his students to study the second chapter of Acts, and encouraged them to search what was the evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit.

On the commonly accepted date of January 1, 1901, one of the students by name of Agnes Ozman became the first person to experiment what we Pentecostals call the "baptism of the Holy Spirit," that is to say, the believer's experience of worship to God in new tongues, in an unknown language (glossolalia). She experienced this by praying to be filled with the Holy Spirit, just as it was described in Acts 2. In the weeks following, other students and Parham himself received this baptism of fire. At irregular rhythms this movement, of the new "Pentecostal doctrine," began to grow, first in Kansas

and then in Texas. In December 1905, Parham moved his Bible School to Houston, Texas.

1.1. Contemporary Pentecostalism experienced in the Azusa Street Revival, its explosion to all nations, thanks to its ferrous practice of reading the book of Acts, as the literal and immutable Word of God.

Willian J. Seymour, a son of slaves and an African-American minister from Louisiana¹, heard at a service in Houston one Lucy Farrow praying “by speaking in new tongues.” This experience touched her heart and moved him to ask her questions. In this way, sister Farrow lead Seymour to Parham.

Seymour immediately requested to be admitted to the Bible School. Due to the severe racial segregation laws of the time he was not allowed to enter the classroom, during the ten weeks of training, but Parham allowed him to listen by sitting outside, through a window or an open door.

He decided to move to California with the sponsorship of sister Neely Terry, who had recently arrived from Los Angeles. Parham laid his hands on this African-America preacher to begin his trip to Los Angeles, and in this way without him knowing it, Parham passed the torch of the “Latter Rain” message to Seymour. The budding Pentecostal movement would transform from a local religious phenomenon to an explosive worldwide movement.

¹ Burgess, Mcgee, 1988, p. 778.

Seymour arrived to Los Angeles on February 22, 1906 and presented himself at the church pastored by Julia W. Hutchins. There he began to preach a literal reading of Acts and the baptism of the Holy Spirit, evidenced by speaking in new tongues. This Pentecostal preaching would end him up in front of closed church doors. These circumstances led him to continue preaching the Pentecostal message in the home of the Asberry family, on 214 N. Bonnie Brae.

Monday April 9, 1906 Seymour and another believer, Edward Lee, received the Holy Spirit baptism. That same day and the following, many people began to receive the baptism of fire. The Pentecostal movement had begun in Los Angeles. Unusual for these years, first a couple dozens and then hundreds of people of white and black races began to worship together. On April 14, 1906 the group moved to 312 Azusa Street. There they began to hold religious services under the name of the “Apostolic Faith Mission,”² preaching a new and literal reading from the book of the Acts.

1.2. This spiritual revolution was fruit of the Holy Spirit’s sovereign action. He endowed Pentecostal believers with the ability to read the Bible, with the faith of a pure child, and allowed them to so recover the Holy Spirit’s dimension in the church’s life of wonders, signs, miracles, gifts and the baptism of fire speaking in new tongues.

² Hollenweger, 1976, 9.

Frank Bartleman, the renown Apostolic chronicler and Azusa Street Revival pioneer, described with stinging and prophetic language, with great emphasis in the third chapter of his “Azusa Street”³ book “Fire Falls on the Missionary Work of Azusa,” the spiritual earthquake produced by the Holy Spirit, in leading thousands of believers in a revival of reading, believing, and asking God the hundreds of promises “for the end times,” in the book of Acts particularly.

The Azusa Street Revival has been the most powerful move of the Holy Spirit in the contemporary church. It freed believers from hundreds of protestant and catholic denominations, from a one-eyed faith, from an amputated faith, from a chained faith, that on paper believed the Bible to be the infallible Word of God, but in its practice denied the historicity, inerrancy, usefulness and perfect testimony of God’s Word.

The Protestant Reformation undertaken in the 15th century was a half-reform. The Pentecostal and Apostolic Revival did not bring a reformation, but a radical restoration, a return once thought impossible, of the Early Church’s life.

The Azusa Street Revival was a restoration of the Holy Spirit’s promise but it was also a restoration of the Early Church’s hermeneutic and exegesis. It was also a restoration of the centrifugal missionary explosion that must be the consequence of a church walking in the Spirit. The promise of Jesus was fulfilled in Azusa and since then in thousands of cities

³ Bartleman, 2006, 83-111.

all over the World: “But the Comforter, which is the Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you (John 14:26).”

2. The contemporary Apostolic Movement: Founded on a literal faith in God’s Word.

2.1. Divine healing and baptism in the Name of Jesus: A literal faith in the Bible.

From its very first issue (September 1906), the “Apostolic Faith”⁴ magazine, testifies of the presence of Mexican persons at the beginning of the Azusa Street Pentecostal Revival. In that same issue it narrates how on one August 11, 1906, an indigenous man from central Mexico began to speak in tongues and how under the Holy Spirit’s power laid hands on a Mrs. Knapp (a young German immigrant), who instantly was healed from terminal pulmonary tuberculosis.

More and more historians identify this “indigenous Mexican man” as Juan Navarro, who is recognized by Trinitarians and Apostolics as the first minister that the Pentecostal movement had. Different historical records indicate that he lived in Houston in 1905, that he worked in an attorney’s office, that he was already an Evangelical believer and that he was baptized in 1905, in the name of Jesus Christ, in Houston, by Charles Parham. Struggling with clearly find-

⁴ Corum, 1986, 2-3.

ing the baptism in the name of Jesus Christ in the book of Acts, Parham performed many baptisms in the name of Jesus Christ. He baptized Howard Goss in 1903, and Goss would later become the first General Superintendent of the United Pentecostal Church. We also know that another UPCI pioneer Andrew Urshan was baptized in the name of Jesus since 1910.

Like many other Pentecostal believers at the beginning of the 20th century, Brother Juan Navarro travelled to California once he had news of the tremendous revival that was taking place, but he did not travel “without luggage” per se: he had already bagged the baptism in the name of Jesus Christ.

2.2. We observe how the Holy Spirit used the literal faith of new Mexican Pentecostal believers in God’s Word, to reveal to them the baptism in the name of Jesus Christ and the oneness of God.

Firstly: Pentecostalism was born with the rediscovery of the Holy Spirit’s baptism in the book of Acts. Undoubtedly, the merit for identifying the experience of speaking in new tongues (glossolalia), as the initial sign of being baptized in the Holy Spirit, belongs to Charles F. Parham.⁵ He himself explains: “I put the students to diligently work on what were the biblical evidences about the Holy Spirit’s baptism.”⁶

⁵ Goff, 1988.

⁶ Parham, 1977, 51.

Secondly: What came then, was a literal reading and passionate study of the book of the Acts by thousands of early Pentecostals. This was their favorite book from the 66 books of the Bible. In its pages they discovered that the dogmas of their denominations denied or never taught: The baptism of the Holy Spirit with the sign of speaking in new tongues, miracles, wonders and prayer for divine healing. And they adopted a totally extroverted worship of God, with freedom for emotions (in the healthiest sense), bodily and audibly expressive.

Thirdly: Precisely, in that new reading of the book of the Acts, the Holy Spirit revealed to these thousands of Pentecostal pioneers the Biblical pattern of water baptism: Acts 2:38 “in the Name of Jesus Christ,” Acts 8:16 “in the Name of Jesus,” Acts 10:48 “in the name of the Lord Jesus,” Acts 19:5 “in the name of the Lord Jesus,” Acts 22:16 “Be baptized ... calling on his name.” Hundreds of them, then, decided to obey God before men and they began to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

Fourthly: This was especially true for the group of Mexican believers in the Azusa Street Revival. From 1906 to 1909, they lived in the powerful spiritual atmosphere of that place, though with the language barrier, they were not able to be nourished from the many messages of preachers of those years. All those preachers were of Trinitarian background. The revelation of the name of Jesus Christ arose since the beginnings of Azusa. The “Apostolic Faith” magazine in its November 1906 issue narrates how one Brígido Pérez, after expe-

riencing the baptism in fire, travelled to San Diego to share this message.⁷ And we know that already in 1907, Luis Ochoa López (who died in the Apostolic Assembly's bosom), at the age of 19, along with Benjamín Cruz, heard the Word of God by a white man named Johnson in San Diego, California. There, they were both baptized in the name of Jesus Christ in 1907.⁸

Fifthly: The Mexican Pentecostal believers, without a doubt under the leadership of Minister Juan Navarro, who was already baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, began to conduct bible studies in the homes. The revelation of the name of Jesus Christ simply allowed them a deeper and greater reading of the Bible without theological prejudices and with a literal faith. They read of the baptism of the name of Jesus in the book of Acts and the message of the one and only God in the whole Bible.

Finally: The inevitable occurred. The Mexican Pentecostals became the first Apostolics and deeply passionate desired to share their biblical discoveries with Pastor Seymour and the Azusa Street Congregation. The Apostolic chronicler Frank Bartleman, with great pain records what took place: "The shaming brought upon the one who lead the service (Seymour), at the beginning of the revival, toward the group of Mexicans."⁹ This provoked the expulsion of "those poor illiterate Mexicans," with the excuse that they could not ever speak

⁷ Ibid, 4.

⁸ Ramos, 2008.

⁹ Bartleman, 1962, 104.

English. And Bartleman recognized this act as “murder of the Spirit.” This catalyzed the integration the first congregations of what would become the Apostolic Assembly. Fox in his recent doctoral thesis affirms that if Ramírez and Walsh are correct in speaking of Mexicans being rebaptized in the name of Jesus Christ in the Azusa Revival, it would have been Seymour’s strong trinitarianism which expelled the Mexicans given the ban against sharing their new oneness theology.¹⁰

3. The Apostolic Assembly is the Lord’s Church founded upon the foundation of apostles and prophets, wherein our Lord Jesus is the cornerstone.

What does it mean for us, that Ephesians 2:20 is the biblical passage used in our church’s official letterhead even up to today? That the Apostolic Assembly believes in the whole Bible, Old Testament and New Testament, but our whole interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures we undertake with Christocentric eyes. That is to say, Christ Jesus and his redeeming work on the cross is the person by whom we believe the Word of God to be perfect and infallible. It is by the testimony of Jesus about the Scriptures that we believe the Word to have been given perfectly to the saints, without error.

¹⁰

Fox, 2011, 167-168.

By 1912, we see already registered the first two Assembly congregations: the “Spanish Faith Apostolic Mission,”¹¹ led by pastor Genaro Valenzuela. And the “Star of Bethlehem” led by pastor Juan Navarro.

The absolute faith in God’s perfect Word of these two congregations, is the distinguishing mark that thousands of apostolic congregations have worldwide thanks to them. And it is that absolute faith in God’s infallible Word which became the dynamic and instrumental faith in our Apostolic Assembly’s development.

We believe and live this dynamic faith. For us, our absolute faith in the Word, inerrant by God, is not the dead letter of another dogma. It is essential in the apostolic spirituality of each congregation. In all our congregations the fire of the Holy Spirit falls and in all of them we are witnesses of miracles, wonders and signs. That is who we are, we are the people of God’s living Word.

Let me say it another way: We Apostolics don’t believe that God’s Word is infallible or inerrant because the Constitution says so. We believe the Bible to be God’s perfect Word because we are the witnesses of God’s power, we are witnesses of the signs and wonders described in the 66 Bible books. We have been baptized with the Holy Spirit’s fire and from within us flow rivers of living water. This is the new pneumatological paradigm in which the Apostolic Assembly was born in and grew.

¹¹

Sánchez Walsh, 2003, 19.

II. The dynamic and instrumental faith in God's Word.

The great difference between the absolute faith in the Word of God by Apostolic believers (a faith in the infallible and inerrant Word), and other evangelical believers that say they believe the Word to be infallible and inerrant, is the manner of faith.

The Apostolic faith in the Word, is a dynamic faith, it is an instrumental faith, that is to say, it is nourished and strengthened by the constant powerful actions of our God. We are not strengthened in a faith based on dogmas or ancient councils. Our faith's strength comes from our personal experience with God. The Holy Spirit has given us to believe. We call on Jesus as Lord by the Spirit. And we absolutely and totally believe in the Word, because the Holy Spirit has baptized us with fire and reminds us dynamically all that Jesus has spoken to us in His Word. I will abound on this last point later. The supreme authority of the Word of God can be clearly seen in the hymnody and ecclesiology of our church:

I. The Word of God in our hymns: “Cantos de Consolación” (Songs of Consolation)

In the oldest apostolic hymns, we find the theology, life and mission of our first congregations. And it is surprising the great number of hymns that mention the different dimensions of God's Word in the life of believers. Let us briefly see in the

hymnody of the pioneers, that from early on they highlighted what the Word **does** in human beings:

1.1. Marcial de la Cruz and the first generation (1915-1920): hymnologists of the Word, according to the oldest record of our hymnal (We provide only English translations of the original Spanish texts).

Hymn 11 – Oh Lord, let not one be lost

“2. Trusting in your Word, I will continue, taking your gospel, and you shall make it heard. It is time for them to search for you. Leaving all error, to obtain life, and so enter in the mansion.”¹²

Hymn 19 – Whoever is in Christ

“2. The Bible is our lamp, it brought us instruction. It serves as a lighthouse which shines on the heart.”¹³

Hymn 21 – God is good.

“1. Jesus, he life gave to me. How good is he! How good is he! He can also give you life, if in His Word you believe.”¹⁴

Hymn 22 – When you hear His Voice.

“1. When you hear his voice; Do not harden the heart, and you

¹² Cantos de Consolación, 15.

¹³ Cantos de Consolación, 23.

¹⁴ Cantos de Consolación, 25.

shall today be saved by Him and have forgiveness. Come, listen closely, the Word of the Lord. You shall be transformed, from here to there”¹⁵

Hymn 33 – The Rose of Sharon

“In the valley a rose blooms and adorns the fields it is planted, the Word of Christ is beautiful in the soul that accepts him now.”¹⁶

Hymn 83 – Only by Faith in Christ.

“Only by faith in Christ can you be saved, and the soul feel consolation; Christ is the dawn, he is the daybreak, who brings salvation to man. Seek the Bible and read His Word. It tells the truth, and you shall find that Christ came to give you freedom.”¹⁷

R.B. Luna.

Hymn 52 – Glory to the Lord

“4. His Word teaches us to love one another, this is the precious key to obtain forgiveness.”

“5. In the Word we find life and salvation. That is, if we are consecrated through prayer.”¹⁸

¹⁵ Cantos de Consolación, 26.

¹⁶ Cantos de Consolación, 37.

¹⁷ Cantos de Consolación, 87.

¹⁸ Cantos de Consolación, 56.

Hymn 53 – Faith, Hope and Charity

“I. Let us search for your justice, holiness with greater fervor. His Word is bread of life. It gives us his love.”¹⁹

1.2. Lorenzo Salazar: Hymn writing sui generis, woven from the Bible.

There is an enormous production of hymns from this pioneer, that are woven marvelously, directly from the Holy Scriptures: “Cuando Despertare” (trans. “When I Wake,” Psalm 17:15, Daniel 12:3); “¿Quién de su amor me apartará?” (trans. “Who from his love shall separate me?” Romans 8); “¿Cuan amables son tus moradas! (trans. “How beautiful are your dwelling places,” Psalm 84); “Los Diez Mandamientos” (trans. “The Ten Commandments.” Exodus 20); Jerusalén, ¡Oh Jerusalén!” (trans. “Jerusalem, Oh Jerusalem!” Matthew 23); “Exhortación de Josué” (trans. “Joshua’s Exhortation,” Joshua 24); “Los Bienaventurados” (trans. “The Blessed,” Psalm 1); “Junto al Lugar del Gólgota” (trans. “Close to Golgotha,” (Matthew 27); “Una Cosa He Demandado” (trans. “One Thing Have I Demanded,” Psalm 27); “Templo Dedicado a Dios,” (trans. “Temple dedicated to God,” Psalm 133); “Nunca Ha Hablado Hombre como este” (“No Man Has Ever Spoken Thus,” John 7) and Job (Job 1).

We can also see the biblical emphasis laid by Bishop Lorenzo Salazar, upon examining his hymns according to the hymnal:

¹⁹

Cantos de Consolación, 57.

Hymn 140 – Jehová, Grande es tu Nombre (trans. “Jehovah, Great is your Name”)²⁰

“3. Jehovah, lily of the valley! **Soft dew and of tender tranquility; Is your Word to my soul**, which longs for peace and solemnness, Your radiance, in its furor, shines of love, as a heavenly body in its integrity”

Hymn 144 - Te doy gracias (trans. “Thanks I give to you”)²¹

“4. **Living and active is Your Word, which nourishes all my soul**; Above all else you keep, keep me in the bosom of your grace.”

Hymn 146 – Mensajero Que Llevas La Simiente (trans. “Messenger who sows the Seed”)²²

“2. Messenger, you who Christ represents, **Fulfill your duty to preach, the Truths you find in the Bible**, though the world disparages you.”

Hymn 152 – Cuan Amables Son Tus Moradas

(trans. How beautiful are your dwelling places)²³

²⁰ Himnario de Consolación, 2015, 140. Jehová, Grande es tu Nombre.

²¹ Himnario de Consolación, 2005, 144. Te doy gracias.

²² Himnario de Consolación, 2005, 146. Mensajero Que Llevas La Simiente.

²³ Himnario de Consolación, 2005, 152. Cuan Amables Son Tus Moradas.

“1. His Law divine, fills my soul, of sweet peace, of sublime calm; Rays of light, happiness no match, manna from heaven falls on his altar”

Hymn 155 – La Fortaleza del Alma (trans. “The Soul’s Might”)²⁴

“1. The Soul finds its might, In Jesus Christ, our Savior, In Him is found eternal life, and full salvation. In His Word which encourages us, and exerts us on our jourey, To obtain life eternal; and so dwell forever in his mansion.”

2. The Word and the first Apostolic Assembly convention agreements.

2.1. Antonio Castañeda Nava, 1925 Convention Invitation Letter.

“We placed as title of this alliance, The Book of Books, through a prayer. Gen 31 (45).”

2.2. Bernardo Hernández, Secretary of the first agreements.

2.2.1. 1925 Convention Agreements:

Introductory Comments:

*“Inspired in his Word and by His Divine Spirit.”*²⁵

²⁴ Himnario de Consolación, 2005, 155. La Fortaleza del Alma.

²⁵ Hernández, 1925, 1.

“One same doctrine emanated from the Bible which is the Word of God with the Holy Spirit’s potency”²⁶ (Antonio Morales).

“God’s Counsel impregnated of Love, Wisdom and Spirit.”²⁷

Specific Agreements:

“1 – To believe the veracity of the Bible and its origin, from God – All of us unanimously affirmed to firmly believe that it was truth and its origin from God.”²⁸

In the Fourth Act of the first 1925 General Convention, Pastor General Francico Llorente presents, on December 4, 1925, the need to:

- 1) To believe that the Bible is Truth.
- 2) And that it’s origin is from God.

“This was agreed upon by the Convention, and with prayer through lifted hands high (from all our heart).”

“9th – Teaching of the believer by God through his laborers and by His Word. Eph. 4:11, 12, 13.”²⁹

*“And our bro. F.F. Llorente followed soon after, **taking hold the Holy Spirit’s sword**, making the following questions.”³⁰*

²⁶ Hernández, 1925, 4.

²⁷ Hernández, 1925, 7.

²⁸ Hernández, 1925, 12.

²⁹ Hernández, 1925, 13.

³⁰ Hernández, 1925, 16.

“Shall the reading of the book of Proverbs be prohibited? – It was answered, no. John 5:39.”³¹

In other words, the first 1925 Convention affirmed the Christian canon of 66 books, as the Word of God for the Apostolic Assembly.

It is also an extremely strong characteristic that from 1925 and on the following convention, that in the participation of proposals, questions, recommendations and agreements, all who asked to speak, had to support their words with one or several Bible passages: They spoke if the Word spoke.

We can synthesize the 1925 Convention:

- a. It affirmed our faith in God’s Word (its 66 books).
- b. It affirmed God’s Word as the fountain of apostolic preaching.
- c. It affirmed God’s Word as the perfect norm for the Church’s life and mission.
- d. It recognized the Word as the only authority for all our agreements.

2.3. 1926 Convention Agreements.

“Art. 1.- Apostolic Doctrine and Communion according to the Word of God.”³²

³¹ Hernández, 1925, 17.

³² Hernández, 1926, 11.

“Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone —Ephesians 2:20. — Acts 2:42.— Revelation 21:14.

*Our creed, discipline, order and doctrine are in the **Word of God**; as it is believed to be **revealed by the Holy Spirit**. John 14:26—1st Cor. 2:9, 13—And we believed that all scripture is divinely inspired and is useful for teaching, rebuking, to correct justly, so that the man of God be completely and perfectly instructed for all good works. —2nd Tim. 3:16, 17.”*

“The Bible, the holy book of God.”³³

2.4. 1941 Convention Agreements.

Bernardo Hernández writes: “Our session has opened once more, uplifting a prayer to our God, asking for His wisdom and help to discern His Holy Word.”³⁴ Apostolic teaching is clear, Scripture cannot be understood by merely reading it: it requires prayer and the Holy Spirit intervention’s.

“The pastor in Sanger, Brother Jesús Valdez questioned whether it was lawful to take some scientific classes to teach doctrine to the people.

After deliberating his question, they replied that we cannot use instruction and elements of the world to bring our brothers to God, but only need to use the Word of God, **be-**

³³ Hernández, 1926, 9.

³⁴ Hernández, 1926, 6.

cause it is the mind of Christ:“Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to naught: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ. For this is the way God signals and teaches, so as to not trust in man’s wisdom.”³⁵

2.5. 1944 Constitution

The Constitution Commission was comprised of the following members. From the Apostolic Assembly we have the following pioneers: Antonio Castañeda Nava, Bernardo Hernández and Arthur Hermosillo. From the Iglesia Apostólica were the following pioneers: Felipe Rivas, José Ortega Aguilar and Maclovio Gaxiola. The Apostolic Assembly approved on its account the first Constitution on December 30, 1944 in Los Angeles, California as they celebrated the twelfth General Convention.

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Hernández, 1941, 7.

The Constitution's prologue clarifies that the foundation of the Constitution is the Word of God: "Therefore, guided by the divine light of the Almighty, **in obedience to His Holy Word** and with righteousness, we proceed to carry out this work, knowing that without God's aid we can do nothing (John 15:5)."³⁶

"Only by **God's sacred Word**, will we have victory over these problems."³⁷

"In the Constitution, we give a fundamental teaching to select the personnel that must work without rest, to establish the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to the **Word of God**."³⁸

Beyond this, in chapter XI "Regulation for the practice of doctrinal points," the second point reads as follows:

"2-Church Ministers shall teach this vital point of doctrine (The Oneness of God), and to this end, they shall establish Bible Studies, Sunday Schools, and lay hold of all possible means to clarify this issue, basing themselves on the Word of God. (1 Tim 6:3, 1 Peter 4:11), so that all these members may come to perfectly understand this mystery about God."

³⁶ Constitución, 1944, 18.

³⁷ Constitución, 1944, 18.

³⁸ Constitución, 1944, 19.

3. God's Word in Pioneers Antonio C. Nava and Daniel Jauhall.

3.1. Pioneer Antonio Castañeda Nava.

In an unpublished writing titled “Does woman have the right to preach the gospel?” wrote this affirmation: “We believe woman should use her talent according to God’s virtue, using holiness and honesty, according to chapter 3 of 1 Peter verse 1 to 7 and her advances should be capable in every way to present the message of God.

And this through the Holy Spirit’s leading first studying the Scriptures which are the **Lord’s testimony** according to Saint John 5:39 and taking the sword and armet of righteousness, **the Word of God which is the Holy Spirit’s sword.**³⁹

In another unpublished writing, “The Messenger and the Apostolic Message,” the pioneer uses the following affirmation on the Bible’s place in evangelism: “When the Scriptures are studied it must be done with reverence without angering one; that **the Holy Spirit would preside** amongst his children, and God’s light be ever more perfect.”⁴⁰

“Only the Holy Book of God is legal, for it is inspired by the Holy Spirit.”⁴¹

³⁹ Constitución, 1944, 19.

⁴⁰ Nava, “El Mensajero Apostólico y su Mensaje Apostólico,” 6.

⁴¹ Nava, “El Mensajero Apostólico y su Mensaje Apostólico,” 9.

3.2. Pioneer Daniel Jauhall, in “Growing in Jesus.”

“When you come upon a passage you don’t understand, pray and ask the Author. For, **the Bible is the only book inspired by God.**”⁴²

“The Bible is the only book that when you read, the Author is always there present.”⁴³

“The Word of God is a powerful force. No word or human phrase can completely describe the power of the written Word. Here we will make use of some examples of what God’s Word can do for you:

1. It defeats Satan: Jesus used the Word when he was tempted (Matthew 4:1-11). Jesus replied to the tempter many times: “It is written.” The written Word of God is your most powerful ally – friend (Deuteronomy 8:3).
2. It helps us resist the Devil: In our own lives and in the world. Satan wants to destroy your walk with God and kill you. But God sustains all things by the power of His word (Hebrews 1:3).
 - a. The universe was built by God’s Word.
 - b. The flood in Noah’s day was brought by God’s Word.

⁴² Jauhall, 2.

⁴³ Jauhall, 3.

- c. The present world is kept by His Word until the last day.
 - d. When the end of this era comes, God will destroy this world by His Word.
3. It will change you: David gives us a powerful testimony of how God's Word can change us in Psalm 19:7-11. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul ..."
4. It is a weapon: The Bible expresses God's thoughts and paths. It is the only visible part of our spiritual armor.
- a. The Sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17).
 - b. The weapons of our warfare (2nd Corinthians 10:4-5).
 - c. Sharper than a two-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12).
 - d. It instructs on how to think (Phil. 4:8).

The Bible speaks to the heart like no other book; let God speak to you through his Word."⁴⁴

4. The Word and Christian Education: The Herald.

4.1. "The Cloud and the Fire in the Desert:" 1930 – 1950.

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Jauhall, 15.

The first heralds were published in the thirties. This was the first decade of pioneer Nava's presidency. The original name of the Herald was: "The Cloud and the Fire in the Desert."

In the credits we find the then General Board of Directors (also called at this time the Executive Body or the General Representation) composed of the following members: Antonio Castañeda Nava (President), Bernardo Hernández (Secretary), and Arthur Y. Hermosillo (General Treasurer). Pioneer Nava and Pioneer Hernández are also registered in these Heralds as Editor and Director (respectively) of the official gazette. The first Heralds had the following three purposes:

1. Publish bible study and Sunday school lessons.
2. Publish devotional material.
3. Publish pertinent agreements and events.

In the first Heralds, we find the doctrine taught by the first General Board of Directors, the pioneering pastors of the Assembly.

Patriarch Arthur Y Hermosillo identifies the eschatological character of the Scriptures: "This teaching of the Church (The Rapture of the Church), or the mystery once hidden, since when? Since times eternal, but now ***is manifest in the Scriptures.***"⁴⁵ Also, pioneer Epifanio M. Cota affirms, "The

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Hermosillo, 1946, 5.

*Bible, however, penetrates the future and lifts the curtain that impedes man from seeing into to tomorrow, and it appeals to the most remote centuries.”*⁴⁶ In his hymn, “Las Navecillas,” the same patriarch affirms in the song’s chorus (translation from Spanish): “Christ is our guide, Jesus is our captain, and our little ships, to the sure port come. **The Bible is our protection, it shines within our hearts, it guides us like a lighthouse, to Salvation’s port.**”⁴⁷

4.2. The Apostolic Herald: Under President Benjamín Cantú.

During President Cantú’s administration “The Cloud and Fire in the Desert” changed name to be “The Apostolic Herald.” In one of the lessons published in 1952 which deals with confession, the author expresses: “The Word of God is the weapon we must brandish when we desire to come out victorious in the struggle with evil.”⁴⁸ In those times Ernesto S. Cantú was Christian Education Secretary, an office he served in until 1974.

4.2.1. Pioneer Reyes N. Coronado, who was Arizona Bishop Supervisor and a longtime pastor in northern California, wrote a poem entitled “The Bible:”⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Cota, 1961, 5.

⁴⁷ Himnario de Consolación, 2005, 89. Las Navecillas.

⁴⁸ Confesión, El Heraldo Apostólico, 8.

⁴⁹ Coronado, 1956, 15.

- 1. The Bible is your Word, Oh God,
Where you most sublime thoughts are found,
I want to hear more of your voice,
Words that penetrate the soul's sentiments.*
- 2. Your sayings are faithful words to me,
From primitive Eden exhaling perfume
Give me always to hear you,
Words of life, unconsumed.*
- 3. All your promises, mysterious,
Every letter fulfilled without delay,
By your word were all things made,
Which reveal in the soul a hope.*
- 4. The BIBLE clarifies your counsel,
To the soul who harkens and perceives;
It reveals your existence from afar,
And you Name, Jesus Christ, always lives.*

4.2.2. Bishop Benjamín Cantú writes: “**The Scriptures are correct**; however, man’s declarations expressed in the Creed which affirms the existence of three distinct persons ... are absolutely unfounded yet it is so sincerely received in the religious world.” “Doctrine, for a change, is God’s REVELATION of a truth JUST AS IT IS FOUND IN THE SACRED SCRIPTURES and it is proved with the same Scriptures. This is the fundamental rule of hermeneutics, or the right and intelligent interpretation of the Scriptures.”⁵⁰ Pioneer Cantú adds a

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Cantú, 1962, 3.

rule on how to correctly discern doctrine: “If the Scriptures do not use the word ‘trinity,’ in reference to the deity, we should not use such word, for we lack scriptural authority do do so.”

4.3.2. In another article entitled “The Bible is the Word of God,” in his character as Bishop President, he speaks on the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures. He bases himself in the biblical text of 2 Peter 1:18-21. He affirms the following key declarations: “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*” The Bible is a “divine product;” “a rich book,” and the “Book of books.” “The Sacred Scriptures were given by God as an answer to an existing need in man. They are an authorized guide to come into the knowledge of God, of man, and of the Universe.” “God speaks in man, God speaks through man, God speaks as a man and God speaks in favor of men.” “The Bible does not partially contain the word of God. The Bible is the Word of God.”⁵¹

4.2.4. Pioneer Francisco Meza, who was Bishop Supervisor of Southern California and in Los Angeles, wrote in an editorial as Editor of the Herald: “In the theological mode, in the Christian mode, God reveals himself not merely at intervals, but permanently in inspired writings (“God’s oracles” 1 Peter 4:11). If a man speaks, let that man speak according to God’s Words; if a man ministers, let that man minister according to God’s power, that it all things God would be glorified through Jesus Christ.”⁵²

⁵¹ Cantú, 1962, 3.

⁵² Meza, 1966, 1.

5. Contributions by two Secretaries of Christian Education:

5.1. Manuel J. Vizcarra: "Power through the Word of God."

President Manuel Vizcarra, who served as the second Christian Education Secretary, celebrated the 1988 General Convention with the theme: "Power through the Word of God." The Apostolic Biblical Expositor under Brother Ernesto Cantú's administration distinguished itself for being expository. But with Bishop Vizcarra the expositor became topical.

In the Biblical Expositor edited by Bishop Vizcarra in July 1975, he writes four lessons on the Bible: How the Bible came to us, the Bible's nature, the Bible's purpose; and the Bible's value. We find the following:

In the first lesson President Vizcarra narrates the history of the compilation of biblical texts. Based on Exodus 24:3-8, when God delivers the law to the people of Israel, he makes a first definition⁵³: "God was about to deliver to them a system for a new mode of life and a new communication between God and the people." "The Law was not given as a method of salvation, but a means by which Israel could become his "special treasure, priesthood and holy people (Exodus 19:1-2)." "Beyond this, God revealed his law until the people expressed their desire to obey him (Ex. 19:7-8)." "(The Law) Was given with the purpose of teaching the people God's holiness and

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Vizcarra, 1975, 6.

to show the sinful state of man with the end of leading the people to Christ (Gal. 3:24).”

In the second lesson, “The Bible’s nature,” the lesson begins with this affirmation: “The Bible is God’s Law (Deuteronomy 6:1).” “(The Bible) is the story of God and his dealings with man and his progressive revelation of himself to the human race.”⁵⁴ “The Lord Jesus Christ is the central point of the Scriptures.”⁵⁵ “The Bible, above all else, declares the deity of Jesus Christ.”⁵⁶ The Bible has authority because “it is the authoritative record of Jesus.”⁵⁷ “The Bible is useful for immediate application, and at the same time, it is eternally valid and applicable today.”⁵⁸ And adds:

“IV. The Bible: inspired by God for our benefit (2 Timothy 3:14-17).”⁵⁹

- A. The Scriptures teach us the path to salvation (v. 14 and 15).
- B. The Bible is inspired by God.
- C. The Bible arms us for our path.

⁵⁴ Vizcarra, 1975, 11.

⁵⁵ Vizcarra, 1975, 11.

⁵⁶ Vizcarra, 1975, 12.

⁵⁷ Vizcarra, 1975, 12.

⁵⁸ Vizcarra, 1975, 12.

⁵⁹ Vizcarra, 1975, 13.

“V. The Bible: Work of the Holy Spirit.”⁶⁰

In the lesson “The Bible’s Purpose,”⁶¹ the patriarch traces the three following purposes: 1. The Bible teaches us God’s sayings (Jeremiah 26:1-3). 2. The Bible teaches us the prophetic panorama of the Christ (Luke 24:44-47). 3. The Bible guides us to believe in Christ (John 20:30-31).

Lastly, in the lesson “The Bible’s Value,”⁶² he highlights four attributes of the Bible based on Psalm 19:

- A. The Word of God is perfect and sure (v. 7).
- B. The Word of God is righteous and pure (v. 8).
- C. The Word of God is true and just (v. 9).
- D. The Word of God is more desirable than riches (v. 10).

5.2. Richard Almaraz: The historic Tomes I and II.

In the first chapter of these biblical studies we find the affirmations: “Our word: Bible” following a grammatical rule concerning languages (as to how words lose their initial significance) no longer means papyrus, paper, or book but a singular book, ‘The Book of God’ – Bible.”⁶³ And adds:

⁶⁰ Vizcarra, 1975, 14.

⁶¹ Vizcarra, 1975, 15-17.

⁶² Vizcarra, 1975, 18-19.

⁶³ Almaraz, 1.

V. THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD-GOD IS THE AUTHOR: John 17:17; 8:32,36; 2Tim. 3:16, 2 Peter 1:21.

VII. GOD USED HUMAN INSTRUMENTS: God used approximately 40 men over 1,666 years span. Starting approximately 1,500 B.C. and ending in the year 97 A.D. Moses was the first writer and John the last.

IX. THE BIBLE IS TOTALLY INSPIRED BY GOD: Mat. 5:18, Rev. 22:18, 19; 1 Tim. 3:16. Man has to accept, believe, and obey all the Word of God. It is not man's prerogative to accept or reject only part of the Bible. Man should not criticize the Bible because the Bible is our judge.

X. THE BIBLE IS VERBALLY INSPIRED: Exodus 35:1; Jer. 1:19; Rev. 1:1.

XI. THE BIBLE IS COMPLETE: Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18."⁶⁴

6. THE PERFECT WORD OF GOD, THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT.

1. The Evangelical movement's anguish and its worldwide decline.

1.1. Ever since the Protestant Reformation arose in all of Europe, a great sector in each country felt that the re-

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Almaraz, 2.

forms did not go far enough. There was a spiritual hunger to go beyond the “Sola Gloria Dei.” It was instead the spiritual hunger to “feel the glory of God.” There was a desire to go beyond the “Sola Scriptura” and to see that “Only Word” in living and transformative action. There was a cry to go beyond the “Sola Fide” and to experience not only the justification by faith, but also the experience of “being born in the Spirit.” And there was also a desire to not only live through a Reformation of the Catholic Church, but better still, a Resitution of the Early Church.

Those desires produced the “Radical Reformation,” which:

- i. Provided the Lord’s Supper with both elements to all believers.
- ii. Renounced infant baptism and practiced only the baptisms of youth and adults.
- iii. Renounced participation in wars, murder or destruction of the properties of others, after being baptized.
- iv. It also produced a revival among apostolic groups, with baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, the oneness of God and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They groups were particularly persecuted.

1.2. In Germany and in other countries with Lutheran majorities, the Protestant Reformation ended up becoming

an asphyxiating “Lutheran orthodoxy,” where the focus became the Faith Confessions (denominational dogmas) and not the Word of God. These dogmas produced the persecution and death of many believers. And finally, the expulsion of thousands of believers who emigrated to establish the United States of America.

“Lutheran Orthodoxy” devolved for a sector of that denomination into the surge of rationalism and later of Liberal Theology, which finally became unable to believe in the infallible Word of God. However, for another sector, it became the Pietist movement, wherein the first European revivals originated, a revival in the reading of the Word and prayer, in worshipping in loud voice in the services, in lifting up of hands for worship and of a sacrificial missionary movement: some become slaves, so as to be missionaries to slaves in the Caribbean.

1.3. In the United States, the “Great Awakenings” (1730 – 1743; 1800 – 1840; 1850 – 1900), were great revivals among evangelical churches, always expecting something powerful from God. These revivals were specially a reaction against humanism, rationalism, materialism and Darwinism. But when the great revival came, “the Latter Rain” (the outpouring of the Holy Spirit), many protestant and evangelical churches rejected and attacked them. And all believers from these churches who embraced Pentecostalism were expelled from amongst them. Protestantism and the Evangelical movement lost part in the great revival they had for so long prayed for.

I.4. Many severe attacks against Pentecostalism came from those recognized as great Evangelical leaders, fundamentalist theologians and supposed champions of the doctrines of inerrancy and infallibility of God's Word:

- a. The Nazarene Pentecostal Church (a Holiness Movement denomination) rejected speaking in tongues in 1919 and changed their church names to the "Nazarene Church."
- b. R.A. Torrey, the famous American evangelist, founding Dean of Biola University, and one of the three editors of "The Fundamentals (a series of 12 books with fundamentalist theology), called speaking in tongues "monkey babble" and prohibited the speaking of tongues in his crusades.
- c. G. Campbell Morgan, British writer of 90 essays, considered the theological foundation for the fundamentalism movement, and a great defender of the infallibility and inerrancy of the Bible, wrote and called Pentecostalism "Satan's latest vomit."
- d. Another famous professor from Princeton, Benjamin B. Warfield, recognized as one of the greatest theologians of fundamentalism, wrote that "the Lord had not worked one single miracle on the earth, since the end of the Early Church."

- e. In 1928 the Worldwide Fundamentalist Association expelled all Pentecostals, with the accusation that they were “unbiblical fanatics.” And attacks against Pentecostals and people like Jerry Falwell or institutions like Bob Jones University, maintain an ironclad rejection of Pentecostal preaches and students “because they speak in tongues.”⁶⁵

One of the most recent attacks comes from another famous fundamentalist teacher, John MacArthur, who likes to boast of being a winner of Pentecostals. He is an ardent preacher that miracles ceased when the New Testament’s writing ended. He affirms that “speaking in tongues, prophecies, miracles, are all pure falsehood, all lies.” In his last book, he attacks Pentecostals and Charismatics, it was published in 2013 with the title: “Strange Fire: The Danger of Offending the Holy Spirit with False Worship.”

1.5. The truth is that Protestantism and the Evangelical movement are seeing with each passing decade a decrease of millions of members. Only from 2007 to 2015 have they lost six million members in the United States. And in Europe protestant temples are empty. In Latin America Protestants quickly rush to classified Pentecostals as Protestants or Evangelicals. Because if we discount the number of Pentecostals, we could even conclude that Protestantism has nearly disappeared in some countries of Latin America.

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Synan, 2001, 76-78.

1.6. I ask you all, when we compare our faith in the Word of God to that of evangelicals: Who really believes the Word of God to be perfect? Who really believes the Bible to be infallible and inerrant? That is why, much of Evangelical apologetics is a defense full of anguish, from a movement that is losing millions of believers and that lacks power and anointing from God's promises: "And these signs shall follow those who believe in my name."

1.7. It does not matter how much fundamentalist or evangelical theologians boast about their belief in the infallibility and inerrancy of the Bible. The moment they don't respect the simple interpretation principle, of reading and literally interpreting a historical book like Acts, their actions cry out that their creeds, confessions, and traditions have more authority over them, than the very Bible.

2. Pentecostalism's and Neo-Pentecostalism's implacable growth in all nations.

2.1. Mark Cartledge, Birmingham University Professor, describes Pentecostalism as the "second greatest form of Christianity" and informs us that in 2010 he calculates the Pentecostal movement reached 520 million believers.⁶⁶ This means, according to him, 27% of the world's Christians. And he provides the following list of facts:

- a. 740 Pentecostal denominations.

⁶⁶ Cartledge, 2010, 2-3.

- b. Charismatic presence in 6,350 non-Pentecostal denominations.
- c. 18,810 independent Pentecostal denominations or networks.
- d. Pentecostalism and Charismaticism are present in 95% of the world's population.
- e. 9,000 ethnic groups with Pentecostal presence.
- f. Pentecostal believers are present in 8,000 different languages.

2.2. Imagine what this means: from a group of ten believers in April 1906 to 600 million Pentecostals in 2015. That is the greatest and quickest growth ever in all of Christianity's history. And this growth is due to one reality: The presence and power of the Holy Spirit!

2.3. That is why urgent questions and theological worries are different for Protestants and Pentecostals. Our spiritual reality is different and our faith in God's Perfect Word, is in every light different.

3. Apostolic faith in the perfect Word of God.

3.1. My question is: When we compare the apostolic faith in the Word of God to that of Trinitarian Pentecostalism. Who really believes in the perfect Word of God? Who really believes the Word of God to be infallible and inerrant?

3.2. Trinitarian Pentecostals here also deny their faith in the Word's infallibility and inerrancy. Thousands of times they have said they don't baptize in the Name of Jesus Christ, because they rather obey Jesus than the Apostle Peter. That is akin to saying that only the Gospels are the Word of God.

3.3. The Holy Spirit baptism, signs and wonders, on one side, and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ and the revelation of the one and only God, on the other hand, are two deep elements of our faith, and this is why the Apostolic believer today lives such a firm faith in God's perfect Word. Until today it has not been necessary to write in our Constitution that we believe in the infallibility and inerrancy of the Bible, because our faith is not mental exercise. Our faith is the experience of the Holy Spirit's fire and our deep love of God's Word, which allows us to shout to the four winds: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel, it is God's dynamite!"

3.4. Since the Apostolic believers on Azusa Street, to our days, the Apostolic faith in God's Word is dynamic and instrumental. It is God himself who builds our faith, as with his apostles: "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him (John 2:11)," and "When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said (John 2:22)."

3.5. I will share my own personal experience: In 1986, I was in my third year of my bachelor in theology, and we were invited to take a class with a famous expert on the History of Christianity in Latin America. This professor held a doctorate in economy from the University of Chile, a doctorate in philosophy from the National Autonomous University of Mexico and a doctorate in theology from a European University. The time came for the class to transition from history to theology and the professor denied the existence of miracles. I remember being 23 years of age, with six other apostolic students, and I asked the professor fully assured and joyous: “Professor, how can you make us doubt in the Bible’s miracles, when we are witnesses of God’s power!” My apostolic classmates began to give dozens of testimonies and the professor called a recess to avoid more testimonies.

3.6. At the 2014 General Convention, it was mentioned that our faith is in peril because of all the pastors taking Master level classes and doctoral programs in liberal seminaries.

- a. Firstly, many liberal seminaries have opened their doors to us, of course, because their professors have come to know our faith and have respect and admiration toward the convictions of the apostolic student. To them intellectual honesty is very important and that is why they recognize historically, that for the first three hundred years of the Early Ancient Church, they baptized in the name of Jesus Christ and believe in only one God (a monarch), manifesting himself

principally in three modes (modalistic monarchianism). Our students have earned their respect with their firm testimonies.

- b. Secondly, many of our students are not admitted in so-called conservative or fundamentalist seminaries, precisely because of all the prejudices mentioned before: their prejudices, a lack of obedience to God's Word, and their preference to the creeds, confessions, and traditions, make them reject our students.
- c. Our worry should not be on our pastors who are undertaking postgraduate theological studies. All of them up to this point continue to give testimony of their firm faith in God's Perfect Word. Our worry should be for all those ministers, who don't undertake theological education, and don't attend their district's bible college, cheating their way through in the last ten years until finally leaving the apostolic faith, all so that in thirty seconds they can abandon the practice of our values and of holiness. Ministers who rush to adorn themselves with jewelry, their wives, their sons, and their daughters. Ministers that in ten seconds time deny the literal teaching of the veil in God's Word. Ministers who come from conservative apostolic churches, but quickly preach that it is fine for a man to dress like a woman, and a woman like a man. They do so denying the literal value of the commandment in

Deuteronomy 22:5. And with great ease they say this commandment is merely cultural ... Ah! But when we mention to them Deuteronomy 22:1, they say that is literal. All those ministers who need to go to our Bible colleges, to be sat down and taught, and mentored by experienced pastors from our districts.

- d. In the last eight years, I have accompanied pastors, in different districts, in a little over than fifty theology classes. Personally, I have taken twenty-six classes. And I am a witness to the same experience: The Holy Spirit has given us the Apostolic Pentecostal experience, a precious strong faith in the perfect Word of God.
- e. In January 2014, eleven pastors and I took a class with a famous professor whose prestige is certifying professional chaplains for hospital work. He has two doctorates: one in Psychology and the other in Theology. The class came to a point wherein he affirmed that miracles do not exist. The response from all of us apostolic students was immediate, overwhelming and full of testimonies. The following day, in all our homework, I counted eight documented cases of divine healing, among dozens upon dozens of other testimonies, documented in our homework. Let us not be afraid of theological education. Let us be afraid of not being witnesses of God's power.

7. Conclusion.

For all the aforementioned, the 109 years of deep and absolute faith in God's perfect Word in our Apostolic Assembly, I recommend that in preparing our faith declaration, we take care of the following:

- 1. As in all our other doctrinal principles, let us only use the language of the Bible to speak of our faith in the Word. Let us not commit the errors of the Trinitarians, who use foreign terms from the Bible's language.**
- 2. Let us come with one pure heart, when we come to discuss our doctrinal principle. Let us come with a heart free of double intentions or personal agendas.**
- 3. And let us write our doctrinal principle, full of faith and gladness, without the anguish of those who have not received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.**
- 4. Let us highlight the Christological character of the Scriptures. We believe the Scriptures because they are the testimony of Jesus Christ. This is the purpose of the Scriptures.**

- 5. Let us also highlight the agency of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures. The Holy Spirit is necessary to come and be transformed by the Word of God. The Bible is “the Sword of the Spirit,” and “sharper than a two-edged sword.” God’s perfect Word is unapproachable if not for the power of the Holy Spirit to read, interpret and share the Scriptures.**

Brethren pastors, we Apostolic believers completely believe in the perfect and holy Scriptures, because we are witnesses of God’s power!

*“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul:
the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.”*

Psalm 19:7

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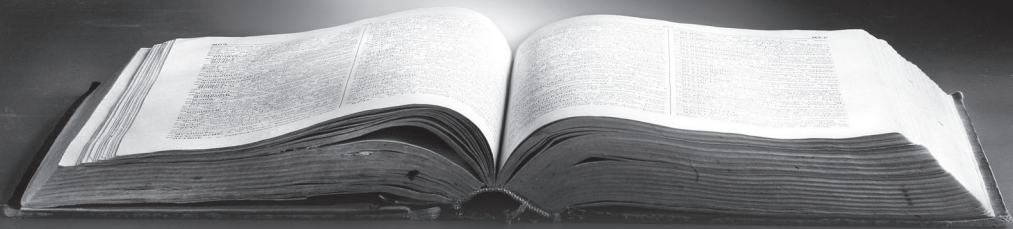
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APOSTOLIC CONCEPT OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES

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INTRODUCTION

Let me begin by quoting one of the most impressive phrases I've read about the pioneers of the Apostolic Assembly of the Faith in Christ Jesus. Every time I read it, I am filled with emotion and a "holy pride" comes over me. When I read what these men, that paved the way that we all enjoy today wrote, I am filled with joy. Although there is no direct relationship between this sentence and the inerrancy of Scripture, I do it to illustrate a point and to serve as an introduction to the following analysis. They wrote in the year 1945 ...

"Those of us who were guided to the realization of this humble work, for the cause of Christ, we did it moved by a sense of gratitude and responsibility to God ... having

commended our minds in prayer to God. And putting our hands on our hearts and pulsing the innermost feelings of our being, we proceeded, trusting that the Holy Spirit has guided and assisted us.”¹

As I said, this phrase of the pioneers, makes my soul vibrate with emotion. With those words, they introduce the 1945 Constitution to the pastors. What moves me most is the manner in which they turn to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Before writing anything, they made sure they had emptied themselves of self, and had filled themselves with God. They understood that the task was difficult and holy, and with hands on their hearts, as a sign of absolute honesty, asserted that book, the first Constitution of the Apostolic Assembly of the Faith in Christ Jesus, was the product of God’s inspiration towards them. They had a total dependence on the Holy Spirit; and this, surely what they learned from their predecessors.

If today there is an evangelical group that holds and believes in the total and absolute inspiration of the Sacred Text more than any other group, it is the proponents of the Oneness of God doctrine, primarily, the pioneers of the Apostolic Assembly. Why do I dare say such a thing? Simply because the Church, after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Topeka, Kansas (1901), and the revival of the Apostolic Mission Azusa Street in Los Angeles, California (1906), was polarized into

¹ Constitution of the Apostolic Assembly of the Faith in Christ Jesus. *Explanatory Note to Readers, 1945 Revision* (Rancho Cucamonga, CA: Christian Education, 2007), 13.

two groups: those who accepted the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in glossolalia,² and those who did not.³ But something more surprising happened to those receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the initial evidence of speaking in tongues, also together with the spiritual experience, they received illumination and revelation of the of the Oneness of God doctrine and baptism in water in the name of Jesus Christ. Jesus promised, “*But the Consoler, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said ... But when the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth ... He shall glorify me; for He will take what is mine and declare it to you.*”⁴ The Spirit dwelling in them, played a vital role in helping them understand and discover biblical truth, including the truth about the Oneness of God and the full deity of Jesus Christ.

Theology and the Trinitarian formula, which for centuries ran through the veins of most preachers who were now receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit, was being threatened by this “new illumination” directly linked to the “new spiritual experience.” In these movements, there was also a strong push towards “restoration”, in other words, to restore the first century Apostolic message. In fact, all the Pentecostal move-

² Justo L. Gonzalez. *Theology Manual Dictionary: Practical Theology of Preaching* (Barcelona, Spain. Editorial Clie, 2015), 131.

³ Vinson Synan. http://ag.org/enrichmentjournal_sp/200602/200602_142_Legacies.cfm (accessed August 19, 2015).

⁴ The Holy Bible: King James Version (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), John 14:26; 16:13-14.

ment was based on the “restorationist”⁵ thought. Given this approach, it was only a matter of time before people started to realize that the apostles always baptized in the name of Jesus and never spoke God in the orthodox Trinitarian terms of the fourth century. Another schism loomed on the horizon.

For Trinitarian theologians, pastors and teachers, who did not accept the Oneness doctrine, it was only a matter of adding to its already huge theological arsenal, glossolalia, without the need to leave the traditional beliefs and doctrines. They dedicated themselves to defend something that in reality did not need much defense, because the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, as was evident in all evangelical circles.

But those who had received the “new illumination” which had also received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit like the others, had no theological weapons at their disposal to defend the divine revelation, they only had the Bible, and for them it was more than enough. So it was a budding church entirely dedicated to the Sacred Text. They had no choice but to rely on the Holy Scriptures, “they” relied on the Bible and the security of biblical inerrancy was the guarantee of all their teachings and writings.⁶

⁵ David Bernard. <http://unicodios.blogspot.com/2011/01/la-controversia-del-nombre-de-jesus-en.html> (accessed, September 1, 2015).

⁶ As an example we can use the 1945 Constitution, as mentioned at the beginning.

Now let us take a look at the history of the Church, especially in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, we realize the amount of apostolic proponents that already existed, and the historical thread that the Apostolics of all centuries left us, but unfortunately this very beautiful flow of information was not accessible to the nascent Church. The Episcopal Pastor David Reed, said:

“The Oneness doctrine was the theological expression of practical piety of the members of the American Revival, early Pentecostal and Holiness groups. Really, we find the roots of Oneness thought in the American Revival of the eighteenth century and the Holiness Movement of the nineteenth century. These movements were characterized by a strong devotion to Jesus Christ and the frequent use of the name of Jesus in prayer, praise, witness and song.”⁷

Now that we analyze this data, we realize the monumental challenge that these men and women had to live and experience through the years. The apostolic theological information at the time was overwhelming, but inaccessible, or perhaps accessible to a privileged few. Only the total dependence on the Sacred Text and power of the Holy Spirit brought the fledgling Apostolics forward amid an extremely violent theological and turbulent sea. I can definitely find no other explanation.

⁷ David Reed. *Origins and Development of the Theology of Oneness Pentecostalism in the United States* (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1978), 27-45.

For them, if the Bible said so, then they believed and practiced it. That's why we see a strong "zeal" in the first brothers on the basic doctrines of the apostolic faith. It's because they lived moments of theological oppression, and now enjoying freedom, do not want anyone or anything to threaten that freedom through new proposals and paradigms.

They faced all kinds of debates, linguistic arguments, theologians, books that called them: plague, Jesus Only, a cult, doctrine of demons, etc. They were also persecuted and even mistreated for practicing a "new doctrine." They confronted all of this by relying on the written Word of God and moved forward. They embraced the Sacred Text and did not allow themselves to be moved, the result of that is that we are here today. But the pioneers' problem does not end here, there's more. The Apostolic Assembly is the oldest and most growing Hispanic group in the United States, and has its roots in the spiritual experience of Azusa Street. Although our theology is rooted in the Book of Acts of the Apostles, in 1906 at Azusa Street, it receives a blood infusion, so that the gospel is preached, and can complete its mission on earth. During the years following the Azusa Street revival in 1906, Brother Juan Navarro received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the revelation of the Oneness of God and he is in charge of baptizing Bro. Francisco Llorente in 1912, who became our first Presiding Bishop during the years 1925-1929.⁸

⁸ Apostolic Assembly. http://apps.apostolicassembly.org/spanish_site/apostolic_history.aspx (accessed August 29, 2015).

These pioneers, aside from suffering the lack of apostolic theological material of the time, not because there was not any, but because they did not have the resources to obtain them, they found an even bigger problem, the problem of language and economic scarcity. The beginning of our beloved Apostolic Assembly was very difficult and full of shortcomings. Most were immigrants who came to the United States for a better future for their families. As a child of immigrants, I know what it is to go through this, but ... how did they stay strong in their faith? How did they open a new path and form the Apostolic Assembly? The only possible explanation to such a dilemma is that: (1) They clung to the Sacred Text, and (2) the Holy Spirit they were receiving, gave them the power to continue forward. These men and women, lacked many things, but they were people of great value, and sensitive to the Spirit of God. They read the Bible, but it was more than reading a book with a historical narrative; they saw themselves in those stories, they identified with those biblical narratives. More than one of them would have identified themselves with Abraham, leaving his kindred, and Joseph living alone in Egypt, far from his family; and even Moses, as liberators. So the Bible was not just a book of stories, or a manual of laws for them, it was the Word of God, it was a torch that illuminated their path.⁹ It encouraged them to continue moving forward no matter what. The Bible was their ally, it was their everything, and there was no time to think otherwise. The appreciated and remembered patriarch, Bishop Antonio Nava Castañeda

⁹ The Holy Bible: King James Version (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), 2 Peter 1:19.

(who would take the leadership of the Church after the death of President Francisco Llorente) wrote the following in his memoirs, just so that we would understand the challenges they had to live through.

“Those who originally taught us doctrine taught us that the organization in the manner of other groups was not good and that we would not follow the same order. For this reason we remain isolated and cut off from one another. Then I decided to look for myself if it was so or if not, and beginning with the Old Testament I began to examine what our ancestors did and how they obeyed God’s commands ...The way God taught Moses the organization is the same we must imitate, for example, Jethro’s counsel, Moses’ father-in-law “¹⁰

They know better than anyone that they had to preach the “Bible”. Not only they should believe in the Holy Book, but put all their trust in the Text. The theological training, was not the norm, our pioneers had to work very hard¹¹ and steady to help their family on “this side” or the “other side.” The Word of God was their guide in all they did. The Bible has been and will continue to be for the Apostolics of the early twentieth

¹⁰ Antonio Castañeda Nava. *Autobiography: 100 Years of a Servant of God 1892-1992*, (Rancho Cucamonga, CA.: Christian Ed. Dept., 1994), 7.

¹¹ Many are the testimonies of the men and women working around the clock literally in rural areas, and then would go to “the service”, to preach and teach, and to visit the sick.

century, and now the twenty-first century, the Word of God, a book to whom we can trust and affirm our faith and our future. Perhaps the distinguished and remembered patriarch Jose Ortega, explains it best when he writes in his memoirs:

“Thank God that now our new generations can enjoy functional and comfortable temples. This is why we struggled, that they should not suffer hardship or scarcity. The needs are different now. However, the key to success remains the same: stay united and respectful of each other, whether they are companies, departments, fraternities or ministries, all are subject to the rules that govern us. Now the ministers of the Assembly in the United States and the Church in Mexico each denomination enjoys its own constitution, but with the same doctrine based on biblical principles, system of government and of finance and disciplines, which cost sacrifices, sleepless nights and great efforts to establish a strong and steadfast church.”¹²

LAUSANNE, SWITZERLAND - CHICAGO, IL

Referring to the Sacred Text, these famous theologians said:

- *“I firmly believe that the authors were completely free of errors.” Augustine of Hippo*

¹² Jose Ortega. *My memories in the Apostolic Assembly and Church of the Faith in Christ Jesus*, (Guadalajara, Mexico. Printed Jalisco, 1998), 76.

- *“The Scriptures never err. Where the Holy Scriptures establish something that should be believed, there we should not divert from the words.” Martin Luther*
- *“The safe and infallible record. The certain and inerrant rule. The infallible Word of God. Free from all stain and defect.” John Calvin¹³*

Possibly, two of the most significant historical developments regarding the doctrine of infallibility and inerrancy of the Scriptures have been the Lausanne Covenant (1974)¹⁴ and the Chicago Statement (1978)¹⁵. While in the Lausanne Covenant there is an apparent “flexibility” in the infallibility of the Sacred Text, the Chicago Statement contains 19 articles, it eliminates all doubts and sums it up saying:

“Scripture is inerrant and entirely free from all falsehood, fraud or deception. We deny that Biblical infallibility and inerrancy are limited to religious spiritual themes of redemption, except in the fields of history and science.”¹⁶

¹³ Dewey M. Beegle. *The Biblical Concept of Revelation: The authoritative Word* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eedermans, 1983), 95.

¹⁴ Lausanne Covenant. <http://movimientolausana.blogspot.com/p/historia.html> (accessed September 3, 2015).

¹⁵ Chicago Statement. http://churchcouncil.org/ICCP_org/Documents_ICCP/Translations/Spanish%20Distilled/02_Biblical_Hermeneutics_Spanish.pdf (accessed August 24, 2015).

¹⁶ Clark H. Pinnock. *Biblical Revelation: The foundation of Christian theology* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1971), 24.

Christian leaders, theologians and pastors gathered three times in the course of a decade (1978, 1982, 1986) to address the issue of biblical inerrancy. At the first meeting, a doctrinal statement was created in conjunction with title “The Chicago Statement on Biblical inerrancy.” This document has been described as “a reference document of the church” created by the then largest and broadest group of evangelical Protestant scholars who once banded together to create a common theological document in the twentieth century. It is probably the first statement as a creed in a systematically integral form of a comprehensive and scholarly basis, about the inspiration and authority of Scripture in the history of the church.”¹⁷ What makes this legacy even more impressive is that those attending this first summit meeting, left their signatures affixed as an act of commitment and loyalty to the Holy Scriptures.¹⁸

causing an avalanche of negative arguments between liberal evangelicals. In this book, he suggested that the story of the resurrected saints walking around town could be “apocalyptic images” (Matt. 27: 51-53). In other words, he suggested that the events did not happen, but it was tradition or legend. Subsequently, Licona resigned his position with the Southern Baptists and the Southern Evangelical Seminary. What followed is quite alarming. Incredibly, some notable evangelical scholars

¹⁷ Dallas Theological Seminary. Records of the International Council On Biblical Inerrancy. <http://library.dts.edu/Pages/TL/Special/ICBI.shtml> (accessed September 2, 2015).

¹⁸ Dallas Theological Seminary. http://library.dts.edu/Pages/TL/Special/ICBI_1_sigs.pdf (accessed September 2, 2015).

began to express their support for Licona's opinion, considering it an "agreement" with the belief in the inerrancy. In other words, despite the large discrepancy between the text and their opinions, they manage to keep believing in an "apparent" biblical inerrancy.

Since 2011, the most alarming of Licona's statements have surfaced, including:

- *A denial of the historicity of the multitude that falls backwards on the assertion of Jesus when He says: "I am" in John 18: 4-6.*
- *A denial of the historicity of the angels at the tomb recorded in the four Gospels, Matthew 28: 2-7.¹⁹*
- *An affirmation that the genre of the Gospel is a Greco-Roman biography when says it is a "flexible genre" in which "it is often difficult to determine where history ends and where the legend begins."²⁰*

Surprisingly, these views continue to gain support among the evangelical community, and these are the professors of some of the best evangelical schools in the country, who are responsible for the formation of the pastors of today and

¹⁹ *ibid.*, Licona, RJ 185-186.

²⁰ *ibid.*, Licona, RJ, 34.

those of future generations, and that they feel comfortable saying that these verses are not facts. This is a direct departure from the historical definition of inerrancy. They do not deny the inspiration or infallibility and inerrancy they only apply them to “certain texts and narratives.” This is more dangerous than completely denying the divine inspiration, this is something like the “lukewarm”²¹ status in the prophetic plan. Therefore it is important to understand that by saying that the Bible is inerrant (without error): we are talking of God’s character, He can not lie. Infallible (no fault): we are talking about the nature of God, it is true. Inspired (originated in God): we are talking about the authority of God, the source of all things.²² By denying that the Bible is the Word of God, or the inerrancy and inspiration, the character, nature and God’s authority is being denied.

Adding to this argument, Pastor John MacArthur in his opening speech of the 2015 Summit on Inerrancy said: “You cannot be a powerful exponent of the Scripture, if you have a weak perspective of the Bible. But because because we know that God’s Word is inerrant, we have a divine mandate to proclaim His truth. Every word inspired. Every word preached.”²³

²¹ The Holy Bible: King James Version (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), Revelation 3:16.

²² Josh McDowell. *New Evidence that Demands a Verdict* (El Paso, TX: Editorial Mundo Hispano, 2007), 33.

²³ John MacArthur. <https://evangelio.wordpress.com/2015/03/03/cum-bre-inerrancia-sesin-1-john-macarthur/> (accessed August 27, 2015).

And again, in the midst of this hurricane of arguments, private agendas and false doctrines, the Apostolics rise with the same flag from the beginning. A flag, which is somewhat worn and sprinkled with blood, but still with the same background colors and waving in triumph and shouting from the rooftops that the Bible is the inerrant, inspired and infallible Word of God.

APOSTOLIC DENOMINATIONS AND INERRANCY

the vast majority of Apostolic Churches in the world still believe faithfully in the total inerrancy of the Sacred Scriptures. Let's look at some of the apostolic denominations and their positions on the Sacred Scriptures. Indeed, all the Apostolic Churches in the United States and around the world, declare and establish in their articles of faith, the infallibility of the Word of God. Without exception each of them presents either on their websites, or through one of its affiliated churches. It appears that is one of the things that really unites all the apostolic denominations. Perhaps we should cultivate more things that unite us rather than those that divide us. Although, it would not surprise me to find, Churches (maybe even apostolic), trying to minimize the concepts of inerrancy, infallibility and divine inspiration. But those who do so, will have to suffer the consequences of divine judgment.

Revelation 22:19 says: “And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

The apostolic movement of the Name of Jesus Christ for the most part, all over the world, are clinging to both the Sacred Text, so much that no one even “thinks” about the possibility of a new argument. Actually, this position is the product of its origins, the difficult adaptation to the new faith, and constant dependence on the Text and the power of the Holy Spirit which they received, which we spoke of in the introduction.

OUR BROTHERS AND THEIR STATEMENTS OF INERRANCY

I. Church of our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith.
In their statement of faith state:

- *“We believe in the New Testament Christianity. God’s word is accepted in its entirety as the final source of authority in matters of faith and practice. There was a miraculous guidance of the Holy Spirit in the original manuscripts extending to all parts of Scripture in an equitable manner.”²⁴*

²⁴ <http://www.cooljc.org/about-us-2/founder/> (accessed September 3, 2015).

2. United Pentecostal Church of Colombia. In its constitutional preamble reads:

- *“We believe that the Bible is inspired by God, the infallible Word of God. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16).*

The Bible is the only God-given authority which man possesses, and therefore, all doctrine, faith, hope, and all instruction for the church must be based on the Bible and be in harmony with it. It must be read and studied by all men and can not be fully understood except under the direction of the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:25). We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1:19-21).

3. United Pentecostal Church International, only has two differences with the United Pentecostal Church of Colombia. (1) The scripture of Luke is changed to 1 John, and (2) Only use verses 20 and 21 of 2 Peter 1, omitting verse 19. It is also found in its Constitution:

- “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16).

The Bible is the only God-given authority which man possesses, and therefore, all doctrine, faith, hope, and all instruction for the church must be based on the Bible and be in harmony with it. It must be read and studied by all men and can not be fully understood except under the direction of the Holy Spirit (1 John 2:27). Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1:20-21).²⁵

4. Apostolic Church of the Faith in Christ Jesus, Mexico. Like the Apostolic Assembly of the Faith in Christ Jesus, they establish their position on the Holy Scriptures in different parts of the Constitution.

5. Pentecostal Assemblies of the World. This is in its articles of faith in its website, and with regard to the Holy Scriptures they say:

²⁵

<http://www.upci.org/about/our-beliefs> (accessed September 2, 2015).

- “All scripture is given by inspiration of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1:20-21). Divine inspiration extends equally and fully to all parts of the original writings. The whole Bible in the original, is therefore without error, and therefore infallible, absolutely supreme and sufficient in authority in all matters of faith and practice, Psalm 119: 160; Matthew 5: 17-18.”²⁶

6. Apostolic Assembly of the Faith in Christ Jesus. This contribution is important because it determines our position and contribution to biblical inerrancy thus far. Still, we do not have a statement of faith established as such in our 18 points of doctrine, but we have it scattered throughout the Constitution (2015) all that our forefathers thought about the Bible. Let's see:

- “Article 41 – Introduction, page 66. “The Apostolic Assembly respects and acknowledges the Bible as the Word of God, the Supreme Book, and the Law to which all ministers, members, and this Constitution must adhere.”

²⁶ http://www.pawinc.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1&Itemid=49 (accessed September 2, 2015)

- *Doctrinal Principles*, page 22. “We also believe that the Bible makes known all His attributes. He is the everlasting Father and, at the same time, a child born unto us (Isaiah 9:6).”
- *The Introduction to the Constitution*, page 4 says: “The members of the Apostolic Assembly have always believed that:
- *The Word of God is our rule of faith, and is the highest and final authority (Matthew 24:35).*
- *Our Constitution flows from the Word of God and that every new proposal or amendment must be forged under the light of the Holy Scriptures (Ephesians 2:20).²⁷*

As we see each of these denominations present in a simple, but firm manner, their stance on the Sacred Scriptures. Perhaps because they never thought that men like Dr. Licona and others, could rise up saying arguing against the divine inspiration of the Scriptures, especially as they are doing in the XXI century.

Although we do not see the depth of our belief concerning the Holy Scripture in any of these apostolic statements, as we can in the Chicago Statement, for example, but again, we can see the seriousness and determination to accept, respect

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The Constitution of the Apostolic Assembly of the Faith in Christ Jesus. Introduction to the Constitution (Rancho Cucamonga, CA: Christian Education, 2007), iv.

and conserve the Sacred Text, as it is written, without adding or taking away. For all this, and all the exegetical work that has developed during this Symposium: “The Word 2015”, I think the historical moment has come to offer all our apostolic brotherhood in the world, not only these conferences, but an “Apostolic Declaration” on biblical inerrancy. This Symposium: The Word 2015, now completes the first phase, that of “The Exposition” today begins the second phase which is “The Declaration”. All our theologians and exponents, are being given the task of writing the statement of faith that will be part of the 18 doctrinal points which our Church maintains.

We must safeguard future generations, and use the Statement of Faith, as the base of our Apostolic Bible Colleges and University. It should be a rule that helps us measure the approval of our preachers and teachers. Our statement of faith concerning the Word of God will be the guide and the flag until the Lord returns for His Church, and then the scriptures for the children of God will be fulfilled in I Corinthians 13:

- ⁸ Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. ⁹ For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. ¹⁰ But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put

away childish things. ¹²For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. ¹³And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

For the love of the Word,
Bishop, J. Fortino

