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**B0510 – March 6, 2005 – Major Bible Themes**  
**Chapter 01 – The Word of God**

**Introductory Information**

The Elder board has graciously decided to purchase *Major Bible Themes* for us. If you would like to give a donation to cover these costs that is up to you. Don't give under compulsion but only cheerfully as God has prospered you. Individual book costs is \$16. There is a sign-up sheet in the back if you would like a book. We have ordered 50 books, 43 of these are accounted for last time I checked the list. So, you'll want to sign up for a book if there are any spaces left. The books will be here by this Wednesday, so you can pick it up then.

At the end of each chapter there is a set of questions. If you will go home each week, read the chapter (normally these chapters are pretty short, 3-4 pages) and answer seven of the questions from that chapter then you will be awarded with a certificate (or a T-shirt) at the end of the course. I'll bypass the seven questions for chapter 1 since you don't have the book yet. But, starting this coming Sunday, if you will choose seven questions from chapter 2, answer them, and turn them in next Sunday, March 13<sup>th</sup> on the back table then I will collect them. These can be typed or handwritten. I'm not going to grade them. I just want you to do them. You don't have to give long drawn out answers. But there has to be some kind of effort. You'll get out of this study what you put into it.

Additionally, if you would like to ask questions about the material I want you to write your question on a piece of paper and put it in the little church in the back of this room and I will answer those questions at the beginning of the next lesson. You don't have to put your name on the questions. You can remain anonymous.

The book, *Major Bible Themes*, was written and originally published in 1926 by L.S. Chafer, founder of Dallas Theological Seminary. Later it was revised by John

Walvoord. It contains 52 chapters so it is designed to be a 1-year study of all the major Bible doctrines.

## Chapter 1

### The Bible: The Word of God

**\*Key Idea – The Bible was composed by God through human authors so that there is a unified message given through a diversity of authors. The result is a remarkable cohesiveness and harmony throughout that could only be produced by God.**

I. *biblos* – the inner bark (cellular substance of the stem) of the papyrus plant from which paper was made; paper was very expensive in the ancient world and so copies of the Bible were very valuable. Not everyone had a Bible so there would be a lot of Bible reading in the synagogues and in the early church. The word *biblos* by metonymy meant, a “book”

A. One book

1. 39 OT Books (Protestant Canon)

22 or 24 OT Books (Hebrew Canon – same content as 39)

Traditional Hebrew Bible known as the **Ta na kh** has 3 main heads or divisions.

#### Torah

Genesis

Exodus

Leviticus

Numbers

Deuteronomy

#### Navi'im

##### Former Prophets

Joshua

Judges

Samuel

Kings

##### Latter Prophets

Isaiah

Jeremiah

Ezekiel

Twelve Prophets

#### Kethuvim

Psalms

Proverbs

Job

##### Megillot - scrolls

Song of Songs

Ruth

Lamentations

Ecclesiastes

Esther

Daniel

Ezra-Nehemiah

Chronicles

2. 27 NT Books – universally recognized. Occasionally one man or small group rejects certain books (e.g. Marcion only accepted Paul's

writings and even rejected parts of Paul's writings. Luther rejected James)

3. The Protestant OT of 39 + Protestant NT of 27 = 66 books which have become known as **"The Divine Library"**
4. **What about the Apocrypha?** The Apocrypha are 15 books written between the time of the Old and New Testaments (425BC - the time of Christ). Most were written around 250-150BC. There were no true prophets living during this time. The Apocryphal work itself admits there were no prophets in **1 Maccabees 9:27, 14:41** *"<sup>27</sup> So was there a great affliction in Israel, the like whereof was not since the time that a prophet was not seen among them."* Josephus, a 1<sup>st</sup> century Jewish Historian, in *Against Apion* 1.8 says the Jews had but 22 books written from the time of Moses to the time of Artaxerxes, king of Persia. After that the history of the Jews was written down very particularly but it was never esteemed with like authority because there was no succession of prophets. He goes on to say of the canonical books that no one has been so bold as either to add anything to them, to take anything from them, or to make any change in them. They are all written in Greek, none are written in Hebrew. They were never accepted by the Jews as 'canonical'. For the Jews, the Book of Malachi was known as the "Seal of the Prophets" indicating that the Jews considered the canon closed with the writing of Malachi. Canonically, Chronicles was the last book to be accepted into the Hebrew canon. It is also the last book in the traditional Hebrew Bible (cf. Matt 23:35). However, the Apocryphal books were kept and copied in many early manuscript copies because they were considered helpful books and edifying, but they were not used in doctrinal disputes. At the time of the Reformation (early 1500's), the German Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses on the door of the Wittenberg church on October 31, 1517. He lambasted the abuses of the Roman Catholic Church, particularly the selling of indulgences to get your mother, aunt or anyone else out of purgatory. By way of response the Council of Trent met in 1546 and pronounced 12 of the 15 Apocryphal books as canonical. They were forced to do this in order to justify the "selling of indulgences" (Tobit 12:9; 4:10), "praying for the dead" (2 Macc 12:44), "worship of angels" (Tobit 12:12), "purgatory" (2 Macc 12:42), and other abuses. It is interesting that they did not accept all 15 apocryphal

books but that is because only 12 were needed to justify their abuses. Apocrypha continued to be printed in many Bibles until the early 1800's. Since then they have been published on occasion but not normally. They contain contradictions and confusions on historical details. They are clearly not the inspired words of God and were never universally recognized as 'canonical' among the Church.

5. You hold "The Divine Library" of 66 Books in One
- B. Unique Aspects
1. Continuity/Harmony – "The Divine Library" agrees with itself throughout
  2. God's Word through Human Authors
- C. Evidence for the Bible as God's Word
1. Internal – the Bible's own claim
    - a. (self-attesting). The Old Testament declares 3,808 times that it is expressing the words of God. In the **Torah**, Exodus 17:14,

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Write this in a book as a memorial, and recite it to Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under the heaven.

In the **Navi'im**, Jeremiah 11:6-8,

<sup>6</sup>And the Lord said to me, "Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying, "Hear the words of this covenant and do them. <sup>7</sup>For I solemnly warned your fathers in the day that I brought them up from the land of Egypt, even to this day, warning persistently, saying, "Listen to My voice." <sup>8</sup>Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked, each one, in the stubbornness of his evil heart; therefore I brought on them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded them to do, but they did not."

And in the Writings, **Kethuvim**, Psalm 110:1,

The Lord says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand, Until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet."

It is clear from each of the three Hebraic divisions of the OT; the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings, that the OT Scriptures consistently self-attest that it is the very Word of God.

But what of the NT? Is the NT the word of God? It too is self-attesting. In 1 Thess. 2:13 the Apostles teaching was considered the word of God,

And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God's message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.

In Luke 5:1, Christ's words were also considered the word of God,

Now it came about that while the multitude were pressing around Him and listening to the word of God,

During Paul's lifetime, his epistles were considered Scripture. Peter points out one of the key verses that confirm that NT writings had a Divine origin (II Peter 3:15-16).

...<sup>15</sup>just as our brother Paul, according to the wisdom give him, wrote to you, <sup>16</sup>as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

John's Prophecy in the Book of Revelation states,

<sup>1</sup>The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him [Christ] to show to His bond-servants, the things which must shortly take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John, <sup>2</sup>who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.

Clearly, John the Apostle confirms that these words are not the words of man, but the very words of God Himself

b. Writers assume throughout that their words are the words of God. For example, 1 Cor 7:10

<sup>10</sup> But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband

2. External – nature of facts
  - a. The continuity of the Bible
    - i. about 40 authors
    - ii. Written over 1,600 years excepting Job (2,200-1800).  
Job written between the events of Gen 10-12.
    - iii. Authors from all walks of life
      - aa. Kings (Solomon)
      - bb. Peasants
      - cc. Philosophers (Solomon)
      - dd. Fishermen (Peter)
      - ee. Physicians (Luke)

- ff. Statesmen (Daniel)
- gg. Scholars (Paul)
- hh. Poets (Solomon)
- ii. Farmers
- iv. Continuity from Genesis to Revelation
  - aa. Historical sequence (Creation to Re-Creation)
  - bb. Unfolding Doctrinal Themes
    - 1. God
    - 2. Sin
    - 3. Salvation
    - 4. Israel
    - 5. Church
  - cc. Progressive Doctrinal Development
    - 1. Pedagogical
    - 2. Type/Antitype
    - 3. Prophecy/Fulfillment
    - 4. Scarlet Thread of Redemption

**\* How could 40+ human authors living in different times and different places, coming from all different walks of life produce one book that has no contradictions? This continuity/harmony can only be accounted for by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.**

- b. The extent of biblical revelation
  - i. Heights of heaven to the depths of hell
  - ii. Beginning of time to the end of time
  - iii. Organizes all things in right relation to one another
  - iv. Early writings never contradicted by later discoveries
  - v. Reveals facts only God could know
  - vi. No other book is so comprehensive and far-reaching
- c. The influence and publication of the Bible
  - i. Most published book in history
  - ii. Chapter divisions were added in 1228 by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Stephen Langton
  - iii. Verse Divisions were added in 1551 to the Greek NT by Robert Stephens
  - iv. First Bible to contain chapter and verse divisions was the 1555 edition of the Latin Vulgate –Stephens
  - v. First English Bible to contain chapter and verse divisions was the 1560 Geneva Bible.

\*We would probably not be sitting here today studying the Bible if it did not have chapter and verse divisions (they are not inspired)

- vi. First book to ever be printed on printing press  
(Gutenberg Bible – mid 1500's)

\*Again, we would probably not be sitting here today studying the Bible if the printing press was not invented.

- vii. Every written language has some portion of Bible
- viii. As of 1967 we had 1,280 different translations
- ix. Continues to be published in greater numbers
- x. Bible transforms peoples lives
- xi. Only divine basis for law and morality
- d. Subject matter of the Bible
  - i. Deals with the seen and the unseen (John 3:12)
  - ii. Describes eternity past and eternity future
  - iii. Reveals God's program for the world, Israel, the Church and Angels
  - iv. When it touches a subject it is accurate
  - v. Makes its readers wise in time and eternity
- e. The Bible as literature
  - i. Poetry (Psalms)
  - ii. Narrative (Gospels)
  - iii. Prophecy (Zechariah, Revelation)
  - iv. Drama (OT)
  - v. Stories of love and war (Ruth & Joshua)
  - vi. The futility of human philosophies (Ecclesiastes)
  - vii. Read by all ages and all degrees of intelligence
- f. The unprejudiced authority of the Bible
  - i. Being written by men it is not in man's favor
  - ii. Man is presented as doomed in sin
  - iii. It is a message from God to man not men to men
  - iv. Speaks of earthly and heavenly things with equal authority (John 3:12)

**\*“Such a book could not be written by man if he chose to write it, and even if he could, man would not choose to write it, apart from divine direction.”**

- h. The supreme character of the Bible
  - i. Supernatural book
  - ii. Reveals the person and glory of God in His Son
  - iii. Similarity of written word and Jesus Christ

- aa. Both supernatural origin
- bb. Both human and divine
- cc. Both transform those who believe
- dd. Both embody divine perfections
- ee. Both simple yet complex
- ff. Both enduring/eternal
- gg. Both living and active

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