

# THE GOD WHO SPEAKS TO MAN

Matthew Finlay



*Developed as a study course by Emmaus Correspondence School, founded in 1942.*

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# STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

Welcome to your study of this course! This course is designed to help you think through for yourself great truths revealed by God for all mankind. You will examine their scope and significance and how they relate to you as a rational, thinking person.

Some of the concepts will no doubt be new to you. For this reason you will find them challenging. At the same time, because they are new to you they will, perhaps, cause you to think deeply about the issues involved.

You should not try to go through this book too quickly. This is a course to be studied. Tests are provided to help you evaluate your progress. Your instructor will grade these exams for you and will help you. He will endeavor to answer any questions which arise out of your studies.

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## **Course Components**

This course has two parts: this study course and the separate exam booklet.

## **How To Study**

You will notice that two typefaces are used in the body of the text. The portions in *italics* are quotations from the Bible. You should know how to find these passages (and the many others referred to in the text) in your Bible. Here is how to locate Bible passages from Scripture references. In the text, verses from the Bible are given with the name of the book, chapter, and verse. To find a verse, first look up the name of the book in the list at the beginning of the Bible. This will tell you at what page the book is found. Most books are divided into chapters, each about a page in length. The chapter is divided into verses, each about one sentence. For example, suppose you want to find 1 Peter 1:18. There are two books written by Peter so you must find the page number for the first book of Peter. The teaching you want is in chapter one and verse 18.

This course of study has twelve chapters, and each chapter has its own exam. Begin by asking God to help you understand the material. Read the chapter through at least twice, once to get a general idea of its contents and then again, slowly, looking up any Bible references given.

Begin studying immediately, or if you are in a group, as soon as the group begins. We suggest that you keep a regular schedule by trying to complete at least one chapter per week.

## **Exams**

In the exam booklet there is one exam for each chapter (exam 1 covers chapter 1 of the course). Do not answer the questions by what you think or have always believed. The questions are designed to find out if you understand the material given in the course.

After you have completed each chapter, review the related exam and see how well you know the answers. If you find that you are having difficulty answering the questions, review the material until you think you can answer the questions.

## **How Your Exams Are Graded**

Your instructor will mark any incorrectly answered questions. You will be referred back to the place in the course where the correct answer is to be found. After finishing this course with a passing average, you will be awarded a certificate.

If you enrolled in a class, submit your exam papers to the leader or secretary of the class who will send them for the entire group to the Correspondence School.

See the back of the exam booklet for more information on returning the exams for grading.

# CHAPTER ONE



## THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE

### THE UNIQUENESS OF THE BIBLE

The Bible is unique! It is not enough to say that it is a unique Book, for it is a collection of sixty-six ancient Books. Moreover, this unique collection of Books is bound together by a central theme and a unity of purpose which makes the books into One Book.

This Book tells of the ways in which God revealed Himself to mankind over a period of several thousand years. This account of the ways in which God has intervened in human history provides us with a description of the nature and the attributes of God completely different from the concept of God found anywhere else in the entire world of literature. The Bible is history, but history strikingly different from ordinary history. Secular history tells of the rise and fall of nations, of great wars and battles, and of the ways in which men and nations have affected the peoples of surrounding territories. But the Bible goes further than that. The Bible is an interpretation of history, showing how men (as individuals and as nations) have either been blessed or punished by God for their attitude to Him and His holy laws. It is this unique explanation of the moral and spiritual factors behind the historical narrative, which makes the Bible so relevant to us today.

The Bible enables us to discover the will of God for our lives because this divine will is made plain in hundreds of real-life illustrations in the Bible. This is why we invite you to commence this study with us. We sincerely hope you will discover for yourself the truth about God Almighty, as Creator, Provider and Savior of men.

First, we must answer some of the questions many people have in their minds as they begin to read the Bible. Some say, for example, "Why should I read a book which is merely Jewish mythology?" Jewish mythology is quite different from what we find in the Bible. In fact

the truth of the Bible will be quite evident to us as we continue our study. Others ask, "How could such an ancient Book still be relevant?" True, people today are much better educated than ever before; yet the Bible (in part or the whole) ranks as the "world's best-seller." Every year more than one hundred million copies are sold! So, when you read the Bible you are in good company, for millions of modern people are reading it! Moreover, it is not being read only by people in Western lands! The Bible (either in part or the whole) is being read today in more than twelve hundred languages. The Bible is being sold today in the languages of 97% of the world's population and is being read in almost every country and island on earth. For this reason alone, no person is really educated if he has not studied the most widely read Book in the literature of the world.

You will find a copy of the Bible helpful as a textbook for use with this course. Have you got a Bible beside you now? The first thing that impresses most beginners is the size of the Bible—it contains more than 800,000 words. Most people hardly know where to begin! Well, let us begin at the very beginning! Open your Bible at the title page and you will find an index listing the names of the sixty-six Books of the Bible. Notice there are two major divisions, one called the Old Testament and the other called the New Testament; both sections are divided into many subsections. In a later lesson we shall explain in detail what these two "Testaments" are and how they relate to each other. The Old Testament was written in the Hebrew language (except for a few small sections written in Chaldee) and the New Testament was written in the Greek language, which had become at that period the international language just as English is today.

The Old Testament begins with a concise account of the creation of the world. This unique narrative begins in the undated past, and records how God the Almighty Creator prepared the world, stage-by-stage, to be a home for mankind. When all was ready, God created man. From this logical beginning, the story continues for thousands of years until we reach the end of the Old Testament in the days of Malachi about 400 B.C. The New Testament covers a relatively short period from the birth of Jesus to the death of the Apostles. It was completed about 100 A.D.

## THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE

People must have a true and authoritative basis for their faith. Many popular religions are based entirely on human ideas and thus are merely theories or philosophies. Christianity is based on the Bible which Christians accept as their final authority because they believe it to be inspired by God. Thus, our first topic for study is the basis for this belief. Why do Christians believe the Bible to be a Book inspired by God? Our answer is found in the Bible itself.

### 1. *THE BIBLE CLAIMS TO BE A REVELATION OF GOD.*

This claim is found in a large number of places in the Bible. It is summed up in two short readings as follows:

*Every scripture is inspired by God and useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the person dedicated to God may be capable and equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16–17).*

*No prophecy of scripture ever comes about by the prophet's own imagination, for no prophecy was ever borne of human impulse; rather, men carried along by the Holy Spirit spoke from God (2 Peter 1:20–21).*

These two short paragraphs give a definition of the Christian concept of the inspiration of Scripture. All Scripture is given by God. It was given in two main ways, first by **direct revelation** (by which the actual words of God are recorded by the prophets): second by **inspiration** (by which the Holy Spirit guided the prophets as they wrote and thus the prophets wrote Divine Truth). Let us examine these two aspects of the Divine origin of the Bible.

The Bible was given by means of **direct revelation**. Nearly four thousand times in the Bible we find words or expressions such as: *And God said . . .* or *The LORD spoke to Moses*, or *The Word of the LORD came to Isaiah*. You could look up the following references by way of example:

- God spoke to Moses (Exodus 3:4), about 1500 b.c.



- God spoke to Samuel (1 Samuel 3:11), about 1000 B.C.
- God spoke to Elijah (1 Kings 21:17), about 900 B.C.
- God spoke to Isaiah (2 Kings 20:1), about 700 B.C.
- God spoke to Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:2), about 600 B.C.
- God spoke to Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1:3), about 600 B.C.
- God spoke to Malachi (Malachi 1:1–2), about 400 B.C.

The above dates are given in round numbers to convey the sense of historical continuity. Thus, God spoke directly to His prophets from time to time throughout the entire period of Israel's national existence commencing with Moses and ending with Malachi. These holy prophets received direct revelations from God and recorded them at His command. Thus, we have here the actual spoken Word of God.

The Bible was also given by means of the **inspiration of the Holy Spirit**. There are large sections of the Bible which contain history and poetry. Are these sections nothing more than Jewish literature? Certainly they are classified as Jewish literature, but even the Jewish people were able to distinguish between ordinary literature and Divinely inspired literature. "Direct revelation" from God was not necessary when the prophets were recording actual historical facts, but to be **authoritative** history it had to be inspired by God.

Because they were inspired by God, the prophets were divinely guided in the selection of **facts** to be written; they were divinely guided in the choice of **words** to describe the facts; and they were divinely guided in recording not merely human comment on the facts, but the **attitude of God** toward the behavior of the persons referred to. Thus by Divine inspiration, the prophets were protected from errors in historical fact, from errors in doctrine and from mistakes made through ignorance. In this way the Bible was kept from becoming a mixture of truth and legend which is what we find in most ancient books (for instance, the Greek classics). Modern research and archaeology have demonstrated the astonishing accuracy of Bible history and supports the claim that the Bible is inspired by God.

This briefly is what the Bible claims for itself. It is a Book (which, in some parts, is thousands of years old) which claims to be a record

of the actual words of God to men, and of the ways in which He has dealt with men in history. Can such a claim be tested? Yes! In fact, God requires that we test this claim sincerely. About 2500 years ago, God spoke through the prophet Isaiah and challenged unbelievers to apply a very practical test. It is found in the following verses. Please read them carefully:

*“Present your argument,” says the LORD. “Produce your evidence,” says Jacob’s king. “Let them produce evidence! Let them tell us what will happen! Tell us about your earlier predictive oracles, so we may examine them and see how they were fulfilled. Or decree for us some future events! Predict how future events will turn out, so we might know you are gods. Yes, do something good or bad, so we might be frightened and in awe. Look, you are nothing, and your accomplishments are non-existent; the one who chooses to worship you is disgusting.” (Isaiah 41:21–24).*

*“I am the LORD! That is my name! I will not share my glory with anyone else, or the praise due me with idols. Look, my earlier predictive oracles have come to pass; now I announce new events. Before they begin to occur, I reveal them to you.” (Isaiah 42:8–9).*

*This is what the LORD, Israel’s king, says, their protector, the LORD who leads armies: “I am the first and I am the last, there is no God but me. Who is like me? Let him make his claim! Let him announce it and explain it to me—since I established an ancient people—let them announce future events! Don’t panic! Don’t be afraid! Did I not tell you beforehand and decree it? You are my witnesses. Is there any God but me? There is no other protector; I know of none.” (Isaiah 44:6–8).*

*“Remember what I accomplished in antiquity! Truly I am God, I have no peer; I am God, and there is none like me, who announces the end from the beginning and reveals beforehand what has not yet occurred, who says, ‘My plan will be realized, I will accomplish what I desire,’ who summons an eagle from the east, from a distant land, one who carries out my plan. Yes, I have decreed, yes, I will bring it to pass; I have formulated a plan, yes, I will carry it out” (Isaiah*

46:9–11).

These verses clearly teach that the fact of inspiration and the facts of history when taken together will prove whether or not a prophet had written the words of God. One unique feature of the Bible is the vast amount of prophecy or prediction concerning future events it contains. God challenges men to examine these prophecies to see whether or not they have been fulfilled! For a prediction to be fulfilled in the way and in the time foretold by the prophet is proof that God spoke through the prophet. We will study this in detail in later lessons. This test can be applied to thousands of predictions in the Bible leading to the conclusion that God has spoken. The Bible's claim to be inspired by the Holy Spirit is the only possible answer to the amazing mystery of the foretelling of the future in accurate detail.

**2. THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE DOES NOT DEPEND  
ON OUR ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND IT.**

Read the following verses:

*Concerning this salvation, the prophets who predicted the grace that would come to you searched and investigated carefully. They probed into what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating when he testified beforehand about the sufferings appointed for Christ and his subsequent glory (1 Peter 1:10–11).*

*And regard the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as also our dear brother Paul wrote to you, according to the wisdom given to him (2 Peter 3:15).*

You will notice that even the prophets themselves did not fully understand the words that God spoke through them or revealed to them. They were simply God's messengers, and often the great truths they wrote down were too profound for them to understand. No human mind can fully understand Divine truths. A Muslim leader once asked, "Would God punish a man for failing to understand Bible doctrines?" The answer is, "No, we are not punished because we cannot understand the mysteries of the Bible, but for unbelief—for refusing to believe what God has said." The prophets themselves

were unable to understand the great truths they taught, so obviously many aspects of Divine revelation are beyond the limitations of our minds. This problem is partly explained by our next point.

**3. DIVINE TRUTH CANNOT BE COMPRESSED  
INTO THE LIFE SPAN OF ANY HUMAN BEING.**

Study this verse:

*They [the Prophets] were shown that they were serving not themselves but you, in regard to the things now announced to you through those who proclaimed the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things angels long to catch a glimpse of. Therefore, get your minds ready for action by being fully sober, and set your hope completely on the grace that will be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed. (1 Peter 1:12–13).*

God is eternal, and we are mortal. For this reason Divine revelation is progressive. God's promises and revelations began in the first era of human life on earth, and continued through the centuries with new aspects of truth being added from time to time. Predictions were fulfilled in some cases hundreds of years after they were made, and so the prophets did not live long enough to see the fulfillment of their own words. Some of the prophecies in the Bible will not be fulfilled until the coming day of judgment. It is foolish for a man to reject a revelation because it does not fit in with the local circumstances of his short life span. Faith in God compels us to believe that God's revelations embrace the entire period of His dealings with the human race. This is why we continually stress the vital need for clear historical perspective in our study of the Bible.

**4. THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE IS UNCHANGING  
AS THE SOURCE OF MORAL CONDUCT.**

We see this in the verse we began with, 2 Timothy 3:16–17. Because the Bible is given by inspiration of God it is profitable. It teaches us the truth about God and states the kind of moral conduct God requires of us. It is profitable for doctrine, for instruction and

for correction. For this reason, our study of the Bible cannot be treated simply as an academic exercise! Unless we are willing to obey God's Word with a sincere heart, we will never learn the deepest truths it contains about eternal life. When we read the Bible seriously and ask God to speak to our hearts through its inspired teachings, we begin to realize that God does indeed speak to men with Divine authority through His Word, the Bible.

# THE GOD WHO SPEAKS TO MAN

## EXAM BOOKLET AK '04 (2 UNITS)

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STUDENT NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

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ADDRESS

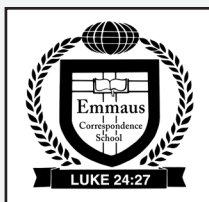
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CITY, STATE, ZIP

COURSE GRADE: \_\_\_\_\_

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INSTRUCTOR



*Exam developed by Emmaus Correspondence School, founded in 1942.*

## A NOTE ON THE EXAMS

The exams are designed to check your knowledge of the course material and the Scriptures. After you have studied a chapter, review the exam questions for that lesson. If you have difficulty in answering the questions, re-read the material. If questions contain a Scripture reference, you may use your Bible to help you answer them. If your instructor has provided a single page Answer Sheet, record your answer on that sheet. This exam contains the following types of questions:

### MULTIPLE CHOICE

You will be asked to write in the letter of the correct answer at the space on the right. Here is an example:

The color of grass is

- A. blue                      C. yellow  
B. green                     D. orange

     **B**     

### WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Questions headed this way are designed to help you express your ideas and feelings. You may freely state your own opinions in answer to such questions.

### RETURNING THE EXAM

See the back of this exam booklet for instructions on returning your exam for grading.

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## CHAPTER 1 EXAM

### THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE

#### EXAM GRADE

*Before starting this exam, write your name and address on the front of this Exam Booklet.*

*Directions: Read each question carefully and write the letter of the correct answer in the blank space on the right. Use the separate answer sheet if provided.*

1. The history contained in the Bible
  - A. is taken from secular history books
  - B. is disproved by secular history
  - C. is written from exactly the same viewpoint of secular history
  - D. is different from secular history in that Bible history interprets events in the light of God's dealings with men\_\_\_\_\_
  
2. The Bible is
  - A. completely irrelevant to today's world
  - B. very much in demand all over the world
  - C. a collection of Jewish fables
  - D. read only in Christian countries\_\_\_\_\_
  
3. The Bible
  - A. contains sixty-six books
  - B. contains five major divisions
  - C. was originally written in Arabic
  - D. was originally in ten oriental languages\_\_\_\_\_
  
4. The first topic discussed in the Bible is
  - A. the creation of the universe
  - B. the history of Satan
  - C. the origin of human sin
  - D. the division of mankind into tribes and nations\_\_\_\_\_
  
5. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and 2 Peter 1:20-21 both deal with
  - A. the rise and fall of Babylon
  - B. the history of the Jewish people
  - C. the inspiration of the Bible
  - D. the reason why God created man\_\_\_\_\_



6. Direct revelation is found in the Bible in those places where God
- A. spoke directly to His prophets
  - B. obscured His message at the time it was given but later enlightened certain teachers to explain it
  - C. caused His Word to be miraculously written without the aid of human instruments such as the prophets
  - D. spoke to Moses and Elijah only
- \_\_\_\_\_
7. The prophets were guided by God in
- A. the selection of the facts to be written in the Bible
  - B. the choice of the words they used
  - C. recording human comment on the facts referred to
  - D. all of the above
- \_\_\_\_\_
8. Which of the following is an important proof that the Bible is God's Word? It
- A. is a very old book
  - B. contains many accurate prophecies
  - C. has been translated into many languages
  - D. was written by great men
- \_\_\_\_\_
9. The most important thing when reading the Bible is to
- A. understand it
  - B. believe it
  - C. read only one chapter at a time
  - D. accept only the parts we like
- \_\_\_\_\_
10. The Bible, being God's Word,
- A. cannot be understood if its study is treated merely as an academic exercise
  - B. teaches the truth about God
  - C. speaks with authority on matters of belief and behavior
  - D. must be studied in the light of all the above
- \_\_\_\_\_

### WHAT DO YOU SAY?

What is your own attitude toward the Bible? Do you have a copy? Are you honestly seeking to understand its message?

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