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TEXT KEY, 1ST HALF

CHAPTER 1 Introduction

◆ Factual Questions—Page 18

1. “The Old Testament is God’s revelation to men” (p. 10). This statement is said to be “one basic fact” which is necessary and fundamental to Old Testament studies. One might say the statement is the “most basic fact” which the question here addresses.
2. Within the Old Testament there are “over four hundred times” in which messages are said to be spoken by the LORD Jehovah (p. 10). The New Testament records that, concerning the Old Testament, “men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21, p. 10), and that the Bible was inspired (2 Tim 3:16, p. 11). Bible authors view the Bible as God’s Word.
3. We are convinced that the Bible is God’s Word “from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by, and with the Word in our hearts” (p. 10). Alternatively, “we believe [the Word is inspired] in order to understand” it (p. 11). This may imply that we are convinced that the Bible is God’s Word by faith—arguably because the Holy Spirit has convinced us to believe.
4. *Parent-instructors should note: The text says “By inspiration we mean that God guided the authors of the Old Testament books in such a way that they wrote what He wanted them to write” (p. 11). This sentence is somewhat unfortunate in two respects. One, it implies that the New Testament is excluded from the definition of inspiration, which on other grounds clearly the textbook author did not mean, and two, at least some non-Scriptural texts could also be said to be guided by God so that what was written was “what He wanted them to write.” Might God not say this of Shakespeare’s works, or even some newspaper article? However, only the Scriptures are “God’s revelation to men” (p. 10). And, of course, the Old Testament is particularly addressed in the textbook.*

Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is the process by which God, using the varied personalities and writing styles of the human authors of the Bible, guided those authors in such a way that what they wrote was “God’s [infallible] revelation to men” (p. 11).

“We cannot understand precisely how” (p. 11) God inspired the human authors of the Bible, but by faith we understand that He “did not ignore the personalities” of the authors or their writing styles, vocabulary, and education, that “He prepared [them] for their work,” and that “they received His word and wrote it” (p. 11).

5. The infallibility of the Holy Scriptures means that “there are no errors in” the Bible (p. 11), since God always speaks the truth (John 17:17), and despite the human authors’ ignorance of many things. The Old Testament is infallible, for it is God’s inspired word (p. 11).
6. The Old Testament is authoritative because “it speaks with all the authority of God Himself” (p. 12). Further, science generally, and archaeology in particular, have often served to support the Old Testament, so confirming its existing authority (p. 12).
7. For purposes of this course, we should study the Old Testament using the following guidelines: (1) the textbook should be used as a guide (p. 10)¹; (2) the Bible must be acknowledged as the Word of God; (3) the Holy Spirit should be considered as one’s mentor (pp. 10, 13); and (4) “we must approach our study of the Old Testament in a spirit of prayer, asking God to reveal to us His” Word (p. 13) so that we might believe and practice it.
8. The writers of the Old Testament differed from each other at least in that they lived in different time periods (from 1500 to 400 B.C.) and wrote in different places, although most wrote in Palestine (p. 13).

All the writers shared a common religious framework, were members of the covenant nation of Israel, and had a common faith (pp. 13, 14).

1. Among other things, this will help put some flesh on the historical background (p. 13).

9. The canon of the Old Testament (“*canon*” meaning *the set of inspired books*) was “completed by the early part of the fourth century B.C.” (p. 14).
10. The Old Testament is divided into “the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings” (p. 14).
11. The Law contains “the five books of Moses.”² The Prophets contain “Joshua, Judges, [1 and 2] Samuel and [1 and 2] Kings” in the “Former Prophets” division; and Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve Minor Prophets³ in the “Latter Prophets” division. The Writings⁴ include the “poetical books, historical books, and five books used by the Jews for their sacred festivals” (p. 14).
12. The Jews must have decided to place into the section called “the books of Moses” only those books that they recognized as Moses’ books. The textbook does not explicitly state this, but it may be inferred from the title (“of Moses”) and from the argument that the Jews recognized the inspired nature of the canonical books. This would have been natural (p. 14). “The distinguishing feature of the Writings” section is that they were not written by prophets (p. 14); books fitting into “The Prophets” section were.
13. The Old Testament is not complete in itself because its purpose was to point to the Christ, the center and apex of revelation. The Old Testament does not include the record of the Christ, but only points to Him (p. 15).
14. The brass serpent story symbolized faith in God, but typified the Christ who was to come (p. 15). A symbol in the Old Testament teaches a lesson. “A type ... [is] something (a person, object, or event) in the Old Testament which is designed by God to resemble and foreshadow something in the New Testament” (p. 15).
15. God’s kingdom does not grow by additions, but it develops like a tulip bulb (pp. 16–17).

◆ Thought Questions

1. *Answers may vary.* Faith in the true God is important in the study of the Bible because it opens the door for us to understand it (p. 11)—cf. *Proverbs 1:7 (the fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge)* and *1 Cor. 2:14 (the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God)*.
2. *Answers will vary regarding how a student decides to study the Old Testament. See the above response to factual question # 7 and pp. 10 and 13 of the textbook.* Possible items may include the following, and more: study that begins with faith that the Bible is the Word of God, study with prayer, study in breadth as well as in depth, study with Christ as the center, study in light of the New Testament, and study by reading and re-reading the text.
3. *Answers may vary in details.* For science to prove that the Old Testament is wrong about history, geography, etc., science would need to be greater than God, whose Word the Bible is, and God would have to be a liar.
4. *Answers may vary in details.* If the Bible were proven wrong about historical matters, the reader could not know whether or not the spiritual matters in the Bible were true or false, and so could not trust the Bible as an independent authority. Neither can the historical matters be wholly divorced from the spiritual, for the spiritual is often derived partly from the historical.
5. *Answers will vary. This is a conceptually challenging question.* If the canon (list) of divinely inspired books was chosen by man, would the choice by man imply that the final authority was merely human and not divine? The textbook suggests that man merely recognized what God wrote (p. 14 regarding the Hebrew canon). By implication, the ultimate grounds by which man recognized which books were inspired was the “inward work of the Holy Spirit” (p. 10).

Outside the argument of the textbook chapter, one might say that Jesus regarded the canon of the Old Testament (the same then as now) as the inspired Word of God (e.g., Luke 24:27), and so the question regarding the Old Testament canon easily becomes greatly dependent on the answer to the question “Who is Jesus?”

As to the New Testament, similarly, much is implied by Jesus’ promise of the Holy Spirit, who would teach the Son’s disciples, remind them of His words, and guide them into all truth (John 14:26; 16:13). As the apex of

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2. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy
 3. Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi
 4. The Writings include Ruth, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Lamentations, Daniel, and 1 and 2 Chronicles. Note: The order of Old Testament books in our English Bibles derives from the Greek translation of the Scriptures; the Jewish Bible has the same books (minus the Apocryphal ones), but the book order is different in some cases.