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CHAPTER 1

DVD SESSION 2

A LOGICAL REASON THE BIBLE CLAIMS TO BE GOD'S WORD

A Summary from the Book

The Bible is the Word of God because it claims to be the Word of God! As you read this chapter you will discover that this statement is not the circular argument it initially appears to be.

We do not have to search for long to find what the Bible has to say about itself; the claims of divine origin are found on nearly every page. In this chapter, we will examine a few. Then we will analyze what this means for you and me.

In the Old Testament, the “mouth of God” was regarded as the source from which the divine message came. “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host” (Psalm 33:6). That expression,

“breath of his mouth,” is the Hebrew equivalent of “God breathed.” God, the Creator, used men to write the Scriptures, but they are God speaking. The same mouth that spoke all of creation into existence is the mouth that spoke, producing the Scriptures.

The Old Testament repeatedly claims to be the Word of God, and those words are therefore as enduring as God Himself: “Forever, O LORD, your word is firmly fixed in heaven” (Psalm 119:89). And again, “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever” (Isaiah 40:8).

If you were to call the authors of the Old Testament to the witness stand, they would affirm with one voice, “We are speaking the words that have been given to us by God.” The implications, as we shall see, are staggering.

New Testament writers have the same ring of authority. They cited the Old Testament as the Word of God and put their own letters on the same level. The authors claimed that they were both recording and writing God’s Word out of their own experience. Paul, who authored at least thirteen books of the New Testament, claimed to have received revelations from God and wrote what he was told to say.

The Bible is really a library of sixty-six books written by about forty different authors over a period that spans fifteen hundred years. The fact that the Bible has unity despite obvious differences in content, style, and perspective is a powerful witness to the independence of each author.

The Bible is not a collection of books on many different topics; there is only one theme, and that is the topic of Christ and the redemption He provided. The apostles saw Christ as the center of the Scriptures.

No matter how much evidence for the credibility of the

Bible is accumulated, I must stress once more that Christ must still be received by faith. I do not mean blind faith, nor faith that is contrary to logic, but rather faith based on reasonable evidence. Yet it is faith nevertheless.

ENGAGING THE TOPIC

Complete the statements below after reading the book and the above summary. Then, during your class or small-group meeting, watch the DVD, Session 2.

1. Inspiration does not just mean that God approved the writings of biblical authors, but that those authors actually _____ His words.
2. Peter made a direct link between the word that he was preaching and the _____ words of the Old Testament.
3. The Bible does not have sixty-six stories to tell, but one story of God's response to man's _____.
4. The apostles saw _____ as the center of the Scriptures.
5. God has chosen to tell us _____ about Himself we could discover in no other way.
6. Our own experience proves that we are slow to accept what the Bible has to say about us and our _____ with God.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How does unity of authorship support the Bible's truthfulness?
2. Read Genesis 3:15. What is the Bible's main theme?
3. How do evidence and faith work together with respect to the credibility of the Bible?
4. Can we *prove* that the Bible is the Word of God?
5. Discuss the statement "Without the willing, there cannot be the knowing." How is this true?

6. Read Deuteronomy 18:18–20. What is the distinguishing characteristic of a true prophet? (See also 1 Kings 20:13; 2 Kings 17:13; 2 Chronicles 12:5.)

7. Read Psalm 12:6; 18:30; 119:40, 89. How do these passages describe God's Word found in the Old Testament?

8. Read Genesis 1:1. Dr. Lutzer cites this verse as an example of the precise unity we find in the Bible. The Hebrew text from which our English versions are translated indicates that the word for "God" is a *plural* noun. What is the significance of this grammatical detail? How does it contribute to the unity of later Scriptures?

9. Describe the unity of symbolism we find in both the Old and New testaments. (See Matthew 16:6 as an example.)

10. When we transfer our trust to Christ for salvation, it is not based solely on historical investigation. What does John 6:44 reveal to us?

PERSONAL REFLECTION

We know that the Scriptures we have are true and dependable. “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16–17). Peter teaches us that the Holy Spirit of God used men of God to write the Word of God (2 Peter 1:20–21).

To successfully live the Christian life, we must study the Word of God, obey it, and let it control our lives. It is the Word of God that furnishes and equips believers so they can live lives that please God and do the work He wants them to do. The better we know the Word and hide it in our hearts, the better we are able to live and work for God.

We become convinced that the Bible is the Word of God, not by subjective hunches, but by having our subjective hunches destroyed when we are humbled in the presence of the God revealed on the pages of the Bible. We finally come to realize that this Book is telling the painful truth about ourselves and our relationships in the world. The pieces of life’s

puzzle suddenly come together and we are led to say, “Once I was blind, but now I see.”

The Bible is a mirror, not a photograph. A mirror shows us as we are; we can't add more hair, a bit of robust color, and with a slight of hand, remove all blemishes. No wonder the Bible frightens those who are unwilling to face their sins, but is a balm to those who are finally prepared to own up to their need and accept the redemption of Christ.

ENGAGING THE TOPIC answers:

1. wrote
2. unchangeable
3. rebellion
4. Christ
5. truths
6. relationship