

THE BASIS OF OUR EPISTEMOLOGY



MICHAEL FILIPEK

THE BASIS OF OUR EPISTEMOLOGY

MICHAEL FILIPEK



LetUsReason
PUBLISHING

Copyright © 2022 by LetUsReason.com

All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without written permission from the author, except for the use of brief quotations in a book review.

Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, King James Version, 1987 printing. The King James Version (KJV) is public domain in the United States of America.

All bolding and bracketed insertions in Scripture quotations or other quoted works are added by this author for emphasis or explanation.

While this author has made every effort to provide accurate internet addresses at the time of publication, neither the publisher nor the author assumes any responsibility for errors or for changes that occur after publication.

CONTENTS

Chapter 1	1
<i>Introduction</i>	
Chapter 2	8
<i>Divine Inspiration</i>	
Chapter 3	18
<i>Furthering our Epistemology</i>	
Chapter 4	28
<i>Godly Prophecy Versus Divination</i>	
Chapter 5	37
<i>Conclusion</i>	
<i>Bibliography</i>	41

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

As Christians, we presently find ourselves living in a deeply skeptical generation. In some ways, this is good. People should not simply believe everything they are told. They should ask questions, examine the evidence, and put forth the effort necessary to discover the truth. The problem arises when healthy skepticism becomes selective, automatically dismissing everything having to do with God and the Bible while accepting other claims with little examination.

Let's first clarify that we absolutely encourage people to seek out answers and truth, especially when it comes to the Bible and the existence of God. That, of course, is one of the primary purposes of Let Us Reason. How can you understand, defend, and teach the truth if you have never taken the time to examine it for yourself? The problem is that generations of people have been conditioned to dismiss everything concerning God and the Bible as nonsense while treating everything presented as mainstream "science" as unquestionable fact.

In other words, many of the same people who demonstrate extreme skepticism toward the things of God place enormous faith in mainstream sources, even when little evidence is provided. Our culture has undergone a dramatic reversal in which claims promoted

through mainstream media, social media, academia, and other influential institutions are often accepted almost automatically. Certain ideas are treated as established dogma even when the supporting evidence is weak or substantial evidence exists against them.

For many years, however, the Christian Church has also had a reputation for discouraging people from doing their own research and understanding why they believe what they believe. In many cases, that reputation has been deserved. Fear-based coercion is neither Christian nor biblical. We advocate the opposite: if we claim to believe something, we should understand why we believe it and be able to explain and defend that belief to others. That brings us to the subject of epistemology.

Epistemology: The study of knowledge, including its methods, scope, and limits. Epistemology examines what distinguishes justified belief from opinion and helps define what we can actually know.¹

Epistemology can be applied to almost any subject. In this study, however, we will develop an epistemological approach to what we believe about God and the Bible.

Christianity has always taught that the Bible is the inspired Word of God given to mankind. Because this claim stands at the foundation of the Christian faith, the question of whether the Bible is truly divine in origin is enormously important. If the Bible were shown to be nothing more than a human book, the credibility of Christianity itself would be seriously undermined.

Of course, even without the Bible, the work of Christ on the cross would still be effective. Christianity does not need the Bible in order for the historical work of Christ to be true. But without the Bible, we would be left without a reliable foundation for understanding doctrine and God's plan of salvation. If God became incarnate as a genuine man, died for our sins, and provided the gospel message of salvation, it follows that He would also provide a reliable written revelation to preserve and communicate that truth. If He cared enough to die for our sins, it makes sense that He would also give us a trustworthy

guide to explain what He has done and what He requires of us. That is exactly what we find in the Holy Bible.

Our task in this study is to determine whether we can know that the Bible is truly God's Word. Put differently, is this even within the scope of what can actually be known? Can we develop an epistemological framework showing that the Bible is a supernatural message given to us by God?

Our approach is not to assume that the Bible is God's Word and then use that assumption to prove itself. That would be circular reasoning. Instead, we will examine whether the Bible contains **internally self-authenticating characteristics** that point beyond ordinary human authorship and provide objective evidence for its claim to divine inspiration. In other words, we will examine the evidence contained within the Bible itself and ask what best explains those unique characteristics.

We believe the evidence points clearly to a divine Author. Two characteristics of the Bible provide the foundation for this case and reveal the "fingerprints of the Holy Spirit" behind its inspiration. These characteristics are internally self-authenticating because they demonstrate qualities that the individual human writers could not have produced on their own. Together, they point beyond ordinary human authorship to an Author who stands outside the limitations of time and knows history from beginning to end.

1. The Bible is a **highly integrated message system**.
2. The Bible contains an astonishing amount of **prophecy**.

These two characteristics provide powerful evidence for the Bible's supernatural origin. Let's now examine each one in more detail.

Integrated Message System

The Bible is a highly integrated message system. What do we mean by "integrated"? Simply put, its many individual parts are connected and coordinated as parts of one unified message. But why would this kind

of integration point to a supernatural Author who exists outside the limits of time?

The answer becomes clear when we consider how the Bible was written. It is a collection of sixty-six different books written by more than forty human writers over roughly 1,500 years. Most of these writers did not know one another, lived in different generations, and wrote under very different historical circumstances. Yet these books form a coherent and unified message that develops across centuries. No single human author could have coordinated that message across so many different writers and generations. This points to a common Author who stands above the human writers and outside of history itself.

Think of it this way. Imagine your favorite novel. Now imagine discovering that its chapters had been written by dozens of different people who mostly did not know one another and lived hundreds of years apart, yet together those chapters formed one coherent story. Now imagine that the earlier chapters also anticipated specific events that would unfold in the later chapters, with those predictions matching the actual course of history. Such a result would demand an explanation beyond the individual human writers.

This is what we find in the Bible. Across many different books and human writers, one unified story unfolds over the course of centuries. That remarkable coordination is what we mean by integration.

This integration can be seen in the way the Bible develops one continuous redemptive story across centuries. Promises introduced in Genesis are expanded through the covenants, the law, the sacrificial system, the kings, and the prophets, and are then carried forward in the New Testament through Christ. Later books repeatedly build upon earlier revelation, explain it more fully, and bring earlier promises and patterns closer to their fulfillment. This kind of coordinated development across many centuries and human writers is one of the clearest expressions of the Bible's remarkable unity.

This is especially evident in the relationship between the two Testaments. The Old Testament introduces promises, covenants, prophetic patterns, and expectations that remain unresolved by the

time it ends. The New Testament then reveals how these earlier threads come together in Christ and explains the direction in which the remaining promises will ultimately be fulfilled. At the same time, the New Testament cannot be fully understood apart from the Old Testament foundation upon which it is built. As the familiar saying puts it, “The New Testament is in the Old Testament concealed, and the Old Testament is in the New Testament revealed.” Together, the two Testaments form one unified story that continues to unfold toward its final completion. This remarkable coordination points to a common Author behind it all.

Prophetic Content

One of the clearest ways the Bible demonstrates an origin beyond its human writers is through prophecy. What do we mean by prophecy, and how does it provide evidence of divine authorship?

The Bible repeatedly describes events before they happen. If these predictions are specific, recorded beforehand, and later fulfilled, the human writers could not have known them through ordinary means. Prophecy therefore serves as a method of authentication, pointing to an Author who knows history before it unfolds. God alone can declare the future with complete accuracy because He is not limited by time. Human beings can make predictions, guesses, and projections, but they cannot repeatedly describe future history in specific detail with perfect accuracy. If the Bible demonstrates this ability, then its prophetic content provides strong evidence that its ultimate source is not human.

For prophecy to function as meaningful evidence, the prediction must be given before the event, specific enough to be recognizable, and fulfilled in a way that can be compared with the historical record. The argument does not rest on vague statements that can be interpreted to fit almost anything after the fact. The strength of biblical prophecy lies in the accumulation of specific predictions and prophetic patterns given in advance and later fulfilled in identifiable people and events.

It is also important to recognize that biblical prophecy involves more than direct predictions of future events. It often includes the portrayal of future realities through anticipatory types, shadows, and patterns, as seen in Hebrews 8:5. A prophetic type is an earlier person, event, institution, object, or pattern that God designed to anticipate a greater future reality. The earlier pattern may appear centuries before its fulfillment, yet later Scripture reveals the intended correspondence between the two. In this way, the Bible can introduce a prophetic pattern early in its history and reveal its greater fulfillment hundreds or even thousands of years later.

The frequency and specificity of these prophetic types, shadows, and patterns cannot reasonably be dismissed as coincidence. If these correspondences were intentionally established long before their fulfillment, they provide further evidence that the Author knew what would happen in advance and deliberately structured the earlier patterns to anticipate later realities.

Our Epistemological Goal

Christians are often criticized for relying on “blind faith.” This study aims to show that Christian faith does not require us to abandon reason or evidence. On the contrary, biblical faith rests on a firm foundation. The Bible does not simply ask to be accepted without examination. Its remarkable integration and extensive prophetic content provide objective reasons to take its claim to divine inspiration seriously. Our goal is to examine these characteristics and demonstrate why belief in the Bible as God’s Word can be rationally grounded in evidence.

This study is intended as an overview and introduction to that approach. Many of the companion studies available free of charge through Let Us Reason examine these lines of evidence in much greater detail, developing the arguments further and providing additional examples of the Bible’s integrated design and prophetic content. The companion study entitled “Prophecy: The Various Forms And Modes Of Expression” serves as a natural “Part 2” to this study by

The Basis Of Our Epistemology

taking the discussion of prophecy much further and examining the different ways prophetic revelation is expressed throughout Scripture. Together, these studies are intended to build a broader cumulative case for recognizing the Bible as a supernatural revelation from God.

1. Merriam-Webster, entry “Epistemology,” *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*. (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/epistemology> - Retrieved 11/11/18)

CHAPTER 2

DIVINE INSPIRATION

Divine inspiration is the label we use to describe the manner in which God transmitted the Holy Bible by using the human writers as channels to communicate His Word to us in written form. The foundation for this goes all the way back to the Old Testament, which is actually presented as God’s very own speech (1 Kings 22:8-16; Nehemiah 8; Psalm 119; Jeremiah 25:1-13; 36). It teaches that although human beings *physically* wrote the biblical texts, **God is their true source.**

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

Let’s examine several foundational points regarding scriptural inspiration. In the above passage, we see the word translated “inspiration” in English. This is the Greek word *theopneustos* (Strong’s #G2315), which literally means “God-breathed.”¹ In other words, it means the inspired text was “breathed out by God” and into the writers, making them mere conduits for His message. It’s the recognition that Scripture is not merely *about* God – it comes *from* God. That is,

the Scriptures were not just influenced by good ideas about God; they were actually directly infused into human beings by the Spirit of God, who breathed direct revelation into the hearts and minds of the Bible's human writers for the purpose of transmission.

God fully intended that His written Word would reach us, and He made sure that His revelation to man would be recorded and distributed. This means that God willed what was written, God superintended the writing, and God speaks through the words. The human authors were real writers with their own vocabulary, style, and personality – yet God guided their writing so that what they wrote was exactly what He intended.

It's important to point out that this does *not* mean that inspiration is a purely mechanical dictation. Christians do *not* believe the writers were merely robots taking divine dictation. Instead, inspiration is God actively directing the message while the humans writers actively wrote using their own minds, language, culture, and experience. For example, Isaiah writes like a poet, Paul like a lawyer, Luke like a historian, and John like a theologian. They are different styles but one divine voice.

Although we often think of and use the term “prophecy” to mean predictions of future things, in the broader sense, all inspired speech or writing would be considered prophecy since it is not originating from one's own intellect or knowledge.

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

Also to be recognized is that the divine inspiration of the Bible refers to the **original manuscripts**, not to any particular later translation. Scholars refer to these original manuscripts as the **autographs**. This means the original writings were without error in what they affirm. Copies and translations are inspired *insofar as* they faithfully preserve the words and message of the originals. Christianity does not claim that God miraculously preserved every subsequent copyist from

making mistakes. What it claims is that God inspired the **original text**. This is why careful textual transmission and translation are of paramount importance.

This idea of the inspiration of the autographs leads to the study of a discipline called **textual criticism**. If God inspired the original manuscripts, but we no longer possess those physical documents, then some crucial questions immediately arise: *How do we know what the original inspired text actually said? Has it been significantly altered since then?* Those questions gave birth to textual criticism. This field is not about doubting or criticizing the Bible as the name may seem to suggest, but instead involves the direct opposite. It is about recovering and/or preserving the original message of the autographs in order that it can be known by us today.

The result is striking: the original wording of the New Testament is recoverable with extraordinary confidence. No major Christian doctrine depends on a disputed text. No core teaching hangs on a textual uncertainty. The variations that exist overwhelmingly involve simple spelling differences, word order, and minor clarifications. Even the leading biblical skeptic and noted New Testament critical textual scholar Bart Ehrman, in his ironically entitled book *Misquoting Jesus*, admits firsthand that the surviving New Testament manuscripts we have today are what the authors wrote originally (even if we don't have the actual originals). In an edition of his book that includes a question and answer session at the end, Ehrman is asked about the Christian beliefs of his mentor, the esteemed scholar Dr. Bruce Metzger. Ehrman answers:

Bruce Metzger is one of the great scholars of modern times, and I dedicated the book to him because he was both my inspiration for going into textual criticism and the person who trained me in the field. And even though we may disagree on important religious questions – he is a firmly committed Christian and I am not – we are in complete agreement on a number of very important historical and textual questions. If he and I were put in a room and asked to hammer out a consensus statement on what we think the original text of the New

The Basis Of Our Epistemology

Testament probably looked like, there would be very few points of disagreement – maybe one or two dozen places out of many thousands. The position I argue for in *Misquoting Jesus* does not actually stand at odds with Prof. Metzger’s position that **the essential Christian beliefs are not affected by textual variants in the manuscript tradition of the New Testament, and most textual variants (Prof. Metzger and I agree on this) have no bearing at all on what a passage means.**²

Bart Ehrman’s conclusion at the end of *Misquoting Jesus* is that, although we no longer possess the original autographs of the New Testament books, the massive number of surviving manuscripts allows scholars to reconstruct the originals with a very high degree of confidence. He states that if he and his mentor Bruce Metzger compared their reconstructions of the original text, they would disagree in only a few dozen places out of many thousands, and that none of those differences affect any essential Christian belief. In other words, even one of the world’s most prominent critical scholars affirms that the Bible we have today, in all significant respects, faithfully represents what the New Testament authors originally wrote.

This also leads us to another theological recognition called the **doctrine of preservation**. If it was in God’s plan to providentially give us His Word, then it follows logically (as well as being plainly stated in the Bible) that He will also providentially *preserve* His Word, despite that the transmission process by necessity involves fallible human copyists. Therefore preservation is a necessary companion to inspiration. The same God who inspired the Bible has also directed its transmission through history so that His Word has never been lost, corrupted beyond recognition, or rendered unreliable. While God did not prevent every copying error or variant, He ensured that the content He intended His people to have has always been available and recoverable in the manuscript record.

Psalms 12:6–7, Isaiah 40:8, Matthew 24:35, and Psalm 119:105 show that God’s Word would endure across generations, not merely as an abstract message but as a real, usable text.

⁶ The **words of the Lord** are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. ⁷ Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, **thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.**

-Psalm 12:6-7

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: **but the word of our God shall stand for ever.**

-Isaiah 40:8

Heaven and earth shall pass away, **but my words shall not pass away.**

-Matthew 24:35

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a **light** unto my path.

-Psalm 119:105

Scripture itself promises us that the Word of God will stand forever and not pass away. It describes His Word as a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our paths. That logically implies that we must have a preserved Word available to us, otherwise it could not fulfill those functions. So, textual criticism is simply the field or discipline of scholarly Bible study that answers the question: "What did the inspired originals actually say?" It flows directly from the conviction that God truly inspired the specific words of Scripture – and that those words matter for Christian life, doctrine, and practice.

And that from a child thou hast known **the holy scriptures**, which are able to **make thee wise unto salvation** through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

-2 Timothy 3:15

We are told to *carefully* and *correctly* handle the word of God (especially Christian leaders who are in teaching and preaching positions).

The Basis Of Our Epistemology

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, **rightly dividing the word of truth.**

-2 Timothy 2:15

This implies that there is an *incorrect* way to handle the Word of God. The Bible teaches that *every* believer bears responsibility to rightly handle and interpret God's Word, not leaving that duty only to scholars or clergy. Paul instruction to Timothy in the above passage is a charge that reflects the broader biblical call for all Christians to grow in discernment, testing what they hear against Scripture itself.

These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and **searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.**

-Acts 17:11

While God gives teachers and pastors to equip the Church (Ephesians 4:11-15), believers are never told to surrender their judgment to them; instead, each Christian is accountable to study, understand, and obey God's revealed truth. In this way the Church is protected from error, and the Word of God remains living and active in the hearts of all who receive it.

So, the logical and theological chain of divine inspiration, textual criticism, and preservation goes as follows:

1. **God chose to reveal Himself in written words.**

Christianity teaches that God did not merely give ideas or experiences, but communicated truth through language. Scripture is "God-breathed," meaning God intentionally expressed His will through human words.

2. **God inspired the original authors in a unique, unrepeatable way.** The prophets and apostles wrote under the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit so that what they wrote was exactly what God intended. Their writings were

therefore fully authoritative, truthful, and free from error in what God meant to communicate.

3. **Those inspired writings entered normal human history.** After the originals were written, they were copied, circulated, translated, and read by ordinary people. God did not suspend the laws of history or human fallibility in this process. Scribes could misspell words, skip lines, repeat phrases, or harmonize passages without realizing it.
4. **Therefore, not every later copy is automatically identical to the original.** Because copying was done by fallible humans, differences between manuscripts arose. These differences do not mean God failed, but that Scripture was transmitted through the same human channels God always uses.
5. **Because God inspired specific words, Christians care about recovering those words.** Inspiration attaches not just to general ideas, but to the wording God chose. That means Christians have a theological obligation to ask and determine which surviving readings most accurately reflect what God originally inspired?
6. **Textual criticism exists to answer that question.** Textual criticism is the disciplined comparison of manuscripts to determine which readings best represent the original text. It is not an attempt to change Scripture, but to undo copying mistakes and get back to the inspired form.
7. **God's preservation works through abundance, not perfection of copies.** God did not preserve His Word by making every copy flawless. He preserved it by ensuring that thousands of manuscripts would exist across many places and centuries. Because no single manuscript controls the text, errors can be detected and corrected by comparison.
8. **Through this process, the original text is providentially recoverable.** The vast manuscript tradition allows scholars to identify scribal errors and recover the original wording with very high confidence. God's Word has not been lost,

even though individual copies are imperfect. Textual issues that do exist are normally well-known and can be mitigated with diligent study.

9. **Therefore, modern Bibles represent the preserved Word of God.** They are not inspired in the sense of new revelation, but they faithfully reproduce the inspired originals as preserved through God's providence and recovered through textual criticism.

In short:

- God inspired the originals perfectly.
- Humans copied them imperfectly over time.
- God preserved them through many witnesses.
- Textual criticism lets us confidently recover them.

Let's continue to discuss some deeper aspects concerning the subject of divine inspiration. It's important that we recognize what this doctrine *does* and *does not* mean. Inspiration means everything Scripture teaches is true and trustworthy in what God intends to communicate without error in meaning. However, although it is true in everything it says, we can *misunderstand* it by taking it out of its intended context, or by expecting it to speak in the way we may think and speak in modern times. Christians often become confused about divine inspiration when they quietly assume that the Bible ought to function like a modern book – written with contemporary standards of precision, vocabulary, and expectations of how “truth” is communicated. When that assumption is imported into Scripture, inspiration gets distorted.

In the modern world, we are trained to expect communication to be technically exact, exhaustively qualified, and standardized. We assume that true statements must be precise in the way scientific writing or legal documents are precise. But the biblical world did not operate with those conventions. Ancient Hebrew and Greco-Roman writers used flexible language, poetic compression, narrative shaping,

and rhetorical emphasis. They told the truth in ways suited to their culture: through story, imagery, parallelism, and selective reporting. When Christians expect the Bible to always speak technically, exhaustively, and with modern scientific or journalistic precision, they end up treating ancient literary forms as if they were technical transcripts. That can create problems the text itself never intended to answer.

For example, the Gospels often summarize long conversations in a few lines or arrange events thematically rather than chronologically. In the ancient world, this was normal historical writing. It was not considered dishonest; it was considered faithful representation of meaning. But when modern readers demand word-for-word transcripts or second-by-second timelines, they may see “contradictions” where ancient readers saw faithful testimony. The confusion is not caused by Scripture failing to be inspired, but by modern readers forcing it into a genre it never claimed to be. The Bible was not written to be a science or legal textbook, a modern history manual, or a technical encyclopedia. However, it will never make factually incorrect statements regarding those topics. The confusion generally arises due to our faulty expectations for how the ancients thought and wrote, and misunderstanding the actual purpose behind any given text. The Bible was written to reveal who God is, who we are, how salvation works, how God acts in history, and what God’s plans are for the future.

Another point regarding inspiration is to understand that because Scripture comes from God, it carries God’s authority. That means it stands above tradition, above Church leaders, and above human opinions. The Church does not *create* Scripture’s authority – it simply *recognizes* it. Jesus refers to this in John 10:27.

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

-John 10:27

Although this passage doesn’t specifically refer to discerning Scripture, it is inclusive of it, especially since the written Word is the primary way God speaks to us. The Bible is not just a collection of

The Basis Of Our Epistemology

ancient religious documents. It is the living voice of Jesus in written form. The Bible is the set of writings in which that voice is found. The Church did not *grant* those books authority; it *recognized* the Shepherd speaking through them.

When later writings appeared that claimed apostolic authority but distorted the gospel – such as many gnostic texts in the centuries following the Apostolic Era – the Church rejected them; not because they were new, but because they did not sound like the Shepherd. They spoke of a different Christ, a different salvation, and a different God. John wrote:

And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

-John 10:5

Because of divine inspiration, we as the recipients cannot pick and choose certain portions of the Bible to accept, while rejecting others. To do that would indicate a belief in yourself rather than the Bible and its divine Author. The entire Bible is one package and it must be accepted as such.

Inspiration does not preserve human religious thoughts but rather communicates God's own self-disclosure. Through Scripture, God reveals His character, His moral will, His truth, and His redemptive plan. Without inspiration, the Bible would simply be religious literature. With inspiration, it's God Himself speaking. Ultimately, the goal of inspired Scripture is not merely informational, but *transformational* (2 Timothy 3:15). The Bible is inspired so that people can understand sin, receive Christ, be spiritually formed, and ultimately know God.

-
1. *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, ed. Stephen D. Renn, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005, p. 522-523.
 2. Bart D. Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why*, New York: Harper San Francisco, 2005, pp. 252-253.

CHAPTER 3

FURTHERING OUR EPISTEMOLOGY

Christian epistemology asks a simple but profound question: How do we know that God has spoken in Scripture? As noted earlier, the answer to this question relates to the prophetic characteristics of the written Word. More specifically, we will find that **the Old and New Testaments validate each other**. This is accomplished through the Bible’s historically-attested prophetic fulfillment in the person of Jesus Christ – meaning that Jesus is the basis of our epistemology. He is both the foundation and the “glue” that holds it all together. The entire book centers on Him, as we’re told in Hebrews 10:7, quoting the messianic statement originally found in Psalm 40:7.

In the volume of the book it is written of me...

-Hebrews 10:7

In this framework, divine inspiration is not established by private mystical experience, nor by ecclesiastical decree, but by **God publicly revealing the future and then bringing it to pass in verifiable history. Prophecy becomes God’s signature on the text.**

Let’s now take our epistemology a bit deeper and examine the way the Old and Testaments validate one another through the prophetic

The Basis Of Our Epistemology

anticipation and then historically-recorded fulfillment of the First Coming of Christ. The Old Testament repeatedly presents it's prophetic content as God's own epistemological litmus test:

⁹ Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; **I am God, and there is none like me,** ¹⁰ **Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done,** saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:

-Isaiah 46:9-10

The claim is not merely that God can guess the future, but that He can specify it in advance in such detail that its eventual fulfillment confirms that it was Him speaking all along. This establishes a unique standard of knowledge: *foreknowledge that cannot be produced by human inference.*

The entire foundation of the Old Testament rests on its prophecies regarding the coming of a future Savior figure called the Messiah. In the Hebrew Old Testament, the Messiah is not merely a political liberator or moral teacher. He is the divinely appointed figure through whom God intends to repair and redeem the fallen, sinful human condition, which separated us from intimate relationship with God. The Hebrew Scriptures present a unified purpose that unfolds across centuries, if not millennia.

The Messiah's coming is necessary to undo the sin problem introduced into humanity through the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3). Right there in the Garden, God promised a coming Messianic Seed who would crush the serpent, Satan (Genesis 3:15).

And I will put enmity between thee [Satan] and the woman [Eve], and between thy seed and her seed [Messiah]; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

-Genesis 3:15

This establishes the messianic mission from the beginning: a Redeemer who would defeat evil and redeem fallen mankind and the fallen world. This thematic thread would then continue to weave itself all through the Old Testament, prophetically predicting and foreshadowing the eventual coming of this Messiah.

For instance, the Messiah is the **true Son of Abraham**, through whom all nations would be blessed (Genesis 12:3). Israel was chosen not as an end in itself, but as the channel through which the Messiah would come to bring God's salvation to the world. The promises to Abraham find their fulfillment in a single ultimate representative who carries the destiny of the many.

Abraham's son Isaac, through whom the promised covenantal "seed lineage" runs, prophetically prefigures this ultimate messianic "son of Abraham." Isaac's near-sacrifice on Mount Moriah (Genesis 22) is a prophetic picture of Jesus' crucifixion. Abraham offering his "only son whom he loved," who carries the wood for his own sacrifice and submits willingly, foreshadows God one day offering His only Son who carries the cross to His own place of death. Abraham's words, "God will provide the lamb," point to Christ as the true Lamb of God. The event occurs on the same mountain region that later becomes Jerusalem, where Jesus is eventually crucified. Isaac's symbolic "death" and return on the third day anticipates Christ's death and resurrection.

The Messiah is also pictured as the **Son of David**, and is promised an eternal throne (2 Samuel 7). But this kingship is not merely political. Psalm 2 and Psalm 110 describe a king who is both divine and priestly, ruling not only Israel but over the nations in a future Kingdom Age. The Messiah would restore God's rightful reign over a rebellious world.

David himself functions as a living type of the Messiah. He is God's anointed king whose life is a pattern that prophetically foreshadows Christ. David is God's chosen and anointed ruler, yet he is rejected, betrayed, hunted, and suffers unjustly before entering his kingdom. This mirrors Jesus, the true Son of David, who at His First

Coming is rejected and afflicted before being enthroned at His future Second Coming (Luke 24:26; Acts 2:30-36).

Psalms 22 is especially important in revealing this because David speaks in the first person, yet describes sufferings that transcend anything recorded in his own life. David writes of being mocked, surrounded by enemies, having hands and feet pierced, being publicly exposed, and having his garments divided by casting lots (Psalm 22:7-18). These details do not fit David's historical experience, but they precisely match the Roman crucifixion of Jesus a thousand years later (Matthew 27:35-43; John 19:23-24). In fact, Jesus explicitly identifies Himself with this psalm when He quotes Psalm 22:1 while dying on the cross, crying out, *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"* (Matthew 27:46).

Throughout the Psalms, David's life and words become a prophetic messianic template and divine correspondence, where the Messiah, would be in effect be the "ultimate David" – a King who suffers unjustly, is seemingly abandoned and betrayed by his own people, yet is ultimately vindicated and worshiped by the nations (Psalm 22:27-31).

The Messiah is the **Suffering Servant** of Isaiah. Isaiah 53, written around seven hundred years before Christ, presents a more vivid picture of the eventual crucifixion of this messianic figure than any of the New Testament epistles written decades after the fact. Although much of Old Testament prophecy discusses the future reign of the Messiah, Isaiah 53 presents a shocking glimpse into a different aspect of the Messiah's future experiences. God's anointed does not first conquer by force, but by suffering and substitution. He bears the sins of the people, is pierced, rejected, and killed, not for His own wrongdoing, but "for the transgression of my people was he stricken" (Isaiah 53:8). This establishes the core of the Messiah's mission. He comes to reconcile humanity to God by taking sin and its judgment upon himself.

The sacrificial system of the Torah (the first five books of Moses) anticipates this. The blood of animals symbolize cleansing, but yet could not

truly remove guilt (Leviticus 17:11; Hebrews 9:12-22). These sacrifices pointed forward to a final, perfect substitutionary offering; a human life given in obedience to God that would truly deal with the sin issue. The Messiah fulfills what the Temple rituals could only foreshadow (Isaiah 53:5-6, 10-12; Matthew 8:16-17; Luke 22:37; 1 Peter 2:24-25; John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:7; Hebrews 9-10; Romans 3:24-26; Ephesians 1:7, et al.). In fact, the New Testament is explicit and systematic in identifying **Jesus Christ as the once-for-all fulfillment of the entire Old Testament sacrificial system**. These passages do not merely present it as a metaphor, but point out that **the Torah sacrifices were intentionally designed from the beginning to prophetically point forward to Him**.

The Bible also presents the Messiah not merely as an individual within the “seed-line” of national Israel, but as **Israel-in-person** – the true, faithful, ultimate Israelite who fulfills everything the nation was called to be but failed to become. This is one of the deepest strands of biblical messianic theology. In the Old Testament, Israel is called God’s “son” (Exodus 4:22; Hosea 11:1) and God’s servant (Isaiah 41:8-9). Yet, Israel repeatedly disobeys, falls into idolatry, and brings cursings and exile upon itself. In Isaiah, however, something remarkable happens: the title “servant” begins to shift from the collective nation as a whole to a **single representative individual** who stands in Israel’s place. In Isaiah 49:3-6, the servant is called “Israel,” yet he is also sent to *restore* Israel – meaning he is both the nation’s representative and the nation’s redeemer.

This Messianic Servant lives out Israel’s calling perfectly. Where Israel failed to trust and obey God, the Servant listens, suffers, and remains faithful (Isaiah 50:4-7). Where Israel brought guilt on herself through idolatry, the Servant bears Israel’s guilt in her place (Isaiah 53:4-12). He becomes, in effect, Israel’s substitute – the one faithful Israelite whose obedience and suffering bring salvation to the many.

The New Testament explicitly presents Jesus Christ in this role. Matthew applies Hosea 11:1 (“out of Egypt I called my son” – originally about Israel) to Jesus (Matthew 2:15), showing that Jesus relives Israel’s story. He passes through the waters (baptism), goes into the wilderness for forty days (echoing Israel’s forty years), resists tempta-

tion, and remains faithful where Israel had failed (Matthew 3-4). Jesus also chooses twelve apostles, symbolizing the twelve tribes, showing that He's reconstituting Israel around Himself. He is the true vine (John 15:1), replacing unfaithful Israel as God's fruitful people. Paul summarizes this when he calls Jesus the "last Adam" (Romans 5; 1 Corinthians 15) and the ultimate seed of Abraham (Galatians 3:16).

Thus, the Messiah is not just *sent* to Israel – there's a divine correspondence in which He *is* a perfected personification of Israel; the ultimate personal representative of the nation. He stands as the covenant-keeping Son, the faithful Servant, and the true Seed through whom the blessings promised to Israel find their fulfillment, allowing salvation to flow to all nations.

Finally, the Messiah also comes to **establish a New Covenant**. Jeremiah 31 promises a day when God will write His law on human hearts, forgive sins, and create a people who truly know Him. Ezekiel 36 speaks of a new spirit and a new heart. The Messiah is the one who inaugurates this transformation, creating not merely a reformed nation, but a renewed humanity, eventually reversing the curse of sin and death. The fulfillment of this New Covenant is then presented as the Christian gospel message throughout the New Testament (Luke 22:20; Matthew 26:28; 1 Corinthians 11:25; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Hebrews 8-10). And the New Testament writers anticipated the literal fulfillment of this New Covenant to also be fulfilled by Israel as a nation in the future (Romans 9-11).

Thus, in sum, the Messiah comes:

- To defeat evil and death
- To fulfill God's promises to Old Testament figures like Abraham, David, and to the nation of Israel
- To bear the sins of humanity
- To establish a New Covenant
- To restore God's kingdom on earth

What has been so far presented is only a brief synopsis of some of the more well-known aspects of how the Old Testament anticipates

the future messianic coming fulfilled by Christ. Entire volumes could and have been written documenting how Jesus as the Messiah is prefigured and prophetically anticipated in great detail all through the Hebrew Scriptures. What we've discussed is just to provide you with a small taste.

But the overall point of discussing this within the context of our epistemology is that this overarching messianic theme is carefully and systematically woven throughout the entire Old Testament prophetically; in fact, it's the entire point. These specifications were then fulfilled by Jesus Christ as that anticipated Messiah hundreds of years later, and is well documented by multiple eyewitnesses, as well as those in direct contact with eyewitness sources. We call this documentation the New Testament.

Jesus is the only figure in all of history in whom all of these prophetic messianic streams converge. He fulfilled these specifications beyond competent dispute. In fact, He is the only option that exists. The fact that Jesus is the Messiah of Israel turns out to be the most conclusive fact in the entire universe, which we conclusively demonstrate in our companion study entitled, "How Sure Can We Be That Jesus Was The Messiah Of Israel?". The Old Testament prophecies mandate that the Messiah had to come *within a certain timeframe* and had to fulfill numerous prophetic specifications. Truly, the evidence shows that we only have one realistic candidate – Jesus Christ.

By *fulfilling* the Old Testament messianic prophecies, Christ then *authenticates* the Old Testament Scriptures. One scholar, J. Barton Payne, found as many as 574 verses in the Old Testament that somehow point to, describe, or reference the coming Messiah. Another scholar, Alfred Edersheim, found 456 Old Testament verses prophetically referring to the Messiah or His times. **Conservatively, Jesus fulfilled at least three hundred of these prophecies in His earthly ministry, according to theologians who have catalogued them** – and this establishes a reliable track record allowing us to expect His fulfillment of the remaining prophecies at His Second Coming.¹

Therefore, we can say that the two testaments are one unified and

integrated book. The Old makes no sense without the New. And the New makes no sense without the Old. Jesus did not invent a new mission. He completed the one that the Hebrew Scriptures had been anticipating all along. **Thus, it can be seen that the New Testament is in the Old Testament concealed, and the Old Testament is in the New Testament revealed!**

The Old prophetically specifies and details the Messiah centuries in advance. The Messiah was to be validated by all of the details prophetically anticipated in these Scriptures. The New historically documents the arrival of that figure, attesting to His fulfillments of these prophetic specifications. Thus, the Old and New Testaments authenticate and validate each other through the prophetic fulfillment of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Put another way, because a certain “guy” came along at exactly the predicted time and actually fulfilled the very specific Old Testament Scriptures, it validates that they truly were prophetic. So, the Old and New Testaments – as a pair – validate one another.

When you understand the integrated design of the Scriptures, you will understand the identity of Jesus Christ, in that He is the fulfillment of them. Jesus’ crucifixion was not a tragedy, but rather a triumphant achievement and victory! It was an event pre-ordained from before the foundations of the universe, and prophetically spoken of throughout the Old Testament – an event necessary to accomplish some very specific goals in God’s plan to redeem the world. Thus, Jesus authenticates the Old Testament because He fulfilled what it spoke of.

One of the first things Jesus did after His resurrection on that same day, was appear incognito to several of His followers on the road to Emmaus and give them a “seven-mile Bible study” (the distance between Jerusalem and Emmaus) detailing Biblical history from Moses all the way to the present – identifying Himself as the One who fulfilled all those things (Luke 24).

²⁵ Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe **all that the prophets have spoken:** ²⁶ Ought not Christ to have suffered

these things, and to enter into his glory? ²⁷ **And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. ...** 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.** ⁴⁵ Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

-Luke 24:25-27, 44-45

The disciples's reaction to Jesus' lesson was one of deep conviction of the truth of what He was teaching. "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked?" they ask each other (verse 32). Their physical eyes were blinded to the identity of Jesus, but their eyes of faith were being opened as Jesus reasoned with them, giving them revelation as He opened their understanding to the Scriptures. One especially interesting aspect to ponder within this story is how they finally recognize Jesus "in the breaking of the bread."

³⁰ And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. ³¹ **And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; ...** ³⁵ And they told what things were done in the way, and **how he was known of them in breaking of bread.**

-Luke 24:30-31, 35

What would have caused them to recognize Him at this time? What else could it have been other than them seeing the nail scars in His hands as He broke and handed them the bread?

The story of the disciples on the Emmaus Road emphasizes how Jesus Himself taught that He was the fulfillment of the Old Testament. This continues to be expounded on all through the New Testament. When the author of Hebrews quotes Psalm 40:6-8 ("in the volume of the book it is written of me"), it stresses that the entire Old Testament was prophetically structured to point to Christ. The Law, sacri-

The Basis Of Our Epistemology

fices, priesthood, kingship of David, and the prophetic promises were not ends in themselves but were intentionally and strategically placed there as shadows anticipating a perfect, obedient Messiah who would truly do God's will and offer the final sacrifice for sin.

Jesus fulfills what these Scriptures foretold, making Him the meaning and climax of the whole biblical story. He is the one that ties it all together. And His fulfillments were thoroughly and carefully documented by numerous eyewitnesses. Thus, we can conclude that Jesus is the basis of our epistemology. And because of its significant use of prophecy, with Jesus as its foundation, the Bible is actually a provably self-authenticating book!

-
1. "How many prophecies did Jesus fulfill?" *GotQuestions.org*. (<https://www.gotquestions.org/prophecies-of-Jesus.html> - Retrieved 10/11/20)

CHAPTER 4

GODLY PROPHECY VERSUS DIVINATION

This last chapter involves the important subject of recognizing Godly prophecy as opposed to an illicit attempt to gain hidden information through sources apart from Him, such as through occult practices like divination. As we've mentioned, only a Being who exists outside of our time domain, who can see past, present, and future simultaneously would be able to detail history in advance. Many other so-called "holy books" exist, but none are validated by the accuracy of highly specified, prophetic content with one hundred percent accuracy in a way comparable to the Bible.

The difference between authentic biblical prophecy and pagan divination is not merely a contrast between two religious practices but a clash between two fundamentally opposed sources of revelation. Scripture presents true prophecy as the sovereign self-disclosure of the living God while condemning divination as an illicit attempt to obtain supernatural knowledge through alternative channels outside of Him.

Godly prophecy always gives glory to God and lines up with Biblical truth. Ungodly prophecy always ultimately seeks to deter an individual from a relationship or dependency on God, and usually establishes a

The Basis Of Our Epistemology

climate of fear or intimidation. We are cautioned in the Word of God to stay away from this type of occult messaging. Divination is a demonic counterfeit ability to see or foretell things not perceptible to humans. It is the ability to access hidden knowledge or secrets pertaining to a person, a people, or an event through demonic sources such as familiar spirits or demonic possession. Divination is also known as – or is often connected with – the occult, fortune telling, soothsaying, and witchcraft. The Bible tells us God’s view of divination in Deuteronomy 18:10.

There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch.

-Deuteronomy 18:10

Jeremiah 14:14 speaks of the false-prophets of that time, saying:

Then the Lord said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart.

-Jeremiah 14:14

So, compared to God’s truth, divination is false, deceitful, and worthless. Even secular researchers who have studied some of these topics have concluded that the supernatural beings that bestow this kind of “knowledge” can very accurately be described as “messengers of deception.”¹ We should recognize that their messages are untrustworthy and are not to be sought after.

This distinction is made even more profound by the fact that the Bible stands uniquely among all religious texts as the only holy book that demonstrably contains precise, specific, verifiable, long-range, and historically fulfilled prophecy. Biblical prophecy is never the product of human speculation or mystical technique but instead originates in God’s own initiative, as we’re told in 2 Peter 1:21.

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

The prophet Amos states how God Himself declares that He reveals His plans to His prophets before He acts in history.

Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.

-Amos 3:7

This means that prophecy functions as part of God's dispensational governance of redemptive history, where God's promises to Israel, the Messiah, and the coming Kingdom unfold progressively through literal historical events, culminating in Jesus Christ, of whom Moses and all the prophets spoke (Luke 24:27) and in whom all the promises of God find their fulfillment (2 Corinthians 1:20).

The Bible places an extremely high standard of one hundred percent accuracy upon itself, and encourages people to hold any prophecy to that standard. Deuteronomy states:

When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.

-Deuteronomy 18:22

Although Godly prophecy is always by definition completely accurate, this alone does not validate a prophecy or a prophet as being from God. False prophets and diviners may also get things right occasionally *but accuracy alone does not validate divine authority*.

¹ If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, ² And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, **Let us go after other gods,**

The Basis Of Our Epistemology

which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; ³ Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

-Deuteronomy 13:1-3

The scriptural standard is that even if a prediction comes true, it should not be seen as valid *if the message leads people away from the true God*. We should not be overly amazed by predictions and signs and wonders since Satan and his agents of darkness can also produce these things, at least to some degree.

¹³ For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. ¹⁵ Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

-2 Corinthians 11:13-15

Even though knowledge obtained through illicit means may at times appear accurate – since Satan is able to at times produce some level of counterfeit signs and insights without possessing actual sovereignty over history – the true test of the legitimacy of a prophetic source goes beyond its accuracy alone. So Satanic sources *can* do things we may consider supernatural, but only God controls history (Isaiah 46:9-10).

In stark contrast to divination, genuine biblical prophecy from God is always embedded within His moral law and redemptive plan, consistently calling humanity back to Himself. The true nature of Godly prophecy reveals His character, and advances His covenant promises, such as those made in the Old Testament to Abraham and David (Genesis 12:1-3; 2 Samuel 7:12-16). And because God *alone* declares “the end from the beginning” (Isaiah 46:9-10), He alone can produce the kind of precise, long-term, multi-generational prophetic record found in Scripture. Such a record of accuracy and precision

makes the Bible not merely a spiritual book but a prophetic document that stands unique in human history. There simply are no other books that have done this.

Although Satanic sources are capable at times of producing accurate predictions, these illicit sources are also known to speak in vague generalities, lacking an abundance of specific details – always designed to lead you away from God or to contradict Biblical truth. Or, their messages may mirror what has already been prophetically described in the Bible, but they twist, distort, or reverse certain elements. Pagan and satanic divination is understood to be unreliable not simply because it's spiritually forbidden, but because of the nature of its source and method. Scripture does not portray occult practices as harmless superstition; it treats them as attempts to access supernatural knowledge apart from the self-revealing God (Deuteronomy 18:9-14). The Bible is equally clear that these sources do not possess God's attributes of omniscience, holiness, or truthfulness. As a result, what they produce is *inherently* distorted, fragmentary, and often deceptive. Several points demonstrate this.

First, pagan divination operates through created, fallen intelligences rather than through the Creator Himself. In biblical theology, Satan and demons are real but finite beings. They do not know the future exhaustively, because only God declares “the end from the beginning” (Isaiah 46:9-10). At best, such spirits can observe human behavior, political trends, and natural patterns and then make educated guesses. This gives divination the appearance of insight while lacking true prophetic certainty. When predictions fail, they fail because the source never had sovereign knowledge of God's decrees – only partial, inferential information.

Second, deception is not an accidental flaw of occult revelation; *it is its defining feature*. Jesus calls Satan “a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44). The goal of demonic communication is not to enlighten but to enslave, confuse, and draw people away from God's truth. That means even when occult messages contain some accurate elements, they are embedded within misleading frameworks that twist interpretation, inflate the ego of the practitioner, or foster dependence on the fallen

occult spirit world. A fortune-teller might correctly identify a personal detail, but then attach to it a false narrative about destiny, karma, or hidden forces, leading the hearer into spiritual and psychological bondage, and putting them on a pathway that leads away from truth.

Third, divination systems are methodologically unstable. Practices such as tarot, astrology, necromancy, or scrying rely on symbolic systems that are vague and elastic. Their “hits” are remembered while their failures are ignored or reinterpreted. This creates the illusion of accuracy while masking how often the system actually fails or contradicts itself. Biblically speaking, this stands in sharp contrast to true prophecy, which is specific, historically anchored, and open to public verification (Deuteronomy 18:21-22). When Isaiah names Cyrus 150 years in advance (Isaiah 44:28-45:1), or when Micah specifies Bethlehem as the Messiah’s birthplace (Micah 5:2), the claim is either true or false; and all can test and know it. Occult divination almost never risks that level of testability.

Fourth, pagan divination is distorted because it is filtered through human sinfulness and psychological projection. Practitioners bring fear, desire, ambition, and trauma into their interpretations. Even if a demonic influence is present, the human interpreter reshapes what is perceived through their own expectations. This compounds error. What results is not pure supernatural information but a hybrid of spiritual deception and human imagination, which makes the output even more unreliable.

Thus, occult divination is fraught with inaccuracies because it’s cut off from the only source of perfect truth: the God who speaks in Scripture. God’s prophetic word flows from His divine purpose, especially as it culminates in Christ (Revelation 19:10). Occult revelation flows from finite, fallen beings who neither know the future with certainty nor desire human good. They may sometimes approximate truth, but they cannot deliver it faithfully. The distortions are not incidental; they are the natural fruit of a counterfeit source trying to imitate what only God can give.

These inaccuracies and vagaries are demonstrated well in the writings of the so-called “prophet” Michel de Nostredame, better known

as Nostradamus. He seems to occasionally get some vague elements correct, but is blatantly inaccurate in other areas. Though widely regarded in pop culture as a prophet, many who have studied Nostradamus's works find that most of the amazing prophecies attributed to him are merely the result of poor linguistic and historical scholarship. In his book *Nostradamus, Bibliomancer: The Man, The Myth, The Truth*, Peter Lemesurier, a former Cambridge linguist and author of nearly a dozen books on the French seer, concludes that Nostradamus was neither a doctor nor an astrologer, nor even (by his own admission) a prophet. He merely believed that history repeats itself, and thus projected known past events into the future. Lemesurier laments that:

Most of those who make such [predictions] – including the English-speaking authors of many popular books on the subject – know next to nothing either about Nostradamus, the texts, or even the sixteenth-century French in which they are written. Few of them have ever seen an original text, or even know sufficient French ... As a result (such predictions) are the result of not reading what the texts actually say, but of shamelessly twisting half-understood words retrospectively to fit the proposed event, or in some cases even twisting the event itself to fit the words.²

Although much of what is considered “prophecy” in pop-culture turns out to be nothing more than charlatanism, we also need to be aware of the deceptive messages that come from the supernatural forces of evil in the world. We should be sensitive to the possibility that the “dark side” gives so-called “messages of enlightenment” that may mimic God’s revelation (yet their agenda is ultimately to deceive). Many of today’s world religions are based on a supernatural message like this, as they incorrectly believe the message is from a god or an angel of God. Islam and Mormonism are two examples. We should be aware of the dichotomy between the supernatural forces of good (God, His angels, etc.) and evil (Satan, fallen angels, demons, etc.). Without understanding the nature of this

“cosmic chess match,” we are susceptible to fall prey to their deception.

The Bible on the other hand, bears an astonishing record of one hundred percent accuracy, down to the extreme details and minutiae. There is no other book on the planet that even approaches its reliability and accuracy. You will begin to see this for yourself as you explore our companion studies. The incredible reality of prophecy is an evidence of the supernatural origin of the Bible.

Unlike every other religious text in the world, the Bible dares to place its divine authority on the line by making hundreds of specific, detailed, and testable predictions across centuries – such as the lineage, birthplace, suffering, death, and resurrection of the Messiah (Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2; Isaiah 53; Psalm 22) – all of which were fulfilled in Jesus Christ. This provides objective historical evidence that biblical prophecy is not mystical guesswork but rather divine foreknowledge rooted in God’s sovereign control of history, something no other sacred book meaningfully provides. All other religious writings either avoid predictive prophecy altogether or offer vague, symbolic, or retrofitted statements that cannot be tested.

Divination is condemned in Scripture precisely because it seeks hidden knowledge through occult practices that bypass God’s authority and invoke spiritual forces that do not originate from Him (Deuteronomy 18:10-12; Leviticus 19:31). It is a form of rebellion against God and His way and order. In fact, the Bible equates rebellion against God with witchcraft itself (1 Samuel 15:23), which is understandable since divination seeks control rather than submission, power rather than truth, and curiosity rather than repentance.

Scripture actually tells us that in the end-times there will be an explosion of false signs, occult practices, and counterfeit revelation designed to deceive many (Matthew 24:24), further stressing the necessity of anchoring our faith in the written Word of God as the only text that has consistently demonstrated divine foreknowledge across thousands of years. This is why Revelation ultimately declares that “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Revelation 19:10), meaning that all true prophecy, from Genesis to Revelation,

converges on Christ and His coming Kingdom. Meanwhile, all divination, no matter how impressive it appears, stands outside God's purposes, leading only to deception and spiritual bondage rather than truth and redemption.

1. Jacques Vallée, *Messengers of Deception: UFO Contacts and Cults*, San Francisco: And/Or Press, 1979.
2. Peter Lemesurier, *Nostradamus, Bibliomancer: The Man, The Myth, The Truth*, Pompton Plains, NJ: Career Press, 2010, Ch. 1.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

As we conclude this study, let's return to the question we began with: Can we actually know that the Bible is the Word of God? Is there a rational basis for believing that its ultimate source is supernatural rather than human? We believe the evidence gives us good reason to answer yes.

We have focused on two primary characteristics of the Bible that form the basis of this epistemological approach. First, the Bible is a highly integrated message system. Its sixty-six books were written by many different human writers over the course of roughly 1,500 years, yet together they form one unified story. The Old Testament establishes promises, patterns, covenants, and prophetic expectations that are carried forward and explained in the New Testament. The two Testaments fit together as parts of one larger message, pointing beyond the individual human writers to a common Author behind them all.

Second, the Bible contains an astonishing amount of prophecy. This is especially important because prophecy provides something that can be tested. The Bible repeatedly records specific information before the events themselves take place. God Himself points to this ability to declare “the end from the beginning” as something that distinguishes

Him from all others. When predictions given centuries in advance are later fulfilled in identifiable historical events, we are confronted with knowledge that the original human writers could not naturally have possessed.

At the center of this prophetic evidence stands Jesus Christ. The Old Testament progressively anticipates the coming Messiah through direct predictions, promises, types, shadows, and patterns. The New Testament then records the arrival of Jesus and demonstrates how these earlier prophetic streams converge in Him. **In this sense, Jesus becomes the basis of our epistemology. The Old Testament prophetically anticipates Him, while the New Testament historically records His fulfillment of those expectations. The two Testaments therefore work together, with Christ serving as the central point that joins them into one unified message.**

We have also seen that divine inspiration does not leave us dependent upon manuscripts that have disappeared beyond recovery. Although the original writings no longer physically exist, the enormous manuscript record allows the biblical text to be recovered with a very high degree of confidence. God inspired His Word, and through its transmission and preservation, that Word has remained available to us.

Finally, we distinguished genuine biblical prophecy from divination and other counterfeit claims to supernatural knowledge. Occasional predictions, signs, or unusual experiences are not enough to establish that something comes from God. Biblical prophecy is tied to God's revealed truth, His redemptive purposes, and a consistent record of fulfillment. The Bible places its own prophetic claims under an extremely high standard and invites them to be tested.

Christian faith, therefore, does not require us to abandon reason or accept the Bible through "blind faith." We are not simply assuming that the Bible is God's Word and then using that assumption or circular reasoning to prove itself. We are examining the internal characteristics of the Bible and asking what best explains them. Its remarkable integration and prophetic content point beyond ordinary

human authorship and provide objective evidence of a divine Author working through the human writers.

These are the “fingerprints of the Holy Spirit” we have been looking for. The Bible presents one unified message unfolding across centuries, while at the same time repeatedly demonstrating knowledge of history before that history occurs. **In this way, the Bible is internally self-authenticating. Its own prophetic claims, patterns, and later fulfillments work together to verify the divine source behind the message.** The Old Testament anticipates what the New Testament records as fulfilled, and the New Testament in turn confirms that the earlier writings were truly prophetic. Together, these characteristics provide a rational foundation for recognizing the Bible for what it claims to be: a supernatural revelation from God.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ehrman, Bart D., *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why*, New York: Harper San Francisco, 2005.
- Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, ed. Stephen D. Renn, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005.
- “How many prophecies did Jesus fulfill?” *GotQuestions.org*. (<https://www.gotquestions.org/prophecies-of-Jesus.html>)
- Lemesurier, Peter, *Nostradamus, Bibliomancer: The Man, The Myth, The Truth*, Pompton Plains, NJ: Career Press, 2010.
- Merriam-Webster, entry “Epistemology,” *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*. (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/epistemology>)
- Vallée, Jacques, *Messengers of Deception: UFO Contacts and Cults*, San Francisco: And/Or Press, 1979.

