

"THE BIBLE"

By Mike Burnham

I. The bible is a collection of sixty-six books which have been written by over forty different authors---kings, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, physicians, statesmen, scholars, poets, farmers, tax collectors, priests---who lived their lives in various countries, on three different continents, over a period of about 1500 years of human history (1400 BC to 100 AD). It was written in three languages, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. In spite of these obstacles, it is a continuous, harmonious and orderly account of the whole history of Gods dealings with man.

"Prophecy and its fulfillment" It has always pleased God to preannounce many of the things he is going to do and the bible records these prophecies and secular history and the bible records the realization of the predictions. Over three hundred of these prophecies were made by the Old Testament writers concerning the coming messiah and these were declared hundreds, and in some instances thousands, of years before Christ came. Those predictions which were to be fulfilled at Christ's first advent were literally fulfilled at that time, thirty-three on the day he died. Many more remain to be fulfilled when he comes again, and it's reasonable to believe, that these will be fulfilled in the same way. Some prophecies concerning nations that were historically fulfilled and recorded in secular works are in Daniel chapter 8.

"Types with their anti-types" in the Old Testament the New Testament lies hidden in types. A type is a word picture, a representation, in the Old Testament of something or someone in the New Testament, called an anti-type. A type can be a person, an animal, a place, an activity, or a thing. The type and the antitype are related to each other by the fact that the connecting truth or principle is embodied in each. For instance, in Exodus 12 the Passover was instituted, in John 1:29 Jesus is Peter 1:18,19 is a further description of the Passover lamb. The Passover lamb was a

type (a picture in words) of the antitype, Christ's, sacrifice and what it accomplished, namely, our redemption from death. In Romans 5:14 Adam is called a type of Christ. All humanity is viewed as being either "in Adam", in whom all die, or "in Christ", in whom all are to be made alive, verse 18; 1 Cor. 15:22. Also Heb. 8:1-5; 1 Cor. 10:6.

The continuity of the scriptures, prophecy and its fulfillment, and types with their antitypes, are the three major factors which serves to exhibit the unity of the two testaments and bind them into one book, and serves to show the divine nature of the scriptures. The bible is the "complete, infallible, inerrant, word of God to man".

The reading and studying of the Old Testament should mean as much to Christians as the New Testament because in it we have some of the major teachings about God, examples of how we should live, fulfilled promises and prophecy showing the faithfulness of God to strengthen our hope and faith in him, romans 15:4; 1 cor. 10:11; 2 pet. 3:2.

Ii. The whole bible is God's word written by men. The theological language used to describe this is "verbal, plenary inspiration." inspiration is a reference to that controlling influence which God exerted over the human authors by whom the old and New Testaments were spoken and written, matt. 1:22,23, acts 1:16.

By "verbal" inspiration is meant that the spirit guided in the choice of the words used. However, the human authorship was respected to the extent that the writers' characteristics are preserved and their style and vocabulary are employed, but without the intrusion of error. They were not allowed to act apart from, or contrary to, the precise mind of God, whose word they wrote. They were literally "moved," or borne along, by the holy spirit, 2 pet. 1:21; 1 pet. 1:10,11.

By "plenary" inspiration is meant that the accuracy which verbal inspiration secures, is extended to every portion of the bible so that it is in all its parts both "infallible" as to truth and "final" as to divine authority, John 17:17; 2 tim. 3:16,17.

Iii. In the field of science, the bible has been so framed that there is no conflict

with true science in this or any age of human history. The bible is not a science book but where it speaks of science it is true, prov. 1:7. Gen. 1; the earth is round, isa. 40:22; the earth is suspended by force, not by anything physical, job 26:7; oceans have natural lanes, psm. 8:8.

The bible is not a medical text. But it is a book containing vast stores of medical fact. One simple aspect of God's command to abraham helped prevent excessive bleeding with circumcision of the newborn, gen. 17:12. That was the instruction that the rite should be done on the eighth day of life. Of major importance in blood clotting is prothrombin. It has been well established that within a few hours after birth prothrombin becomes relatively depleted and does not become replenished by the infant's liver until about the eighth day of life. Some health laws given by God to Israel were not discovered until the last two hundred years or less. Laws diagnosing and quarantining skin diseases like leprosy guaranteed that infectious diseases would not be spread with abandon throughout Israel, and the covering of the mouth also worked to keep the spread of infectious diseases, and this was only discovered about 150 years ago in germany, lev. 13:38-46,51,52. In a similar fashion the bodies of dead humans, animals, and insects were considered contaminated and strict laws governed the handling of these potentially infective objects. The fastidious bathing requirements attached to these laws were of profound significance in the control of disease. Infectious diseases which caused discharges were considered particularly dangerous and persons or animals with these discharges were isolated from other people. Whatever the discharge touched was either effectively cleansed or destroyed by fire. This helped limit the spread of tuberculosis, venereal diseases, and many bacterial and parasitic infections, lev. 15:1,11-13,19. Medically, the bible is not fiction, for when the medical problems of its people were written, the descriptions were too real, too exact. Medically, the bible bears its own credentials (dr. Russel j. Thomsen, medical history from God's word).

There are many interesting laws that God gave to Israel, very explicit laws for their well-being and some seem rather odd to us today like Deut. 25:5-10. You will run across this law throughout the bible but it has special significance in the book of

ruth.

Many believe the law of "a tooth for a tooth" (Exodus 21:22-25) is for everyone and that it is a law of retaliation. It was never intended to allow individuals to avenge their own injuries. Actually it was given to the judges of Israel (v-6, 20) so that they had a guide in making just decisions. It represented the equality of justice in compensation and restitution, (v-26,27). The hand represented one's livelihood. If a singer cut off the hand of a pianist and the judges cut off the hand of the singer the penalty would not be equal to the crime because the singer would still have his livelihood and the pianist would not. If in verse 22 the woman gives birth prematurely the one who caused the premature birth will be fined. But if the baby is born dead the man will pay with his life for that would be considered equal. Compensation was possible except for murder, (Deut. 35:31). But if the injury is less, the offender may offer compensation in monetary damages, according to the amount prescribed by the husband and the judges. Also see v-28-30.

There are three groups of people mentioned in the bible, the Jews, the gentiles, and the church. It's important to know which of these groups or individuals a group (as seen above) the bible is talking to while you are reading or studying because commands, prophecies and promises addressed primarily to one does not mean they are necessarily for the other two groups except in a secondary application.

Another thing to keep in mind when you read or study is the context. Rudyard Kipling wrote: "I have six faithful serving men who taught me all I know. Their names are what and where and when and how and why and who".

Also, make sure you know the meanings of the words you are reading. You can either keep an Oxford dictionary on hand or Vine's expository dictionary of Greek words.

"The Old Testament"

In our English bible's the Old Testament is divided into three divisions, the historical books (17 books from Genesis through Esther), the poetical books (5 books

from Job through the Song of Solomon), and the prophetic books (17 books from Isaiah through Malachi).

The New Testament is usually considered to be divided into four divisions, the gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), historical (Acts, which is a companion to the gospel of Luke since he wrote both books, and it continues the history of the first churches), the epistles (letters) (21 books of teaching) and prophetic (the book of Revelation).

The center references can help clear up passages that may be difficult to understand by saying the same thing in a little different way, (Gal. 3:13 2 Cor. 5:21). They also help in studying topics, by taking the reader to corresponding passages throughout the bible that are talking about the same thing, (1 Cor. 6:20). They also help in understanding what is being said in the New Testament by taking you back to its type in the Old Testament, for instance, John 3:14, 15.