



# The Place of the Bible

## In the Home, Church, and Society

by Jeremy Cagle

Since attending Seminary, I have begun teaching physical education at a local elementary school in inner city Arleta, California. I have found that, in teaching children, it is necessary to explain every activity in painstaking detail. It is useless to tell a nine year old to play a game of dodge-ball. Every part of the game must be investigated and expounded upon. He needs to know:

- 1). Where are the boundaries?
- 2). Where can I throw from?
- 3). What can I throw at? (There must be special penalties for head shots)
- 4). What happens when I am hit by the ball?
- 5). What happens when my ball is caught?
- 6). Can I come back in after being knocked out?

Each one of these steps requires an elaborate system of directions. For instance, in describing the boundaries it is also necessary to discuss:

- 1). Where are the in-bounds?
- 2). Where are the out-of-bounds?
- 3). What happens when I step from the in-bounds to the out-of-bounds?
- 4). What happens when I step from the out-of-bounds to the in-bounds?
- 5). Can I throw the ball from out-of-bounds?
- 6). If so, what happens when I hit someone?
- 7). If so, what happens when I hit someone with a head shot?
- 8). If so, what happens when my ball is caught?

And on and on and on . . . Even though this process can get tedious, one part of the class I have enjoyed explaining to my students is our authoritative structure. Growing up in America, my children are adapted to a Democratic society where every voice is heard and where every vote counts. Our P.E. class, however, does not model the American culture.

My classroom is a benevolent<sup>1</sup> dictatorship. Their voices are only heard when their hands are raised and, even then,

not always in its entirety. Their votes only count when I tell them so. I have found that there is no other way to run the class. If I allowed them to help me teach, their class time would be spent arguing with or harming each other (in the past, I have had to stop a six year old from picking up a brick during recess). Due to these and other factors, my class is only taught directly with my authority.

My authority is not the only authority or the chief authority for the class, however. Our school has a principal and a vice principal, and above them is a board of directors. But my authority is the only authority that directly affects my students in the classroom.

The Bible is a direct authority in the life of a Christian just like I am a direct authority in my students' P. E. class. But whereas I answer to my principal and our board of directors, the Bible has no principal or board of directors to answer to: it is the ultimate authority.<sup>2</sup> Since God no longer reveals Himself<sup>3</sup> in direct ways to believers,<sup>4</sup> the place of the Bible in the life of every Christian is one of supreme authority. It is authoritative in its doctrine, in its prophecy, and in its description of events.<sup>5</sup>

In order to obtain a proper understanding of the purpose and function of the Bible, it is important to understand the place and role of the Bible. Christians should not make the Bible an authority in their lives if it was never intended to be one. Conversely, if the Bible was written to be an authority, it should either be treated as such or done away with if it is proven to be in error.<sup>6</sup>

## I. The Place of the Bible in the Bible

It may seem strange to look to the Bible to see what it says about the Bible. This is what philosophers call circular reasoning. Circular reasoning is a logical fallacy defined as “using my conclusion as a premise to prove the conclusion.”<sup>7</sup>

For instance, if I told you that the Bible was true, that would not be circular reasoning. But if I said the Bible was true because it claimed to be true, that would be.<sup>8</sup> To put it another way, circular reasoning looks like this:

Premise 1: The Bible is true

Premise 2: The Bible claims to be inspired by God and, therefore, is a reliable authority

Conclusion: The Bible must be true

Because of the dilemma of circular reasoning, Bible-believing Christians find themselves in a difficult situation: their ultimate authority and the object they are attempting to defend are one-and-the-same. How do we get out of this dilemma? Or, can we get out of it at all?

The answers are yes and yes. Circular logic is not new to Christianity. It has been around as long as there have been absolute and final authorities. On using the Bible to prove the truthfulness of the Bible, Wayne Grudem comments:

It should be admitted that this is a kind of circular argument. However, that does not make its use invalid, for all arguments for an ultimate authority must ultimately appeal to that authority for proof: otherwise the authority would not be an absolute or highest authority. This problem is not unique to the Christian who is arguing for the authority of the Bible. Everyone either explicitly or implicitly uses some kind of circular logic when defending his or her ultimate authority for belief.<sup>9</sup>

There must be some standard for every argument, otherwise the argument would go nowhere. The standard for every individual who serves the God of the Bible should be the Bible. So, with all that said, what does the Bible say about the Bible?

Several passages should be considered in finding the place of the Bible in the Bible:

1). 2 Timothy 3:16-17, “All Scripture is inspired by God

and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

The Greek word for “inspired” in this passage literally means “God-breathed.”<sup>10</sup> In other words, everything that is given the title “Scripture” is breathed out by God Himself.<sup>11</sup> The Bible is breathed out by God Himself and is given the authority of God Himself.

2). Psalm 19:7-9, “The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether.”

“Each of (these) 4 parallel lines contains a word (a synonym) for God’s Word; each describes what His Word is; and each pronounces what it effectually accomplishes.”<sup>12</sup>

Each phrase in Psalm 19:7-9 describe a particular aspect of the Bible.<sup>13</sup> The following is a list of the synonyms and their equivalent:

The law of the Lord – “His teaching,” “direction,” or instruction”

The testimony of the Lord – that which “bears witness” to its divine author

The precepts of the Lord – the “orders, charges” of God’s Word

The commandment of the Lord – “divine orders”

The fear of the Lord – “not technically a word for the Word, but it does reflect the reality that Scripture is the manual for worship of God”

The judgments of the Lord – His judicial decisions<sup>14</sup>

Not only are these phrases synonymous with certain aspects of the Bible, they also list several qualities of Scripture:

The law of the Lord – is perfect

The testimony of the Lord – is sure

The precepts of the Lord – are right

The commandment of the Lord – is pure

The fear of the Lord – is clean

The judgments of the Lord – are true

This Psalm is very helpful in understanding the place of the Bible in the Bible. Here, King David<sup>15</sup> states that the Bible is perfect.<sup>16</sup> It is flawless. The perfection of the Bible does not make it authoritative but the perfection of its laws does. David states that the Bible's laws are perfect and its commandments are pure: "The law of the Lord is perfect . . . the commandment of the Lord is pure . . ." If this is the case, then it is the ultimate authority, for it contains flawless laws and perfect commandments.

The Psalm goes on to give its audience a greater trust in the Word of God. "The testimony of the Lord is sure . . ." In other words, whatever the Bible says happened, happened. Creation,<sup>17</sup> the Flood,<sup>18</sup> the life of Jesus and His death and resurrection<sup>19</sup> are all historical events, faithfully recorded because "the testimony of the Lord is sure . . ."

Not only are its testimonies sure, "The precepts of the Lord are right . . ." A precept is "a rule of moral conduct."<sup>20</sup> The moral commands of the Bible are correct. The Ten Commandments, the law in the Old Testament, Jesus' new law in the New Testament,<sup>21</sup> are all laws regarding moral conduct<sup>22</sup> and they are all morally accurate and trustworthy. Knowing that the moral code taught in Scripture is pure gives great reliability to the authority of the Bible.

The Lord's testimonies are sure, His precepts are right, and "the judgments of the Lord are true . . ." There are numerous statements in the Bible that pronounce judgment. Many of these are by Jesus Himself. One such pronouncement from Jesus is found in Matthew 23, where He calls the Pharisees hypocrites (v. 14), blind guides (v. 16), fools (v. 17), blind men (v. 19), and compares them to whitewashed tombs (v. 27). While we like to beat up on the Pharisees in our sermons and Bible studies, none of

us would want to bear the brunt of such an attack. This harsh judgment sounds almost hateful. But according to Psalm 19:9, the judgment of the Lord is true. Even Jesus' harshest denunciations are perfect in their accuracy and reliable in their content.

The Bible has perfect laws, sure testimonies, right precepts, pure commandments, and true judgments. Psalm 19 shows the reliability (and authority) of the Bible by demonstrating the perfection of the Bible's content.

3). 2 Peter 1:3, "seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence."

In Peter's day such a statement would require little explanation because "the knowledge of Him who called us" could be easily obtained. If people wanted to know what Jesus said and taught, they could talk with eyewitnesses (such as Peter himself) of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Or they could talk with close associates of the eyewitnesses.<sup>23</sup>

Today, such a statement requires some explanation. The eyewitnesses of Jesus' life and teachings and their associates have been dead for over 2,000 years. Where do we go today to learn "everything pertaining to life and godliness?" We go to the writings of Jesus' Apostles and their close associates. In other words, we go to the Bible.

2 Peter 1:3 establishes the authority of the Bible in the Bible by showing that the Bible is a complete and sufficient authority for everything the believer faces. The only true knowledge of God left today is found in the pages of Scripture. God no longer reveals Himself specifically to His people through prophets,<sup>24</sup> He only specifically reveals Himself through the pages of Scripture. And what He reveals gives us enough information to face any situation ("pertaining to life") with a response that is pleasing to God ("and godliness").

The place of the Bible is one of ultimate authority. It is an authority because it was breathed out by God Himself (2 Tim 3:16), contains perfect content (Ps 19:7-9), and gives adequate information to face any circumstance that life may present (2 Pet 1:3).

## II. The Place of the Bible in the Home

If the Bible is the Word of God and sufficient to assist the believer in every area of life, it would be helpful to examine its place in several areas of life: specifically the home, the church, and society.

After what has already been said, it goes without saying that the place of the Bible in each of these places would be one of authority. But the Bible is not an authority in the home in the same way it is an authority in the church (although it is an authority in both). Likewise, the place of the Bible in society is not the same as the place of the Bible in the home. The Bible's role in all of these areas should be examined, for its role is unique in each one.

The place of the Bible in the home is one of consistent authority. To develop this further, the first time the Word of God is mentioned in relation to the home is right before the Israelites crossed the Red Sea and left Egypt. While they were still in the land of their slavery, God told them,

You shall tell your son on that day saying, "It is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt." And it shall serve as a sign to you on your hand, and as a reminder on your forehead, that the law of the Lord may be in your mouth; for with a powerful hand the Lord brought you out of Egypt.<sup>25</sup>

It is important to provide some background for this passage. In Genesis 17, the Lord made a covenant with Abraham that He would make a nation out of Abraham's offspring and give Abraham's descendants the land of Canaan (vv. 6-8). In response to this covenant, Abraham was to circumcise<sup>26</sup> himself and every male descendant in his family (vv. 9-14). In the book of Exodus, God fulfilled His promise to Abraham and formed the nation of Israel by giving them the Law of Moses.<sup>27</sup>

Exodus 13 describes how God reminded Abraham's descendants to keep this covenant (v.1-2). In reminding them to keep the covenant, God referred them to the law of Moses. What was the relationship between this law and circumcision? Circumcision was to remind the Israelites of the law. "And it shall serve as sign . . . that the law of the Lord may be in your mouth."<sup>28</sup> The Israelites were not to be circumcised to fulfill a ritualistic religious ordinance, they were circumcised to remind them of the

law they were to keep. Circumcision was a means to an end: the end was the keeping of the law.

Again, the place of the Bible in the home of the believer<sup>29</sup> is one of consistent authority. God told the Israelites that the purpose of their circumcision was that 'the law of the Lord may be in their mouth.' What does this mean?

Let me illustrate: when I first posted this website, I told everyone. I sent out e-mails, made phone calls, even wrote newsletters to my family, friends, and people in my ministry. I was excited. A lot of hours were spent (by myself and several other men) writing, editing, and designing this site and I wanted everyone to know. It was always on my mouth.

That is how the law of Moses was to be for the Israelites. It was to be in their mouth so that it would come out of their mouth. It was to be a consistent authority for them.<sup>30</sup> If they wanted to lie, they were to think of commandment nine.<sup>31</sup> Before they wanted to worship other gods, they were first to think of the consequences.<sup>32</sup> Whenever they had to make a decision, the law of the Lord was to come out of their mouth to make the decision for them.

The Bible is to be the same for Christians today. In Ephesians 6:4, Paul commands fathers "do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." Just as Jewish parents were to teach their children the law of Moses, Christian parents are to bring their children up in the "instruction of the Lord." And the only place this instruction is found is in the Bible.<sup>33</sup>

In the home, the Bible is to be a constant authority. Any parent will tell you that the only way to raise a child is consistency. I teach children three days a week and I will tell you that if you give them an inch, they will take a mile. You have to be firm and you have to be relentless in order to get your point across.

In order for fathers to "bring their children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord," they would have to do it consistently and with the authority of the Bible. The opportunities to do so are endless: "Sarah, why don't you share your toys with Suzie?" "Johnnie, why didn't you clean up your room like I told you to?" "Brian, why did

you say that bad word?” The Bible is to be taught in every aspect of the home, for it is adequate to do so<sup>34</sup> and it was written to do so. Any problem that parenting presents has an answer in the Bible and, consequently, it is to be a consistent authority in the home.

### III. THE PLACE OF THE BIBLE IN THE CHURCH

‘What does the Bible mean to you?’ That question begins hundreds of Bible studies across the country every week. It can bring with it two flawed assumptions: the Bible can be interpreted many different ways, and the Bible is not very clear as to its meaning.<sup>35</sup>

After all, who can make any sense of passages such as Genesis 5:27, which says that Methusaleh lived 960 years and then died?<sup>36</sup> No one lives that long! Many people cannot make a logical meaning out of such passages, so they just make up their own meaning. This is what I call the “me” hermeneutic.<sup>37</sup> In this method of interpretation, I take the Bible to mean whatever I want and make it say whatever I want it to.<sup>38</sup>

This type of Bible reading has pervaded today’s churches to the point that it is now commonplace. If you tell the average church attendee that he will die as a result of his sins because Romans 6:23 says so,<sup>39</sup> he may respond that that is your interpretation and he interprets Romans 6:23 differently.

But what does the Bible say about its clarity? Does the Bible claim that it has many different meanings or just one? How does the Bible interpret itself? Let us find out by looking at the example of Jesus.

The Jews in Jesus’ day were given an education very different from the one we are given today. They had one book to learn: the Old Testament. It contained their law, history, poetry, and prophecy. With such a diverse array of literature, misunderstanding would be common. But Jesus never let His disciples or His opponents use this as an excuse for confusion. When they misunderstood the Old Testament, Jesus claimed that it was their fault, not the fault of the Old Testament. Jesus also believed that the meaning of the Scriptures was clear. Consider the following passages:

“Jesus said to them, ‘*Did you never read in the Scriptures,*

*‘The stone which the builders rejected, this became the chief cornerstone; this came about from the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes’*” (Matt 21:42)?

“But Jesus answered them, ‘You are mistaken, *not understanding the Scriptures* nor the power of God” (Matt 22:29).

“But all this has taken place *to fulfill the Scriptures* or the prophets.’ Then all the disciples left Him and fled” (Matt 26:56).

“Every day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me; but this has taken place *to fulfill the Scriptures*” (Mk 14:49).

“Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself *in all the Scriptures*” (Lk 24:27).

“*You search the Scriptures* because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me” (Jn 5:39).<sup>40</sup>

Through example, Jesus taught that the Old Testament was clear and had only one objective meaning. If He believed otherwise, how could He say things like, “this has taken place to fulfill the Scriptures,” or “He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures?” If there were many different meaning to those passages, how could Jesus know what fulfilled the Scriptures and what did not? How could He explain those things concerning Himself in the Old Testament if they were not clear?

The place of the Old Testament in Jesus’ day was one of clear authority. The place of the Bible in the church today is no different.

In discussing the importance of looking forward to the coming day of the Lord<sup>41</sup> and of guarding against error,<sup>42</sup> Peter tells his readers:

Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and

unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.<sup>43</sup>

While Peter acknowledges that Paul's writings (which were already considered part of Scripture)<sup>44</sup> were hard to understand,<sup>45</sup> he also acknowledged that they could be understood. If they could not be understood, how could the "untaught" and "unstable" be blamed for "distorting" them?<sup>46</sup>

Peter, in writing to a New Testament church audience,<sup>47</sup> taught that the Scriptures were understandable and that they only had one meaning. The place of the Bible in the church today is no different. Passages in the Bible have one meaning, not many. Romans 6:23, which says, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" means exactly what it says: the wages of sin is death and the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ. It has one meaning and, because it has one meaning, it is clear. So it is with all of the Bible.

God wrote a book to instruct His people in how they should live, and the book He wrote is clear. The place of the Bible in the church is one of clear authority.

#### IV. THE PLACE OF THE BIBLE IN SOCIETY

The place of the Bible in society is that of a confirming authority. It confirms life to those who believe in Jesus' death and resurrection and it confirms death to those who do not.

In 2 Corinthians 2, Paul briefly describes how "a door was opened for me in Troas" and some success in his ministry there (v. 12). However, he did not find a peace of mind about his work there because Titus was not there, so he left Troas and went to Macedonia (v. 13). Despite this discouragement, Paul states his encouragement in verses 15 – 16:

For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma from death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things?

Regardless of whatever change of plans he had to endure in his missionary endeavors, Paul was thankful to God that, wherever he went, a "sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place" (v. 14) was being manifest through

him. What does this mean? What is this aroma of death and life?

I was a philosophy major in college. My classmates and I studied the rules of logic and tried to apply them in every discussion of any philosophic importance. I had an agnostic classmate who was pursuing a philosophy degree in college with the intention of obtaining another philosophy degree in graduate school. He and I did not talk of God very much, but when we did, his statements shocked me.

One of our conversations went like this:

Friend: "Doesn't the Bible say to do good to please God?"

Me: "Yes. That sounds like something the Bible would say."

Friend: "Shouldn't we do good just to do good?"

Me: "Well, if we do good just 'to do good' we have no definition of good. If we do good to please God, we have a definition of 'good.' 'Good' is that which pleases God. Is murdering someone good? No. That does not please God. Is giving money to the poor good? Yes. That does please God."

"Without this, one could argue that murdering someone was good and giving money to the poor was not. There must be a definition of good in order for it to mean anything. The Bible provides one in saying that we are to do the good that pleases God."

Friend: "But shouldn't we do good just to do good?"

My friend was very intelligent. He had taken extra classes in math to follow the teachings of Alfred North Whitehead<sup>48</sup> and he even attempted to read such massive works as Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time*<sup>49</sup> for personal growth. But when it came to discussing the person of God, he made some very illogical statements.

Consider the argument above. His premise and rebuttal were exactly the same. He did not even change the wording! This is the same logical fallacy called circular reasoning<sup>50</sup> but, this form of circular reasoning did not have the authority of the Bible to rely upon. My friend

knew that. He had spent countless hours studying good and bad arguments for the existence of God but when it came to applying them, his emotions got the best of him. Needless to say, this was not a discussion we had very often because it quickly grew too passionate.

My friend's failure to concoct a rational argument against the existence of God was not a result of his lack of training, but a result of his failure to repent of his sins. God has made Himself plain to my former classmate<sup>51</sup> but he refuses to acknowledge that, and, as a result, he lives in irrationality.

This is the aroma Paul mentioned in 2 Corinthians 2:15-16. Why was Paul a "fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life?" Because he was teaching the Word of God. He was teaching the truth and that truth was an aroma of life to those who believed the truth and an aroma of death to those who did not.

The Bible is a book that offends and saves; it rebukes and it encourages. Statements from our Lord such as, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the

Father but through Me"<sup>52</sup> and "unless you repent, you will all likewise perish"<sup>53</sup> are absolute, intolerant, and offensive.<sup>54</sup> But they are true. Jesus is the only way to God the Father and, unless we repent<sup>55</sup> of our sins and bow to His Lordship, we will perish.

It is this truth which makes the Bible a confirming authority in our world. The application of its teachings confirms those who are alive in Christ, and the rejection of its teachings confirms those who do not know Jesus at all.<sup>56</sup> Matthew 7:17-20 says,

So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, you will know them be their fruit.

The identity of a Christian can be found in the fruit of his life. If he believes in Jesus Christ as His Lord and Savior, he will act like it. If he does not, he will act like he does not. This is the "fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing." The Bible is a confirming authority in our society of those who are being saved and of those who are perishing.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>"Benevolent" meaning (relatively) good-natured. I pray for patience a lot.

<sup>2</sup>It could be argued that God is the ultimate authority over the Bible. While that is true, the Bible would not be God's Word if it contradicted Him in its commands or doctrine. Since it does not, it is the ultimate authority in the life of the believer.

<sup>3</sup>For a study of the way God reveals Himself, see Stephen Lee Cavness' article: "God, Revelation, and Dr. Phil."

<sup>4</sup>1 Corinthians 13:8-10 makes it clear that miraculous gifts (such as God miraculously and specifically revealing Himself to His people) will cease. Verse 8 says, "Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away." While the Bible does not make it clear exactly when this cessation will take place, a study of church history does.

From the death of the Apostles to the middle of the second century, there were no recorded miracles among the church. In 160 A.D., the gift of tongues was practiced by a traveling prophet named Montanus and two women who declared that after them was the end of the world. During the Middle Ages, there were a few descriptions of speaking in tongues, but these were invariably mentioned alongside other, extremely bizarre miraculous claims.

In the late 1700's, the "Shakers" said they practiced the gift of tongues, but they also claimed that their leader was the second incarnation of Christ. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, this gift was practiced by certain groups, but these were little different than Montanus or the Shakers. In the past 30 years, however, some churches with good doctrinal teaching in other areas have ostensibly begun to practice this gift. See Thomas R. Edgar's *Miraculous Gifts* (Neptune, N.J.: Loizeaux Brotehrs, 1983) 226-229, 235-236, 246-247.

Since the revelatory gifts have ceased, the only way God reveals Himself specifically to His followers today is through the Bible.

<sup>5</sup> The Bible is written in three main forms: doctrine, prophecy, and narration. In each of these forms, the Bible is equally authoritative. In other words, its teachings on doctrinal matters such as who God chooses in salvation (Rom 9) are equal to its prophetic declarations about the coming Messiah (Is 53) and its historical descriptions of creation (Gen 1).

<sup>6</sup> In order for a book to discuss the person and nature of God, that book would have to be written by God Himself. If the Bible were written by a God incapable of error, it would contain no errors. The Bible, therefore, must be inerrant – without error – by its very nature. It cannot talk about God without being written by God and it cannot contain error if it was written by God. Despite the best efforts of skeptics and liberal Christians, the inerrancy of the Bible has never been credibly threatened, much less disproven, given a correct understanding of its history and grammar. For a good source on the doctrine and evidence of Biblical inerrancy, see *Inerrancy*, ed. by Normal L. Geisler (Grand Rapids: The Zondervan Corporation, 1980).

<sup>7</sup> Louis P. Pojman, *Philosophy: The Quest for Truth* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002) 38.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994) 78-79.

<sup>10</sup> A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol. IV (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Publishers, 1931) 627. The Greek word for “God-breathed” is *theopneustos*.

<sup>11</sup> For a source on the books that were officially given the title of “Scripture” by the early church, see our next issue: “The Canon.”

<sup>12</sup> John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible* (Nashville, Tenn.: Word Publishing, 1997) 759.

<sup>13</sup> The “God’s Word” that David would have been referring to would be the law and commandments of the Old Testament (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and some of the Psalms). Although this Psalm was written before much of the Old Testament, and before the entire New Testament, it still applies to the New Testament because the Bible was written to be taken as a whole. The New Testament was given the same rank and authority as the Old Testament by the early church (see our next issue: “The Canon”).

<sup>14</sup> All of these definitions are taken from *The MacArthur Study Bible*, 759.

<sup>15</sup> *New American Standard Bible* (Anaheim, Cal.: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1997) 399. At the top of Psalm 19 a brief title: “A Psalm of David.”

<sup>16</sup> Psalm 19:7.

<sup>17</sup> Gen 1.

<sup>18</sup> Gen 7-8.

<sup>19</sup> The life of Jesus, including His death and resurrection, is found in The Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

<sup>20</sup> *Webster’s New World Dictionary* (Cleveland, Ohio: Wiley Publishing, 2002) 506.

<sup>21</sup> Jesus did not come to abolish the Old Testament law but to fulfill it (Matt 5:17-19). However, in fulfilling the Old Testament law, He began a new law (Matt 5-7).

<sup>22</sup> For example, Commandments 7 (Deut 5:18), 9 (Deut 5:20), and 10 (Deut 5:21)

of the Ten Commandments have nothing to do with legal issues; they are strictly moral: do not commit adultery, do not lie, do not covet. Under most governmental organizations, an individual could not be prosecuted for committing adultery, lying, or coveting.

<sup>23</sup> *The NIV Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995). This is what Mark and Luke did. Although they wrote two Gospels of Jesus’ life, neither of these men were close associates of Jesus when He was on this earth but Mark was a close associate of Peter (1488) and Luke was a close associate of Paul (1529).

<sup>24</sup> See footnote 4.

<sup>25</sup> Ex 13:8-9.

<sup>26</sup> *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, ed. by Ronald F. Youngblood (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995). Circumcision is "the surgical removal of the foreskin of the male sex organ," (278).

<sup>27</sup> The "law of Moses" is referred to as 'the Torah' in Hebrew and 'the Pentateuch' in Greek. It is the first five books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Genesis contained the history of the world and the history of the forefathers of Israel. The rest of the books contained the law that the nation of Israel was to live by. The actual 'laws' of Moses were recorded in these latter books.

<sup>28</sup> Ex 13:9.

<sup>29</sup> The place of the Bible in the home of the unbeliever is discussed in section IV: The Place of the Bible in Society. It is to serve as "a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma from death, to the other an aroma from life to life," (2 Cor 2:15-16).

<sup>30</sup> For another example of this, see Deuteronomy 6:4-7.

<sup>31</sup> Ex 20:16.

<sup>32</sup> Exodus 22:20 says, "He who sacrifices to any god, other than to the Lord alone, shall be utterly destroyed."

<sup>33</sup> See footnote 4.

<sup>34</sup> 2 Timothy 3:16 (quoted above) says, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness." The Bible is useful for every part of training in righteousness, including parenting.

<sup>35</sup> One passage can have many different *applications* but, if it has many different *meanings*, then it means nothing. If I say, "John went to the store" and I really mean "John was a beautiful man," then my previous statement does not make any sense. If all 66 books of the Bible were written in such fashion, who could make any meaning of any of them?

<sup>36</sup> For an explanation of Genesis 5, see my article in this issue: "Genesis 5: The Importance of Difficult Passages."

<sup>37</sup> Alan Cairns, *Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Greenville, S.C.: Ambassador Emerald International, 2002). Hermeneutics is the "science of Bible interpretation," (207).

<sup>38</sup> For an example of this, see "Appendix 3: Why Use So Many Translations" in Rick Warren's *The Purpose Driven Life* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002). In this appendix, Warren comments, "since the verse divisions and numbers were not included in the Bible until 1560 A.D., I haven't always quoted the *entire* verse, but rather focused on the phrase that was appropriate. My model for this is Jesus and how he and the apostles quoted the Old Testament. They often just quoted a phrase to make a point," (325).

The problem with such a statement is the motive behind it: to justify misinterpreting Scripture. No one would argue that an author would have to quote from an entire Bible verse every time that verse is used but that same author should not use verses out of context (as Warren does in his use of Matthew 18:20, p. 139; Jude 16, p. 165; Jer 29:11, p. 31; and Matt 16:25, p. 19). For a good treatment of how these verses are taken out of context, see Nathan Busenitz's article in *Fool's Gold?*, ed. by John MacArthur (Crossway Books: Wheaton, Ill.: 2005) 49-50.

Along the same lines, pastors today do not have the same authority as Jesus and the Apostles. Supposing for the sake of argument that our Lord and His Apostles quoted Scripture out of context, that would not give us the right to do the same. Our Lord was and is the incarnate Word of God (Jn 1:1-8) and His Apostles wrote the very words of Scripture. To put ourselves on that same level of authority is unwarranted.

<sup>39</sup> Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

<sup>40</sup> All these italics are mine.

<sup>41</sup> 2 Pet 3:10-13.

<sup>42</sup> v. 17.

<sup>43</sup> vv. 14-16.

<sup>44</sup> Peter looks at Paul's writings as being put alongside "the rest of the Scriptures," (v. 17).

<sup>45</sup> v. 16.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> 2 Peter was written, "To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of God and of Jesus our Lord," (2 Pet 1:1).

<sup>48</sup> Alfred North Whitehead was a British Mathematician who later became a philosopher. He wrote numerous works including *Science and the Modern World* and *Principia Mathematica*, co-authored by Bertrand Russell. Information found at [www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfred\\_North\\_Whitehead#Works\\_by\\_Whitehead.com](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfred_North_Whitehead#Works_by_Whitehead.com), downloaded at 4/20/06.

<sup>49</sup> *Being and Time*, trans. by Joan Stambaugh (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1996). Heidegger's work is a difficult read for any undergraduate or graduate student. Consider the following quote from page 13, "In designating the task involved in 'formulating' the question of being, we showed that not only must we pinpoint the particular being that is to function as the primary being to be interrogated but also that an explicit appropriation and securing of correct access to this being is required. We discussed which being it is that takes over the major role within the question of being. But how should this being, Da-sein, become accessible and, so to speak, be envisaged in a perceptive interpretation?"

<sup>50</sup> For a discussion of circular reasoning, see section 1: The Place of the Bible in the Bible.

<sup>51</sup> Rom 1:20. To put this another way, Cornelius Van Till once wrote that "No man can help knowing God for in knowing himself he knows God . . . If man's self-consciousness did not depend upon his God-consciousness there would be no meaning to Romans 1:20. Each man would live in a world by himself." *The Defense of the Faith* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1955) 198.

<sup>52</sup> Jn 14:6.

<sup>53</sup> Lk 13:3.

<sup>54</sup> That does not make them wrong, just "culturally inappropriate."

<sup>55</sup> Repentance is "the sense and sight, not only of danger, but also of the filthiness and odiousness of his sins, and upon the apprehension of God's mercy in Christ to such as are penitent, he so grieves for and hates his sins, as that he turns from the all to God, purposing and endeavoring constantly to walk with Him in all the ways of new obedience," (Cairns, 379).

<sup>56</sup> It is not possible to love Jesus without wanting to know more about Him. While some believers may be neglecting our Lord's teachings due to ignorance, they will seek the truth with all their might. In John 14:23 Jesus says, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with Him." The only way to love Jesus is to keep His Word. And the only way to keep His Word is to know it. Any true Christian would seek to do so with all his heart (Matt 6:21).