

The Wonder of the Word

by Dr. John Zoller

Chapter 1 -

THE WONDER OF ITS FORMATION

In 2 Peter 1:20-21 we have these words which tell us that the Bible is GOD given.

"No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation, 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."

The Bible is the most wonderful book in all the world. As one has said:

"It reveals the mind of GOD, the state of man, the plan of salvation, the doom of sinners and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, its decisions are final."

Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter. It tells us of Heaven and reveals to us the gates of Hell.

CHRIST is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of GOD its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide our feet. Read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory and a river of pleasure. It is given you in life, will be opened at the judgment, and will be remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labor, and condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents.

Owned, it is riches; studied, it is wisdom; trusted, it is salvation; lived, it is character; and obeyed, it is power.

It is the Word of our GOD which shall stand forever".

Here are a few facts that may interest you - there are 773,692 words in the Bible, and a total of 3,566,480 letters. There are 39 books in the Old Testament, 929 chapters and 23,214 verses. The New Testament has 27 books, 260 chapters and 7,959 verses.

The shortest book in the Old Testament is Obadiah. The shortest chapters in the Old Testament are Psalm 117 (2 verses) and Esther 10 (3 verses). The shortest verse in the Old Testament is I Chronicles 1:25; the shortest verse in the New Testament is John 11:35, "**Jesus wept.**"

The longest chapter in the Old Testament is Psalm 119; in the New Testament the longest chapter is the first chapter of Luke. Psalm 117 is the central chapter of the Bible, the heart of the Word of GOD.

It takes 70 hours and 40 minutes to read the Bible as any ordinary person would read a newspaper. It will take 52 hours and 20 minutes to read the Old Testament, 18 hours and 20 minutes is needed to read the New Testament. In the Old Testament it takes 4 hours and 28 minutes to read the Psalms, in the New Testament the Gospel of Luke requires the longest time, 2 hours and 43 minutes.

The Bible is published in over 1200 languages to-day and in over 1000 more dialects and the work is still going on. The Bible was the first book to be printed, this took place in Mentz, Germany in 1450 by Gutenberg. The first copy of the English Bible appeared in 1535 and fifty years later the Bible was spreading all over England. Large crowds gathered in St. Paul's to hear it read. In 1611 the Authorized Version of the Bible (also known as the King James Version) was given to the world. In all the writings in the English language there are none that excel it in beauty and arrangement. Its power as literature can never be estimated, because of the depth of life which it sounds and the range of life which it covers.

THE WONDER OF ITS NAME

The word "Bible" comes to us from the Greek word "biblia" which means "the books". The Bible is composed, as I have already told you, of 66 books. And yet it is in the truest sense but ONE BOOK. The Bible speaks of itself as just one book. In Psalm 40:7 we read, "**In the volume of the book it is written.**"

The word "SCRIPTURES" is also given to the Bible. The word "Scriptures" comes from the Latin, and means "the writings". In Daniel 10:21 we read of "**The Scripture of truth**". The Bible is also called "the Scripture" in John 10:35 where we read, "**The Scripture cannot be broken**". Note also II Peter 3:16, "**the Scriptures.**" The phrase "**The Holy Scriptures**" is only used only once. In II Timothy 3:15 Paul writes to Timothy - "**From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures**".

In Hebrews 4:12 the Bible is called "**The Word of GOD.**" There are other names I could give you, but let me mention just one more reference in which the Bible definitely states that GOD was the writer - "**The statutes, and the ordinances, and the law and the commandment, WHICH HE WROTE FOR YOU, ye shall observe to do forevermore; and ye shall not fear other gods**" II Kings 17:37.

HOW THE BIBLE WAS FORMED

Have you wondered how we received this wonderful book that I have been telling you about? Let me trace the wonder of its formation before you so that you, too, dear reader, might see the Hand of GOD in and through it all: for remember, GOD IS THE AUTHOR OF OUR BIBLE. The men He used were just the channels He used to write down the message that was given to them.

Do you know that the prophets who wrote the Bible under the leadership and guidance of the HOLY SPIRIT, often searched to find the meaning of the messages that were given to them?

Listen to this, -

"Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:

Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (I Peter 1:10-11).

Does this make clear to you the fact that there was but one Master mind that formed the Bible? Remember this, the Bible was written by some forty persons, men in all walks of life - some of it was written by kings, some by shepherds, by prophets, by fisherman. One writer was a tax collector, another a physician, another a plowman and yet another a miner. These men wrote during a period beginning about 1500 years before CHRIST or even longer, until 100 years after CHRIST when the Apostle John completed the Book of the Revelation while on the isle of Patmos. Their places of residence were hundred of miles apart as well. The prophet Daniel wrote from Babylon, which was the capital of the Chaldean monarchy; while the Apostle Paul wrote from a prison in Rome, nearly 1600 miles away.

Then, too, think of the content of their writings! The Bible is more than a history. It contains prophecy, law, biography, poetry, drama, psalms and proverbs, as well as warnings and exhortations. What a book this is!

As you study its pages you will note the strong individuality of the writers. There is a very marked difference between the writings of Moses and the writings of the Prophet Isaiah; or even between the writings of the Isaiah and Daniel. Yet through it all we realize that each writer was giving GOD's message in his own way and manner.

With at least forty authors, writing in three different languages - Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek - written in countries hundreds of miles apart, and by men in every station in life from king to fishermen, over a period of 1500 years, under such varying circumstances; naturally we would expect the greatest possible variance and discord in their writings, and yet, as we study what they have written we find a most wonderful and marvelous unity. As the late Dr. Torrey stated it, - *"Every part of the Bible fits every other part of the Bible - one ever increasing ever growing thought pervades the whole."*

THE ERRORS AND THE CONTRADICTIONS

I know what some will say, perhaps some who read these words, - what about the errors and contradictions in the Bible - does this reveal a unity of the whole?"

I will admit to you that sometimes, on the surface, it does look as though the Bible contained errors and contradictions. But you will find, IN EVERY INSTANCE, without a single exception, that when we study the Bible, comparing Scripture with Scripture, as we are told to do, every difficulty disappears, there is no error or contradiction whatever the marvelous unity of the whole is clearly apparent. And the more you study the Word the more this wonderful unity is revealed.

Every writer of the Bible had a purpose in view. Let me illustrate, - It is stated in the Book of Genesis which is the Book of beginnings, that "The seed of the woman will bruise the serpent's head" (Genesis 3:15). Here we have the first promise given to us of one who would redeem us from sin. And as we continue we are told more of the CHRIST (the seed of the woman) who is to come. Prophet, priest and king give us details concerning His coming. Then we are told that He is born, He lives and carries on His three-fold ministry of healing, preaching and teaching, He is crucified, dead and buried. He breaks the bands of death rising from the dead, He ascends into Heaven; and then we are told of His Second Coming, the rise of the Anti-Christ of a period of trouble the greatest the world has ever known as "The Great Tribulation", the Battle of Armageddon and the consummation of the period known in Scripture as "**The Times of the Gentiles**"

It is a marvelous, swift moving unity that is alive! What answer can any thinking man give to this? There is only one answer - back of the forty writers (writing throughout the centuries) guiding and directing them, empowering them, speaking in them and through them, WAS THE MIGHTY AND ETERNAL GOD. This is the only answer. It is the final answer. THIS EXPLAINS THE WONDER OF THE BIBLE'S FORMATION!

"Suppose it were proposed to build in our Capital City of Washington a temple that should represent the stone products of every State in the Union - some from the marble quarries of Marlboro, New Hampshire, others from the granite quarries of Quincy, Massachusetts; some from the brownstone quarries of Middleton, Connecticut; some from the gray sandstone quarries at Berea, Ohio; some from the porphyry quarries below Knoxville, Tennessee; and some from the redstone quarries near Hancock, Michigan; some from brownstone quarries at Kasota, Minnesota; some from the gypsum quarries of the far west- some from stones from every state in the Union.

I want you, dear reader, to be convinced in your mind that GOD is the author of our Bible, that the men who wrote the message GOD gave to them were but the secretaries. I want, here and now as you are reading, to give you the illustration Dr. Torrey gave us to set before you this truth for I do not know of a better one. He says, -

"The stones were to be of all sizes and shapes - some large, some small, some medium, some cubical, some spherical, some conical, and some rectangular. Each stone was to be hewn into its final shape at the quarry from which it was taken. Not a stone was to be touched by mallet or chisel after it reached its destination.

Finally the stones are at Washington and the builders go to work. As they build they find that every stone fits into every other stone, and into its place. It is found that there is not one stone too many, or one stone too few, until at last the builder's work is done, and there rises before you a temple with its sidewalls, its buttresses, its naves, its arches, its transepts and its choirs, its roof, its pinnacles and its dome, perfect in every outline and in every detail; not one stone too many, and not one stone too few, not one stone left over and no niche or corner where one stone is lacking, and yet every stone hewn into its final shape in the quarry from which it was taken, HOW WOULD YOU ACCOUNT FOR IT?

There is one very simple way to account for it, AND ONLY ONE WAY TO ACCOUNT FOR IT

AT ALL, namely, that back of the individual quarryman was the master architect, who planned the whole building from the beginning, and gave to each individual quarryman his work and specifications.

Now this is precisely what we find in that Temple of Eternal truth which we call the Bible; the stones for which are quarried in places remote from each other by hundreds of miles, and at periods of time 1500 years apart; stones of all conceivable sizes and shapes, and yet every stone fitting into its place, and fitting every other stone, until when the Book is finished there rises before you this matchless Temple of GOD's Truth, perfect in every outline and in every detail, not one stone too many and not one stone too few, and yet every stone cut to its final shape in the quarry from which it was taken. HOW ARE YOU TO ACCOUNT FOR IT?

There is but one rational way to account for it, that back of the human hands that wrought was THE MASTER MIND OF GOD that thought and gave to each individual workman His specifications for the work. You cannot get around it and be honest and fair.

This is how our Bible was formed. Marvelous is the wonder of its formation.

THE BIBLE WAS FORMED GRADUALLY

Remember, dear reader, we did not receive our Bible complete from the beginning as we have it to-day. It was centuries in the making, the Scriptures were formed gradually, as the plan and program of GOD was unfolded.

GOD spoke through men. The Bible came to us through the Jewish peoples. There just had to be a Divine channel, and Our Heavenly Father, in His loving purpose for the world's blessing, selected this people through which the HOLY SPIRIT should work - not only for their sakes but for the sake of the whole world. You cannot read the Old and New Testaments without realizing that from the very beginning the people had an all pervading sense of GOD's Presence and rule.

Prophets and priests, apostles and teachers all had a part in revealing the plan and purpose of GOD. Some were ordinary men; others had a deep realization of GOD's Presence and Power. They saw the sin of the people, they sounded out GOD's call to repentance, promising His pardon and forgiveness. Each wrote under the guidance of the HOLY SPIRIT. Moses gave us the law; the prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah and others, told us of things to come. They revealed to us the mind of GOD, they thundered out His punishment for sin. David sung songs of praise, Solomon gave us proverbs of Divine wisdom. Daniel told us of the beginning of Gentile World power, of its progress throughout the centuries and its ultimate end. Each gave us what the HOLY SPIRIT directed them to write. These writings became the Old Testament. The New Testament was formed the same way. BUT IT WAS GOD HIMSELF WHO GAVE US THE BOOK. HIS LOVE AND LIGHT SHINE THROUGH EVERY PAGE.

"A glory gilds the sacred page,
Majestic like the sun;
It gives a light to every age,
It gives, but borrows none.

The Hand that gave it still supplies
The gracious light and heat,
His truths upon the nations rise,
They rise, but never set.

Let everlasting thanks be Thine
For such a bright display.
As makes a world of darkness shine
With beams of heavenly day.

My soul rejoices to pursue
The steps of Him I love,
'Til glory breaks upon my view
In brighter worlds above."

- William Cowper

Dear reader, spend more time reading your Bible. It has life, it has power. The sun never sets on its glowing page. It goes equally to the cottage of the plain man and the palace of the king. It is woven into the literature of the scholar, it colors the conversation of the streets. The Bible ministers to men when the fever of sickness is upon them; the aching head finds a softer pillow when the Bible is beneath. It blesses us when we are born; rejoices with us; sympathizes with us in our sorrow; it tempers our grief. It lifts us above ourselves, it reveals CHRIST and the glorious plan of salvation, and it shows us our final home.

Begin the day by reading the Bible with the family. Many of you remember how your fathers and mothers read it when you were but a child. Its truth became a part of your very life.

"The Bible is the best book
The book we hold so dear,
A story book, a picture book,
A book of songs to cheer.

The Bible tells of JESUS,
Now in His home above,
The Bible brings the message sweet
Of GOD's most wondrous love.

- J. W. Wood

WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH YOUR BIBLE? Do you realize that it is a book of life? I am sure that you have a Bible, but what good is it if **YOU NEVER READ IT?** Perhaps, dear reader, you are one of those who know folk who scornfully ignore GOD's Holy Word, or have heard others heap ridicule upon it. This has taken place so often and so long that you have come to

believe that what these enemies of GOD's Word are saying is true.

HOW TO KNOW THE TRUTH

Face the facts. Consider the wonder of the Bible's formation. GOD wrote it using men. GOD has protected it from all the onslaughts of all its enemies. Every device known to man has been used to destroy it. In every age its enemies have been vanquished. GOD's Holy Word still stands, transforming life and character, bringing its message of life and love to all who read its pages.

There are more Bibles being printed and read in this space age than at any time in all the history of the world. It is in as great demand to-day as ever. Why? Because it meets man's greatest need, the need of the soul.

Examine any book written by man, your reaction will be normal and ordinary. But examine GOD's Holy Word and you will find that something has happened, the Bible has examined you, you will see yourself as GOD sees you. If you want to know the truth, if you are willing to be honest with yourself and with GOD, the Bible will reveal it to you. You will see sin as it is - terrible, plighting in its power, soul destructive in its result, punished at its end.

YOU WILL SEE THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AS SAVIOUR, AS GOD IN THE FLESH, THE ONE WHO DIED UPON THE CROSS THAT YOU MIGHT LIVE. You will be convinced in your heart that He rose from the dead, that He ascended into Heaven and that He will soon return to take His own out of this world, so wicked and wrecked by sin. You will discover the secret of live itself from the Bible, for it tells of the personality and work of the HOLY SPIRIT and of His coming into this world to live in our bodies to meet our every need be it material, physical or spiritual. (Romans 8:11; I Corinthians 3:16)

Do you want to know the truth? Then know this - this HOLY SPIRIT IS HERE NOW! He is there this very moment as you are reading, He is closer to you than the heart that is beating in your bosom. He wants to release GOD's Mighty power to make real the wonderful promises of salvation and blessing the Bible tells you about.

I mean this - I say it once again - The Blessed HOLY SPIRIT, of Whom the Bible tells IS HERE NOW, right now, there where you are. I want you to KNOW HIM. He does not have a body as our LORD JESUS did, He does not have a body that He might live in your body. When you open the door of your heart, and you do this by an act of your will, then He will enter your body and you will enjoy the wonderful blessing He brings. Then your Bible will cease to be just a book to you, it will become the very WORD OF GOD - food for your soul, a light to brighten your pathway, a guide to direct your footsteps, a source of supply for your every need.

Are you asking me to tell you just what you should do that this experience may become real to you? If so, I will tell you. Begin reading the Gospel of John. Read it with an open mind, a willing heart. Throw aside all preconceived ideas, they are no help to you, only a hindrance. Give the HOLY SPIRIT a chance to speak to you through GOD's Word.

Read how the "**Word became flesh and dwelt among us**" (John 1:14). Read the wonderful story of the New Birth in John's Gospel, Chapter 3. As you prayerfully read the mighty truth of

the Gospel will break like a flood upon your soul. You will see yourself as you are in GOD's sight. **YOU WILL SEE OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST AS A SAVIOUR.**

When you open the door of your heart the HOLY SPIRIT will enter. He will make real the promise of GOD's which says,

"Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

You can be certain of this, if He will not cast you out, He will most certainly take you in. He will cleanse you from all your sin, for the promise given is, - **"The Blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin"** (I John 1:7). When the blood has been applied to your wicked sinful soul, then every sin you have committed in all your life is covered by the Blood, then your heart Is cleansed, then you are made a new creation (II Corinthians 5:17) then the HOLY SPIRIT unites with your spirit, this is how you are born again.

Do you see what happens when this miracle takes place? The Bible becomes a personal message TO YOU. It calls you by name. Its winsome loveliness becomes so real to you that you wonder how you could have treated it as you did. It is like a mother's love caroled out of the very heart of GOD. The message of love is understood in any language. **THE BIBLE IS GOD'S MESSAGE OF LOVE TO YOU!**

When the cry of death is heard in the dark, when there is no star to lighten the way, only a muttering thunder as an accompaniment to the rustle of the wings of the angel of death, then this Blessed Word of GOD sends out its light.

O the Wonders of the Word!
"Blessed Book, Precious Book,
On Thy dear old tear-stained leaves I love to look:
Thou art sweeter day by day, as I walk the narrow way.
That leads at last to that bright Home above"

~ end of chapter 1 ~
