

# Fallen Angels

## *Architects of This Present Darkness*

### V. HOW EVIL FORCES HAVE QUESTIONED THE WORD OF GOD

#### PART II – THE CANON, HIGHER CRITICISM, AND THE VOICE OF GOD

The Bible was written by about forty authors over the course of 1500 years

Old Testament canon wasn't completed until after the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, but parts had been recognized far earlier.

The books of the law (*also known as the Torah or Pentateuch—Genesis-Deuteronomy*) were acknowledged as early as II Kings 22 (640 BC – 600 BC).

The Septuagint 250 +/- BC is the translation of the Hebrew books of the OT to Greek.  
It has most of the books Christians identify as canon in the OT plus the Apocrypha

The rabbinical school of the Pharisees in Jamnia, Israel arrived at a final list of twenty-four books, which equate to the thirty-nine books of the Christian Old Testament (by 140 BC)

The Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered in 1947, have a few minor differences, but they are remarkably similar to the accepted Hebrew Scriptures we have today

The New Testament Canon

As early as the first centuries of the Christian church some of the books were recognized

Peter referred to Paul's writings as Scripture (2 Peter 3:15-16).

Clement of Rome mentioned at least eight New Testament books (95 AD).

Ignatius of Antioch acknowledged seven books (115 AD).

Polycarp, a disciple of John the apostle, acknowledged fifteen books (108 AD)

Irenaeus mentioned twenty-one books (185 AD).

Hippolytus recognized twenty-two books (170-235 AD).

The first "canon" was the Muratorian Canon, compiled in 170 AD, which included all of the New Testament books except Hebrews, James, and 3 John (twenty-four)

The Council of Laodicea (363 AD) affirmed the twenty-seven books of the New Testament

The Councils of Hippo (393 AD) and Carthage (397 AD) reaffirmed the same twenty-seven books as authoritative

The principles used by the councils to determine whether a New Testament book was truly inspired by the Holy Spirit were fourfold.

First, the author must be an apostle or have a close connection with an apostle.

Second, the book must have been accepted by the body of Christ at large.

Third, the book had to contain consistency of doctrine and orthodox teaching.

Fourth, the book had to bear evidence of high moral and spiritual values that would reflect a work of the Holy Spirit as the divine Author.

God, in His sovereignty, and despite the limitations of men, brought the early church to the recognition of the books He had inspired

These books are recognized today as the canon of Scripture.

Bible Testifies that it is the Word of God

Heb.4;12

For the Word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Matt. 4:4

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Luke 11:28

He replied, "Blessed rather are those who hear the Word of God and obey it."

Isaiah 55:11

...so is my Word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

John 1:1

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Psalms 12:6

And the words of the LORD are flawless, like silver purified in a crucible, like gold refined seven times.

I Peter 1:25

...but the Word of the Lord endures forever." And this is the word that was preached to you.

II Tim. 3: 15-17

...from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Higher Criticism

By the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, acceptance of the Bible in Western civilization was in trouble  
Science (geology, paleontology, evolution, anthropology)

And biblical criticism appearing to be discrediting the Bible and its authority

Immanuel Kant (1724 – 1804) declared a coming "age of reason"  
He called for the rejection the authority of the church and the Bible

Gotthold Lessing (1729 – 1781) believed that true Christianity depended on "inner truth" rather than written traditions like the Bible

Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768 – 1834) redefined religion as an immediate "feeling" of dependence on God

1830's Tübingen School: looked at each Biblical text critically  
Their reliability or helpfulness depended on their time and place  
Called "historical" or "higher" criticism.

Julius Wellhausen (1844 – 1918) divided the origins of the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy) into four authors:

J (Yahweh); E (Elohim); D (Deuteronomistic); P (Priestly)  
Wellhausen challenged the helpfulness of the Law of Moses  
He promoted the "religion of the Spirit" – that of the OT prophets  
And the example of the "life of Jesus and the apostles,"

American church leaders actually stayed relative conservative and orthodox until the late 1800's  
But eventually, *American seminaries* and *mainline denominations* moved in the direction of the German theologians

Methodists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, *Episcopalians (with many conservative congregation exceptions)*

#### Higher Criticism's Various Claims:

Biblical writers and then translators embellished and altered the biblical texts to make them appear more miraculous, inspirational, and legitimate

We must determine what Jesus *really* said and how oral traditions since Jesus have led to conflicting written accounts

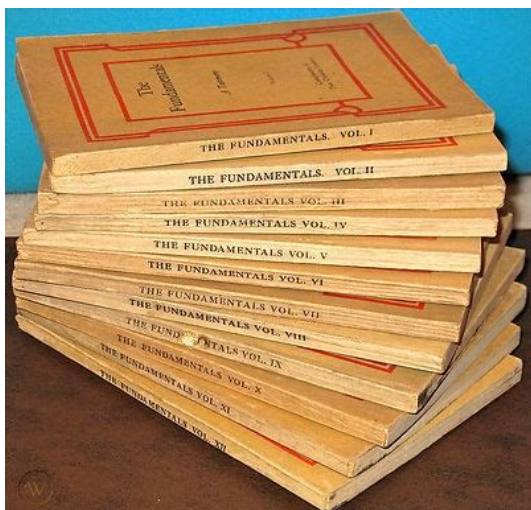
The Bible must be "demythologized" to rid it of miracles and the supernatural( Rudolf Bultmann the chief advocate)

The Bible was to be rejected as ancient, oppressive, not relevant today

The "Fundamentals," ninety essays published from 1910 to 1915 defended traditional Christianity and Bible interpretation.

The essays argued that there were five concepts that must be believed to be consistent with faith in Christ and the historical traditions of the Church

- 1) The inerrancy of the Bible
- 2) The virgin birth of Jesus
- 3) Substitutionary atonement of Christ
- 4) Bodily resurrection of Jesus
- 5) Historical miracles



These essays led to the formation of the Fundamentalist movement; later the Evangelical Movement

These doctrinal points are the basic of the conservative theology of most Baptists, Pentecostals, and Charismatics

Understanding the Word of God

Evil supernatural beings try to get us to doubt, ignore, not value, and misinterpret the Word by:

Minimizing its importance

Distracting us from reading it

By scientific theories

By "higher criticism"

By syncretism: the reconciliation or fusion of teachings in the Word with differing systems of belief, philosophy, or religion (*watering the Word down*)

Evil supernatural beings and those they have deceived lead the attack on the Bible

II Cor. 4:4

In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ

The Word of God is in the form of a book, the Bible, but it is more than a book

Heb 11:3

By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible

John 1:1

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Can we know about the Bible and not know God?

John 5:38-40

Nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent. You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

God reveals Himself through His Word:

1. By illuminating His written word as we study the Bible
2. Through teachers, preachers of the Word
3. Through friends, families, *even* non-believers, (*even donkeys*) giving us the Word
4. Through the still small voice (*the method of choice of God*)
5. Through the audible voice (*His least preferred method*)
6. Through dreams, visions, impressions
7. Through signs (*the burning bush*)

The Bible is the *Church's* book—not a book for the unbelieving

The Bible can only be understood correctly by a reader as the Holy Spirit enlightens the understanding of its passages

The Book reads us as we read it

Interpretation of the Bible:

1. Literal and/or
2. Allegorical or metaphorical

Example—Abraham nearly sacrificing Isaac in Genesis 22

Referred to in Romans 4 and Hebrews 11 as a historical event

Had implications for Abraham

Also has implications for us

Allegorical interpretation of Scripture is safer if:

1. We are willing to accept the literal, historical meaning (*if present*)
2. Done in the community of believers
3. Consistent with accepted, historical, church interpretation of the event
4. Points to Jesus or is fulfilled by Him

We hear the *Voice of God* through the *Word of God*

The conservative Western Church stresses the importance of having a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ

We believe that we must come to a place in our lives where we choose to turn from our way of thinking (*repent of our sins*)

Realize that there is a God who created us and loves us

Believe that He sent His Son, Jesus, to die for our sins

And that Jesus was a historical man who died and then rose from the dead

And then receive Him into our lives by faith

We believe that when we truly have faith and trust in Jesus as our Savior, then God's Holy Spirit comes to dwell in us

We can then have a *personal relationship* with God

Similar to the relationship between friends

Between husband and wife

Jesus is the bridegroom / we are the bride

God, of course, is invisible –  
 This makes it more difficult  
 It is like having a relationship with an invisible man

But relationships are hard if carried out from a distance  
 They work best if two people can  
 See each other  
 Hear each other speak (or at least *write* to each other)  
 Touch each other

If we are *really* to have a personal relationship with God, it would help if we could see, hear, and feel (*or sense*) Him

The Bible teaches that we can do all three  
 Not with our five physical senses (*usually*)  
 But with our spiritual senses

Matt 5:8  
 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

John 10:3  
 To him the porter opens; and the sheep hear His voice: and he calls his own sheep by name, and leads them out.

We can feel or sense God by His Presence

God really does want us in relationship with Him

Heb 8:10-11  
 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

In the Word we are referred to as God's:

### Children

Rom 8:16-17  
 The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

### Friends

John 15:15  
 No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends

## Sheep

John 10:3-5

The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen for his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will flee from him because they do not recognize his voice."

What kind of relationship do we have with Him if we cannot experience Him at least somewhat like we can experience *our* family and friends  
How could He ask us to hear and see and sense Him if it were impossible or extremely difficult?

Temptations to do evil come from the voice of a stranger – the devil  
Every time – every time – that we fall to temptation, we have heard or "sensed" then and followed the voice of a stranger

Do we think we can't hear the Voice of Jesus?

Sadly we sure can hear the "voice" of the hireling, the false shepherd – in temptations  
Do we have more faith in our ability to hear the devil, then in our ability to hear God?  
Say it isn't so?

If we can sense the pull, hear the thought of a temptation, we can hear into the supernatural

If we can sense a pull, hear the thought to resist a temptation, we can hear the voice of the Holy Spirit in our spirit, in our conscience

Many, if not most spontaneous thoughts are from God or the devil

Most studied, reasoned thoughts are ours – some good, some evil

Those who know Jesus, follow His voice and advice

Those who are holy, who set themselves apart for God, tend to hear Him more consistently

John 14:21

He that hath my commandments, and keep them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will show myself to him.

He reveals Himself to those who love truth

John 18:37

Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

He does not reveal Himself to the religious and Pharisaic heart--to those who are proud and unteachable

John 5:37-38

And the Father who sent me has Himself testified concerning me. You have never heard His voice nor seen His form, nor does His Word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one He sent.

#### Four principles that help us hear His Voice

##### 1. Quiet ourselves –“I will stand my watch”

Ps 46:10

Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen

Ps 4:4

Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still

##### 2. Look for what He will say –“and will watch to see what he will say unto me”

Picture Jesus

Meditate on Him

Think on Him with you / with His disciples,/ in the scenes of the Bible

Healing, teaching, forgiving, blessing, encouraging

The power of pictures

Worth a thousand words

Jesus taught in parables

Hab 2:1-2

I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved. And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.

##### 3. Listen for spontaneous thoughts

Consciously entertain the possibility that the thoughts are from the supernatural dimension  
God or evil

##### 4. Write them down – journal

Rev 1:11

Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book

Thoughts from the Lord are:

Consistent with the written Word

Given in the Spirit of Jesus

Encouraging, supportive usually

If a rebuke—always redemptive—with a plan for improvement

If a thought appears to be new concept – a "revelation" – if challenging – if you are worried about the words *not* being God take it to Godly friends for review

Conclusion:

With the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, it is possible for us to hear the Voice of God as well as, if not better than the OT men and women of God



How can we ask a dying world to join us in relationship with God if our relationship is just intellectual and not alive, real, practically helpful to us

How can we "protect and preserve" the Word from being doubted, ignored, not valued, misinterpreted

Because of the attack on it by evil supernatural beings and their followers?  
Atheists, humanists, political ideologues, false religions of the world

It is helpful to always keep before us the fact that God is the creator.

All men, and other "gods," Allah, Buddha, Vishnu (others); gods in history (Egyptian, Mesopotamian) mythological gods (Greek, Roman, Norse), principalities, powers, human leaders, human personalities, Satan, fallen angels, demons

– Are all merely created beings

Be always conscious of the Creator thought

And the promise that we are love, supported, and protected by the Creator  
Seated with Him, above all the other non-created authorities—lesser "gods"  
We and intellectually, spiritually, emotional, maturely above all circumstance and challenges

Read the Word daily; learn it; understand it; preach it

Seek a closer relationship with God

Purpose to develop your relationship with Him  
Like developing a relationship with a friend or loved one

Ps 27:7-8

Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me.  
When thou said, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek.

Ps 15:1-2

LORD, who may dwell in your sanctuary? Who may live on your holy hill?  
He whose walk is blameless and who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth from his heart

I urge all of you to spend time with God daily

Quiet yourself  
Picture Jesus  
Pay attention to spontaneous thoughts  
Write down what He says

Become healthier, holier and more obedient

Becoming true disciples of Jesus

For our families  
For our friends  
For our churches  
For our communities

Become warriors for Christ that can truly believe in the cause