

A Long Journey Requires A Map

No matter how close we may be to a place, if we do not know where it is, without guidance it could take forever to find it. It is possible, without directions from someone who knows how to get there that, by random wandering about, we would never find our destination. Consequently, no one would set out on a long trip without a good map. If our trip should be a journey of some epic proportions, the necessity of a good set of maps, and ones that we had confidence were accurate, would be essential.

The journey of which we have been referring for a number of months is certainly one of epic proportions. It is to find our way to our Creator and our Lord. Surprisingly, there are people who think that they can find God through aimless wanderings. They are equipped with nothing more accurate than the imaginings of their minds. More amazingly, there are those who will not even engage their own imaginations, but blindly follow other men who are as fallible as themselves. What we need, as humans searching for our destiny as well as our origin, is help. The Bible, that book which claims for itself to be written by God, the Creator of the universe and its Supreme Authority, is that help.

This brings our discussion to the second foundational principle of life, the Bible is the complete revealed will of God. For the last eight months or so, we have been presenting information that builds an irrefutable case that God does exist and that He is a being of magnificent proportions, worthy of man's primary attention. He is the One from whom we came and the One to whom we are trying to find our way. We will now begin an exploration into the basis for our confidence that the Bible is what it claims to be.

In the second letter of the Apostle Paul to his protégé, Timothy, we find a corner-stone of divine truth:

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3: 16-17, ESV).

The message is that, contrary to many modern claims that the Bible is nothing more than a compilation of men's writings and, as such, should be ignored, the Bible claims for itself the authorship of God.

Some would argue that we can claim anything we wish, no matter how stupendous and improbable it might be. We could claim to be God, ourselves, as some terribly deluded people have. The question then naturally arises, "What is there in a personal claim?" Our response is that there are two important elements in any personal testimony. First, it would be pointless for us to make a claim for the Bible that it did not make for itself. By the quotation above, we see that the Bible does make that claim. The Apostle Peter corroborates this position in his first letter. He writes:

...No prophecy in Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation. No prophecy ever originated from humans. Instead it was given by the Holy Spirit as humans spoke under God's direction (2 Peter 1:20-21, God's Word).

Whatever objection may be made against the Bible, it cannot be asserted that the Bible does not claim for itself to be from God.

Secondly, a personal claim is as reliable as the character of the one making it. In a court of law it is quite appropriate for a defendant to give testimony on his own behalf and his testimony will only be as credible as his character. Opposing attorneys will attempt to weaken personal testimony by calling into question the character of the one testifying. If the defendant testifying in his own behalf does not have a good reputation, the testimony is weakened. But, if the one who testifies for himself can be shown to be of impeccably good character, any accusations brought against him will be weakened. Thus it is with the Bible. The Bible sets before man the highest standards of human conduct. It is a book of unchallengeable character. It may actually be the Bible's lofty standards presented for human conduct that spurs such contempt and railing accusations against it. But, in terms of personal testimony, it presents itself as an excellent witness.

This may not be sufficient evidence to give the reader confidence that the Bible is truly man's map to God, but it is a beginning. We believe we can in the coming weeks provide enough evidence to convince the average person, perhaps even the honest skeptic, that the Bible is truly the Word of God.