

## **1005 Only one Bible**

**(Verses refer to those in NASB unless otherwise specified.)**

**The Bible is inspired by God. First, we'll look at the question of why people can come up different interpretations when people are reading the same Bible? Second, let us look at the at the apparent contradiction between science and the Bible. Finally, we'll use a simple framework to illustrate the coexistence of predestination and preknown. In this framework, we can also see there is no contradiction between God's absolute authority and man's free will.**

**First, let us use a verse to answer the question about why we can come with different interpretations. In 2 Peter 3:16, Peter says, "as 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." People come with different interpretations because the Scriptures are distorted.**

**Next we will take a look at what Paul says in Philippians 2:1-2 "Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose." In short, we are united in Jesus Christ. Our goal is to be conformed to the image of Jesus. And there is only one Jesus. When we all are conformed to the image of Jesus, how can we not be united? "For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren." (Romans 8:29)**

**We'll use one example to talk about distortions. In the seven churches of the Book of Revelations, their geographic locations are clockwise from the church of Ephesus to the church of Laodicea. Some people then from the geographic arrangement talk about that the seven churches represent different stages of churches. We only need to ask a simple question to see if there are distortions. Does the Bible mention anything like that? The answer is definitely no. The Bible is our absolute standard. It is clear that there are distortions. Thus, we can distinguish if the words from a person have any distortion at least by whether the words are from the Bible directly or from the concept of the Bible. For an example in the latter, the words "Holy Trinity" is never mentioned in the Bible, but the concept is there and mentioned in many places in the Bible.**

**Next, let us take a look at the question regarding the contradiction between the Bible and the science we know nowadays. People think that the Bible is just a superstition. Let us then use Fig. 1 to illustrate conceptually about the difference between the Bible and today's sciences.**

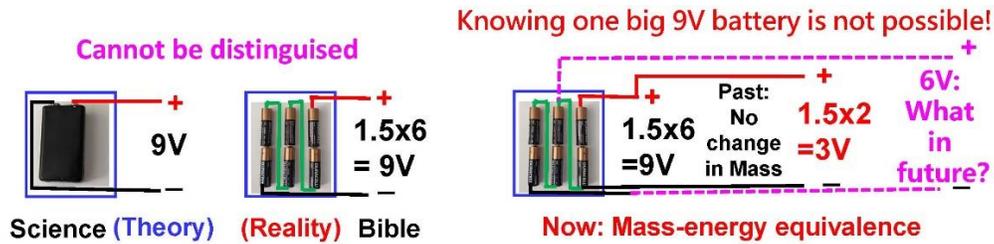


Fig. 1: Basic difference between the Bible and the science

The blue line represents a black box, where the inside is filled with batteries. If we want now to know what is inside but we can only measure the voltage of two outside lines, which is 9 volts. Then we cannot distinguish between if there are one big 9V battery and six 1.5V batteries from outside. In other words, when what we discussed represents the current science, then science is just theories. What the Bible says is the reality since the Bible is inspired by God. In Fig. 1, the reality is that there are six small batteries.

When there is an additional two-line voltage, 3 volts can be measured. We then know for sure that one big 9V battery inside is not a correct description. Just like in the past of the era of Newton, we thought that mass cannot be changed after collisions. However, later in the era of Einstein, we learned that mass can be reduced to generate energy. That is how atomic bombs and nuclear plants were discovered. Thus, the sciences nowadays are only temporary, and what the Bible described is permanent and is reality since the Bible is inspired by God.

Let us use an example in the Bible to conclude this issue. We thought for a long period of time that people think that heaven is round and earth is square. In that era, if you told people that earth moves around sun and earth hangs on nothing, no one would believe you. Copernicus told the world about the fact earth moves around sun and got persecuted. Science is absolutely useful. For example, satellite can be used to verify this fact. And the Bible says so long time ago.

"It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, ..." (Isaiah 40:22)

"He stretches out the north over empty space and hangs the earth on nothing." (Job 26:7)

The concept of "heaven is round and earth is square" is to see things in the aspect of human at that time. "Seeing in the aspect of the Bible" means whatever the Bible says counts. The Bible doesn't mention everything. If there is seemingly a contradiction in sciences and the Bible, we need to use the Bible to lead sciences since what is in the Bible is reality. About the seemly contradiction, it is due to the fact that our current science has not reached the level enough to understand it, just like in the era of Newton which thought that mass had to be conserved in a collision.

Last, let us discuss the issues raised by predestination and preknown. Calvin teaches there is only predestination, and Martin Luther talks about there is only preknown. However,

predestination and preknown exist at the same time as clearly stated in Romans 8:29. Therefore, both of them are not consistent with the Bible in this issue. When we use the Bible as our absolute standard, they are both incorrect in this issue.

Let us use a simple example to illustrate having predestination and preknown occurred simultaneously. In this framework, we can see there is no contradiction between the fact that God has the absolute authority and the fact that man has free will. We want to emphasize one point that this explanation is to help to understand the Bible better since the Bible doesn't say clearly that it is so and of course we don't know what happens exactly. If such an explanation is not what happens and God can make me think about such a framework, He must have a better one.

Let us now use a game I played in elementary school to present such a framework. In the game shown in Fig. 2, we start from the paper roll in the top left. When the roll opens a little bit, we can see one path. Open a little more, there are two choices. At this time, the roll doesn't open more and the player has to make a choice - left or right? If now the roll opens more and shows as in the middle left figure, then choosing the right path leads to be burned by fire and game is over. If choosing left, then it comes to next choice. If the roll opens more and shows like the middle right figure, then choosing right leads to the drowning and the game is over. Otherwise, the player faces another choice and so on. Finally, the roll is completely open and shows only one path leading to the other edge of the roll as indicated by the right most figure. If choice is all right, then the player wins.

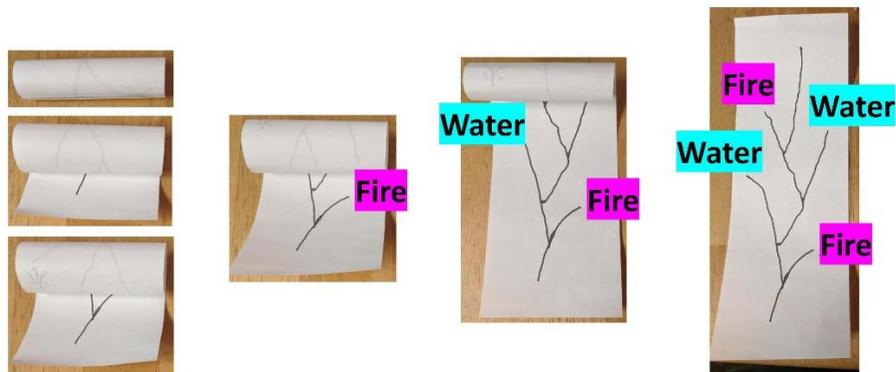


Fig. 2: A game played when in elementary school

This is such simple game and we might ask how it is related to the Bible. We illustrate this point in Fig. 3. The game starts in the closed roll as if we are in creation. Then Adam and Eve face a choice and need to choose if they are to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and they know that in the day that they eat from it they will surely die. Their choice is not to eat, and then face the seduction of the snake. Finally, they choose to eat and their souls die.

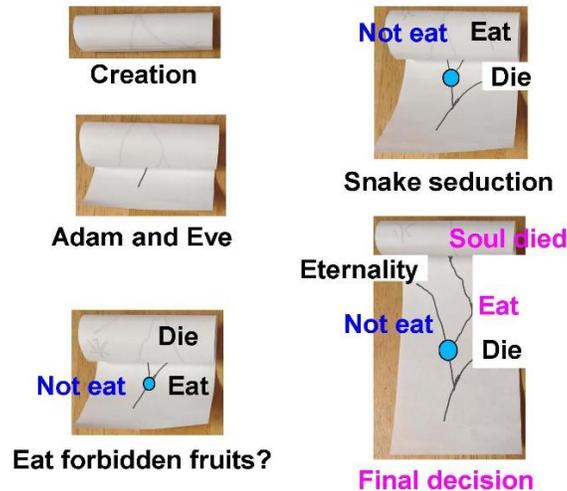


Fig. 3: Relationship between the game and the Bible

Since the player in this game doesn't know in advance how the paths are arranged, he has free will to make a choice. He has no idea how the pathway is arranged and definitely cannot participate the arrangement. The other person has the sole authority to decide, just like God has the absolute authority. Isn't it so? God is omnipotent, He knows in advance which path we'll choose. In other words, He is preknown. God can design the whole path in advance, and can pre-know our choice. How come He cannot be predestined? Therefore, both predestination and preknown exist at the same time, and there is no contradiction between the fact that God has the absolute authority and the fact that man has free will.

Our whole life can be represented by such a path figure conceptually, but having multiple choices each time. If two people are totally unrelated, their paths don't intersect. If there is an interaction between them, then that portion of paths may be in common. Conceptually, the life of everyone in mankind is able to be represented by such an intertwined figure, but too complicated to even think about it.

We actually face the fact that there is no contradiction mentioned everyday. To see this, we can use the price structure of using electricity as an example. The price depends when you use electricity and how much. The utility company basically announces the price structure, and users has no control over it just like the fact that God has the absolute authority. But users can choose when to use electricity and how much. The utility company has no control over it. Isn't this just like the fact that man has free will? In the era of Martin Luther and Calvin, electricity had not discovered yet. They cannot think about such a framework, where there is no contradiction between the fact that God has the absolute authority and the fact that man has free will. Thus, further thinking about the existence of a framework of the coexistence of preknown and predestination.

Therefore, we can see a simple conclusion. If we want to discern the words of a person, we have to view it if it is consistent with the Bible in the aspect of the Bible since the Bible is inspired by God. Don't look at things in the aspect of human. Don't use the words of man

**to discern the correctness of particular words because God is infinite and men are finite.  
No matter how spiritual a person is, the person will surely make mistakes somewhere.**