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## What the Bible is Not

This Chapter describes what the Bible is not. Strauss states that there are 4 is-not about the Bible. They are not a magic-answer book, a list of commands to obey, a collection of promises to claim or a textbook of systematic theology. He states these so we can rid of misconceptions about the Bible. Some of them are about promises of the Bible is we claim are our but is that true.

The first one is the Bible is not a magic-answer book. However he said that these also created 2 positive outcome. They create reverence for the Bible and that it is still relevant today. He also describes that people uses the Bible as a crystal ball answering machine. The crystal ball can give people answers from bible verses where its is different from its intended or original meaning. Even though God can use anything to speak to people but it “violates the most fundamental principle of Bible study”.(Strauss, p16)

It is not a list of commands for us to obey. Strauss states that we need to trust and obey God because it is our responsibility. However not all the command of the Bible are for us. Some of them are for a specific culture while some of them are for everyone. An example is the need to offer on the altar an animal sacrifice. We are not going to do that in New York City but it is required for Israel before the destruction of the Second Temple. However for believers in Jesus it is not longer needed because he is the ultimate sacrifice. The need to understand the Scripture will help us know which command apply to us. In order for us to know we “first of all interpret the commands of Scripture in context as commands to them(the original audience) before we apply these commands to ourselves.”(Strauss, p23) It is about context, context and context.

The third one is that the Bible is not a list of promises to claim. He states that there are many good promises in the Bible but not all of them are for us to claim. For example, there are promises where God will prospers us, give us long life, and claim of land for the descent of Abraham. We are not getting all of them but we “can learn a great deal about the nature of God”(Strauss, p27) from these promises. However we need to understand these promises base on its “context, purpose, and qualifications.”(Strauss, p29) He lists two key points about biblical promises. The first one is each biblical promise was given to a specific individual or group and related first of all to their situation. The second one is that promises are often conditional and contingent, dependent on circumstances and the response of the recipient. He gave example of nation where God declares destruction but when repent God relents. The opposite is also true. So can’t just claim promise without understanding of context.

Finally the Bible is not a textbook of systematic theology. He states that the bible’s theology is progressively revealed and not given to use all at once. The Bible’s theological statements are contextually located. The Bible’s theology is selective, not comprehensive. However the Scripture gives us what we need and know what God requires of us. He gave examples of the writings of Paul to explain about many aspect of our life issues.

The most important thing is that we can not just read a verse of the Bible and claim it is the truth or an answer to a question without know the context. We need to carefully find out the original meaning and

its intention. If it is something we can claim we need to know how it can be use to glorify God. Jesus came to save use from sin and to serve so we need to follow his actions.