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Divine Inspiration
And
Heliocentrism

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Faculty of theology

Divine Inspiration
And
Heliocentrism

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PREFACE

It is with immense delight and gratitude that I submit this dissertation to the faculty of theology of St. Mary's Malankara Major Seminary, Trivandrum, as a partial fulfillment of the academic studies. This work is a humble attempt to express the topic “**DIVINE INSPIRATION AND HELIOCENTRISM**”. Any accomplishment requires efforts and help of many people and this work also has no exception with regard.

I praise and thank God, the almighty for His grace and blessings in the process of the formation of this work. The mighty hands of God, which I felt throughout this task is the ultimate source behind the completion of this work. His providence has disposed many people to be of help to me in the understanding, formulation and in the completion of the present study.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Divine Inspiration is the doctrine that the authors of the Bible were led or influenced by God in order to write the word of God in human language. From the beginning of the Church Christians believed that the author of the sacred Scripture is Holy Spirit and therefore there is nothing wrong in the Bible. The Catholic Church always kept the purity of the divine authorship of the sacred Scripture in the Church. For keeping the divinity of the Scripture, council of Trent curses them, who knowingly and deliberately do not accept Scripture as sacred and canonical. In the history of the Church, people who stood against divine inspiration of sacred Scripture were either condemned or punished.

Heliocentrism is an astronomical model in which the earth and planets revolve around the sun at the centre of the solar system. A polish priest Nicholas Copernicus and a Catholic layman Galileo Galilei were the great scientists who scientifically proved the heliocentric theory. Many Catholic theologians and scientists opposed this theory because in the Bible many passages teaches that earth is the centre and all other celestial objects rotate around the earth especially Joshua: 10:12-13, Psalms 93, 104, and Ecclesiastes: 1:5.

The title of my dissertation is “Divine Inspiration and Heliocentrism”. In this dissertation I am trying to reconcile the tension between sacred Scripture and science. For this I select Joshua: 10:12-13 to prove scientifically that what was said in the Bible is not contrary to science. I have tried to make an exegetical study of it only as a help for establishing my point. Therefore it is mainly a theological analysis of the text.

The whole thesis is divided into three chapters. In the first chapter which is titled as “The Divine Inspiration of Sacred Scripture”, my attempt is to find out the way how the Church interpreted divine inspiration throughout the centuries. The sacred Scripture itself clearly states that it is Word of God. The early Church fathers blindly believed in the inerrancy of the Scripture because the Word of God cannot go wrong. I also mention

some Church documents for supporting my ideas. When the fifteenth century scientists proposed the heliocentric theory it became a threat to divine inspiration of Scripture because people believed that Bible teaches Geocentrism. Then the Catholic Church was forced to re-interpret the divine interpretation. I have also tried to use some quotations from modern theologians on re-interpretation of divine interpretation.

We have seen in the history of the Church that how the divine inspiration of sacred Scripture was interpreted and re-interpreted. In the second chapter, which is titled as “A Re-reading of Joshua: 10:12-13”, my attempt is as the title indicates we are trying to re-read the scriptural text Joshua: 10:12-13. This passage was the main cause for the re-interpretation of the divine inspiration of the sacred Scripture because the Catholic Church even today believes that this biblical text teaches Geocentrism. In this chapter exegetically we are penetrating into the mystery of this particular passage together with a scientific study on the whole book of Joshua.

In the third chapter, titled as “Understanding of Divine Inspiration in the Background of the Scriptural Text Joshua: 10:12-13”, I concentrate mainly on the scientific evidences which help me to prove that Joshua: 10:12-13 does not say anything about Geocentrism but it distinctly speaks about Heliocentrism. In this chapter I am trying to establish the fact that the Word of God is divinely given to man and if it is the Word of God, it cannot go wrong and God will not allow his word to fall in error. In the third chapter as a preparation for this study in the first session we discuss about the Sun, the Earth, the Moon and its movements in the space, its distance and its gravitational pull and push. It will help us a lot to prove that Joshua: 10: 12-13 speaks about Heliocentrism instead of Geocentrism. Final point of my thesis is that there is nothing wrong in the Holy Bible simply because it is Word of God

CHAPTER ONE

THE DIVINE INSPIRATION OF SACRED SCRIPTURE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Divine inspiration is a doctrine that ultimately affirms that the sacred Scriptures are the Word of God.¹ The word ‘inspiration’ comes from the Greek word *theopneustos*, which literally means "God breathed".² “All the books of the Old and New testament are the inspired Word of God in this sense.”³ The Greek word *theopneustus* can be found only in the second letter of St. Paul to Timothy 3: 16-17:⁴ “All Scripture is inspired by God, and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work”.

1.1. BIBLE VERSES RELATED TO DIVINE INSPIRATION

The sacred Scripture is a collection of sacred texts written by different authors.⁵ The Christians and the Jews believe that the Holy Bible is the product of divine inspiration.⁶ The sacred Scripture itself clearly states that it is divinely inspired, it cannot go wrong.⁷ The various Bible passages from Old and New Testaments show the inerrancy of the Holy Bible.

¹ Raymond Collins, “Inspiration of Scripture”, Richard P. McBrien (ed.), *The Harpercollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, (Harpercollins Publishers, New York, 1995) 669.

² Raymond Collins, “Inspiration of Scripture”, Richard P. McBrien (ed.), *The Harpercollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, 669.

³ Hubert J. Richards, “The Holy Bible”, Mabel Quin (ed.), *Virtue’s Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol- 2* (Virtue & Company Limited, London, 1966) 537.

⁴ Raymond Collins, “Inspiration of Scripture”, Richard P. McBrien (ed.), *The Harpercollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, 669.

⁵ Hubert J. Richards, “The Holy Bible”, Mabel Quin (ed.), *Virtue’s Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol- 1*, 105.

⁶ Neil Grant, *500 Questions and Answers about the Bible*, (Derrydale Books, New York, 1999) 12.

⁷ C. P. Ceroke, “Authority of Bible” Paul Kevin Meagher- Thomas C- Sister Consuela Maria (ed.), *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Religion Vol- A-E*, (Corpus Publications, Washington, 1979) 447.

1.1.1 Old Testament

The Old Testament is the first part of Christian Bible based upon the Hebrew Bible.⁸ The Hebrew Bible is a collection of ancient religious writings by the Israelites.⁹ Christians and religious Jews believe that it is the sacred Word of God.¹⁰ The Old Testament consists of many distinct books by various authors produced over a period of centuries.¹¹ The Old Testament powerfully speaks about the divine inspiration in various Bible passages.

1.1.1.1 Exodus 24:4

For ratifying covenant God said to Moses that come up to the Lord with Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and seventy of the elders of Israel. Lord asked Moses to come near and others to stay back. After returning from Yahweh Moses told everything to the people what God had spoken to him “and Moses wrote down all the words of the Lord.” This verse distinctly states that this is Word of God thus it cannot fall into error because it is uttered by God.

1.1.1.2 2 Samuel 23:2

David was elected by God as a king of Israel. God was with David so he could defeat the neighbouring countries such as Philistines, Amalekites, Ammonites, Armeans etc. and made Jerusalem as capital of Israel. David was a successful king. In the last days of David he is professing that “The Spirit of the Lord speaks through me; his word is upon my tongue”. This verse tells us that through the divine inspiration David spoke these words. If it is Word of God it is perfect because God cannot say anything wrong.

⁸ Neil Grant, *500 Questions and Answers about the Bible*, 12.

⁹ Hubert J. Richards, “The Holy Bible”, Mabel Quin (ed.), *Virtue’s Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol- 1*, 105.

¹⁰ Neil Grant, *500 Questions and Answers about the Bible*, 12.

¹¹ D. J. Bourke, “Old Testament”, Paul Kevin Meagher- Thomas C- Sister Consuela Maria (ed), *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Religion Vol- O- Z*, 2595.

1.1.1.3 Jeremiah 1:9

When Yahweh appointed Jeremiah as a prophet to the nations, Jeremiah said Lord God truly I do not know how to speak because I am only a boy. Yahweh consoled Jeremiah and assured that he would be with him to deliver him. After this Jeremiah writes that “Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth; and the Lord said to me, ‘Now, I have put my words in your mouth’”. From this verse it is quite sure that what all things the prophet had spoken would be the Word of God, not his words because Yahweh said that He has put his words in Jeremiah’s mouth.

1.1.1.4 Jeremiah 30:2

Yahweh says to prophet Jeremiah that “write in a book all the words that I have spoken to you.” God asks to write his words which were spoken to prophet Jeremiah. Surely it is God’s words the prophet writes. If it is Word of God it cannot be erroneous.

All these Old Testament passages tell us that the sacred Scripture is nothing other than God’s Word which is spoken through the divinely inspired authors. Thus the conclusion is very evident that the Holy Bible is Word of God so it consists no error.

1.1.2 New Testament

The New Testament is the second part of the Christian Bible.¹² It discusses the person of Jesus, the teachings of Jesus and events in first-century Christianity.¹³ The New Testament reflects and serves as a source for Christian theology and morality.¹⁴ The New Testament distinctly speaks that the sacred Scripture is inspired by God and if it is Word of God, no error can occur.

¹² C. P. Ceroke, “New Testament”, Paul Kevin Meagher- Thomas C- Sister Consuela Maria (ed.), *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Religion Vol- F-N*, 2521.

¹³ Alfred Durand, “Testament”, Charles G. Herbermann (ed.), *The Catholic Encyclopedia Vol-14*, (The Universal Knowledge Foundation, London, 1913) 531.

¹⁴ F. B. C., “Bible”. Norma H. Dickey (ed.), *Funk & Wagnalls New Encyclopedia Vol-4* (Funk & Wagnalls L. P., New York) 52.

1.1.2.1. Mathew 22:31

While teaching about the resurrection of the dead Jesus asks the audience that “Have you not read what was said to you by God?” So for Jesus the Old Testament is what is said by God. If the whole Bible is said by God then there will be nothing wrong in the Bible. Because God cannot say what is not right.

1.1.2.2. 2 Timothy 3:16

When the false teachers educated the believers with false doctrines St. Paul wrote to Timothy that “All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work”. This is the only Bible passage which directly speaks about the divine inspiration of sacred Scripture.

1.1.2.3. 2 Peter 1:20-21

Towards the end of first century some teachers of the Church began to teach false teachings to the Christians. When Peter knew this he wrote a letter to them instructing to keep firm faith. “First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God”. From this Bible passage we can clearly acknowledge that the sacred Scripture is inerrant. If the prophesy of God is through Holy Spirit cannot be false then if the same Spirit inspires the sacred authors of Bible, it cannot go wrong.

All the Bible passages which are mentioned above very firmly preach that Bible is Word of God¹⁵. In the Old Testament many times we read that “thus says the Lord” or “The Lord says to.... (Prophets, Kings etc).” From these verses, we can draw the conclusion that Holy Bible is the Word of God. In the New Testament we come across many passages which beautifully tell us that holy Bible is God’s Word.¹⁶ If the Holy

¹⁵ Hubert J. Richards, “Inerrancy of Scripture” Mabel Quin (ed.), *Virtue’s Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol- 2*, 531.

¹⁶ A. J. Maas, “Scripture”, Charles G. Herbermann (ed.), *The Catholic Encyclopedia Vol-13*, 636.

Bible is Word of God it cannot fall into error.¹⁷ Thus we can conclude that the sacred Scripture is inerrant.¹⁸

1.2 DIVINE INSPIRATION IN THE EARLY CHURCH

The word “inerrant” is a modern word which is used to explain that the Scripture teaches truth.¹⁹ The early Church also believed that there is nothing wrong in the Bible.²⁰ The ancient Church Fathers never thought to provide a systematic doctrine of Scripture. But they teach that the Scripture is without error because they strongly believed in the divine authorship of Scripture.²¹ God the Holy Spirit is the direct and responsible author of sacred Scripture.²² Thus the early Church Fathers saw inerrancy as a result of divine inspiration.²³

¹⁷ Hubert J. Richards, “Inerrancy of Scripture” Mabel Quin (ed.), *Virtue’s Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol- 2*, 531.

¹⁸ D. J. Bourke, “Inerrancy”, Paul Kevin Meagher- Thomas C- Sister Consuela Maria (ed.), *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Religion Vol- F-N*, 1800.

¹⁹ Raymond Collins. “Inerrancy of Scripture”, Richard P. McBrien (ed.), *The Harpercollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, 663.

²⁰ Leonard Doohan. “Biblical Inspiration”, Michael Glazier – Monika K. Hellwig (ed.), *The Modern Catholic Encyclopedia*, (The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, 1994) 433.

²¹ Leonard Doohan. “Biblical Inspiration”, Michael Glazier – Monika K. Hellwig (ed.), *The Modern Catholic Encyclopedia*, 433.

²² Leonard Doohan. “Biblical Inspiration”, Michael Glazier – Monika K. Hellwig (ed.), *The Modern Catholic Encyclopedia*, 433.

²³ Raymond Collins. “Inerrancy of Scripture”, Richard P. McBrien (ed.), *The Harpercollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, 663.

1.2.1 Clement of Rome (Ca. A.D. 35-101)

Pope Clement is considered to be the first Apostolic Father of the Church.²⁴ He was the second or third Bishop of Rome after Saint Peter.²⁵ Clement's only genuine existing writing is his letter to the Christian congregation in Corinth.²⁶ In his letter Pope Clement writes to the Christian community at Corinth that "you have studied the holy Scriptures, which are true and are of the Holy Spirit. You well know that nothing unjust or fraudulent is written in them".²⁷

1.2.2 Justin Martyr (ca. A.D. 100-165)

St. Justin is an early Christian apologist. His dialogue with Trypho the Jew is the oldest Christian apology against Judaism.²⁸ In this Christian apology he portrays his views on sacred Scripture:

"I will not have the effrontery at any time either to suppose or to say such a thing. If a Scripture which appears to be of such a kind be brought forward, and there be a pretext for regarding it as contradictory, since I am totally convinced that no Scripture is contradictory to another, I shall admit instead that I do not understand what is spoken of, and shall strive to persuade those who assume that the Scriptures are contradictory to be rather of the same opinion as myself".²⁹

1.2.3 Irenaeus of Lyons (ca. A.D. 140-202)

St. Irenaeus was the second Bishop of Lyons and he was an early Church Father and apologist.³⁰ His most prominent writing is the *Detection and Overthrow of the False Gnosis* (Adversus Haereses).³¹ In his book he writes with clear conviction that "the

²⁴ William A. Jurgens, *The Faith Of The Early Fathers, Vol. I*, (The Liturgical Press Collgeville, Minnesota, 1970) 6.

²⁵ Henry Bettenson, *The Early Christian Fathers*, (Oxford University Press, London, 1956) 2.

²⁶ Pope Benedict XVI, *The Fathers*, (Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, Huntington, 2008) 7.

²⁷ William A. Jurgens, *The Faith Of The Early Fathers, Vol. I*, 11.

²⁸ Frank Sadowski, S.S.P., *The Church Fathers on The Bible*, (Alba House, New York, 1987) 12.

²⁹ William A. Jurgens, *The Faith Of The Early Fathers, Vol. I*, 65.

³⁰ Henry Bettenson, *The Early Christian Fathers*, 65.

³¹ Pope Benedict XVI, *The Fathers*, 25.

Scriptures are certainly perfect, since they were spoken by the Word of God and by his Spirit".³²

1.2.4 Hippolytus of Rome (ca. A.D. 170-235)

St. Hippolytus was a theologian.³³ The Church accords him, the title of *Sanctus* and the honours of the alter.³⁴ His famous exegetical work is *Commentary on Daniel*.³⁵ In this exegetical treatise he writes that "neither does Scripture falsify anything, nor does the Holy Spirit deceive his servants, the prophets, through whom he pleased to announce to men the will of God".³⁶

1.2.5 Augustine of Hippo (A.D. 354-430)

St. Augustine is an early Christian theologian and philosopher as well as one of the important Church Fathers in western Christianity³⁷. In his letter to Jerome he writes that

"I think it is dangerous to believe that anything in the sacred books is a lie.... For if we once admit in that supreme monument of authority even one polite lie, no shred of those books will remain. Whenever anyone finds anything therein that is difficult to practice or hard to believe, he will; refer to this most pernicious precedent and explain it as the idea or practice of a lying author".³⁸

In his another letter to Jerome Augustine firmly states about the inerrancy of sacred Scripture that

"I have learned to hold those books alone of the Scriptures that are now called canonical in such reverence and honor that I do most firmly believe that none of their authors has erred in anything that he was written therein. If I find anything in those writings which seem to be contrary to the truth, I presume that

³² William A. Jurgens, *The Faith Of The Early Fathers*, vol. I, 88.

³³ Gregory Dix, *The Treatise on Apostolic Tradition*, (S.P.C.K, London, 1937) 13.

³⁴ P. K. Meagher, "Hippolytus of Rome", Paul Kevin Meagher- Thomas C- Sister Consuela Maria (ed.), *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Religion Vol- F-N*, 1673.

³⁵ Frank Sadowski, S.S.P., *The Church Fathers on The Bible*, (Alba House, New York, 1987) 254.

³⁶ William A. Jurgens, *The Faith Of The Early Fathers*, vol. I, 164.

³⁷ Frank Sadowski, S.S.P., *The Church Fathers on The Bible*, 284.

³⁸ William A. Jurgens, *The Faith Of The Early Fathers*, Vol. III, 2.

either the codex is inaccurate, or the translator has not followed what was said, or I have not properly understood it”.³⁹

The Church Fathers are very clear about the divine inspiration of the sacred Scripture. All the Church Fathers undoubtedly speak that all the parts of the sacred Scripture cannot go wrong because God is the direct and responsible author of the sacred Scripture.⁴⁰ Thus we can conclude that for early Church Fathers the sacred Scripture is inerrant.

1.3 MAGISTERIAL TEACHINGS OF THE CHURCH

The Magisterium of the Catholic Church is the Church's authority or office to establish its own authentic teachings.⁴¹ This authority is vested uniquely in the Pope and the bishops, under the premise that they are in communion with the correct and true teachings of the faith.⁴² “This authoritative teaching office in the Church was originally conferred by Jesus himself in a special way on Simon Peter as leader of the twelve apostles.”⁴³ The Roman Pontiff has the power to declare doctrines concerning faith or morals which would be infallible.⁴⁴ The ecumenical council also has the right for similar declaration.⁴⁵ Most dogmas have been promulgated at ecumenical councils.⁴⁶ Examples

³⁹ William A. Jurgens, *The Faith Of The Early Fathers*, Vol. III, 4.

⁴⁰ Frederick E. Greenspahn (ed.), *Scripture in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*, (Abingdon, Nashville, 1982) 25.

⁴¹ Charles S. McCoy, “Council of Trent”, William H. Gentz (ed.), *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion* (Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1976) 1063.

⁴² Peter C. Phan, “Magisterium”, Michael Glazier – Monika K. Hellwig (ed.), *The Modern Catholic Encyclopedia*, 536.

⁴³ C. P. Ceroke, “Magisterium”, Paul Kevin Meagher- Thomas C- Sister Consuela Maria (ed.), *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Religion Vol- F-N*, 2209.

⁴⁴ R. Emmet Mclaughlin, “Council of Trent”, Richard P. McBrien (ed), *The Harpercollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, 1267.

⁴⁵ R. Emmet Mclaughlin, “Council of Trent”, Richard P. McBrien (ed), *The Harpercollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, 1267.

of solemn declarations by ecumenical councils are the Council of Trent's decree on justification and the First Vatican Council's definition of Papal infallibility.

1.3.1 Council of Trent

The Council of Trent was held between 1545 and 1563 in Trento (Trent).⁴⁷ It was one of the Roman Catholic Church's most important ecumenical councils.⁴⁸ The council of Trent was prompted by the Protestant Reformation.⁴⁹ The Trent council confidently speaks even uses harsh words for keeping the purity of the sacred Scripture.⁵⁰

After listing all the names of the books in the Holy Bible the council of Trent very strongly says in the fourth session that

“if, however, anyone should not accept as sacred and canonical these books in their entirety and with all their parts, as they have been customarily read in the Catholic Church and preserved in the ancient Latin Vulgate edition, and should knowingly and deliberately repudiate the aforesaid, traditions, let that one be anathema”.⁵¹

The Council Fathers used slightly cruel language about those who do not accept the Holy Bible as sacred and canonical.⁵² From these words of Fathers we are sure that Church firmly believed in the inerrancy of the sacred Scripture.

⁴⁶ Peter C. Phan, “Magisterium”, Michael Glazier – Monika K. Hellwig (ed.), *The Modern Catholic Encyclopedia*, 537.

⁴⁷ Charles S. McCoy, “Council of Trent”, William H. Gentz (ed.), *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*, 1063.

⁴⁸ R. Emmet Mclaughlin, “Council of Trent”, Richard P. McBrien (ed), *The Harpercollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, 1267.

⁴⁹ Joseph F. Kelly, “Ecumenical Council”, Michael Glazier – Monika K. Hellwig (ed.), *The Modern Catholic Encyclopedia*, 272.

⁵⁰ R. Emmet Mclaughlin, “Council of Trent”, Richard P. McBrien (ed), *The Harpercollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, 1267.

⁵¹ Dean P. Bechard (ed.), *The Scripture Document: An Anthology of Official Catholic Teachings*, (The Liturgical Press Collgeville, Minnesota, 2001) 4.

⁵² R. Emmet Mclaughlin, “Council of Trent”, Richard P. McBrien (ed), *The Harpercollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, 1267.

1.3.2 First Vatican Council

The Vatican Council was convoked by Pope Pius IX on 29 June 1868.⁵³ The first Vatican Council was the twentieth ecumenical council of the Catholic Church.⁵⁴ The council was formally opened on 8 December 1869 and adjourned on 20 October 1870.⁵⁵ *Dei Filius* is the incipit of the dogmatic constitution of the First Vatican Council on the Catholic faith, which was adopted unanimously, and issued by Pope Pius IX on 24 April 1870.⁵⁶ The constitution set forth the teaching of the holy Catholic Church on God, revelation and faith.⁵⁷

In the second chapter on revelation, the dogmatic constitution about sacred Scripture quite firmly states that

“These books the Church holds to be sacred and canonical, not because, having been composed by simple human industry, they were later approved by her own authority, nor merely because they contain revelation without error, but because, having been written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they have God for their author and were delivered as such to the Church”.⁵⁸

From these words we can have the conclusion that since the sacred Scripture is divinely inspired and God for their author it cannot fall into error.⁵⁹

⁵³ Austin Flannery O.P., “Vatican Council II” Michael Glazier – Monika K. Hellwig (ed.), *The Modern Catholic Encyclopedia*, 887.

⁵⁴ John Charles, “Vatican Council II”, William H. Gentz (ed.), *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*, 1084.

⁵⁵ Herman J. Pottmeyer, “Vatican Council II”, Richard P. McBrien (ed.), *The Harpercollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, 1296.

⁵⁶ Herman J. Pottmeyer, “Vatican Council II”, Richard P. McBrien (ed.), *The Harpercollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, 1297.

⁵⁷ John Charles, “Vatican Council II”, William H. Gentz (ed.), *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*, 1084.

⁵⁸ Dean P. Bechard (ed.), *The Scripture Document: An Anthology of Official Catholic Teachings*, 17.

⁵⁹ Hubert J. Richards, “Inerrancy of Scripture” Mabel Quin (ed.), *Virtue’s Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol- 2*, 531.

1.4 AN UNINVITED TWIST IN THE HISTORY

Till sixteenth century people believed that the Earth is the center of the universe and everything rotates around the Earth.⁶⁰ This geocentric theory was proposed by Aristotle and Ptolemy.⁶¹ But the Copernican revolution and the Galilean discovery had shaken the very base of the ancient geocentric theory of Aristotle and Ptolemy.⁶² Copernicus and Galileo proved with adequate evidences that the Sun is the center of the universe and every celestial object rotate around the Sun.⁶³

1.4.1 Copernican Revolution

Nicolas Copernicus (1473 – 1543) was a brilliant Catholic cleric from Poland.⁶⁴ For relaxation he started to observe the changes which occur in the sky with the naked eye.⁶⁵ From his observations Copernicus could find that the Sun is at the center and the Earth revolves around it while rotating on its axis daily.⁶⁶ Copernicus first outlined his ideas about the heliocentric theory in a manuscript titled *Commentariolus*.⁶⁷ There he suggested a heliostatic system, where the Sun was at the center of the universe and the Earth made rotations.⁶⁸

⁶⁰ I. Bernard Cohen, *Revolution in Science*, (The Belknap press of Harvard university press, London, 1985) 105.

⁶¹ I. Bernard Cohen, *Revolution in Science*, (The Belknap press of Harvard university press, London, 1985) 112.

⁶² A. Mark Smith. “Copernicus”, *The World Book Encyclopedia, Vol-4*, (World Book, Inc., Chicago, 2004, Vol-4) 1039.

⁶³ A. Mark Smith. “Copernicus”, *The World Book Encyclopedia, Vol-4*, 1039.

⁶⁴ David Even, “Copernicus”, Franzis Leiber (ed.), *Encyclopedia Americana Vol-7*, (Grolier Incorporated, Danburg, 1927) 755.

⁶⁵ C. A. R., “Copernicus”, Jorge Cauz (ed.), *Encyclopedia Britannica Vol-3*, (Helen Hemingway Benton Publisher, Chicago, 1974) 145.

⁶⁶ I. Bernard Cohen, *Revolution in Science*, (The Belknap press of Harvard university press, London, 1985) 107.

⁶⁷ I. Bernard Cohen, *Revolution in Science*, 111.

⁶⁸ David Even, “Copernicus”, Franzis Leiber (ed.), *Encyclopedia Americana Vol-7*, 755.

After much observations “Copernicus skillfully applied this idea in his master piece, on the revolutions of the heavenly spheres”⁶⁹ (“*De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium*”).⁷⁰ It was published in March 1543.⁷¹ In which he proposed a heliocentric cosmology, “according to him, the universe is not centered around the Earth, but that the Earth is actually a planet circling the Sun”.⁷² He died two months after publishing his research. “*De Revolutionibus*” initially met no resistance from the Catholic Church.⁷³ It was only in 1616, more than seventy years after Copernicus's book appeared that the Catholic Church officially condemned Heliocentrism as physically false and contrary to the Holy Bible.⁷⁴ The ban continued until 1757.⁷⁵

1.4.2 Galilean Controversy

Galileo Galilei was an Italian astronomer.⁷⁶ He was born in 1564.⁷⁷ He was a Catholic and a progressive thinker. He is known as the father of modern science.⁷⁸ Galileo played a major role in the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century.⁷⁹ Through a telescope, set in his garden, behind his house, Galileo saw the Milky Way, the valleys and mountains of the Moon etc.⁸⁰ Galileo, a good Catholic, offered infinite thanks to God for being so kind as to make him alone the first observer of marvels kept hidden

⁶⁹ A. Mark Smith, “Copernicus”, *The World Book Encyclopedia, Vol-4*, 1039.

⁷⁰ C. A. R., “Copernicus”, Jorge Cauz (ed.), *Encyclopedia Britannica Vol-3*, 146.

⁷¹ David Even, “Copernicus”, Franzis Leiber (ed.), *Encyclopedia Americana Vol-7*, 755.

⁷² Ammu Mathew, World of Science, *Tell Me Why*, Dec. 2015, Vol. 9, No: 12, p. 59.

⁷³ J. A. B., “Nicolaus Copernicus”, Mabel Quin (ed.), *Virtue’s Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol- 1*, 276.

⁷⁴ J. A. B., “Nicolaus Copernicus”, Mabel Quin (ed.), *Virtue’s Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol- 1*, 277.

⁷⁵ J. A. B., “Nicolaus Copernicus”, Mabel Quin (ed.), *Virtue’s Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol- 1*, 277.

⁷⁶ Stillman Drake, “Galileo”, Franzis Leiber (ed.), *Encyclopedia Americana Vol-12*, 240.

⁷⁷ James Brodrick S.J., *GALILEO: The Man, his Work, his Misfortunes*, (The Catholic Book Club, London, 1964) 14.

⁷⁸ Ravi Ravindra, “Galileo Galilei”, Mircea Eliade (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, (Macmillan Publishing Company, Detroit, 1987) 465.

⁷⁹ James Molloy, “Galileo”, Mabel Quin (ed.), *Virtue’s Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol- 2*, 433.

⁸⁰ I. Bernard Cohen, *Revolution in Science*, 136.

in obscurity for all previous centuries. Galileo began talking about his observations at dinner parties and in public debates in Florence.

In 1610, Galileo published a small book *Sidereus Nuncius* (Starry Messenger), which describes “that the planets, mercury and Venus, pass through phases just like Moon. Galileo argued that the only way they could do that is if they circled the Sun, and not the Earth”.⁸¹ With these observations he promoted the heliocentric theory of Nicolaus Copernicus (published in *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* in 1543)⁸². Heliocentrism, the theory that the Earth was a planet, which along with all the others revolved around the Sun, contradicted both Geocentrism and the prevailing theological support of the theory.⁸³

Galileo's initial discoveries were met with opposition within the Catholic Church.⁸⁴ Galileo compelled to answer certain Scripture passages, such as Joshua: 10:13, Psalms 93 and 104 and Ecclesiastes 1:5 which speaks of celestial motion and terrestrial stability⁸⁵. In 1611, Galileo visited Rome and exhibited the wonders of the telescope to the pontifical court.⁸⁶ He tried to produce scriptural confirmation of the view that the Earth went around the Sun.⁸⁷ The Church warned him that he should limit himself to study of the physical world and to avoid applying his ideas to theology.⁸⁸ In 1616 the Church condemned as absurd and heretical the view that the Earth moved around the

⁸¹ Ammu Mathew, *The Universe, Tell Me Why*, Oct. 2009, Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 20.

⁸² T. Early, “Galileo”, Paul Kevin Meagher- Thomas C- Sister Consuela Maria (ed.), *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Religion Vol- F-N*, 1439.

⁸³ James Molloy, “Galileo”, Mabel Quin (ed.), *Virtue's Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol- 2*, 433.

⁸⁴ James Molloy, “Galileo”, Mabel Quin (ed.), *Virtue's Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol- 2*, 433.

⁸⁵ T. Early, “Galileo”, Paul Kevin Meagher- Thomas C- Sister Consuela Maria (ed.), *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Religion Vol- F-N*, 1440.

⁸⁶ James Brodrick S.J., *GALILEO: The Man, his Work, his Misfortunes*, 55.

⁸⁷ John Gerard, “Galilei”, Charles G. Herbermann (ed.), *The Catholic Encyclopedia Vol-6*, 344.

⁸⁸ James Brodrick S.J., *GALILEO: The Man, his Work, his Misfortunes*, 64.

Sun, and the Church made expressions of this view forbidden reading.⁸⁹ Pope Paul V instructed Galileo to refrain from teaching the doctrine, and Galileo promised to obey.⁹⁰

Until the arrival of the heliocentric theory the Catholic Church has no doubt about the inerrancy of the sacred Scripture.⁹¹ Certain passages in the Holy Bible speak very distinctly about the geocentric theory such as Joshua 10:13, Psalms 93 and 104 and Ecclesiastes 1:5.⁹² Thus the Catholic Church could not digest the heliocentric theory of Copernicus and Galileo at the initial stage.⁹³ But when the latter scientists reasonably proved the heliocentric theory, the Catholic Church was forced to re-interpret the divine inspiration of sacred Scripture.

1.5 RE-INTERPRETATION OF DIVINE INSPIRATION

From the beginning of the Catholic Church onwards the Fathers without any doubt taught that Holy Bible is inerrant but after the Copernican revolution and Galilean controversy the Catholic Church changed her view about sacred Scripture. Holy Spirit took men as his instruments in writing, implying that some error could slip in, not indeed from the principal author, but from the inspired writers.⁹⁴

1.5.1 Second Vatican Council

Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican addresses the relations between the Catholic Church and the modern world.⁹⁵ The council formally opened under the

⁸⁹ T. Early, "Galileo", Paul Kevin Meagher- Thomas C- Sister Consuela Maria (ed.), *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Religion Vol- F-N*, 1440.

⁹⁰ John Gerard, "Galilei", Charles G. Herbermann (ed.), *The Catholic Encyclopedia Vol-6*, 345.

⁹¹ Leonard Doohan, "Biblical Inspiration", Michael Glazier – Monika K. Hellwig (ed.), *The Modern Catholic Encyclopedia*, 433.

⁹² T. Early, "Galileo", Paul Kevin Meagher- Thomas C- Sister Consuela Maria (ed.), *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Religion Vol- F-N*, 1440.

⁹³ John Gerard, "Galilei", Charles G. Herbermann (ed.), *The Catholic Encyclopedia Vol-6*, 344.

⁹⁴ J. Neuner, S. J.- J. Dupuis, S.J(ed.), *The Christian Faith: In The Doctrinal Documents Of The Catholic Church*, (Theological Publications In India, Bangalore, 1990) 83.

⁹⁵ James Molloy, "Vatican Council II", Mabel Quin (ed.), *Virtue's Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol- 3*, 1038.

pontificate of Pope John XXIII on 11 October 1962 and closed under Pope Paul VI on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception on 8 December 1965.⁹⁶ Dogmatic constitution on divine revelation (*Dei Verbum*) solemnly promulgated by his holiness pope Paul VI on November 18, 1965.⁹⁷ The council also focused the central role of Scripture in the life of the Church.

Regarding divine inspiration, the second Vatican council firmly states that “The divinely revealed realities, which are contained and presented in the text of sacred Scripture, have been written down under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit”.⁹⁸ The council speaks further that “To compose the sacred books, God chose certain men who, all the while he employed them in this task, made full use of their powers and faculties so that, though he acted in them and by them, it was as true authors that they consigned to writing whatever he wanted written and no more”.⁹⁹

Second Vatican council very clearly speaks that Holy Spirit inspired the authors and used their faculties to write. From these words we can come to the conclusion that the human faculties are used for converting the Word of God into human language.

1.5.2 Encyclicals

Here we are dealing with three encyclicals *Providentissimus Deus*, *Spiritus Paraclitus* and *Divino afflante Spiritu* which reinterprets the Catholic Church’s view about sacred Scripture.¹⁰⁰ Since the human faculties are used for writing the sacred

⁹⁶ James Molloy, “Vatican Council II”, Mabel Quin (ed.), *Virtue’s Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol- 3, 1039-1049.

⁹⁷ B. C. Marthaler, “Vatican Council II”, Paul Kevin Meagher- Thomas C- Sister Consuela Maria (ed.), *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Religion Vol- O-Z*, 3643.

⁹⁸ Austin Flannery O.P. (ed.), *Vatican Council II; Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*, (St. Paul’s Publications, Bombay, 2001) 668.

⁹⁹ Austin Flannery O.P. (ed.), *Vatican Council II; Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*, 668.

¹⁰⁰ Frederick E. Greenspahn (ed.), *Scripture in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*, (Abingdon, Nashville, 1982) 15.

Scripture the chances of arising error is normal because they wrote the sacred Scripture within their limited knowledge on science.

1.5.2.1. Providentissimus Deus

Providentissimus Deus, (On the Study of Holy Scripture), is an encyclical letter issued by Pope Leo XIII on 18 November 1893.¹⁰¹ In it, Pope reviewed the history of Bible study from the time of the Church Fathers to the present.¹⁰² He also addressed the issues of apparent contradictions between the Bible and physical science.¹⁰³

Pope Leo XIII notes that there are some men of physical science who scrutinize the Sacred Scriptures in order to detect a fault in matters that pertain to the sensible experience.¹⁰⁴ In response, the Pontiff explains that the sacred writers “sometimes describe and treat these matters (scientific matters) either in somewhat in a figurative language or as the common manner of speech those times required...”.¹⁰⁵ He continues that “it is futile to argue that the Holy Spirit took men as his instruments in writing, implying that some error could slip in, not indeed from the principal author, but from the inspired writers”.¹⁰⁶

1.5.2.2. Spiritus Paraclitus

Spiritus Paraclitus is the seventh Encyclical of Pope Benedict XV, which is published on 15 September 1920.¹⁰⁷ *Spiritus Paraclitus* advocates traditional exegesis

¹⁰¹ Dean P. Bechard (ed.), *The Scripture Document: An Anthology of Official Catholic Teachings*, 37.

¹⁰² J. Neuner, S. J.- J. Dupuis, S.J(ed.), *The Christian Faith: In The Doctrinal Documents Of The Catholic Church*, 73.

¹⁰³ J. Neuner, S. J.- J. Dupuis, S.J(ed.), *The Christian Faith: In The Doctrinal Documents Of The Catholic Church*, 73.

¹⁰⁴ Dean P. Bechard (ed.), *The Scripture Document: An Anthology of Official Catholic Teachings*, 38.

¹⁰⁵ J. Neuner, S. J.- J. Dupuis, S.J(ed.), *The Christian Faith: In The Doctrinal Documents Of The Catholic Church*, 82.

¹⁰⁶ J. Neuner, S. J.- J. Dupuis, S.J(ed.), *The Christian Faith: In The Doctrinal Documents Of The Catholic Church*, 83.

¹⁰⁷ Dean P. Bechard (ed.), *The Scripture Document: An Anthology of Official Catholic Teachings*, 81.

based on the method of St. Jerome and condemns the historico-critical method to the study of the Bible.¹⁰⁸ Through this Encyclical Pope educates the people that Holy Scripture were written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit “besides he has no doubts that the individual writers placed themselves freely at the service of the divine dictation according to each one’s nature and gifts”.¹⁰⁹ One more thing Pope wanted to make sure that “there are many things in Scripture concerning natural sciences, history, and the like, which cannot be reconciled with modern scientific progress”.¹¹⁰

1.5.2.3. *Divino Afflante Spiritu*

Divino afflante Spiritu (Inspired by the Holy Spirit) is a Papal Encyclical letter issued by Pope Pius XII on September 30, 1943.¹¹¹ This Encyclical inaugurated the modern period of Roman Catholic Bible studies by encouraging the study of textual criticism.¹¹² In the encyclical Pope states that Church was using Latin Vulgate version for a many centuries, “a use which proves this version to be entirely immune from any error in matters of faith and morals”.¹¹³ So that, as the Church herself testifies and confirms, it can be safely quoted, without least fear of erring, in disputations, public readings and sermons.

¹⁰⁸ J. Neuner, S. J.- J. Dupuis, S.J(ed.), *The Christian Faith: In The Doctrinal Documents Of The Catholic Church*, 77.

¹⁰⁹ J. Neuner, S. J.- J. Dupuis, S.J(ed.), *The Christian Faith: In The Doctrinal Documents Of The Catholic Church*, 84.

¹¹⁰ J. Neuner, S. J.- J. Dupuis, S.J(ed.), *The Christian Faith: In The Doctrinal Documents Of The Catholic Church*, 85.

¹¹¹ Dean P. Bechard (ed.), *The Scripture Document: An Anthology of Official Catholic Teachings*, 115.

¹¹² J. Neuner, S. J.- J. Dupuis, S.J(ed.), *The Christian Faith: In The Doctrinal Documents Of The Catholic Church*, 79.

¹¹³ Pope Pius XII, *Encyclical Letter: Divino Afflante Spiritu*, (London Catholic Truth Society, 1943) 16.

1.5.3 Theologians

Christian theology is the study of Christian belief and practice.¹¹⁴ Such study concentrates primarily upon the texts of the Old Testament, the New Testament and on Christian tradition.¹¹⁵ Theology helps the theologian to understand Christian tenets, to make comparisons between Christianity and other traditions, and to defend Christianity against objections and criticism.¹¹⁶ Some of the 19th century theologians re-interpreted the inerrancy of sacred Scripture in order to defend the scientific discoveries of the time.

1.5.3.1. Joseph Ratzinger (1927-)

Pope Benedict XVI (Joseph Aloisius Ratzinger) was a Pope from 2005 until his resignation in 2013. He has been well known in the Church as an accomplished theologian.¹¹⁷

“With respect to science and history, Ratzinger makes this point (divine inspiration) clear in his essay, *Exegesis and the Magisterium of the Church*. There he affirms that the relationship between the claims of scientific reason and the claims of the Scripture can never be settled once and for all, because the faith attested to by the Bible also involves the material world; the Bible still makes claims about his world, concerning its origin as a whole and man’s origin in particular. To exclude science or scientific content from Scripture absolutely, in other words, is effectively to abandon the notion of a single domain of truth and of the harmony between faith and reason.”¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ J. J. Mueller, “Biblical Theology”, Michael Glazier – Monika K. Hellwig (ed.), *The Modern Catholic Encyclopedia*, 860.

¹¹⁵ J. J. Mueller, “Biblical Theology”, Michael Glazier – Monika K. Hellwig (ed.), *The Modern Catholic Encyclopedia*, 860.

¹¹⁶ Robert Morgan, “Biblical Theology” R. J. Coggins – J. L. Houlden (ed.), *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*, (SCM Press, London, 1990) 87.

¹¹⁷ Mathew Illathuparampil, *The Contemporary Theologians*, (Asian Trading Corporation, Bangalore, 2006) 405.

¹¹⁸ <https://dlib.bc.edu/islandora/object/bc-ir:101389/datastream/PDF/download/citation>. (accessed on 18/9/2017)

1.5.3.2. Hans Kung (1928-)

Hans Kung is a Swiss Catholic priest, theologian, and author.¹¹⁹ He is notable for his rejection of the doctrine of papal infallibility.¹²⁰ Although Kung is not officially allowed to teach Catholic theology, his priestly faculties have not been revoked. About divine inspiration Kung writes that,

“First of all, to understand how Scripture is inspired, one must face the fact that the actual text of the Bible was written by people, some known, and some anonymous. Thus it is unequivocally man’s word collected, written down, given varied emphasis, sentence by sentence by quite definite individuals and developed in different ways. Hence it is not without shortcomings and mistakes, concealment and confusion, limitations and errors”.¹²¹

1.5.3.3. Avery Robert Dulles (1918 – 2008)

Avery Robert Dulles, S.J. was a Jesuit priest, theologian, and cardinal of the Catholic Church.¹²² He was an internationally known author and lecturer.¹²³ He understands the divine inspiration in a different manner that is,

“The Word of God is (even in the post-apostolic Church) a free decision and gift of God. The Bible, the Church, preaching, bear witness to revelation, but are not revelation; these can become the Word of God if Christ is pleased to speak through them. The Bible is not inerrant, because it was written by fallible men, but Christ can still be pleased to speak his Word through their fallible words. The truth given is not “it-truth” (i.e. propositional) but the truth of God asserting himself in Christ as judged and saved with us”.¹²⁴

¹¹⁹ Mathew Illathuparampil, *The Contemporary Theologians*, 279.

¹²⁰ Mathew Illathuparampil, *The Contemporary Theologians*, 279.

¹²¹ <http://widesky.biz/blog/2009/07/29/the-authority-and-inspiration-of-scripture-according-to-hans-kung-in-on-being-a-christian/> (accessed on 18/9/2017)

¹²² Mathew Illathuparampil, *The Contemporary Theologians*, 130.

¹²³ Mathew Illathuparampil, *The Contemporary Theologians*, 130.

¹²⁴ <https://theologiainvia.wordpress.com/2010/03/25/dulles-models-of-revelation/> (accessed on 18/9/2017)

1.5.3.4 Karl Barth (1886–1968)

Karl Barth was a Swiss Reformed theologian who is often regarded as the greatest Protestant theologian of the twentieth century.¹²⁵ Karl Barth beautifully presents his view on divine inspiration. He writes that

“We may again ask whether a proper emphasis on the human element of Scripture necessarily involves errancy in the historical or scientific material. It involves a general fallibility of the authors as such, i.e. apart from the special working of the Holy Spirit for this particular purpose. It also involves, perhaps, a limitation or restriction of knowledge. On scientific, historical, geographical and other factors the Bible only gives us such simple and largely generalized information as is necessary for its own purpose... the Bible may and does contain definite error, or that because our recognition of the inspiration of Scripture does not depend on its human infallibility, therefore we have to say almost *de fide* that it is humanly fallible.”¹²⁶

1.6 CONCLUSION

The early Church had no doubt about the inerrancy of sacred Scripture because they believed that the Holy Bible is Word of God thus there is no room for error in the Bible. During the medieval period the growth of science had reached at its pinnacle. The medieval period science paved way for people to question the inerrancy of sacred Scripture. Copernicus and Galileo had proven the Heliocentrism when Geocentrism was prevalent. The Catholic Church could not digest the heliocentric theory at its initial stage. The Church warned them not to propagate heliocentric theory in public. Later when the science reasonably proved Heliocentrism the Church was forced to reinterpret the divine inspiration.

¹²⁵ Mathew Illathuparampil, *The Contemporary Theologians*, 25.

¹²⁶ https://theologicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/inspiration_bromiley (accessed on 18/9/2017)

SECOND CHAPTER

A RE-READING OF JOSHUA: 10:12-13

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The book of Joshua is the first book in the historical books in the sacred Scripture. “The book of Josue narrates the fulfillment of the promise made by God to Abraham that his descendants should possess the land of Canaan.”¹²⁷ “It is generally agreed now that the events it records took place ca. 1250-1225 B. C.”¹²⁸ In this chapter I am trying to re-read the book of Joshua especially Joshua: 10:12- 13. Going into the deep of this passage let us find how the world looks at this verse and how the Church tries to explain this verse.

2.1. HISTORY OF JOSHUA

Joshua was the son of Nun.¹²⁹ He was born in Egypt, in the year 1355 BC. He belonged to the tribe of Ephraim. The name Joshua means “the Lord is salvation.”¹³⁰ The selection of this name was the first indication that Joshua was a type or picture of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Joshua was the first one who received oral law directly from Moses and transmitted it to the Elders of Israel. He was also the first leader of the Jews upon their own land. “After the death of Moses Joshua succeeded to the leadership of Israel and made plans for crossing into Canaan from the camp at Shittim.”¹³¹

¹²⁷ E. Power S.J., “Josue”, Dom Bernard Orchard (ed.), *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture, Vol-6*, (Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, London, 1953) 279.

¹²⁸ Joseph R. Sizoo, “The Book of Joshua”, George Arthur Buttrick (ed), *The Interpreters Bible*, (Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1984) 550.

¹²⁹ James Martin (trans.), “The Book of Joshua”, *Commentary on the Old Testament Vol.2*, (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1986)13.

¹³⁰ E.J. Joyce C.P.P.S., “Joshua”, Reginal C. Fuller (ed.), *A New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, (Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, London, 1969)282.

¹³¹ H. G. May, “Joshua”, Mathew Black (ed), *Peak’s Commentary on The Bible*, (Thomas Nelson LTD, Edinburg, 1962), 290.

2.1.1. Spy Work at Canaan (Joshua: 1:1- 2:24)

Joshua selected two brave and faithful men, Caleb and Phinehas, to cross the Jordan and to find out the feeling of the people of Canaan with regard to the coming war.¹³² The spies, disguised as potters, crossed the Jordan and reached Jericho, the first fortified city on the other side of the Jordan. There they met a woman called Rahab who lived right in the city wall. She was a renowned innkeeper whose inn the nobles of Jericho frequently met.

The king of Jericho got the news of the arrival of two spies sent by Joshua. The king sent word to Rahab to deliver them to his soldiers. When the soldiers came “they were hidden by Rahab under the stalks of flax.”¹³³ She told the king's messengers that two strangers did come to her inn, but they looked like potters and sold earthenware. Nobody noticed them, and before closing the city gate, they left.

After sending away the king's messengers, Rahab went up to the roof and told Caleb and Phinehas that all the inhabitants of the land were in terror of the children of Israel, because they heard the miraculous way they defeated the mighty kings of Sihon and Og.¹³⁴ She also added that as soon as they had heard it, their hearts started to melt, and there did not remain any more spirit in any man, because of you, for God your God, He is God in heaven above and on Earth beneath. She told them honestly and sincerely. Then Rahab begged them that just as she had saved their lives, they should save her life and the lives of the members of her family when the Jericho falls into the hands of the children of Israel.

¹³² E.J. Joyce C.P.P.S., “Joshua”, Reginal C. Fuller (ed.), *A New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, 283.

¹³³ A. Plummer, “Historical Books: Joshua to Nehemiah”, H.D.M. Spence (ed), *The Pulpit Commentary*, (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1849) 31.

¹³⁴ Joseph R. Sizoo, “The Book of Joshua”, George Arthur Buttrick (ed), *The Interpreters Bible*, 560.

The spies promised her that they will save her. “Certain tokens were agreed upon for the performance of this promise, and then the spies departed, hid themselves in the mountains, thus escaping pursuit, and finally returned in safety to Joshua.”¹³⁵

2.1.2. Jordan Becomes Dry (Joshua: 3:1- 5:15)

First the priests, bearing the Holy Ark, stepped into the Jordan. The Jordan at that time was deep and overflowing, but when the feet of the priests touched the water, then the water of the Jordan was divided and stood up like a huge wall, which grew higher and higher as the water streamed down from the upper Jordan.¹³⁶ The centre of the river was dry and the children of Israel crossed it comfortably. “The crossing complete, the priests cross with the ark, and as soon as they have reached the dry land on the other side the waters flow as before.”¹³⁷

2.1.3. Conquest and Division of the Land (Joshua: 6:1- 22:34)

The place where the Jews encamped on the western bank of the Jordan was named Gilgal, and Joshua erected there a monument of twelve stones taken from the river Jordan to commemorate the great miracle of the crossing.¹³⁸ They offered there the Paschal sacrifice for the first time upon the soil of the Promised Land, and they duly brought the 'Omer', and thereafter they ate the product of the land. The manna had already stopped on the day of Moses' death.

“The men of war, followed by seven priests bearing seven trumpets and the ark, and they, in their turn, by the rest of the people, were to march round it seven times.”¹³⁹ “The Jericho city fell when the Israelites marched around it the thirteenth time in procession, led by the priests bearing the ark.”¹⁴⁰ Joshua was told by Yahweh that nothing

¹³⁵ A. Plummer, “Historical Books: Joshua to Nehemiah”, H.D.M. Spence (ed), *The Pulpit Commentary*, 37.

¹³⁶ H. G. May, “Joshua”, Mathew Black (ed), *Peak's Commentary on The Bible*, 290.

¹³⁷ A. Plummer, “Historical Books: Joshua to Nehemiah”, H.D.M. Spence (ed), *The Pulpit Commentary*, 32.

¹³⁸ H. G. May, “Joshua”, Mathew Black (ed), *Peak's Commentary on The Bible*, 290.

¹³⁹ A. Plummer, “Historical Books: Joshua to Nehemiah”, H.D.M. Spence (ed), *The Pulpit Commentary*, 32.

¹⁴⁰ H. G. May, “Joshua”, Mathew Black (ed), *Peak's Commentary on The Bible*, 290.

should be taken from the Jericho city as your possession but Achan did the opposite. Achan was found guilty and Achan is burnt, with all his family and goods.¹⁴¹ After completing all the conquests Joshua divided the land to twelve tribes.¹⁴²

2.1.4. Joshua's Farewell (Joshua: 23:1- 24:33)

When Joshua felt that his task was well almost done, and he was about to leave his beloved people, “Joshua gathers all the tribes together one last time to hear his farewell speech.”¹⁴³ He gave them his last advice and instructions with regard to the leadership of Israel, which they were to assume after him.

Then he called a great national assembly in Shechem to bid farewell to his beloved people. He told them the whole history of Israel from the days of Abraham, and urged them to remain firm in their allegiance to God and to the Torah. Finally he asked the people: “Choose you this day whom you will serve, as for me and my house, we will serve God?”¹⁴⁴ And all the people answered unhesitatingly: "God forbid that we should forsake God! We shall forever remain faithful to our God and our Torah!"

Then Joshua made a covenant with the people, and set up a huge stone as a monument and witness of the Jews' firm determination to serve God and observe the Torah and commandments. Two years later, at the age of 110 Joshua died and was buried in his own estate in Timnath- Serach, in mount Ephraim. His leadership of his people lasted for 28 years.¹⁴⁵

2.2. THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

Moses liberated the people of God but he could not bring them to Canaan. Joshua led the people to the destination. The real hero of the book is Joshua himself. For going

¹⁴¹ A. Plummer, “Historical Books: Joshua to Nehemiah”, H.D.M. Spence (ed), *The Pulpit Commentary*, 33.

¹⁴² H. G. May, “Joshua”, Mathew Black (ed), *Peak’s Commentary on The Bible*, 290.

¹⁴³ Robert B. Coote, “The Book of Joshua”, Leander E. Keck (ed.), *The New Interpreter’s Bible, Vol-2*, (Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1994) 709.

¹⁴⁴ A. Plummer, “Historical Books: Joshua to Nehemiah”, H.D.M. Spence (ed), *The Pulpit Commentary*, 37.

¹⁴⁵ A. Plummer, “Historical Books: Joshua to Nehemiah”, H.D.M. Spence (ed), *The Pulpit Commentary*, 37.

deep into the book of Joshua at first we should know the audience of the book of Joshua, its date of writing and the author of the book.

2.2.1. Audience of the Book of Joshua

The book of Joshua is not written at a stretch it has taken many stages to complete the work.¹⁴⁶ “The process of editing would be the work of centuries; so that Joshua appeared in its final form around the time of the exile (587 BC).”¹⁴⁷ If the book is to be dated in this late time, then it was for encouraging the exiles to keep firm faith in the days of suffering and pain.¹⁴⁸

2.2.2. Date of Writing the Book of Joshua

Some scholars say that it is not Pentateuch but Hexateuch including the book of Joshua because the first six books are written in the same period of time.¹⁴⁹ But some other scholars are having the view that the book of Joshua was written between 600 and 200 year BC.¹⁵⁰ “It was composed obviously after the reformation of Josiah in 621, perhaps in more than one stage, and its final date may have been during the exile or just after the return from exile.”¹⁵¹ “The process of editing would be the work of centuries; so that Joshua appeared in its final form around the time of the exile (587 BC).”¹⁵²

When we read the book of Joshua thoroughly we can come to know that the book is composite and it came long time after Joshua. “Hints of later origin are found in the recurrent phrase ‘to this day’ (4:9, 5:9, 6:25, 7:26, etc.) or in the reference to a source book, ‘The Book of Jashar’ (10:12, 13).”¹⁵³

¹⁴⁶ Robert B. Coote, “The Book of Joshua”, Leander E. Keck (ed.), *The New Interpreter’s Bible, Vol-2*, 556.

¹⁴⁷ H. G. May, “Joshua”, Mathew Black (ed), *Peak’s Commentary on The Bible*, 289.

¹⁴⁸ H. G. May, “Joshua”, Mathew Black (ed), *Peak’s Commentary on The Bible*, 289.

¹⁴⁹ H. G. May, “Joshua”, Mathew Black (ed), *Peak’s Commentary on The Bible*, 289.

¹⁵⁰ Robert B. Coote, “The Book of Joshua”, Leander E. Keck (ed.), *The New Interpreter’s Bible, Vol-2*, 557.

¹⁵¹ H. G. May, “Joshua”, Mathew Black (ed), *Peak’s Commentary on The Bible*, 289.

¹⁵² H. G. May, “Joshua”, Mathew Black (ed), *Peak’s Commentary on The Bible*, 289.

¹⁵³ H. G. May, “Joshua”, Mathew Black (ed), *Peak’s Commentary on The Bible*, 289.

2.2.3. Authorship of the Book of Joshua

The tradition holds the view that the book of Joshua is written by Joshua himself. But the modern scholars questioned this idea because the death of Joshua is described in the Book. The Bible scholars say that it is very difficult to attribute any author to the book of Joshua. “Dr.Lightfoot thinks that Phinehas wrote it.”¹⁵⁴ First it was in oral tradition later it was made book, and then it was given theological insight.¹⁵⁵

2.3. SCIENCE OF THE TIME

Here we are dealing with the science especially cosmology, during the time when the book of Joshua is written. We have already seen that the book of Joshua was composed between 600 and 200 years BC.¹⁵⁶ Thus we must go after the science during this period. In those days “the world and reality were expressed in terms of mythos, through myths,”¹⁵⁷ even though, the Greeks who lived in the ancient world tried to explain the planet Earth and its position in the universe. Let us see the sciences which Jews and their neighboring countries held during the ancient era.

2.3.1. Pagans

Almost all the neighboring countries of Jews were having their own sciences either they go after the cosmos or the myths gave certain irrational beliefs about the world. For example “the Ionian philosophers of the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. devoted so much attention to cosmological problems”¹⁵⁸ whereas “the Babylonians constructed Ziggurats and observed the movements of the heavenly bodies in order to detect and predict the future.”¹⁵⁹ Here I am explaining only the sciences of Greeks and Babylons because Jews were mostly influenced by these two nations.

¹⁵⁴ Mathew Henry, “An Exposition of The Book of Joshua”, Leslie F. Church (ed.), *Commentary on The Whole Bible*, (Port City Bible Company, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1972) 210.

¹⁵⁵ E.J. Joyce C.P.P.S., “Joshua”, Reginal C. Fuller (ed.), *A New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, 282.

¹⁵⁶ Robert B. Coote, “The Book of Joshua”, Leander E. Keck (ed.), *The New Interpreter’s Bible, Vol-2*, 258.

¹⁵⁷ Mathew Chandrankunnel, *Cosmosophy, Physics & Philosophy of the Cosmos* (Dharmaram Publications, Bangalore, 2014) 17.

¹⁵⁸ R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of Nature* (Oxford University Press, New York, 1976) 29.

¹⁵⁹ Mathew Chandrankunnel, *Cosmosophy, Physics & Philosophy of the Cosmos*, 17.

2.3.1.1. Greek Philosophy

Philosophy originated in ancient Greece during the 500's BC.¹⁶⁰ In those days "physics and astronomy were included as parts of philosophy, whereas now they constitute separate sciences."¹⁶¹ The Greek philosophy starts with Thales and no one did know whether they had any philosopher before Thales. Let us peep into the philosophies of ancient Greeks.

2.3.1.1.1. Thales (ca. 624-548 B.C.)

Thales is the first Greek philosopher lived in the city of Miletus on the Ionian coast.¹⁶² Besides being a philosopher he was also an astronomer, geometrician, engineer and politician.¹⁶³ He probably never wrote anything and we do not have any work of Thales. But we know him through the writings of Aristotle and other philosophers. "For him Earth is superimposed on water (apparently regarding it as a flat floating)."¹⁶⁴

2.3.1.1.2. Anaximander (ca. 610-546 B.C.)

Anaximander was the disciple of Thales.¹⁶⁵ He lived in Miletus. "He was eminent for his astronomical and geographical knowledge, and in this connection was the first to construct a map."¹⁶⁶ His book on Nature is said to be the first philosophical work written in Greece.¹⁶⁷ According to him, "The Earth is not a disc, but a short cylinder like the drum of a pillar."¹⁶⁸

2.3.1.1.3. Anaximenes(Ca.585-525 B.C.)

Anaximenes was a citizen of Miletus and he is supposed to be a disciple of Anaximander.¹⁶⁹ He wrote a prose work "On Nature" of which only a fragment is left.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁰Ronald P. Legon, "Philosophy", *The Word Book Encyclopedia*, vol. 8 (World book, Inc., Chicago, 2004) 369.

¹⁶¹ W. T. Stace, *A Critical History of Greek Philosophy*, (The Macmillan Press Limited, London, 1996) 1.

¹⁶² W. T. Stace, *A Critical History of Greek Philosophy*, 20.

¹⁶³ Thomas Vellilamthadam, *Greek Wisdom* (Oriental Institute Publications, Kottayam, 1981) 16.

¹⁶⁴ Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, (The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland, 1962) 38.

¹⁶⁵ Thomas Vellilamthadam, *Greek Wisdom*, 19.

¹⁶⁶ W. T. Stace, *A Critical History of Greek Philosophy*, 24.

¹⁶⁷ W. T. Stace, *A Critical History of Greek Philosophy*, 24.

¹⁶⁸ Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, 41.

¹⁶⁹ Thomas Vellilamthadam, *Greek Wisdom*, 20.

¹⁷⁰W. T. Stace, *A Critical History of Greek Philosophy*, 28.

He kept the view about the Earth is “As with Thales, the Earth is conceived as flat. It floats on the air like a leaf.”¹⁷¹

2.3.1.1.4. Pythagoras (Ca.580-496 B.C.)

Pythagoras was born in the island of Samos on the Ionian coast.¹⁷² He left no writings. In fact Pythagoras was not a professional philosopher, rather he was considered as an inspired prophet. He founded a religious society, and his scientific and religious activities as well as these of his followers contributed to the growth of philosophy.¹⁷³ “To the Pythagoreans, not only was the Earth spherical, but it is not the centre of the universe. The Earth and the planets revolve—along with the Sun—round the central fire or hearth of the universe (which is identified with the number one). (According to Aristotle—*De Caelo*, 293, a 25-7—the Pythagoreans did not deny Geocentrism in order to explain phenomena, but from arbitrary reasons of their own)”¹⁷⁴

2.3.1.1.5. Leucippus (370 B.C.)

Leucippus of Miletus was the founder of atomist school.¹⁷⁵ He was the member of school of Parmenides and he was the disciple of Zeno. “The atomist philosophy is really the logical development of the philosophy of Empedocles.”¹⁷⁶ “In his detailed scheme of the world, Leucippus somewhat reactionary, rejecting the Pythagorean view of the spherical character of the Earth and returning, like Anaxagoras, to the view of Anaximenes, that the Earth is like a tambourine floating in the air.”¹⁷⁷

2.3.1.1.6. Aristotle (384-322 B.C.)

Aristotle was born in Stragira in northern Greece and he was a disciple of Plato.¹⁷⁸ Aristotle is a realist and he is fascinated by physics and biology. Aristotle advice the people to keep their eyes open and look around. In 335 he went to Athens and set up a

¹⁷¹ Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, 43.

¹⁷² Thomas Vellilamthadam, *Greek Wisdom*, 24.

¹⁷³ W. T. Stace, *A Critical History of Greek Philosophy*, 32.

¹⁷⁴ Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, 52.

¹⁷⁵ Thomas Vellilamthadam, *Greek Wisdom*, 42.

¹⁷⁶ Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, 90.

¹⁷⁷ Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, 92.

¹⁷⁸ Thomas Vellilamthadam, *Greek Wisdom*, 117.

school of philosophy at the Lyceum.¹⁷⁹ Aristotle believed that “the movements of stars were circular, i.e. ellipsoidal, and that Earth was the centre of the universe.”¹⁸⁰

2.3.1.2. BABYLON WISDOM

When the Greek philosophy was flourishing, the Babylonians were under the bondage of irrational myths. We cannot find a proper philosophy or astronomy in the ancient Babylonian world. People were blindly following the myths of the time. “In the Babylonian conception of the universe the Earth occupied the central place. It was the accepted centre of their planetary system. Like the quadrilateral temple modelled after it, the Earth of the Babylonians was four-cornered.”¹⁸¹ It was “a flat circular Earth floating above a freshwater sea, surrounded by a saltwater sea, with a solid sky-dome above.”¹⁸²

2.3.2. Jewish science

In a strict sense we can say that there was no philosophy or astronomy in the land of Jews in the ancient times. Israelites were always busy with wars and as slaves. Thus they did not get any time to propagate any science or philosophy. Also one thing we should not forget that their sacred Scripture was science and their belief was philosophy. Even though, they had philosophies and sciences through the contacts with other neighboring countries. “Roughly from 300 B.C.E to 300 C.E., a period during which the Jews were in close contact with the two great peoples of the west, the Greeks and the still not fully Christianized Romans.”¹⁸³

The conquest of Alexander introduced the period of Hellenistic culture in the Jewish land, which is commonly dated from about 300 to 100 B.C.E.¹⁸⁴ The impact of Hellenism upon the Jews made a cultural exchange between east and the west.¹⁸⁵ The Jews kept their believes as sacred so they always stood away from other philosophies and

¹⁷⁹ W. T. Stace, *A Critical History of Greek Philosophy*, 32.

¹⁸⁰ Thomas Vellilamthadam, *Greek Wisdom*, 159.

¹⁸¹ <http://www.sacred-texts.com/earth/boe/boe10.htm> (accessed on 2/11/2017)

¹⁸² <http://www.crystalinks.com/enumaelish.html> (accessed on 22/11/2017)

¹⁸³ Ralph Marcus, *Hellenistic Age, Great Ages and Ideas of the Jewish People*, (The Modern Library, New York, 1956) 96.

¹⁸⁴ Ralph Marcus, *Hellenistic Age, Great Ages and Ideas of the Jewish People*, 97.

¹⁸⁵ Ralph Marcus, *Hellenistic Age, Great Ages and Ideas of the Jewish People*, 96.

sciences in order to keep their faith's purity but Greek philosophy was in a way closer to Jewish belief in certain extent thus "they were closer to Greece than to the orient."¹⁸⁶

From this we can draw the conclusion that somehow the Hellenistic culture influenced the Holy Bible a lot at least it influenced the Greek Bible because it was written during the time between 320- 200 B.C.

2.4. EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT JOSHUA: 10:12-13.

Biblical exegesis is the explanation of a passage or a book of the Bible.¹⁸⁷ "Since the sacred Scriptures are divinely inspired books, the purpose of biblical exegesis is to set forth and explain their full thoughts not only as human documents but also as writings containing God's Word, God's Revelation."¹⁸⁸ Catholic and protestant commentaries on Joshua: 10:12-13 is briefly explained here in order to get deep knowledge about this controversial passage.

2.4.1. CATHOLIC COMMENTARIES

Catholic commentaries are the biblical exegesis made by Catholics. Catholic Bible scholars always interpret sacred Scripture in the Catholic perspective. "The primary goal, however, is to arrive at biblical truths and values by an unbiased use of exegesis and hermeneutics."¹⁸⁹ Let us evaluate how the Catholic commentators approach this particular Bible verse.

2.4.1.1 Prolonged Daylight

The book of Joshua with a commentary is written by Joseph J. De Vault, S.J. The author specially concentrated on the book of Joshua in this commentary. The book contains Bible passages together with its explanation. The author says, this particular verse is poetic.

¹⁸⁶ Ralph Marcus, *Hellenistic Age, Great Ages and Ideas of the Jewish People*, 96.

¹⁸⁷ L. F. Hartman, "Biblical Exegesis", *New Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. V*, (Jack Heraty & associates, Inc., Palatine, 1981) 707.

¹⁸⁸ L. F. Hartman, "Biblical Exegesis", *New Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. V*, 707.

¹⁸⁹ F.F.B., "Biblical Exegesis and Hermeneutics", *The New Encyclopedia Britannica, vol. 7* (Helen Hemingway Benton, Publisher, Chicago, 1984) 60.

Josue 10-7- 15 has cause no little trouble to readers in the past, particularly verses 12-15, the “Sun-miracle.” In explanation of the text, we should remark first of all, that we have here two views of the battle. The first is in prose (verses 7-11) and records the fact of the great victory achieved with Yahweh’s help in the form of a mighty hailstorm. The second is poetic (verses 12-14) and gives Josue famous war cry apostrophizing the Sun and the Moon. This is followed by and editors comment.

Attempts have been made even in modern times to explain the Sun’s standing still on the basis of a prolonged daylight due to refraction of light, or as a meteor shower or some other such phenomenon. These pseudo-scientific explanations collapse of their own tortured weight. Happily they are being replaced by a sane exegesis which recognizes the passage for what it is a highly poetic version of an emotionally charged cry of Josue, who hoped for time, for daylight, in which to crush the enemy utterly. The enemy was crushed, so the time was granted, and this is expressed poetically in verse 13a, prosaically in verse 13b.¹⁹⁰

In this commentary the author tries to give two explanations for the Sun’s standing still. In the first explanation the author says it is a poetic expression and in the second he gives a scientific explanation for this that is it may be a prolonged daylight due to refraction of light.

2.4.1.2 Lord Fought for Israel

A biblical- theological commentary is written by Leslie Hoppe, O.F.M. This commentary specially focuses on two Old Testament books such as Joshua and Judges. The book also contains Bible passages together with its explanations. Let us go in to the deep of this commentary and find its meaning.

The belief that the lord fought for Israel is given graphic illustration through the mention of two miracles. The miracle of hailstones (v. 11) is integrated into the prose account of the battle. The miracle of the Sun (vv. 12-14) is recounted by means of a quotation from the poetry found in the book of Jashar (the righteous). This book, which has not survived, was apparently a text celebrating heroic achievements (cf., 2 Sam 1:18). As a poetic celebration of the divine help given to Israel, vv. 12b-13 are similar to the song of Moses (Exod 15) and the song of Deborah (Judg 5). Recounting these miracles serves to reinforce

¹⁹⁰ Joseph J. De Vault, S. J., *The Book of Josue With a Commentary*, (Paulist Press, New York, 1960) 20.

the belief that Israel is invincible when God takes her side. According to the ideology of holy war, it is God's might—not Israel's—which brings victory.¹⁹¹

The *Biblical- Theological Commentary* tries to present a new interpretation for the standing still of Sun. This commentary speaks that it is a poetic celebration of the divine help given to Israel. Besides this commentary very briefly explains the ideology of holy war, it is God's might, not Israel's which brings victory. This author is not willing to give a scientific explanation to this passage.

2.4.1.3 Poem from the Book of Jashar

A New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture is a commentary which is done by many Catholic Bible scholars of twentieth century. The general editor of this commentary is Rev. Reginald C. Fuller. This Catholic biblical commentary touches the entire corner of the Holy Bible.

The 'miracle of the Sun' has been taken as literal fact or pseudo-scientifically explained, eg. the passage means that the Sun cease to give heat that would debilitate the men of Israel; or, the Sun did not actually stand still, but its light was refracted by the hailstones thus prolonging daylight. It is generally recognized today that all such interpretations are unnecessary. These vv are in fact a second description of the victory at Gibeon, this time in poetic language. This is indicated both by the fact that the Heb. text itself has a poetic structure and that it is quotation from the book of Jashar, an ancient collection of poetry (2 Sam 1:18). In such poetry the action of God is often described and highlighted by striking natural phenomena (Ps 68 (67); 18.....) this is soaring, imaginative language and one does an injustice to the poet by interpreting it in a wooden, literal way. Particularly pertinent here are Jg 4 and 5. The battle of Barak and Sisera is described in prose (4) then repeated in poetic language in the ancient canticle of Deborah where God is pictured as advancing before his armies and 'the Earth quaked and the heavens were shaken, while the clouds sent down showers, mountains trembled in the presence of the lord' (4-5) and 'from heaven fought the stars, from their courses they fought against Sisera' (5:20). 14 this verse prosaically states the central point: the lord fought for Israel.¹⁹²

¹⁹¹ Leslie Hoppe, O.F.M, *Joshua, Judges*, (Michael Glazier, INC., Wilmington, Delaware, 1982) 66.

¹⁹² E.J. Joyce C.P.P.S., "Joshua", Reginald C. Fuller (ed.), *A New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, 287.

A New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture tries to place a different view about the Bible passage Joshua: 10:12 to the heart of the faithful. The commentator of Joshua firmly states that Joshua 10: 12 is written in a poetic language thus it is injustice to the poet by interpreting this passage in a wooden, literal way. The author of the commentary is not ready to give any scientific explanation for this passage because the Bible itself speaks that these verses are from the book of Jashar.

2.4.1.4 Total Eclipse of the Sun

Anchor Bible is a biblical commentary written by a group of Bible scholars from various Christian denominations including Catholic Bible scholars. The anchor Bible is entirely different from other commentaries because it gives word by word explanation using original Hebrew and Greek words. But here I am only paraphrasing the commentary.

The essential preoccupation here is the thought of Yahweh's responsiveness to a human voice. The word '*Then*' in the archaic poetry of Judges 5, this particle is used repeatedly, and elsewhere it is used in Num 21:17 and 1 Kgs 8:12 to introduce poetic fragments. The particle *then* occurs nine times in Joshua and six of those passages are clearly in material that is shown on other grounds to be the editorial contribution of Dtr 2 (8:30; 14:10, 11; 20:6; 22:1, 31).

Many have thought that somewhere in the background of this poem is the experience of a total eclipse of the Sun. More recently, a date has been fixed by J. F. A. Sawyer, "Joshua 10:12-14 and the Solar Eclipse of 30 September 1131 B.C." And still more recently, reinforcing Sawyer's approach, it has been urged that "the sudden disappearance of the last rays of the Sun seems to have an almost hypnotic effect on unsuspecting witnesses, making the very few minutes of totality seem like hours (and thus giving the impression of the Sun standing still in the sky, for a corresponding length of time)." F. R. Stephenson, "Astronomical Verification and Dating of Old Testament Passages Referring to Solar Eclipses." The most serious problem with such astronomical explanations of the poem is the tension which remains with the meteorological phenomena in v 11.

Comparison with Assyrian astronomical texts, where the simultaneous appearance in the sky of Sun and Moon can mean a good omen, has brought a genuine advance in understanding the poem. On this view, it is argued, the first

part of the poetic excerpt resembles a prayer or incantation that the two great luminaries will stand in opposition on a day favorable to Israel.¹⁹³

At first the commentator writes that Joshua 10:12, 13. are poetic fragments which is taken from the book of Jashar. But latter he scientifically explains that the background of this poem is the experience of a total eclipse of the Sun. Also the author portrays that may be the meteorological phenomena caused the Sun to dim its light. At the end the commentator speaks about something very strange for the other commentaries that is when the Sun and Moon comes together it is a good omen. It was the view kept by Assyrians which can be seen in the Assyrian astronomical texts.

2.4.2. PROTESTANT COMMENTARIES

Protestant Bible commentaries are the biblical exegesis written by protestant Bible scholars. The protestant Bible scholars will interpret sacred Scripture only in their own protestant perspective. Anyway they interpret the Bible in order to take out the biblical truth which is hidden in the Bible.¹⁹⁴ Let us have look at various protestant Bible commentaries which speaks about Joshua: 10:12-13.

2.4.2.1. The Sun and the Moon Stood Still

One Volume Bible Commentary is a protestant commentary written by William Neil. This commentary covers the entire Bible. William Neil does not go deep into the sacred Scripture rather he stands only in the peripheral level. We do not get a detailed explanation from this commentary but get comparatively a good explanation.

By a cunning stratagem the inhabitants of Gibeon save themselves from destruction, but are condemned to menial duties in the Temple yet unbuilt (9; 1-27.) to protect them against the resentment of neighbouring chiefs, Joshua fights a mighty battle in which Israel's arms ate less decisive than divine intervention in the form of giant hailstones and an abnormally long day or night. "The Lord fought for Israel" (10. 14). It is implied that with the defeat of this coalition resistance crumpled in the; south and the whole of the Negeb as well as the hill towns now fell into Joshua's hands (10; 1-42). The triumphal progress continued

¹⁹³ Robert G. Boling- G. Ernest Wright, *Joshua- A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, (The Anchor Bible Doubleday, New York, 1982) 282,283,284.

¹⁹⁴ F.F.B., "Biblical Exegesis and Hermeneutics", *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, vol. 7, 60.

northwards until from Hebron in the south to Hermon in the north, all the land that Moses saw from Moab was in Israel's power. No quarter had been given. The Canaanites were virtually annihilated their cities sacked. "So Joshua took the whole land.....and gave it for an inheritance unto Israel.... And the land rested from war (11: 1-23).¹⁹⁵

According to William Neil it was a long day or night when Joshua fought against Amorites. He used the Bible to state that the lord fought for Israel. William Neil does not say anything about the book of Jashar and the poetic nature of the text. Then let us conclude that William Neil believed that it was actually happened in the history that the Sun and the Moon stood still.

2.4.2.2 An Added Poem

Peake's Commentary on the Bible is a protestant commentary written by several protestant Bible scholars. Mathew Black is served as the general editor of this commentary. *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* gives only a little explanation about Joshua: 10:12-13.

"The implication of the poem is that the Sun stood still in the east and the Moon in the west. The Dueteronomist makes the poem the words of Joshua, but the poem itself is non-committal as to the speaker. 'The book of Jashar' is also quoted in 2nd Sam: 1:18 and in the LXX of 1st king: 8:53. It was apparently a collection of poems. Compare the book of the wars of the lord (Num.21:14). The poem is interpreted to mean that the Sun delayed its setting for a whole day, and that it was in the zenith of the heavens rather than the east when it stood still."¹⁹⁶

The commentator of *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* writes that the book of Joshua is written by a Dueteronomist and he added the poem which is in the book of Jashar to the book of Joshua. This commentary is simply going away from the real meaning of the text.

2.4.2.3 Criticism Against the Idolaters

Commentary on the Whole Bible is a Commentary written by Matthew Henry. For two hundred and fifty years Mathew Henry's Bible commentary has been the most

¹⁹⁵ William Neil, *William Neil's One Volume Commentary*, (Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1962) 147.

¹⁹⁶ H. G. May, "Joshua", Mathew Black (ed), *Peak's Commentary on The Bible*, 297.

widely used of all Bible commentaries. Now I am following the edited version of this commentary.

Now, *first*, it looked great for Joshua to say, Sun stand thou still. His ancestor Joseph had indeed dreamed that the Sun and Moon did homage to him; but who would have thought that, after it had been fulfilled in the figure, it should be again fulfilled in the letter to one of his posterity? He bids the Sun stand still upon Gibeon, the place of action and the seat of war, intimating that what he designed in this request was the advantage of Israel against their enemies; it is probable that the Sun was now declining, and here he mentions the valley of Ajalon, which was near to Gibeon, because there he was at that time, *secondly*, it was bold indeed to say before so before Israel, and argues a very strong assurance of faith.

The wonderful answer to this prayer. No sooner said than done (v. 13): *the Sun stood still, and the Moon staid*. The same God that rules in heaven above rules at the same time on this Earth, and, when he pleases, even *the heavens shall hear the Earth*, as here. Concerning this great miracle it is here said, *that it continued a whole day, that is*, the Sun continued as long again above the horizon as otherwise it would have done. That hereby the people had full time to avenge themselves of their enemies, and to give them a total defeat. Note, sometimes God completes a great salvation in a little time, and makes but one day's work of it. This is said to be written *in the book of jashar*, a collection of state- poems, in which the poem made upon this occasion was preserved among the rest. Those words, *Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou Moon in the valley of Ajalon*, sounding metrical, are supposed to be taken from the native of this event as it was found in the book of Jashar. The Sun, the eye of the world, must be fixed for some hours upon Gibeon and the valley of Ajalon, as if to complete the great works of God there for Israel, and so to engage the children of men to look that way, and to *enquire of this wonder done in the land*. He would hereby convince and confound those idolators that worshipped the Sun and the Moon and gave divine honours to them, by demonstrating that they were subject to the command of God of Israel. This miracle is signified that in the latter days, when the light of the world was tending towards a night of darkness, the *Sun of righteousness*, even our Joshua, should arise give check to the approaching night, and be the true light.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁷ Mathew Henry, "An Exposition of the Book of Joshua", Leslie F. Church (ed.), *Commentary on The Whole Bible*, 226.

The Matthew Henry's commentary gives a different picture about the Sun's standing still. The commentator draws that what Joshua's ancestor Joseph had dreamed that the Sun and Moon did homage to him; that is exactly happened at the time of Joshua. Matthew Henry in a way accepts that it was happened in the history that God heard the prayer of Joshua and made the Sun and Moon to stay still. Even though he clearly speaks about the poetic nature of the event which is taken from the book of Jashar. At last he says this text is a strong criticism against the idolators who worships Sun and Moon through demonstrating that they were subject to the command of God of Israel.

2.4.2.4 Poem and Prose

The New Interpreters Bible is a twelve volume commentary. This is one of the reliable commentaries in the post modern world. The whole Bible is explained in this commentary in a beautiful manner. The book of Joshua is commented by Robert B. Coote.

The same conception lies behind the episode encapsulated in the poetic excerpt in 10:12-13, which is too fragmentary to give a clear picture. The prose interpretation in v. 13b takes it to refer to an extension of day light, presumably in order to allow Israel to complete its slaughter of the enemy. This oldest interpretation is found also in Sir 46:4. However, the prayer puts the Sun over Gibeon and the Moon over Aijalon (hence it cannot refer to a Solar Eclipse), and thus must have been pronounced at daybreak, not late in the day. Moreover, the day is not unique because the Sun stopped, but because God "heeded a human voice." This cannot mean that God has never answered a prayer; it probably means that God has never taken orders from anyone in battle. Several recent interpretations make a comparison between Joshua's prayer and ancient near eastern omens. Certain sects of omens used "wait" and "stand" to refer to the Sun and Moon in their normal motions, not their miraculous deviation from their usual course or pace. This is probably the case with Joshua's prayer. According to some omens, if the Sun and the Moon appear together on the fourteenth day after new Moon, there will be peace in the land; if the Sun and the Moon do not appear together until the fifteenth day, there will be catastrophic war. One interpretation along these lines supposes that Joshua seeks a favourable omen. Another suggests

that Joshua does not believe in omens himself but wants the Amorites to receive a discouraging omen.¹⁹⁸

In the beginning the commentator very clearly says that Joshua 10:12, 13 is a poem and its prose can be seen in v13b. The author also mentions that it is not a Solar Eclipse. But he does not say any reason for saying this. Then he writes several recent interpretations which make comparison between Joshua's prayer and ancient near eastern omens. The interpretation is almost same as in the *Anchor Bible*. From this commentary it is very clear that the commentator is not interested to say anything scientifically.

2.5 CONCLUSION

Through this chapter we were trying to re-read the scriptural passage Joshua: 10:12-13. A thorough study of the book of Joshua made us aware that how Yahweh is faithful to fulfill his promise. Scientific and historical study of the book of Joshua prove that it is not only written by Joshua himself but many others also contributed for this book. Most of the commentators of sacred Scripture are having the view about the Bible verse Joshua: 10:12-13 is that it is a poem taken from the book of Jashar. There are only very few commentators who agree that it is actually happened in the history.

¹⁹⁸ Robert B. Coote, "The Book of Joshua", Leander E. Keck (ed.), *The New Interpreter's Bible, Vol-2*, 647.

CHAPTER THREE

UNDERSTANDING OF DIVINE INSPIRATION IN THE BACKGROUND OF THE SCRIPTURAL TEXT JOSHUA: 10:12-13

3.0 INTRODUCTION

In our everyday life we see the Sun, the Earth and the Moon. But we know only a little about all these. Now we are going to swim in to the fundamental knowledge of the Sun, the Earth and the Moon. Knowing the basic facts about the Sun, the Earth, the Moon and it's movements in the space, it's distance and it's gravitational pull and push, is essential for interpreting Joshua: 10:12-13. This is because; even today most of the Catholic as well as protestant theologians believe that this particular text teaches Geocentrism. In order to prove that this Biblical text does not say anything about Geocentrism and there is nothing contrary to science in the Holy Bible. In this chapter we are travelling together to understand the divine inspiration in the background of the scriptural text Joshua: 10: 12-13 with the help of certain scientific researches.

3.1. STAR OF OUR SOLAR SYSTEM

There are billions of stars in the universe.¹⁹⁹ Stars are massive globes of gas held together by the force of gravity.²⁰⁰ At a star's core, atoms of hydrogen join together to form helium in a process called nuclear fusion.²⁰¹ The energy generated by this process produces heat and light.²⁰²

¹⁹⁹ Mani Bhaumik, *The Cosmic Detective*, (Gopsons Papers Ltd, Noida, 2008) 11.

²⁰⁰ Mani Bhaumik, *The Cosmic Detective*, 11.

²⁰¹ Andrew King, *Stars:A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford University Press, London, 2012) 49.

²⁰² Stephen Eales, *Planets and Planetary Systems*,(Sanat Printers, Haryana, 2014) 87.

The Sun is a glowing ball of gases at the centre of the Solar System.²⁰³ The Sun is nearer the Earth than any other star and so it looks larger than other stars.²⁰⁴ Compared with other stars Sun is only a medium sized star.²⁰⁵ “The weight of the Sun is 700 times greater than the combined weight of the eight planets.”²⁰⁶ It is one of the many stars astronomers call *Yellow Dwarfs*.²⁰⁷

3.1.1. Gravitational Force

Gravitation is an attraction between all bodies in the universe causes gravity.²⁰⁸ The Sun has a magnetic field that somewhat resembles a bar magnet, especially near its poles.²⁰⁹ Mass of the Sun makes up 90% of the mass of the entire Solar System.²¹⁰ The mass of the Sun is about 1047 times the mass of the Jupiter, the largest planet.²¹¹ “The Sun’s mass is about 2×10^{30} kilograms, or 2×10^{27} tons. This is about 300,000 times more massive than the Earth.”²¹² Because the Sun is so massive the force of the gravity at its surface is much greater than at any of the planets.²¹³ “The gravitational pull of the Sun is what swings the planets around in their orbits.”²¹⁴ The objects would weigh more on the surface of the Sun than they would on any planet.²¹⁵ A person who weighs 45 kg on the Earth would weigh about 1270 kg on the Sun.

²⁰³ Andrew King, *Stars: A Very Short Introduction*, 8.

²⁰⁴ Andrew King, *Stars: A Very Short Introduction*, 14.

²⁰⁵ Mani Bhaumik, *The Cosmic Detective*, 10.

²⁰⁶ Robert Jastrow, *Stars, Planets and Life*, (William Heinemann Ltd, London, 1968) 17.

²⁰⁷ Parul. R. Sheth, *The Sun*, (National Book Trust, India, 2005) 10.

²⁰⁸ M. N. Sastri, *History of Planet Earth*, (Himalaya Publishing House, Bombay, 1993) 21.

²⁰⁹ Parul. R. Sheth, *The Sun*, 15.

²¹⁰ M. N. Sastri, *History of Planet Earth*, 14.

²¹¹ Robert Jastrow, *Stars, Planets and Life*, 99.

²¹² Andrew King, *Stars: A Very Short Introduction*, 16.

²¹³ Andrew King, *Stars: A Very Short Introduction*, 18.

²¹⁴ Andrew King, *Stars: A Very Short Introduction*, 16.

²¹⁵ Andrew King, *Stars: A Very Short Introduction*, 18.

The force of gravity also pulls the Sun's gases towards the centre of the Sun.²¹⁶ If there were nothing to balance the force of the gravity on the Sun, the Sun would collapse.²¹⁷ The hot gases have high pressure and it will try to expand.²¹⁸ The pressure of the gas balances the force of gravity and hence the Sun keeps its size and shape.²¹⁹

3.1.2. Movement of the Sun

Like the Earth, the Sun spins like a top.²²⁰ And, just as the Earth revolves around the Sun, the Sun revolves around the centre of the Milky Way.²²¹ The Earth takes one day to rotate once on its axis.²²² But the "Sun rotates on its axis from east to west, the solar equator turning about once in 25 ½ days and the poles in about 34 days. This is because it does not rotate as a solid body."²²³ The Earth takes a year to revolve around the Sun, but the Sun takes about 225 millions years to make one revolution around the centre of the Milky Way at a speed of 250 km/sec.²²⁴

3.1.3. Distance of the Sun

The Earth's distance from the Sun varies from about 147 to 152 million km. This distance varies because the Earth travels around the Sun in an elliptical orbit.²²⁵ The average distance between the Earth and the Sun is about 150 million km.²²⁶ "Light travels

²¹⁶ Andrew King, *Stars:A Very Short Introduction*, 18.

²¹⁷ Andrew King, *Stars:A Very Short Introduction*, 18.

²¹⁸ Robert Jastrow, *Stars, Planets and Life*, 44.

²¹⁹ Andrew King, *Stars:A Very Short Introduction*, 18.

²²⁰ Mani Bhaumik, *The Cosmic Detective*, 11.

²²¹ Mani Bhaumik, *The Cosmic Detective*, 11.

²²² Mani Bhaumik, *The Cosmic Detective*, 48.

²²³ M. N. Sastri, *History of Planet Earth*, 14.

²²⁴ M. N. Sastri, *History of Planet Earth*, 21.

²²⁵ Parul. R.Sheth, *The Sun*, 37.

²²⁶ Andrew King, *Stars:A Very Short Introduction*, 21.

at a speed of 3.0×10^5 km/sec.”²²⁷ At this speed, light from the Sun takes 8 minutes and 20 seconds to reach the Earth.²²⁸

3.2. THE BLUE PLANET

The Earth is one of the eight planets that revolve in orbits around the Sun, which is bound by the force of gravity.²²⁹ It is “the third planet from the Sun in our Solar System.”²³⁰ The Earth is a huge sphere, the surface of which is made up of rock, soil and water.²³¹ According to the modern scientists the Earth is 4.5 billion years old.²³² “The Earth has the only large Moon in the inner Solar System.”²³³ The Earth is only a tiny part of the universe, but it is home for human beings and many other living things.²³⁴

The Earth has a mass of 6.0×10^{24} kilogram²³⁵ and the diameter of solid Earth is 12,756 kilometers.²³⁶ “The Earth’s atmosphere is mostly composed of oxygen and nitrogen.”²³⁷ Animals and plants can live on the Earth because it is at the right distance from the Sun.²³⁸ Sunlight meets the energy needs on Earth.²³⁹ Almost all forms of life on Earth, including all the plants and animals depend on the Sun for heat and light.²⁴⁰

²²⁷ M. N. Sastri, *History of Planet Earth*, 2.

²²⁸ M. N. Sastri, *History of Planet Earth*, 2.

²²⁹ Robert Jastrow, *Stars, Planets and Life*, 17.

²³⁰ John Gribbin, *Almost Everyone’s Guide To Science*, (Universities Press, Hyderabad, 1999) 173.

²³¹ Stephen Eales, *Planets and Planetary Systems*, 4.

²³² Robert Jastrow, *Stars, Planets and Life*, 72.

²³³ Stephen Eales, *Planets and Planetary Systems*, 7.

²³⁴ Robert Jastrow, *Stars, Planets and Life*, 50.

²³⁵ M. N. Sastri, *History of Planet Earth*, 2.

²³⁶ John Gribbin, *Almost Everyone’s Guide To Science*, 144.

²³⁷ Stephen Eales, *Planets and Planetary Systems*, 4.

²³⁸ Andrew King, *Stars: A Very Short Introduction*, 14.

²³⁹ Andrew King, *Stars: A Very Short Introduction*, 14.

²⁴⁰ Andrew King, *Stars: A Very Short Introduction*, 14.

3.2.1. Movement of the Earth

The Earth is always moving.²⁴¹ “The Sun’s gravity keeps the Earth in an orbit.”²⁴² It spins like a top and also travels around the Sun at the same time.²⁴³ One day is the time taken by the Earth to round its axis.²⁴⁴ One year is the time taken by the Earth to travel once round the Sun.²⁴⁵ The spinning motion of the Earth makes the Sun appear to move from the east to west, and causes day and night on Earth.²⁴⁶ The day side of the Earth faces the Sun and the night side faces away from the Sun.²⁴⁷ The Earth travels 958 million km around the Sun in 365 days, 6 hours, 8 minutes and 9.54 seconds at an average speed of 107, 200 km/hr.²⁴⁸

3.2.2. The Earth’s Magnetism

The Earth is a large object with a strong gravitational field, and unless there is something resisting this gravitational field the planet will collapse under its own weight.²⁴⁹ The Earth acts like a huge bar magnet.²⁵⁰ “We experience the gravitational pull of the Earth on our bodies, and on things around us, as weight.”²⁵¹ The molten metal core of the Earth produces the Earth’s magnetic field, which extends some 60,000 km out into space.²⁵² “The region dominated by the Earth’s magnetic field is called Magnetosphere,

²⁴¹ M. N. Sastri, *History of Planet Earth*, 1.

²⁴² Andrew King, *Stars:A Very Short Introduction*, 14.

²⁴³ Robert Jastrow, *Stars, Planets and Life*, 120.

²⁴⁴ M. N. Sastri, *History of Planet Earth*, 21.

²⁴⁵ M. N. Sastri, *History of Planet Earth*, 21.

²⁴⁶ Parul. R.Sheth, *The Sun*, 31.

²⁴⁷ Parul. R.Sheth, *The Sun*,33.

²⁴⁸ Mani Bhaumik, *The Cosmic Detective*, 48.

²⁴⁹ Stephen Eales, *Planets and Planetary Systems*, 12.

²⁵⁰ M. N. Sastri, *History of Planet Earth*, 26.

²⁵¹ Andrew King, *Stars:A Very Short Introduction*, 15.

²⁵² M. N. Sastri, *History of Planet Earth*,26.

which protects us from the harmful solar radiation.”²⁵³ The magnetic poles act like the ends of a magnet and make compass needle point north.²⁵⁴

3.3. THE NATURAL SATELITE OF THE BLUE PLANET

The Moon is one of the thirty one satellites that circle about the eight planets of the Solar System.²⁵⁵ Moon is the Earth’s nearest neighbor in space.²⁵⁶ “The Moon was an intact planet, forming in the same general area of the Solar System as the Earth, that passed so close to the Earth that it became gravitationally trapped in an Earth-bound orbit.”²⁵⁷ Moon is the first object in space to be visited by human beings.²⁵⁸ “The Moon is Earth’s only natural satellite.”²⁵⁹ The name Moon is a German noun, it is very much related to the Latin *mensis* which means month.²⁶⁰ “It is the largest Moon in the Solar System relative to the size of its planet.”²⁶¹ The Moon shines due to the reflection of light from the Sun.²⁶² Moon’s appearance changes as different parts in the night because the moon is lit by the Sun.²⁶³

The Moon has no life of any kind and it has no air, wind, or water.²⁶⁴ When we see with the naked eyes from the Earth, the Moon looks like a smooth globe with dark and light patches of grey, because numerous meteorites created craters in the surface of

²⁵³ M. N. Sastri, *History of Planet Earth*, 26.

²⁵⁴ John Gribbin, *Almost Everyone’s Guide To Science*, 127.

²⁵⁵ Robert Jastrow, *Stars, Planets and Life*, 68.

²⁵⁶ Mani Bhaumik, *The Cosmic Detective*, 45.

²⁵⁷ S. Alan Stern, *Worlds Beyond*, (Cambridge University Press, United Kingdom, 2002) 87.

²⁵⁸ Malti Bansal, *Now We Set To Settle On Moon, Chandrayan Discovery Paves The Way*, (Mind Melodies, New Delhi, 2010) 12.

²⁵⁹ Malti Bansal, *Now We Set To Settle On Moon, Chandrayan Discovery Paves The Way*, 12.

²⁶⁰ Malti Bansal, *Now We Set To Settle On Moon, Chandrayan Discovery Paves The Way*, 13.

²⁶¹ Malti Bansal, *Now We Set To Settle On Moon, Chandrayan Discovery Paves The Way*, 26.

²⁶² Malti Bansal, *Now We Set To Settle On Moon, Chandrayan Discovery Paves The Way*, 30.

²⁶³ Malti Bansal, *Now We Set To Settle On Moon, Chandrayan Discovery Paves The Way*, 31.

²⁶⁴ Robert Jastrow, *Stars, Planets and Life*, 70.

Moon.²⁶⁵ The Moon revolves around the Earth in 27.3 days and rotates around its axis in approximately 29 days.²⁶⁶

3.3.1 Distance of the Moon

The Moon is a very close neighbor of our planet Earth.²⁶⁷ The distance of the Moon from the Earth always varies because it travels in an elliptical orbit.²⁶⁸ “The Moon currently orbits the Earth at a distance of 384,000 kilometers, or about 60 Earth radii.”²⁶⁹ The point where the Moon comes closest to the Earth is 363,104 km away.²⁷⁰ This point is called the Moon’s perigee.²⁷¹ The Moon’s farthest point from the Earth is 405,696 km away.²⁷² This point is Moon’s apogee.²⁷³ “The Moon’s diameter is 3474 kilometres (2,159 mi), a little more than a quarter of that of the Earth.”²⁷⁴

3.3.2. Gravity

The Moon’s gravity is very weak in comparison to that of the Earth.²⁷⁵ Because “the smaller the planet, the less the pull of its gravity, and the greater the leakage rate.”²⁷⁶ The gravity on the Moon’s surface is about 17 percent of that at the Earth’s surface.²⁷⁷ A person who weighs 60kg on the surface on the Earth weighs only 10 kg on the Moon.

²⁶⁵ M. N. Sastri, *History of Planet Earth*, 16.

²⁶⁶ Malti Bansal, *Now We Set To Settle On Moon, Chandrayan Discovery Paves The Way*, 12.

²⁶⁷ Mani Bhaumik, *The Cosmic Detective*, 45.

²⁶⁸ Dr. Martin Ardagh, *Understanding Earth Science*, (Random Exports, New Delhi, 2013) 47.

²⁶⁹ S. Alan stern, *Worlds Beyond*, 86.

²⁷⁰ Malti Bansal, *Now We Set To Settle On Moon, Chandrayan Discovery Paves The Way*, 14.

²⁷¹ Dr. Martin Ardagh, *Understanding Earth Science*, 47.

²⁷² Malti Bansal, *Now We Set To Settle On Moon, Chandrayan Discovery Paves The Way*, 14.

²⁷³ Dr. Martin Ardagh, *Understanding Earth Science*, 47.

²⁷⁴ Malti Bansal, *Now We Set To Settle On Moon, Chandrayan Discovery Paves The Way*, 12.

²⁷⁵ Dr. Martin Ardagh, *Understanding Earth Science*, 36.

²⁷⁶ Robert Jastrow, *Stars, Planets and Life*, 70.

²⁷⁷ Malti Bansal, *Now We Set To Settle On Moon, Chandrayan Discovery Paves The Way*, 12.

3.3.2.1. The Moon and the Tides

Just as the Earth's gravity pulls on the Moon, the Moon's gravity pulls on the Earth and its large bodies of water.²⁷⁸ "Most of the tidal effects seen on the Earth are caused by the Moon's gravitational pull, with the Sun making a somewhat smaller contribution."²⁷⁹ The gravitational tidal force arises because the side of Earth facing the Moon is attracted more strongly by the Moon's gravity.²⁸⁰

3.3.3. Movement of the Moon

The Moon travels around the Earth in an elliptical orbit.²⁸¹ The Moon moves at an average speed of 3700 km/hr along its 2.3 million km orbit.²⁸² Scientists measure the Moon's revolution around the Earth in Synodic month and sidereal month.²⁸³ A synodic month, which is equal to 29.5 days, is the period from one new Moon to the next new Moon.²⁸⁴ It is the time taken by the Moon to revolve around the Earth in relation to the Sun.²⁸⁵ "The Moon makes a complete orbit around the Earth with respect to the fixed stars about once every 27.3 days (its sidereal period)."²⁸⁶ If the Moon's revolution were to begin on a line with a star, it would return to the same position about 27.3 days later.²⁸⁷ "The Moon is in synchronous rotation: it rotates about its axis in about the same time it takes to orbit the Earth. This results in it nearly always keeping the same face turned

²⁷⁸ Mani Bhaumik, *The Cosmic Detective*, 49.

²⁷⁹ Malti Bansal, *Now We Set To Settle On Moon, Chandrayan Discovery Paves The Way*, 26.

²⁸⁰ S. Alan Stern, *Worlds Beyond*, 87.

²⁸¹ Dr. Martin Ardagh, *Understanding Earth Science*, 47.

²⁸² Malti Bansal, *Now We Set To Settle On Moon, Chandrayan Discovery Paves the Way*, 14.

²⁸³ Dr. Martin Ardagh, *Understanding Earth Science*, 49.

²⁸⁴ Malti Bansal, *Now We Set To Settle On Moon, Chandrayan Discovery Paves The Way*, 26.

²⁸⁵ Malti Bansal, *Now We Set To Settle On Moon, Chandrayan Discovery Paves The Way*, 26.

²⁸⁶ Malti Bansal, *Now We Set To Settle On Moon, Chandrayan Discovery Paves The Way*, 26.

²⁸⁷ Dr. Martin Ardagh, *Understanding Earth Science*, 49.

towards the Earth.”²⁸⁸ The Moon seems to change the shape because we see different parts of its sunlit surface as its orbits the Earth.²⁸⁹

3.4. UNDERSTANDING OF DIVINE INSPIRATION IN THE BACKGROUND OF THE SCRIPTURAL TEXT JOSHUA: 10: 12-13 WITH THE ESSENTIAL HELP OF SCIENCE.

The early Church was convinced that the author of sacred Scripture is Holy Spirit and, therefore, there is nothing wrong in the Holy Bible.²⁹⁰ After fifteenth century we see a drastic development in the field of science and technology. A polish priest Nicholas Copernicus proved heliocentric theory, Sun as the centre of the universe, while the Church held the geocentric theory, Earth as the centre of the universe.²⁹¹ Later, when the science proved heliocentric theory with ample evidences the Church reinterpreted the divine inspiration: Bible as inspired by God does not mean that God as the direct author of the Bible, in the sense that he does not put a readymade book in the mind of the inspired person.²⁹² Since God respects the human freedom, the idea was given to the author and within his limited knowledge of the day he wrote it.²⁹³

Even today world believes that Joshua 10:12-13 tells Geocentrism but it is absolutely wrong. In the text it is very much clear that Joshua asks Sun and Moon to stand still. It does not mean that the Holy Bible teaches Geocentrism. In this post modern world also we are under the bondage of Jewish religion. For interpreting everything in the Bible we depend upon Jewish background and the science of the time. Let us come out of the bondage of Jewish background and interpret this particular text and understand the real meaning of divine inspiration with the help of certain scientific researches.

²⁸⁸ Dr. Martin Ardagh, *Understanding Earth Science*, 28.

²⁸⁹ Malti Bansal, *Now We Set To Settle On Moon, Chandrayan Discovery Paves The Way*, 30.

²⁹⁰ William A. Jurgens, *The Faith Of The Early Fathers, vol. I*, The Liturgical Press Collgeville, Minnesota, 1970, p. 11.

²⁹¹ Ammu Mathew, *World of Science, Tell Me Why*, Dec. 2015, Vol. 9, No: 12, p. 59.

²⁹² J. Neuner, S. J.- J. Dupuis, S.J(ed.), *The Christian Faith: In The Doctrinal Documents Of The Catholic Church*, 83.

²⁹³ J. Neuner, S. J.- J. Dupuis, S.J(ed.), *The Christian Faith: In The Doctrinal Documents Of The Catholic Church*, 84.

3.4.1. Hypothetical Solution to Joshua: 10:12-13

We have already seen that Sun is the centre of the Solar System²⁹⁴ and through the massive gravitational pull of it, Sun controls all the planets to keep in its orbits.²⁹⁵ The Sun is not a solid object; it is a glowing ball of gases even though it rotates on its axis and revolves around the centre of the Milky Way.²⁹⁶ My point is if Sun is the centre of the universe and if Sun controls all other planets through its gravitational pull then if the Sun is asked to stop its rotation and revolution. Would the Earth stop its rotation and revolution? Yes it will stop its rotation and revolution because Sun is the centre and Sun controls all other planets in the Solar System. This is what happened in the case of Joshua: 10:12-13. Joshua asked Sun to stand still then automatically the rotation and the revolution of the Earth will be stopped because Sun is the centre and Sun controls all planets in the Solar System.

Here arises another problem; Joshua asked Sun to stand still why he asked Moon to stand still? If Sun controls everything what is the need of this question? The answer is “The Sun’s gravitational pull on the Moon is over twice as great as the Earth’s pull on the Moon”²⁹⁷ and “If the gravitational attraction of the Sun could be turned off while maintaining the Earth-Moon gravitational attraction, the Moon would continue to orbit the Earth.”²⁹⁸ That is the reason why Joshua asks Moon to stand still.

3.4.1.1. The Missing Day

In the year 1960, “in preparation for the Apollo Moon landings, a computer at NASA calculated the positions of the Earth, Moon and other Solar System bodies with great precision far into the past and the future.”²⁹⁹ Through this computer program NASA could find a small problem which stopped the working of Solar System in the fifteenth

²⁹⁴ Andrew King, *Stars: A Very Short Introduction*, 8.

²⁹⁵ Andrew King, *Stars: A Very Short Introduction*, 16.

²⁹⁶ Mani Bhaumik, *The Cosmic Detective*, 11.

²⁹⁷ Dr. Martin Ardagh, *Understanding Earth Science*, 51.

²⁹⁸ Dr. Martin Ardagh, *Understanding Earth Science*, 52.

²⁹⁹ <https://answersingenesis.org/creationism/arguments-to-avoid/have-nasa-computers-proved-joshuas-long-day> (accessed on 06-01-2018)

century BC. It caused the “Solar System bodies not being in their correct positions, indicating that nearly a day was missing from time.”³⁰⁰ Some of the NASA scientists and engineers explained this missing day by adding the day nearly at the time of Joshua. The scientists answered the puzzled missing day by interpreting Joshua: 10:12-13.

3.4.2. Scientific Opinion

Scientifically we cannot prove that the Earth will stop its movements if the Sun is asked to stand still. We can explain this theory only hypothetically. We have seen that the Sun is the centre and Sun keeps the planets in its orbits.³⁰¹ Some modern scientists say that if Sun stops its movements the Earth may go away from its orbit and it will continue its rotation but there will not be any day or night and any seasons.³⁰² Suppose the Earth stood still then the Earth may be attracted by Sun and all living beings in the Earth would burn. There is an another problem for the pausing of the Earth. The Earth travels 958 million km around the Sun in 365 days, 6 hours, 8 minutes and 9.54 seconds at an average speed of 107, 200 km/hr.³⁰³ The modern scientists say that in this speed if the Earth stops its movements then the human beings and the other things on the Earth will be thrown into space and oceans will be thrown into chaos.³⁰⁴ If the Moon is caused to stand still then the gravitational pull of the Earth will attract Moon toward it and they would crash together.³⁰⁵ These are the possibilities which scientists put forward for the standing still of Solar System.

3.4.3. New Interpretation of Divine Inspiration

Now it is our time to make clear the interpretation of divine inspiration. Holy Spirit has inspired human beings to write the Word of God in human language. We

³⁰⁰ <https://answersingenesis.org/creationism/arguments-to-avoid/have-nasa-computers-proved-joshuas-long-day> (accessed on 06-01-2018)

³⁰¹ Andrew King, *Stars:A Very Short Introduction*, 16.

³⁰² <https://science.howstuffworks.com/science-vs-myth/what-if/what-if-earth-stopped-spinning.htm> (accessed on 06-01-2018)

³⁰³ Mani Bhaumik, *The Cosmic Detective*, 48.

³⁰⁴ <https://www.spaceanswers.com/solar-system/what-would-happen-if-the-earth-stopped-spinning> (accessed on 06-01-2018)

³⁰⁵ <https://www.physicsforums.com/threads/if-the-moon-stopped-orbiting-the-earth.405198> (accessed on 06-01-2018)

should not think that the Holy Spirit has inspired the sacred authors only at once. The Holy Spirit encircled his presence to the sacred authors and inspired every seconds of their life to write the Word of God. If the Word of God is divinely given to man, if it is the Word of God, it cannot go wrong and God will not allow his word to fall in error. The inspired authors might be unaware about the ideas given by the Holy Spirit regarding science. Even in the midst of unawareness of the reality they simply wrote it because it is given by God. Since it is given by God they no need to worry about the truthfulness of the facts.

Before concluding the dissertation we should know one more thing. It is not Joshua the powerful leader of Israel, made Sun and Moon to stand still but God who created the entire universe with a single word, made Sun and the Moon to stand still. We no need to doubt the inerrancy of the Scripture because the omnipotent God can do everything. Even he can annihilate the cosmos and make it a chaos. Let us leave everything in the hands of God and keep our firm faith in tradition and sacred Scripture without losing its integrity.

3.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter we were traveling together to learn more about the Sun, the Earth and the Moon. Through learning these celestial object's gravitation, distance and movements in the space we were trying hard for unveiling the mystery behind the biblical text Joshua: 10:12-13. Actually this Bible verse does not say anything about Geocentrism but it is the theologians and the scientists of modern century claim that this scriptural text speaks about Geocentrism. This crisis affected the purity of the divine inspiration a lot. We were scientifically proving that there is no contradiction between sacred Scripture and science

GENERAL CONCLUSION

In the early centuries the Catholic Church taught that there is no error in the sacred Scripture regarding science and history but in the course of time when the discoveries of science conquered its pinnacle, the Catholic Church was forced to reinterpret her teaching about divine inspiration. My aim was to lead once again everyone to the early Church belief that there is nothing wrong in the Holy Bible. In this dissertation I tried my level best to unveil the mystery behind the biblical text Joshua: 10:12-13 in order to say that no error can be found in sacred Scripture. As a conclusion to this thesis we can draw the following points:

1. The sacred Scripture itself speaks that it is nothing other than God's Word which is spoken through the divinely inspired authors. The early Church firmly believed in the inerrancy of the sacred Scripture. Now the conclusion is very evident that the Holy Bible is Word of God so it consists no error. No human science can conquer God unless He reveals himself to us. Thus No science can also measure the truthfulness of the facts in the Holy Bible. Because it is unconquerable God's Word.
2. For interpreting the sacred Scripture, all are running after Jewish social, cultural situation of the time. Knowing the Jewish background is good to learn more about sacred Scripture but we should not be fenced on Jewish background. Today most of the Bible scholars interpret the sacred Scripture in this perspective. They are not ready to come out of it and interpret the sacred Scripture in a different angle. Once we are out of it God the almighty will open our eyes to conquer the horizons of the sacred Scripture.
3. Sun is the centre of the Solar System and through the massive gravitational pull of it, Sun controls all the planets to keep in its orbits. The Sun is not a solid object; it is a glowing ball of gases even though it rotates on its axis and revolves around the centre of the Milky Way. The point is if Sun is the centre of the universe and if Sun controls all other planets through its gravitational

pull then if the Sun is asked to stop its rotation and revolution. Would the Earth stop its rotation and revolution? Yes it will stop its rotation and revolution because Sun is the centre and Sun controls all other planets in the Solar System. This is what happened in the case of Joshua: 10:12-13. Joshua asked Sun to stand still then automatically the rotation and the revolution of the Earth will be stopped because Sun is the centre and Sun controls all planets in the Solar System.

4. Joshua asked Sun to stand still why he asked Moon to stand still? If Sun controls everything what is the need of this question? The answer is the Sun's gravitational pull on the Moon is over twice as great as the Earth's pull on the Moon. If the gravitational attraction of the Sun could be turned off while maintaining the Earth-Moon gravitational attraction, the Moon would continue to orbit the Earth. That is the reason why Joshua asks Moon to stand still.
5. It is not Joshua the powerful leader of Israel, made Sun and Moon to stand still but God who created the entire universe with a single word, made Sun and the Moon to stand still. We no need to doubt the inerrancy of the Scripture because the omnipotent God can do everything. Even he can annihilate the cosmos and make it a chaos. Let us leave everything in the hands of God and keep our firm faith in tradition and sacred Scripture without losing its integrity.

Through this dissertation I tried my best to prove that there is no contradiction between sacred Scripture and science. They are not contradictory but complementary. I know that there are a lot of scientific historic errors in the Bible. I could prove only one error from all those. Science has no stable theories or ideas for a long time, always it changes. So I firmly believe that one day all the errors in the Bible will be cleared by someone. I wish to believe that there is nothing wrong in the Holy Bible simply because it is Word of God.

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