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The sacred name of God, Yahweh, is indicated by LORD

ISBN 0-9628971-7-5

Second Edition © 2002, 2005

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Printed in the United States of America



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	iii
Dedication.....	v
Introduction.....	vii
Chapter One: Important Questions that need to be Addressed.....	1
Can we trust the Bible?.....	1
Should we question the Bible?.....	2
Isn't God so mysterious that there is not much we can know about Him?.....	3
Wasn't the Bible passed down verbally from generation to generation before it was written?.....	7
Does God talk to men?.....	8
Didn't the men God spoke to make mistakes?.....	14
Hasn't the text been copied so many times that it is unreliable?.....	15
Didn't the original text have contradictions?.....	19
Aren't some of the books of the Bible lost or missing?.....	27
Don't the Bible and science oppose each other?.....	33
Does archaeology support the Bible?.....	43
Does history support the Bible?.....	49
Do miracles happen?.....	53
Doesn't the Bible contain some false and even harmful teachings?.....	55
Doesn't the hypocrisy in the Christian Church show the Bible is not true?.....	59

Don't Christians disagree about even the most basic Christian truths?...	61
Chapter Two: Important Points to Keep in Mind	63
God is the Bible's sole Author.....	63
The Bible accurately foretells the future.....	65
God will prove Himself.....	71
What the Bible is.....	75
Conclusion.....	77
A Tribute to the Bible by Finis Jennings Dake.....	79
Selected Bibliography.....	81
Scripture Index.....	87
What Is Spirit & Truth Fellowship International.....	91
What Is Christian Educational Services.....	93
Further Study Material.....	95

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people helped me in the writing and production of this book, and I am grateful for them all. Before I start naming some of the specific helpers I have had with this book, I think it is important to say that the Bible is an amazing technical book, and there are many “apparent contradictions” that can tend to be faith-blasters to those of us who have technical minds. Although many things in Scripture are clear and simple, many are not. God has not hidden this fact, but openly states it.

Proverbs 25:2

It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings.

God had concealed things in Scripture in such a way as to destroy the wisdom of the “wise” of this world, and frustrate the intelligence of the intelligent (1 Cor. 1:19). However, to those people who approach the Bible with humility, prayer, and faith, God reveals what He has concealed, and the Word of God fits together perfectly, without problem or contradiction.

As I have studied the text of Scripture through the years, many people and books have helped answer questions that I have had and have helped to build my faith in the accuracy and integrity of Scripture, and to these I owe a debt of gratitude.

In the specific writing of this book, my special thank to Ken Schleimer, who read several early drafts and made many helpful suggestions.

Many others proofread the manuscript or parts of the manuscript and made helpful suggestions, including Jeff Blackburn at the Home Office of Spirit & Truth Fellowship International.

Matthew Johnson made many helpful additions. Besides doing proofreading, he did the layout, including the text box and picture insertions that make the book more readable.

Bob Maffit proofread the book many times, and laboriously checked

each scripture to be sure that the reference I had typed in the manuscript matched the verse that actually appeared on the page.

Shawn Mercer did a tremendous job in designing the cover.

My thanks to all who helped produce this work. May it be a blessing to God, the Lord Jesus, and the people of God.

John Schoenheit
March, 2005

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to those people who want to believe the Bible but have been confused by the sophisticated and high minded arguments of “scholars” and others who “oppose the truth” (2 Tim. 3:8). May the truths and facts in this book be helpful in building and maintaining their faith in the “God-breathed” Word.



INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 1976, I met Bill, a dedicated Christian who taught Dale Carnegie courses. He told me a story that has stuck with me, probably because I, as well as other people I know, have had similar experiences. These common experiences are, in large part, the motivation for writing this book.

While Bill was teaching a course at a private but quite liberal religious school, he was invited to join the staff for lunch. Throughout the meal, the conversation revolved around the class he was teaching, but eventually it turned to the Bible and whether or not it was relevant in people's lives today. Bill confidently stated that it was, and assumed, given the religious setting he was in, that his hosts would agree. He was surprised when one of the ladies in attendance, the presiding staff member, stated assuredly that the Bible was full of contradictions and could not be relied upon.

Bill had studied the Bible diligently and put his faith in it, so he said to the lady, "I am not aware of any contradictions. Could you please show me one?" She replied confidently, "Well, everyone knows that the Bible is full of contradictions." Bill, not willing to back down, stated more firmly that he did not know of any contradictions, so would she be so kind as to show him one. To everyone's surprise, the woman suddenly broke into a torrent of tears and confessed that she could not show even one.

Bringing up the Bible in conversation can result in a wide range of responses. The above incident illustrates what frequently occurs, that is, someone challenges the accuracy and integrity of the Bible. Usually these challenges are voiced as if they were universal knowledge: "*Everybody* knows the Bible is full of contradictions." The intent behind such challenges is to make the point, either directly or indirectly, that the Bible is not the Word of God, but the word of men, and therefore deserves no more attention than any other book. At best it might be a "helpful" book, perhaps providing some wisdom and encouragement or a good story or two, but nothing more. At worst, it might be a source of

misinformation and misdirection, providing a false sense of hope and, ultimately, discouragement for those who try to believe and obey it.

Challenges to the Bible's integrity come from many fronts: science, history, archaeology, and, sadly enough, even from "biblical scholars." These challenges take many forms, and it would be impossible in this short book to cover every one ever put forth. It is my intent, however, to meet head-on some of the most common accusations and criticisms, and in so doing to answer some of the questions that people have about the Bible. Hopefully, in the process, the serious seeker will find keys and guideposts to pursue further study into the integrity of the Bible and come to appreciate it as God's Word—a book that can be relied upon for faith and practice.

Whether or not the Bible is God's Word is actually the crux of the entire discussion of this book. If the Bible is God's Word, then it will be accurate and helpful. God authored the Bible to help and bless mankind, and He has no reason to lie or distort truth in any way. If the Bible is God's Word, we should read it, study it, cherish it, believe it, and obey it. If the Bible is not God's Word, but man's, then it is no better than any other book man has written and deserves no more attention than any other helpful book. Furthermore, we would expect it to have contradictions and misinformation, and should take a very skeptical view of it.

As you read this book, I hope it will become obvious that most people's questions and doubts about the truth of the Bible have no foundation in fact. It is often the case that people doubt the Bible simply because they heard somebody somewhere say that the Bible could not be believed. This book will answer many of the questions of those people who doubt the Bible, and it will show there are many valid reasons why the Bible can be believed.

Through the centuries, the Bible has come to be known by many as "The Good Book." I hope that what you read with the ensuing pages will help you come to believe that it is the Best Book.

CHAPTER ONE

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED

Can we trust the Bible?

For generations, people have trusted the Bible. It has guided, encouraged, and comforted millions of people who readily testify to its life-changing impact. It is the best selling book of all time, and not by a small margin. It is the cornerstone of Western Civilization and the document upon which our nation's Founding Fathers based our Constitution. Its ethical standards have launched freedom movements, and its laws and regulations have guided lawmakers, judges, and jurists by the score. It has inspired great works of music and art, including songs, sculpture, paintings, plays, and movies. Its graphic portrayals of heroes and heroines have captured the imagination of young and old alike.

On the other hand, it is also perhaps the most criticized document in history. Literally thousands of books have been written giving "evidence" that it is not true. Typical of false witnesses, the detractors often contradict each other, and their logic is faulty. Opponents claim that it is "just a book written by men." Some critics say its main character, Jesus, never lived. Others acknowledge that he lived, but claim he never said what the Bible says he said. Others acknowledge that he lived and that much of what is recorded in the Bible was what he said, but assert that he was not literally raised from the dead. And so it goes. Like the false witnesses at Christ's trial, their testimonies do not agree (Mark 14:59).

The best way for you to decide whether you can believe the Bible is to weigh the evidence for yourself. I trust that when all of it has been loaded onto the scales, you will find that the Bible is reliable, trustworthy, and 100% believable.

Should we question the Bible?

Questioning is a normal and healthy part of learning. Every teacher I know loves students who ask questions, because it shows they are interested and learning. God certainly does not mind when we ask Him questions. Furthermore, God has answers to our questions. The Bible is full of answers on all kinds of subjects. God gave us a command to love Him with all our heart, soul, *mind*, and strength (Mark 12:30). Some people act as if an intellectual pursuit of God is either unnecessary or ungodly. However, God created our minds so we can think using reason and logic, and He is the One who said we should love Him with “all” our mind. We cannot do that if we are not fully convinced that the Bible is true.

Asking questions is a vital part of learning, and God tells us to ask Him if we need wisdom:

James 1:5

If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.

It is very important, however, that we understand the difference between *questioning* and *doubting*. I believe that many people who say they “question” the Bible actually mean they “doubt” it. I say that because, in my years of teaching the Bible, most people who have told me they “question” the Bible are not really looking for answers. They do not trust God, and are comfortable living with doubt and unbelief about Him and His Word. If the Bible is true, however, it is not wise to remain comfortable in unbelief. We are pleased when people trust us, and God is pleased when people trust Him. In fact, the Bible states clearly that “...without faith [trust] it is impossible to please God...” (Heb. 11:6a). God can answer questions and help us believe if we search for answers, but God cannot stop our doubt and unbelief if we are comfortable with them.

It is not necessary to live in unbelief and doubt. You can resolve any doubts or overcome any unbelief you may have if you desire to. How? By becoming clear on what you doubt and why you doubt it, and then diligently seeking answers. God tells us that when we diligently seek, we will get answers. Sometimes the answers come very quickly, sometimes after years of study and prayer, but they do come.

Do not wait until you have “all the answers” before you serve God. He is vast, and His creation is vast, and neither you nor I will ever have “all the answers.” There will always be things we have questions about and things we do not know, so do not put off serving God just because you have questions. Do the things you know God wants you to do. Many times the answers come as you are serving and obeying.

Isn't God so mysterious that there is not much we can know about Him?

It is a sad commentary on Christian teachers and preachers that many of them, and the people they teach, believe that God and the Bible are mysterious and unknowable. Well-meaning Christians often quote Isaiah to support their claim.

Isaiah 55:8

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD.

As with any passage of Scripture, the *context* is key to proper interpretation. To whom is the “your” in this passage referring? Who are those people who do not think or act like God? From the preceding verse, Isaiah 55:7, we discover it is *the wicked and evil people of the world*. Wicked people do not think or act like God (Ps. 5:4; 10:4), but righteous people are to imitate Him (Eph. 5:1). You cannot effectively imitate someone unless you know a great deal about him, and the fact that righteous people are commanded to imitate God shows that we can know much about Him. The very same section of Isaiah tells us God can

be known. Just two verses earlier in Isaiah, we read:

Isaiah 55:6a

Seek the LORD while He may be found....

If God can be “found,” then He can be known. It is clear from many biblical references that God wants us to know Him. In fact, God has revealed Himself so clearly through His Word, His Son, and creation that if we do not know Him, we are fools.

Jeremiah 4:22a

My people are fools; they do not know me....

God is not in hiding. He has revealed Himself for millennia. For example, He made Himself known to Moses and the Israelites.

Psalms 103:7

He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel.

Of course there are some things about God we do not know. There are some secret things, as it says in the following verse from Deuteronomy, but the last part of the verse says the things God has revealed “belong to us.”

Deuteronomy 29:29

The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.

If God could be known in the Old Testament times as these verses show, then we can know Him even better today because Jesus Christ made Him known even more clearly. John 1:18b says Jesus Christ “...has made Him [God] known.” If Jesus made Him known, then obviously He can

be known. Therefore, if someone does not know God, it is his own fault, not God's. The whole Bible is about God and His Son, Jesus Christ, and it is not a small book. God wants people to know Him and His Son. He wants people to enter into relationship with Him and to fellowship with Him and His Son.

Interestingly, while God has been trying to reveal Himself to people, they have often pushed Him away. Time and again in the Old Testament it was not God who turned from His people, but the people who turned from Him and rejected His knowledge. God even complained that there was no "...knowledge of God in the land" (Hosea 4:1b-KJV), and later He gives the reason why: "...You have rejected knowledge..." (Hosea 4:6).¹ The same thing is happening today. Rather than pressing in to know God, people are afraid that God will intrude into their lives. They think God will want them to do things they do not want to do, as if He did not have their best interests at heart.

The primary reason people think God will intrude into their lives and that religion is meaningless and burdensome is because of man's regulations and practices that have been added to true Christianity. Truth is freeing, uplifting, and affirming. In contrast, man's religion is wearisome, binding, and burdensome. Unfortunately, much of man's religion has been palmed off on the public as true Christianity. This happens because people have not been taught how to read the Bible and really understand what they are reading. So they end up following whatever their religious leaders say.² Jesus Christ dealt with the same thing almost 2,000 years ago. The

1. The NIV's "acknowledgment of God" in Hosea 4:1 is not as accurate a translation of the Hebrew text as the "knowledge of God" that most other versions have. Although it is true that the people did not acknowledge God, the Bible is making the point that they did not know Him, and they should have, and in fact they would have if they had not rejected Him.

2. One of the goals of Christian Educational Services (CES) is to teach people how to study and understand the Bible for themselves using concordances, lexicons, Bible dictionaries, Bible atlases, customs books, etc. CES publishes written materials such as *22 Principles of Bible Interpretation*, videos such as *Tools for Basic Bible Study*, runs seminars, and has a research website, www.TruthOrTradition.com to help people learn to use these tools and understand the Bible.

Pharisees' man-made religion forced all kinds of burdensome practices on people. Concerning the religious leaders of his day, Jesus said, "They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders..." (Matt. 23:4a). He was speaking of the heavy loads of unnecessary religious practices. In contrast, he said of his ways: "My yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:30). While man's religion is burdensome, true religion is a joy and a great blessing.

Because they have been taught unbiblical doctrines instead of the truth revealed in the Bible, Christians often think that God cannot be understood. It would be off the subject of this book to discuss individual doctrines, but if you are one of the people who has been told God is mysterious or you have to "take it on faith," then you might want to look more deeply into those doctrines to see if they are actually in the Bible. Through my years of study I have come to the conclusion that the truth, God's truth, *makes sense*. God made the mind of man in such a way that we can understand and love Him. God created people so He would have a family to fellowship with Him. It would be ridiculous for God to want a family, create a family, and then not reveal Himself to them. He reveals Himself to those who earnestly seek Him (Prov. 2:1-5; Heb. 11:6).

God's truth makes sense.

Not only can and should we know God, but we can also understand the Bible and know biblical truth. There are people who assert that no one can really know the truth, but they did not reach that opinion by studying the Bible. God says He wants all men to know the truth. Although most translations of 1 Timothy 2:4b state that God wants us to "...come to a knowledge of the truth," the Greek text is much more forceful, something that is picked up very well in *The Amplified Bible*.

1 Timothy 2:3b and 4 (AMP)

(3b) ...God our Savior

(4) Who wishes all men to be saved and [increasingly] to perceive *and* recognize *and* discern *and* know precisely *and* correctly the [divine] truth.

God would be a liar if He said He wants us to perceive, recognize, and know precisely and correctly the divine truth, but gave us no way to know it. We can know both God and truth if we are willing to give up some time and energy and approach God and the Bible with prayer, honesty, perseverance, humility, and intellectual rigor. Of course, this means taking time out of our busy lives and dedicating it to Bible study and learning about God. But that investment will pay off thousands of times over. If you are a Christian, you will live forever, and God will absolutely repay you manyfold for the effort you give to Him now. Jesus told us that we should seek God's kingdom first in our lives, and that all the other things we desire will be added to us in time (Matt. 6:33).

Wasn't the Bible passed down verbally from generation to generation before it was written?

A common misconception about the Bible is that it was passed down by word of mouth from generation to generation before it was written, so therefore it must be the words of men, and unreliable. If the Bible is man's writing, then it deserves no more credit or attention than any other great book. In the final analysis, what we believe about the Bible will determine our attitude about it and in large part set the spiritual tone for our lives. The truth is, the Bible did not come by the will of man, but holy men of God wrote the very words of God.

Although many people say the Bible was passed down verbally from generation to generation before it was written, there is no proof this actually occurred. All those who wrote the Bible are long dead, and there are no testimonies from them or people they spoke with saying that all they did was write down the family histories and campfire stories that had come down to them. Can it be proven that the men who wrote the

Bible just put down oral traditions on paper? It cannot. So when people say the Bible was passed down from generation to generation, they are just stating a theory. There is no actual proof to substantiate it.

Are there reasons we should reject the theory that the biblical records were passed by word of mouth for generations before being written? Certainly. Anyone who studies the history of oral traditions knows that details get lost, names and places are forgotten or replaced, and there is a tendency to exaggerate, either for better or worse, such that the good guys become very good and the bad guys become evil incarnate. The Bible is written in a way that shows it is not just a book of oral traditions. The characters are depicted in ways that are inspiring, heartwarming, true to life, convincing, and convicting. They have their good points and their human weaknesses. In reading about them we read about ourselves, because their humanity is so well portrayed in Scripture. Furthermore, the details, place names, and geographical descriptions in the Bible are written with the accuracy of an involved and knowledgeable eyewitness. That eyewitness is God. The richness, depth, and historical accuracy of Scripture are in sharp contrast to the exaggerations, the historical inaccuracies, and the shallow and one-dimensional portrayals of characters in legends, folk history, and mythology.

Does God talk to men?

If the Bible is God's Word, then God must talk to men. Of course, there are many people who do not believe that God speaks with people, but that is only their opinion. They cannot prove that God does not talk with people. If there is a God, and if He did create people, then it makes perfect sense that He would communicate with them. Many people through the centuries have testified that they had personal contact with God or the Lord Jesus Christ, and today it would be difficult to go to a gathering of charismatic Christians and not have at least some of them testify they had received personal communication from Heaven in one form or another.

If there is a God, and if He did create people, then it makes perfect sense that He would communicate with them.

In the Bible, there are a number of words used to describe its contents: “Scripture,” the “Word of God” or “Words of God,” “prophecy,” “revelation,” etc. Each of these words has its own distinct meaning, yet the idea is the same: knowledge given by God to men and written down in what we refer to as the Bible.

The Bible specifically states that God gave it to men.

2 Timothy 3:16

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.

“All Scripture,” what is written in the Bible, “is God-breathed.” “God-breathed” points to God as the *source* of the words. In order to speak, you have to breathe. This verse is saying that all the words written in the Bible came from God—He “breathed” them out. In other words, no man or group of men was the source of Scripture. No man sat down with a paper and pen (or a clay tablet and pointed stick) and said, “I’ve got some great insight and a good story, and I’m going to write part of the Bible.” The testimony of the Bible is that God is its source.

Let’s look at another reference.

2 Peter 1:20 and 21

(20) Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation.

(21) For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

To have confidence in the Bible, we must understand that Scripture did not have its origin in the will of man, and thus, not in any traditions that were passed down from generation to generation. Neither was it the accumulated wisdom of a few “inspired” men. This verse refers specifically to speaking words from God, but it is also applicable to *writing* words from God. Here it clearly states that the origin, or the source, of the words was not man. The content of the Bible came from God, who communicated it to men, who then wrote it down.

By the way, “prophecy,” as the word is used in the Bible, does not always mean foretelling the future. The word “prophecy” also refers to the declaration of *past* or *current* events and the details of those events. Whenever God gives information to someone and that person speaks it, that is prophecy. A quick read of any of the prophetic books such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, or Ezekiel will show that much of the prophecy they spoke concerned Israel’s past and present. Therefore, the entire Bible is “prophecy,” some of it foretelling future events and some of it simply declaring the truth concerning past or current events. Scripture is clear that no prophecy was the prophet’s own interpretation.

In Galatia, there were people who stood against the message of the apostle Paul. The Lord moved Paul to write that it was the Lord who was the author of Paul’s writings. Paul did not get his message from man; he got it by revelation from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Galatians 1:11 and 12

(11) I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up.

(12) I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

Paul was not the only writer who got his message by revelation. *All* the writers of the Bible did. In the case of Moses, the Bible says many times, “the LORD spoke to Moses.” Why question that? If there is a God,

can He not speak with those He created? In fact, if there is a God, it seems certain He *would* speak to people. Many men who put pen to paper as writers of the Bible made the specific claim that God spoke to them, and there are many accounts of Him doing so. A partial list includes: Moses (Exod. 19:3), Joshua (Josh. 1:1), Samuel (1 Sam. 3:11), Solomon (1 Kings 3:11), Job (Job 38:1), Isaiah (Isa. 6:8-13), Jeremiah (Jer. 1:4-19), Ezekiel (Ezek. 1:1-3; 2:1ff), Hosea (Hosea 1:1), Joel (Joel 1:1), Amos (Amos 7:1-9), Jonah (Jonah 4:1-11), and Paul (Gal. 1:11 and 12). The testimony of these men and others who wrote the Bible is that they were writing expressly what God said to write.

Not only is there no proof the Bible was passed down by word of mouth from generation to generation before it was written, there is evidence to the contrary. It is obvious that people who lived at the time the Bible was written thought Moses, David, Daniel, etc., were writing the words of God. No one carefully preserves and passes down the word of a lunatic or liar, which is exactly what the authors of the Bible would be had they claimed God was speaking to them when He was not. The fact that the books of the Bible were carefully preserved and passed down from one generation to the next shows that the people who lived when they were written recognized those documents as being true and valuable. There is no indication the people alive at the time of Moses doubted that God spoke to him. This is why the books of Moses were very carefully preserved as the Word of God.

It is also very clear that people in later generations recognized that God had spoken to their forefathers. Josiah is a good example. He was a king of Judah who reigned some 800 years after Moses. His father, Amon, was an evil king who did not obey the Law of Moses, so Josiah grew up without knowing the Mosaic Law. When Josiah started his reign, the scrolls containing the Law of Moses were found in the Temple and read to him. His reaction was immediate. He ripped the clothing he was wearing (an Eastern way of showing he was very upset) and sent a delegation to Huldah the prophetess to find out what to do. Josiah was worried because he knew the words that were read to him were God's commands, not

just “Moses’ wisdom” (2 Kings 22:13). Josiah did not take the attitude, “It is unfortunate we have missed out on the wisdom of *Moses* for so long; after all, Moses was such a learned individual.” No, Josiah knew it was *God’s* Word and *God’s* commands that had been found, and he was concerned about the wrath of God that would come upon his kingdom because he and the people had been disobedient to His laws. Regrettably, many people today are so convinced the Bible is man’s words and man’s wisdom, they feel completely comfortable ignoring it.

Jesus Christ believed God spoke to Moses and other people who wrote Scripture. He openly stated that it is God’s Word. Surely he would not have said that if he believed the Bible were just the accumulated wisdom of some great men. Jesus also said the Word of God was true (John 17:17). He did not say it had contradictions or errors.

Although Moses lived some 2,500 years after Adam, almost 1,000 years after the flood, and almost 500 years after Abraham, that does not mean that what he wrote was passed down to him by word of mouth from earlier generations. God is eternal. He was an eyewitness of all the events on earth throughout history and He has perfect memory. Therefore, God is exceptionally well qualified to speak to men who would then write down what He said. Furthermore, God would get all the details correct—something that is true of the biblical text but certainly not something we would expect if it were the product of accumulated folklore and stories passed down from generation to generation. Many critics of the Bible either do not believe there is a God or they think that God would not speak to people, so they conclude that men authored the Bible. Their conclusion is in error. God does exist. Furthermore, He created man to fellowship with Him, so it makes perfect sense for Him to speak with men and women.

Does the fact that the Word of God was written by revelation mean there were no stories passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth or in other writings? Not at all. The great events described in the Bible would have been told and retold, and even inspired folklore and

legends. Of course, the vast majority of these are lost to us. However, some were preserved (with a significant loss of accuracy) in the writings of other cultures. For example, many ancient cultures have a Flood story. It is vital to understand, however, that there is a big difference between admitting there were stories passed down from generation to generation, and claiming the writers of the Bible used these stories as the basis for their work. If anything, what God told the holy men to write would have confirmed or corrected things that had come down to people by word of mouth.

People who say the Bible is only a collection of folklore passed down through the generations often try to make this idea easier to accept by saying, “But the Bible is still a good book with wonderful lessons.” Make no mistake, the men who wrote Scripture claimed that God actually spoke to them. The whole Bible is record after record of “the LORD said,” or “the LORD did.” If these records are not true, if God really did not speak to the men who wrote, if God did not put Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, or save Noah and his family on the Ark, or sustain Israel with manna for 40 years, or dry up the Jordan River so Israel could cross over, or stop the sun for Joshua, or multiply the loaves and fish, or raise the dead, then the Bible is not a “good” book at all—it is a pack of lies, and the men who wrote it were colossal liars. The Bible does not claim to be a book of stimulating stories and inspiring fables—it claims to be “the truth.” The books of the Bible do not begin with “Once upon a time,” or some other homespun opening that would let the reader know they are just man’s folklore. They are clearly written as if they happened just the way they are recorded.

The Bible makes many claims: claims about its author, God; claims about the men who wrote what God said; claims about events such as the walls of Jericho falling down; claims about salvation and how to obtain everlasting life; and claims about the future and how things will be at the end of this world. If these claims are not true or are exaggerations of what really happened, what is left to believe? That the Bible is a book with some nice proverbs and a few insightful parables and stimulating

stories? That is not very satisfying or comforting, and it does not make the hard work of learning the Bible even worthwhile. If, on the other hand, the Bible is the Word of God as it claims to be, then it is worth studying, learning, and obeying. Furthermore, if the Bible is in fact the Word of God, then the critics are doing mankind a monumental disservice by causing people to doubt it, and they will have to account for this “...on the day when God will judge men’s secrets through Jesus Christ...” (Rom. 2:16).

Didn’t the men God spoke to make mistakes?

I have occasionally heard it stated that even if God spoke to men, what they wrote cannot be trusted because men make mistakes. That is an unreasonable and unfounded belief. Imagine the following situation: you are the president of a large corporation and you have a secretary. You call your secretary into your office because you want to dictate a letter. After you finish dictating, you ask to see a copy for review, and a little later a copy shows up on your desk. You take one look at it and immediately recognize it is nothing like the letter you dictated. If this happened more than once, you would probably fire the secretary. A good secretary would be able to get what you said written down word for word with no problem at all. So ask yourself, “Is God less knowledgeable of a person’s abilities and skills than a corporate president?” Do you think He might know who is going to accurately record what He says? God picked the men He could trust to get it right, just as you would. By the way, does the secretary have to know everything the president knows to accurately record what he says? The answer is an obvious, “No.”

The assertion that the Bible must be full of errors because men wrote it down is just that—an assertion. I know of no book written by a Bible critic that definitively lists the specific doctrines or verses supposedly corrupted by man’s influence. If modern scholars and critics really believed that part of the Bible was from God (which would be more valuable than gold), and part of it was from man (which would have modest value at best),

then we would expect to see a huge amount of effort being expended to sort out man's words from God's words, and recover the true words of God. There is no such effort, which reveals that the critics do not actually believe that "some" of the Bible is from God. They only say it has man's mistakes in it to discredit it and to have a reason to ignore it. Wise people are not fooled by the unproven assumption that the Bible contains man's mistakes. Wise people believe, and live by, the Bible.

Hasn't the text been copied so many times that it is unreliable?

It is occasionally stated that the Bible has been copied and/or translated so many times that it has become unreliable. The actual evidence refutes this idea. The text of Scripture was copied, yes, but not to the end that it cannot be trusted. In actuality, the fact that the Bible has been copied over and over enables us to be sure we have a biblical text that is very close to the original. This is easy to understand. We will examine two scenarios to show that making multiple copies actually helps to establish what the original said.

In scenario number one, you are living in the "BC" era (before computers)—no photocopy machines, not even carbon paper. You write a letter to a friend and make a handwritten copy for your files. Later, you are told that your letter never arrived at your friend's house, so you go to your files to make a copy from your copy. However, as you are making the new copy, you do not see something you are sure was in your original letter. It occurs to you that when you made the copy you might have left a line or two out. Unfortunately, you have no way to check. The original is lost and you are holding the one and only copy. There is simply no way to determine whether your memory, or the copy you are holding, is faulty.

In scenario number two, you write a letter and then copy it ten times and send it to ten friends. In this situation, if you lose your original you

can still recover what it said with a high degree of accuracy. The way to reconstruct the original is to get the ten copies together and compare them. Then you can usually tell very quickly if mistakes were made. The multiple copies allow you to determine the content of the original. People endeavoring to make an exact copy may make a mistake, but rarely do they make the same mistake on several different copies. They may leave out a word on one, misspell a word on another, and even skip a line or double a line on a third, but the same mistakes would not be made on all the copies. Comparing the copies would reveal the mistakes, and the original could be reconstructed. When several people are making the copies, it is even easier to reconstruct an original because it would be rare indeed for different people to make the same mistake. Thus, it is almost always the case that the more copies of a document that exist, the greater the likelihood is that an accurate original can be reconstructed. This principle is recognized by scholars and is sometimes referred to as “the tenacity of the text.”

There are more manuscripts of the Bible in existence today than of any other document from the ancient world. There are more than 5,500 Greek manuscripts of the New Testament and more than 10,000 manuscripts of the Latin New Testament. Furthermore, the New Testament was translated into other languages as well, including Aramaic, Ethiopic, Armenian, Slavic, Bohairic, and Anglo-Saxon. There are, in fact, more than 24,000 ancient handwritten manuscripts of the New Testament that can be read and compared and used to rebuild the original text.³ That is not all. Have you ever written a letter to a friend and quoted someone in it? Many of the early Christians and Church Fathers wrote letters and essays in which they quoted the Bible. There are more than 36,000 patristic citations of the Bible (i.e., quotations of the Church Fathers or “Patriarchs”) that scholars use to help determine the original text.⁴

3. Josh McDowell, *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict* (Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 1999), p. 34.

4. Norman Geisler and William Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Moody Press, Chicago, 1986), p. 467.

Generations of biblical scholars have carefully read, reread, and compared these texts to get back to the original New Testament. Furthermore, the use of computers to compare and contrast manuscripts has greatly increased scholarly confidence that we are very close to the original documents penned by Matthew, Paul, Peter, and others. Does that mean the New Testament text we have today is perfect? No, but it is *very* close. Ezra Abbot places the purity of the New Testament text at 99.75% pure, and A. T. Robertson's estimate is 99.9%.⁵ Scholars testify there is not one essential doctrine of the Church that is in question because of an inaccuracy in the text.⁶ Not one! This means if you are reading an accurate translation of the Bible, you can believe what you read.

Scholars testify there is not one essential doctrine
of the Church that is in question because of an
inaccuracy in the text.

In contrast to the more than 24,000 New Testament manuscripts on hand today, in a distant second place for the most ancient manuscripts from which to build and check an original text is the *Iliad* by the Greek poet Homer. There are only 643 manuscripts of the *Iliad* that have been preserved and are available for us to study today. Yet the same critics who say the Bible cannot be trusted would never say you should not bother to read the works of Homer because they have been copied over and over and there are so few manuscripts existing that we just cannot trust that we are reading what Homer wrote. Interestingly, those same critics support the teaching of ancient history using the works of Homer, Caesar, Pliny, Herodotus, Livy, Tacitus, Plato, and others.

I received my degree in philosophy from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and I do not remember one professor saying that the works of the ancient philosophers were in doubt because we could not trust they had come down to us intact. Yet I heard over and over that

5. Ibid., p. 474.

6. Josh McDowell, op. cit., *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, p. 35.

the Bible was untrustworthy. The evidence, however, is that the text of the Bible is much more surely established than is the work of any other ancient writer. Why was I not taught this in school? Because there is a bias against the Bible—a bias not based on the facts of the case. The facts of the case prove that the text of the Bible is the most reliably established of all the ancient writings.

Not only is the New Testament text we have today very close to the original, the evidence shows that the Old Testament text is too. First of all, there are tens of thousands of manuscripts of the Old Testament available to check and compare.⁷ However, unlike the Greek scribes, the Hebrew scribes handled the text with an almost superstitious reverence. There were specific regulations about the types of materials onto which the biblical text could be copied, the kind of ink that could be used, the size of the printed columns, and the spacing of the words. There was even a specific ritual that was to be performed before writing down the name of God. It was also forbidden to write anything from memory. After a scribe wrote, each line was counted to assure none were doubled or skipped, and each letter was counted so that if one were omitted, the error was immediately discovered. If, at the end of copying, even one error was found on the manuscript, it was destroyed.⁸ Modern textual scholars agree with Sir Fredrick Kenyon who stated, “The Christian can take the whole Bible in his hand and say without fear or hesitation that he holds in it the true Word of God, handed down without essential loss from generation to generation throughout the centuries.”⁹

To summarize the main points we have covered so far: (a) God is the Author of Scripture, (b) He communicated what He wanted written to men who wrote it down accurately, and (c) the content of the Bible has been copied many times over, which has preserved the accuracy of the text and allowed researchers to verify it. These are significant truths, and they give us confidence in the integrity of the Bible.

7. Norman Geisler and William Nix, op. cit., *A General Introduction to the Bible*, pp. 357 and 358.

8. Ibid., p. 380.

9. Ibid., p. 382.

Didn't the original text have contradictions?

It is often stated you cannot believe the Bible because it is full of contradictions. That is not true. As we saw earlier, the Bible is “God-breathed” and therefore the original would have been absolutely perfect and without contradiction. Any “contradiction” in the Bible is an *apparent* contradiction not an *actual* contradiction. Thankfully there are many books that have been written explaining apparent contradictions in the Bible. Occasionally, the serious student of the Bible may see an apparent contradiction in the version of the Bible he is reading. These come from one or a combination of three sources: transmission, translation, or misunderstanding.

Transmission is copying the text in the same language. For example, the Hebrew Bible was copied in Hebrew to make more Hebrew texts available, and the Greek texts were copied in Greek to make more Greek texts available. Errors in transmission occur when the person copying the text fails to be 100% accurate. Perhaps he skipped a word or a line or misread a word. Remember that copying texts used to be a very tedious process. Copying any significant portion of Scripture could lend itself to copying errors. If a copy that contains an error becomes the basis for a version of the Bible, then that version will also contain the error. However, remember that the numerous copies and Scripture citations now available have enabled researchers to identify the vast majority of these types of errors.

A humorous example of a transmission error occurs in codex 109, a manuscript copied in the 1300s A.D. An apparently sleepy scribe was copying the genealogy in Luke 3, which, in the text he was copying from, was in two vertical columns. Instead of copying the names in vertical columns as they appeared in his master copy, he copied them across the columns horizontally. The result was that everyone had the wrong father. God was the son of Aram, and the source of the human race was not God, but Phares. Correcting the manuscript was very easy because of the thousands of correct manuscripts in existence. Other copying

mistakes may not be as obvious, but they are corrected by the same process, i.e., comparing manuscripts.¹⁰ If a version of the Bible is based on a manuscript of text that has a copying error, then that version may contain an apparent contradiction.

Translation errors are the second way apparent contradictions get into the Bible. Greek and Hebrew can sometimes be difficult to translate, especially if the translators do not understand what the author was trying to say. It is unrealistic to think that translators have never made a mistake, but it is more unrealistic to stop reading the Bible or say it is unreliable because it has been translated from one language to another. I am not aware of a “perfect” English version. Some English versions are better than others; nevertheless, all of them speak of salvation through Christ and the value of godly living.

An example of a mistranslation occurs in the *King James Version* of Acts 7:45. The verse is speaking of Joshua bringing the tabernacle of Moses with him into the Promised Land, but the *King James Version* reads that “Jesus” brought in the tabernacle, not “Joshua.” The mistake is understandable because in both Greek and Hebrew, “Joshua” and “Jesus” are the exact same name. However, in English they are different, and the English translation needs to be accurate. Most modern versions have corrected the error and read “Joshua.”

One kind of translation error occurs because the exact meaning of the Greek or Hebrew word cannot be brought into English. This is not so much a case of an actual error, but is rather the inability of the translator to bring the fullness of the meaning of a Greek or Hebrew word into English. An example in the Greek text occurs in Luke 11:8. In the record in Luke, in the middle of the night a man is demanding bread from his neighbor. The NIV says the man was bold, while the NASB says the man

10. It occasionally occurs that the ancient manuscripts are quite evenly divided in their different readings, and in those cases the professional textual critics have other ways to determine the original besides comparing manuscript to manuscript, although that is the most common way.

was persistent. Why the difference? The Greek word *anaideia* actually has both meanings. Choosing one meaning or the other is usually necessary, but does not yield a completely accurate understanding of the text. This is one of the reasons that Bible study is necessary, lexicons and concordances are important, and commentaries can be very helpful.

God authored the Bible for our blessing and benefit, and it is up to us to work to know and understand it. *The Amplified Bible* was written to communicate more of the depth of meaning of some of the Greek and Hebrew words, and instead of a one-word translation of *anaideia* in Luke 11, it incorporates both meanings and reads, “shameless persistence *and* insistence.” If you discover a mistranslation in your Bible, it is helpful to make a note of it in the margin so you will read it correctly in the future.

Misunderstanding is the third, and without a doubt the most common, source of apparent contradictions. When a person misreads something in the Bible or misunderstands what he reads, he may interpret it as a contradiction. Misunderstandings can happen fairly easily, and for a number of reasons. Misunderstanding the language of the Bible, failure to note the person or people being addressed, not properly understanding the biblical customs or way of recording information, assuming similar records are identical or identical records are only similar, not getting all the details about something from every part of Scripture and thus making false assumptions about the records, and not recognizing the legitimate figures of speech used by God in the text are some of the major causes of apparent contradictions.

Biblical language can be hard to understand. Words like “atonement,” “sanctification,” “redemption,” etc., are not used in everyday English and can be misunderstood easily. Also, many words have more than one meaning. Even seemingly simple biblical words like “saved” can have a variety of meanings depending on the context. People and places often have more than one name, and, to make matters worse, different people and places often have the same name. For example, Jethro, Moses’

father-in-law, is also called “Reuel” and “Jether” (Exod. 4:18-Hebrew text, but most versions have “Jethro” so readers will not be confused). However, at least five other people in the Bible are named “Jether.” It is easy to see how contradictions could be “found” when, in actuality, no contradiction exists.

Failure to note *to whom* a passage is addressed causes many apparent contradictions. Different parts of the Bible are addressed to different individuals or groups of people, and God occasionally changed the rules He wanted men to live by. Something God said to Abraham may not apply to the Jews under the Law, or something God said to the Jews under the Law may not apply to Christians. Also, God spoke specific words to many individuals and groups that do not apply except to them. It can cause great confusion if someone just picks up a Bible, opens it, reads a passage and tries to apply it in his life without noting to whom the passage is addressed. Imagine that a man by chance opens his Bible to Genesis and reads God’s command to Abraham that male children must be circumcised or His covenant is broken (Gen. 17:14). However, the next day his Bible happens to fall open to Galatians, and he reads, “Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all” (Gal. 5:2). This man could become completely confused about what God desires for his life. But there is no need for that confusion. If you recognize that God has given different rules at different times, and also has spoken specifically to individuals or groups, then you know that finding out to whom a section of Scripture is addressed can be the most important key to making it fit with the whole of Scripture, and you most certainly want to find this out before applying it in your own life.¹¹

Another thing that causes Bible readers to be confused is not recognizing the manners and customs of the people in the Bible. There

11. That God changed the rules by which men live at various times in history is vital to know, and absolutely essential to understanding the Bible. Our booklet by Mark Graeser, *Defending Dispensationalism*, (Christian Educational Services, Indianapolis, IN, 2001) is very helpful in gaining an understanding of the basic concepts of the different “administrations” in the Bible. For further study, you may also visit www.TruthOrTradition.com, TOPIC: Administrations.

has been a dramatic change in people's daily lives and customs since biblical times. For example, the well-known Bible character, Samson, told his enemies a riddle and challenged them to tell him what it meant. They secretly threatened his wife, and said that they would kill her and her family if she did not give them the answer to the riddle. Wanting to save her family, she told them the solution. They then went to Samson and gave him the solution, acting as if they had figured it out for themselves. Samson realized how they solved his riddle, and he proclaimed, "...If you had not plowed with my heifer, you would not have solved my riddle" (Judg. 14:18c). Samson's statement about plowing does not make sense to us Westerners, and we wonder what plowing with a young cow has to do with solving a riddle. However, as we study the culture of the Old Testament, we learn the answer. In the Biblical culture, women were occasionally referred to as "cows" (Amos 4:1), and a young woman was referred to as a "heifer." A somewhat similar usage in our culture is referring to females as "chicks." In training a heifer to plow, the owner prods it with a goad (a pointed stick), until it learns to plow a straight row. Samson said in a very Eastern way, "If you had not plowed with [threatened with some kind of pain] my heifer [my young wife], you would not have found out my riddle."

Apparent contradictions come from:

- Transmission
- Translation
- Misunderstanding

An example of an apparent contradiction involving chronology occurs when we compare Jeremiah 25:1 with Daniel 1:1. In Jeremiah 25:1, the first year of Nebuchadnezzar is the *fourth* year of Jehoiakim, king of Judah. In Daniel 1:1, Nebuchadnezzar is called the king of Babylon in the *third* year of Jehoiakim. Although this was once considered an obvious

contradiction, scholars now know that far from being a contradiction, it actually proves the accuracy of the text. Jeremiah wrote from Judah while Daniel wrote from Babylon, and the two countries used different systems of counting the reigns of kings. The first months of their respective calendars were six months offset. The start of Daniel's year in Babylon was Nisan, which usually falls in our March or April (they used lunar years, which are different than our solar years). The start of Jeremiah's year was the month Tishri, which occurs in our September or October. Thus, an event that started in the summer of the fourth year of Daniel would still be in the summer of the third year of Jeremiah. If the books of Jeremiah and Daniel gave the same information about the years of Jehoiakim and Nebuchadnezzar, then *that* would have been a contradiction, and not historically accurate. God moved both Jeremiah and Daniel to record information that was historically accurate to them, given the countries in which they were living, and the entire Bible is just as historically accurate as the dates of Daniel and Jeremiah.

False assumptions about the Four Gospels are a common source of apparent contradictions. It is common knowledge that each of the Four Gospels gives different details about Christ's life. This means the only way to get the entire picture of Christ's life is to read all four.¹² Scholars have noticed the differences between the Four Gospels, and claimed that the writers contradicted each other. For example in Matthew 21:19, Jesus cursed a fig tree that withered immediately. In Mark 11:14-21, Jesus cursed a fig tree that withered overnight. Doubters are quick to point out this difference and say that Matthew and Mark contradict each other. The simple truth, however, is there were two trees that Jesus cursed. The fig tree was a symbol of Israel, and Jesus cursed two of them to make a point. It was the same point God made to Pharaoh in the book of Genesis when He gave him the same basic dream twice—something done twice is established by God and will certainly come to pass. Jesus knew that

12. For a clear presentation of Matthew presenting Christ as the king, Mark as the servant, Luke as the man, and John as the Son of God, see Mark Graeser, John Lynn, John Schoenheit, *One God & One Lord: Reconsidering the Cornerstone of the Christian Faith* (Christian Educational Services, Indianapolis, IN, 2003) chapter 6.

Israel as a nation was going to wither after it rejected him, so he cursed *two* fig trees to emphatically make the point.

The above examples are just two illustrations of so called “contradictions” often cited by critics of the Bible, that are nothing of the kind. There are also times when God places pieces of a story throughout the Bible so that only the diligent reader will see all the details. For example, different parts of the history of Israel are found in Kings, Chronicles, and the Prophets, so someone reading just one part will not get the whole story and may make false assumptions.

Before we close the discussion on apparent contradictions, it is essential to cover the very important area of *figures of speech*. A figure of speech is a deviation from the literal usage of language, or an unusual use of language to make an impact on the reader or catch his attention. The Bible should be taken literally whenever and wherever possible, but there are occasions when it is not literal, and a knowledge of figures of speech is essential in order to make sense of some difficult parts of Scripture. The field of figures of speech is not guesswork or haphazard. It is quite technical and exacting. There are more than 200 different figures of speech that have been identified in Scripture. The milestone work that has been done on the subject is the book, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, by E. W. Bullinger. Sadly, it is often the case that whenever someone does not understand a verse, or is unwilling to take it literally, he calls it a figure of speech. This is simply not the proper way to handle God’s Word.

It should not be thought unusual that God would use figures of speech. We use them all the time, and God uses them to enhance His communication to us. Interestingly, most of the time when we humans use them, we do so instinctively and haphazardly. God always uses figures of speech for a specific purpose, so it is important to recognize them. An example of how knowing the figures of speech in Scripture can help us correctly interpret the Bible occurs in Malachi. The prophet Malachi said that Elijah would come before the great Day of the Lord (Mal. 4:5). When

the disciples finally realized that Jesus was the Christ (the Messiah), they were confused because, to them, Elijah had not yet come. They asked Jesus, "...Why then do the teachers of the Law say that Elijah must come first?" (Matt. 17:10b). These disciples had been taught in the Synagogue that the Christ could not come until Elijah came, and since Elijah had not come, then how could Jesus be the Christ? Jesus corrected their misunderstanding and said, "...Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him..." (Matt. 17:12a). "Then the disciples understood that he was talking to them about John the Baptist" (Matt. 17:13).

John the Baptist was not Elijah, but there were so many similarities between the two men that God used the figure of speech *Antonomasia*, or "name change," to describe John. *Antonomasia* is used to import the characteristics of one person onto another person. When my son was young, he would occasionally jump up and down on the couch. If I caught him, I would say something like, "Cut that out, Tarzan." I know my son's name is not Tarzan, but by calling him "Tarzan," I was attributing Tarzan's characteristics to him. This is a common figure, and one that we use all the time. Elijah did not have to come back from the dead to fulfill Malachi's prophecy. One *like* Elijah needed to come—and John was similar to Elijah in so many ways that it was appropriate to prophetically call John "Elijah."

The use of *Antonomasia* in Malachi is a good example of a non-literal figure of speech. Another is *Hyperbole*, or exaggeration. Exaggeration was a common way of making points in the biblical culture, and so it appears in the Bible. Christ said, "And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away..." (Matt. 5:30a). He would be horrified if anyone actually cut off a hand. In a very Eastern way, Christ was making the point that we need to be prepared to take drastic measures to stop sinning.

An example of a figure of speech that uses unusual patterns of language to get the reader's attention is *Polyptoton*, or "many inflections." *Polyptoton* uses the same word more than once in a passage, but uses

it in different parts of speech. A good example is 2 Kings 21:13b: “...I will **wipe** Jerusalem as one **wipes** a dish, **wiping** it and turning it upside down.” In this verse it is the unusual repetition of the words that God uses to catch the attention of the reader. Knowing the figures of speech used in the Bible resolves many apparent contradictions, and also points out to us things to which God wants us to pay special attention. Anyone wanting to understand the Bible better will profit by taking some time to study Bullinger’s book on figures of speech.

It has been proven over and over again that “contradictions” in the Bible are only *apparent* contradictions, which study and research can resolve. The original God-breathed Word first given to the writers was without contradiction, and things that are hard to understand or at first seem like contradictions can be explained in light of the whole scope of Scripture.

Aren’t some of the books of the Bible lost or missing?

Another fairly common misconception about the Bible is that it is in some way incomplete, i.e., that it has books missing. The 66 books that compose the modern Bible are known as the “canon,” a theological word that means, “the books of the Bible officially accepted as Holy Scripture.” Some doubters of the Bible think church councils constructed the Bible by arbitrarily choosing the books they thought should be included. Furthermore, these people often assert there are many other books that should be in the Bible. These are sometimes referred to as the “lost books” of the Bible.

Before addressing the issue of whether or not any God-breathed books were left out of the Bible, I would like to make a personal observation. In my years in the ministry I have had the opportunity to personally speak with perhaps twenty people who subscribe to the theory that there are lost books of the Bible, and I have noticed something interesting: those who criticize the Bible by claiming it is incomplete do not conduct

their lives according to the books that *are* included in the Bible. This is hypocritical because if the Bible *is* missing books, then the parts we do have become even more valuable. If pirates have most of a treasure map, they do not throw it out because it is missing a piece. Instead, the part they have becomes even more valuable, and they study it with great intensity. Critics of the canon do not live by the books that are included in Scripture. Almost without exception they use the theory of the “missing books” to ignore the Bible altogether. It is clear to me they are not trying to restore a faulty document. Instead, they are looking for an excuse to ignore the Bible, and they find that excuse by questioning the canon.

The Church did not “create” the canon as the critics assert; rather, they *recognized* it. From the time God first spoke His Word to people and told them to write it down, there have been other writings that were not “God-breathed.” There were enough books circulating in the ancient world that Ecclesiastes, which was written more than 900 years before Christ, says, “...Of making many books there is no end...” (Ecc. 12:12). Some of the books existing in biblical times contained material substantiating Scripture. A few of these are mentioned in the Bible, including, “...the book of the annals of Solomon” (1 Kings 11:41b), “...the annotations of the prophet Iddo” (2 Chron. 13:22b), and “...the annals of Jehu...” (2 Chron. 20:34b). Even though these books are mentioned in the Bible, and supported it, they are still not “God-breathed,” and are left out of the canon. They are lost to us today precisely because the people of the time knew they were not “God-breathed,” so they did not carefully preserve them and pass them down from generation to generation as they did with what they recognized to be the God-breathed Word.

The Church did not “create” the canon as the critics assert; rather, they *recognized* it.

Before “books” were invented, Scripture was kept on scrolls, pieces of rolled up parchment or leather. Scrolls existed centuries before what

we today call a “book,” which is a number of pages bound together on one side. Book format came into common use around the time of the writing of the New Testament. Since the pages could be written on both sides, paper was conserved, and books were easier to read from and carry than scrolls. Before the book format, the larger writings, or “books,” of the Bible (such as Genesis, Joshua, Jeremiah, etc.) were usually kept on individual scrolls, and it was customary to write several of the smaller books (such as Joel, Amos, Obadiah, etc.) on one scroll.

The fact that Scripture existed on scrolls has been used by people who criticize the canon. They try to make it seem as if all the scrolls of the Bible, as well as dozens of others, were just “floating around the Christian world” until some Church committee, hundreds of years after Christ, decided to put some of them together and make one official book. That is not what happened. By the time the individual books of the Bible were bound together as one book, they had been read, revered, loved, preserved, and recognized by generations of believers as truly being “the words of God.” In contrast, the non-canonical books were recognized in the community of believers as not being from the mouth of God.

God had the whole Bible in mind when He first told Moses to write His words on a scroll, translated “book” in most versions (Exod. 17:14). The writings of Moses were known as “...the Book of the Law of Moses...” (Josh. 8:31). The fact that the Law of Moses was recognized to be “the words of God” throughout Israel’s history, including the time of Christ, shows that the books recognized by the people were carefully preserved and handed down, not just as history or nice prose, but as the Word of God. The same was true for the psalms of David, the proverbs of Solomon, the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah, etc. By the time Church councils undertook the task of compiling all the loose books into a single volume, those considered as “the Word of God” were well known and loved in the Christian community.

There are reliable tests that have been used to determine whether or not a book is a part of the canon, such as:

- Was the book originally written by a confirmed prophet of God?
- Does the message contain the truth of God?
- Does it have in it the power of God to change a person's life?
- Was it accepted by the people of God? Those alive at the time the book was written were the best qualified to know and preserve it and pass it down.

There is a very good reason why Christians do not include the “lost books” in the Bible—they are not Holy Scripture. The people who wrote them were not accepted as “holy men of God” in their own generations, as were Moses, Samuel, and other biblical writers. Furthermore, reading and studying the non-canonical books shows they are not “God-breathed.” They were not accepted as the Word of God at the time they were written. They are full of historical inaccuracies, fanciful stories, outright falsehoods, and contradictions with the rest of the canon. Since the average Christian has probably heard of the “lost books” of the Bible, but more than likely has never read any selections from them, inserting a section here from one of the more popular apocryphal writings is appropriate. The following is an excerpt from the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*:

1. I, Thomas the Israelite, tell and make known to you all, brethren from among the Gentiles, all the works of the childhood of our Lord Jesus Christ and his mighty deeds, which he did when he was born in our land. The beginning is as follows.
2. 1. When this boy Jesus was five years old he was playing at the ford of a brook, and he gathered together into pools the water that flowed by, and made it at once clean, and commanded it by his word alone. 2. He made soft clay and fashioned from it twelve sparrows. And it was the Sabbath when he did this. And there were also many other children playing with him. 3. Now when a certain Jew saw what Jesus was doing in his play on the Sabbath,

he at once went and told his father Joseph: "See, your child is at the brook, and he has taken clay and fashioned twelve birds and has profaned the Sabbath." 4. And when Joseph came to the place and saw (it), he cried out to him, saying: "Why do you do on the Sabbath what ought not to be done?" But Jesus clapped his hands and cried to the sparrows: "Off with you!" And the sparrows took flight and went away chirping. 5. The Jews were amazed when they saw this, and went away and told their elders what they had seen Jesus do.

3. 1. But the son of Annas the scribe was standing there with Joseph; and he took a branch of a willow and (with it) dispersed the water which Jesus had gathered together. 2. When Jesus saw what he had done he was enraged and said to him: "You insolent godless dunderhead, what harm did the pools and the water do to you? See, now you also shall wither like a tree and shall bear neither leaves nor root nor fruit." 3. And immediately that lad withered up completely; and Jesus departed and went into Joseph's house. But the parents of him that was withered took him away, bewailing his youth, and brought him to Joseph and reproached him: "What a child you have, who does such things."

4. 1. After this again he went through the village, and a lad ran and knocked against his shoulder. Jesus was exasperated and said to him: "You shall not go further on your way," and the child immediately fell down and died. But some, who saw what took place, said: "From where does this child spring, since his every word is an accomplished deed?" 2. And the parents of the dead child came to Joseph and blamed him and said: "Since you have such a child, you cannot dwell with us in the village; or else teach him to bless and not to curse. For he is slaying our children."

5. 1. And Joseph called the child aside and admonished him saying: "Why do you do such things that these people (must) suffer and hate us and persecute us?" But Jesus replied: "I know

that these words are not yours; nevertheless for your sake I will be silent. But they shall bear their punishment.” And immediately those who had accursed him became blind.¹³

Anyone familiar with the Four Gospels and the character of Jesus will realize immediately that the above “gospel” is not a part of the God-breathed Word, and certainly does not represent the love or wonderful heart of the Savior, Jesus Christ. That Jesus, even as a child, would kill another child who insulted him is completely out of character for Jesus, and that he would kill a second child who merely bumped into his shoulder is totally preposterous.

The “lost books” are also known for containing accounts of miracles that have no godly purpose or redeeming value, such as we saw above with Jesus and the sparrows. The “Gospel of Thomas,” and all the other non-canonical books have “fatal flaws” that reveal they are not the Word of God. As stated previously, there is a reason the “lost books” are not included in the canon of Scripture: generations of Christians and Christian scholars have read them and realized they did not come from God.

Another way God has kept His Word pure is by intertwining and cross-referencing the books of the Bible and the biblical characters. With the exception of the book of Esther, every single book of the Old Testament is either quoted or referred to in the New Testament. The phrase “It is written,” followed by a quotation or reference to the Old Testament occurs more than 60 times in the New Testament, and there are many other quotations that are not so specifically referenced. Also, in both the Old Testament and the New Testament many of the writers knew of each other and even referred to each other. Daniel and Ezra both mention Jeremiah; Ezra refers to Haggai and Zechariah; Nehemiah wrote about Ezra; Kings and Chronicles mention many of the prophets; Moses, Joshua, and Samuel are mentioned in many of the books; Job is

13. Hennecke, Edgar, *New Testament Apocrypha* (The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1963), pp. 392-394.

mentioned in Ezekiel and James; Noah is mentioned in ten books besides Genesis; Peter wrote about Paul; Paul mentions Peter, Mark, and Luke; the book of Acts (written by Luke) mentions the apostles and Paul, and on and on. In contrast to this extensive cross-referencing system showing that the people of God knew of, loved, and respected each other, the non-canonical books are not crossed referenced in this way.

It is easy for the critic to say the Bible is an arbitrary collection of books. However, anyone who actually reads and studies the canon of Scripture will be able to conclude what thousands of scholars who are concerned about the purity of the Bible and the validity of the canon have discovered and rediscovered: the canon found in the modern protestant versions of the Bible, with 66 books from Genesis to Revelation, can be confidently trusted as “the Word of God.”

Don't the Bible and science oppose each other?

The Bible is not a science textbook. Nevertheless, it is accurate when it mentions facts within the realm of science. Furthermore, the Bible contains physical knowledge about the world that was not generally known when the writers recorded the words of God. God created the heavens and the earth, and He intimately knows all about His creation. He simply told His prophets about the nature of earth and the universe, and they wrote down the scientific information He gave them.

One of the chief arguments against the Bible is that evolution, not creation, is responsible for the origin of animals and man. Christian Educational Services joins its voice with thousands of other educated Christians in categorically denying that evolution is true and that men and women are the product of millions of years of unplanned and random changes. The evidence from all branches of science is confirming that God did create the heavens and the earth, just as the Bible says. We have material on the subject, and the reader is also referred to the many books, articles, and scholarly monographs on the subject done by *The Institute*

for Creation Research, The Creation Evidences Museum, and Answers in Genesis, some of the organizations that specialize in teaching the truths about creation.

Unfortunately, many bookstores do not have books written from a creationist point of view, so it is easy for the average person to assume that there are only a few “religious fanatics” who still deny evolution. In fact, there are hundreds (yes, hundreds) of books written by competent and credible scientists that explain why creation, not evolution, is the most logical choice for the origin of the universe and of mankind. Why is it that a theory that has never been proven is so widely believed? Schools and museums and the media all discuss evolution as if it were fact. Often they call what does not qualify as evolution, “evolution,” attempting to make the theory easier to believe.

Before we go on, it is important to understand that when “evolution” is mentioned in this book, I am referring to “macroevolution,” which is actual evolutionary development including change of phylum, class, order, family, and genus. This should be distinguished from “evolution in the species,” which is *not actually evolution at all*. Within each species there is genetic room for change, and it is sad that this change within the species is often called “evolution.” For example, when dogs are bred to produce larger dogs, smaller dogs, blacker dogs, whiter dogs, etc., that is not evolution. It is change, yes, but technically it is “speciation,” not “evolution,” as the term is used in the creation/evolution debate. God, thankfully, created genetic room for change within species. That is why we humans can recognize each other—we are all a little different, yet all the same species. If tall people meet, marry, and have children, eventually (perhaps several generations later) the kids will be taller than average. This is change, but not evolution. It is development within the species. These developments can be quite stark, as we see among dogs, or not quite as stark but very noticeable, as we see among humans. Although we all came from Adam and Eve, there are many differences between the humans on planet earth. These variations within a species in no way confirms the theory of evolution, which requires that life develop from non-living material, and then that living material constantly organizes

itself by random changes into increasingly complex organisms.

Though not widely publicized, the theory of evolution is under attack from every angle. *Darwin on Trial* shows that evolution is not actually “science” in the accurate sense of the word.¹⁴ *Evolution: The Fossils Still Say No!* shows that the fossil record supports creation, not evolution.¹⁵ If evolution had occurred, the fossil record would be one continuous plastic flow (i.e., in a state of flux or transition) with genera and species being mostly indistinct and always in transition. After years of digging up fossils and petrified remains, the “missing link” has yet to be discovered in any animal or plant form. Instead, what paleontologists find are *distinct* plants and animals at every level of the fossil record. This is exactly what you would expect to find if creation occurred as recorded in the Bible, because each genus was created by God.

The theory of evolution is under attack from every angle.

In *Not By Chance*, Dr. Lee Spetner (who is not a Christian), writes convincingly that the discipline of information theory shows that random changes cannot lead to large-scale evolutionary changes.¹⁶ *Darwin's Black Box* sets forth the biochemical challenge to evolution and shows from biochemistry that random mutations could not have produced the biochemically complex organisms that cover the earth. This is a challenge to the theory of evolution that modern science has only recently become aware of because many of the biochemical processes regulating life had not been understood until recent years.¹⁷ *The Troubled Waters*

14. Phillip E. Johnson, *Darwin on Trial* (Intervarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL, 1991).

15. Duane T. Gish, *Evolution: The Fossils Still Say No!* (Institute for Creation Research, El Cajon, CA, 1995).

16. Dr. Lee Spetner, *Not By Chance! Shattering the Modern Theory of Evolution* (The Judaica Press, Brooklyn, New York, 1997).

17. Michael Behe, *Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution* (The Free Press, New York, NY, 1996).

of Evolution shows that the theory of evolution, which suggests that “random” processes have led to complex organisms, violates the Second Law of Thermodynamics, which states that things naturally go from a state of order to disorder.¹⁸ This is why things that work, break, rather than broken things fixing themselves, and why we humans are always cleaning and straightening. Any mom will testify that things do not get orderly on their own. We blow things up to *destroy* them, but evolution teaches that an explosion, the “Big Bang,” resulted in higher and higher forms of order. If that were the case, evolution would be the only thing science is aware of that violates the Second Law of Thermodynamics. According to the laws of physics, creation, not evolution, accounts for the high order of life forms on earth.

The late Gordon R. Taylor was an Englishman and the chief science advisor for BBC Television in England. He wrote *The Great Evolution Mystery*, which questions many of the things American evolutionists believe.¹⁹ But was he a creationist? No, he just did not believe in the kind of evolution usually taught in American schools. He believed in a different type of evolution, which brings up a noteworthy point. Although most non-scientists are not aware of it, there are a number of competing theories of evolution. Those who believe in evolution cannot agree among themselves as to which is correct. Because evolution is not really science at all, but actually just a *theory*, different scientists have posited different *theories* about evolution, and these *theories* contradict one another: Darwinianism, Neo-Darwinianism, the Punctuated Equilibrium Theory, the Theory of Inherited Characteristics, and the list goes on. All these differ in how they explain the origin of the life forms we see on earth. When the entire picture of life on earth is examined, creation, not evolution, explains it best.

Although the Bible is not a science textbook, it has some startling

18. Henry M. Morris, *The Troubled Waters of Evolution* (Creation-Life Publishers, San Diego, CA, 1974).

19. Gordon R. Taylor, *The Great Evolution Mystery* (Harper and Row Publishers, NY, 1983).

scientific information in it—startling primarily because at the time it was written, the information was not known to human beings.

- *The hydrologic cycle*

The fact that water is drawn up from the earth into the air and later comes down as rain was not known in ancient times. Yet God made it clear in His written Word.

Job 36:27 and 28

(27) He draws up the drops of water, which distill as rain to the streams;

(28) the clouds pour down their moisture and abundant showers fall on mankind.

Ecclesiastes 1:7

All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full. To the place the streams come from, there they return again.

How could writers who lived hundreds of years before Christ know scientific information that we have learned about only in the last centuries? God, who created the heavens and the earth, told them.

- *The water in clouds*

It was not generally known by ancient man that clouds are full of water. The association between clouds and rain was known because it rains only when it is cloudy, but it was definitely not known that even in good weather the fleecy clouds hold literally tons of water, something Job alluded to when he spoke of the “weight” of the clouds.

Job 26:8

He wraps up the waters in his clouds, yet the clouds do not burst under their weight.

Job 37:11

He loads the clouds with moisture; he scatters his lightning through them.

Because water is heavier than air, clouds have to be “balanced” in the sky. This is not readily apparent to those of us on the ground. It is generally assumed that clouds float because they are lighter than the air, but actually there is a lot of complex physics behind the clouds floating in the air. God spoke of this “balance” to Job some 4,000 years ago:

Job 37:16

Do you know how the clouds hang poised, those wonders of him who is perfect in knowledge?

Job 37:16 (AMP)

Do you know how the clouds are balanced...?

- *The weather patterns*

Modern scientists are aware of the circular patterns of the winds. We study them regularly by balloon, airplane, and satellite. Ancient man, however, had no such devices and could not track the patterns of the weather. However, God knew about the circular patterns of the wind currents and told His servants about them.

Ecclesiastes 1:6

The wind blows to the south and turns to the north; round and round it goes, ever returning on its course.

Ecclesiastes 1:6 (NASB)

Blowing toward the south, Then turning toward the north, The wind continues swirling along; And on its **circular courses** the wind returns.

- *The Ocean Currents*

Ancient man did not know much about the great currents flowing in the ocean, and it has been only very recently that scientists have discovered there are currents running like great rivers underneath the surface of the ocean at various depths. Ancient man did not know about these underwater pathways. In 1786, Benjamin Franklin published the first modern written account about the great ocean currents, and today we know a lot about the currents that are almost like roads in the ocean, traveling in a circular pattern. God, however, knows all about them, and through the writings of King David, almost a thousand years before Christ, first revealed to mankind about “the paths of the sea.”

Psalm 8:8

The birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.

- *The springs at the bottom of the ocean*

It has been only since the invention of the modern submarine and since contemporary undersea exploration began that man has learned some of the facts that God revealed to Job some 4,000 years ago. How could Job have possibly known there were springs at the bottom of the ocean unless God told him? Only in the last century could we finally confirm what readers of Job have known for millennia.

Job 38:16

Have you journeyed to the springs of the sea or walked in the recesses of the deep?

- *The earth suspended in space*

Long before the Romans taught the earth was being held upon the shoulders of the god, Atlas, or other people believed that the earth was

held on the back of elephants or a large turtle, God revealed that it was simply suspended in empty space.

Job 26:7

He spreads out the northern *skies* over empty space; he suspends the earth over nothing.

Job 26:7 (NASB)

He stretches out the north over empty space, and hangs the earth on nothing.

God's Word spoke of scientific facts hundreds and sometimes even thousands of years before mankind in general knew them or had the ability to confirm them. This could be the case only because God, the Creator, knew what He made and how He made it, and revealed information about His creation to man. The fact that the Bible reveals scientific information that was unknown to the people of ancient times is very solid and important evidence proclaiming that God, not man, is the Author of Scripture. There is one more important point that must be made about the Bible and science: not only does the scientific evidence in Scripture reveal God's authorship, but also there is no truly scientific discovery that contradicts or disproves the Bible.

On occasion I have heard scoffers talk about the Bible as if no thinking person ever believed it. If the Bible is believable, then it makes sense that through the ages there would have been great men and women of science who had studied it and concluded that it was true. There are many such men and women. A few select example include:



Johann Kepler (1571-1630). He is considered to be the founder of physical astronomy. He was the first to state that his research was only “thinking God’s thoughts after Him,” a succinct statement, and one later echoed by other believing scientists.

- **Francis Bacon** (1561-1626). He is considered to be the formulator of what we today call “the scientific method. He recognized that men learn from both the Bible and the world around them, and wrote: “There are two books laid out before us to study, to prevent our falling into error; first, the volume of the Scriptures, which reveal the will of God; then the volume of the Creatures, which express His power.”



Blaise Pascal (1623-1662). He is one of the founders of hydrodynamics. He was a deeply devoted believer, and wrote religious works as well as scientific ones. To him is attributed the “Wager of Pascal,” the essence of which is that a man cannot lose if he becomes a Christian. If he is right, and God does exist, he will have everlasting life and everlasting joy. If he is wrong, he has enjoyed a wonderful life on earth. However, if someone does not believe and is wrong, he will lose everything.



Isaac Newton (1642-1727). Famous for the discovery of the law of gravity and the formulation of calculus as a branch of mathematics, he was perhaps the most intelligent man of this millennia. He was a devout Bible believer, fluent in both Greek and Hebrew, and wrote many books on biblical subjects, including *Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John*, a book on the prophecies of Daniel.²⁰

- **Michael Faraday** (1791-1867). Faraday is recognized as one of the greatest physicists of all time. He invented the electric generator, and discovered magnetic lines of force

²⁰ Sir Isaac Newton, *Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John* (Oregon Institute of Science and Medicine, 2251 Dick George Road, Cave Junction, OR, Reprinted 1991).

and electromagnetic induction. He had faith in the Bible and prayer, and believed the tenets of his church, one of which was: “The Bible, and it alone, with nothing added to it nor taken away from it by man, is the sole and sufficient guide for each individual, at all time and in all circumstances...”

- **Georges Cuvier** (1769-1832). He is considered to be the founder of the science of comparative anatomy, and helped forge paleontology into a separate scientific discipline. He was a strong proponent of catastrophism, and believed the Flood of Noah was the last global catastrophe our earth has faced. He strongly supported creation, and defended it in important creation/evolution debates.
- **Jedidiah Morse** (1761-1826) was the leading American geographer of his day. He authored the very first American geography textbook, which was almost universally used in schools and went through 25 editions. He was a strong believer in the six-day creation of the earth and Noah’s Flood, and his textbook included a section about the animals being saved from destruction by Noah’s Ark and their subsequent distribution around the earth. His son, Samuel Morse, invented the telegraph, and was also a strong Christian. The first message sent across telegraph wires (1844) was: “What God hath wrought.”²¹

These few examples could be multiplied by the hundreds and thousands, both yesterday and today. What the Bible says makes sense, and many thinking men and women of science and other academic disciplines have long recognized that fact.

21. These examples, and many more, can be found in the book by Henry Morris, *Men of Science, Men of God: Great Scientists Who Believed the Bible* (Master Books, El Cajon, CA, 1988). Morris gives a short sketch on each of more than 100 men who believed the Bible. There are no women in the list of scientists above. Although today there are female scientists who are prominent in their fields and believe in creation, until this century it was close to impossible for a woman to become a recognized scientist.

Does archaeology support the Bible?

The material evidence that archaeologists have discovered supports the Bible. Sadly, in the 1900s there was a great deal of archaeological work interpreted in a way that discredited the Bible. Of course, it has been said that archaeology “proves” the Bible, and this is not technically correct either. The Bible contains much information about God, the spiritual nature of the world, and the future of man that archaeology can never prove. The best archaeology can do is substantiate what the Bible says about the past, but the importance of that should not be understated. If, time after time, archaeology substantiates statements the Bible makes about the past, it would be logical to conclude that because the Bible is reliable historically, it must be reliable when it speaks of salvation, the coming of Christ, the Judgment, and everlasting life.

Many modern archaeologists do not think archaeology substantiates the Bible; they say it disproves the Bible. In fact, most of the universities that offer degrees in archaeology are staffed by archaeologists who do not believe the Bible. What is the situation? As the discipline of archeology developed, many theories were set forth concerning the dating of the ancient time periods being uncovered in the ground. As the many theories gradually gave way to an “accepted chronology,” there was a misdating of the layers in the ground. The subject is a complex one, and many books and articles have been written on it, but we can summarize the situation thusly: because archaeologists have mislabeled and misdated the eras of the ancient past that have been uncovered in excavations, the “evidence” they find in the ground does not match the biblical record. This has resulted in many of them doubting the accuracy of the Bible.

The Old Testament town of Jericho provides an excellent example of what has happened. According to the book of Joshua, when Joshua came to Jericho it was a formidable city, enclosed by a large wall and inhabited by Canaanites. Through a miracle, part of the wall of the city collapsed, which allowed the Israelite army to rush in, kill the people, and set the city on fire. Later, Jericho was rebuilt and inhabited. If the Bible is accurate,

archaeologists should be able to dig into the tel, the dirt mound, at the site of Old Testament Jericho and find a large collapsed wall associated with a burn layer. Sure enough, archaeologists do find a large wall at Jericho, which is partially collapsed and associated with a deep burn layer indicating great destruction, not just a small fire. However, because of the way most modern archaeologists misdate the various layers, they claim when Joshua arrived, Jericho was either a deserted city or a small settlement. They say the wall was destroyed and the city burned *before* Joshua arrived, and Joshua simply took credit for what others had done by writing the story that now appears in the Bible. This viewpoint, or some similar idea that discredits the Bible, can be found in many books on the archaeology of the Bible. Warner Keller, whose book, *The Bible as History*, has sold more than 10 million copies, writes:

For if it is the case that Israelites did not come to Jericho until the time of the occupation, i.e., about the middle or towards the end of the 13th century B.C., they did not need to conquer the city for they found it uninhabited!²²

The Bible states that Jericho was inhabited, and even fortified. Remember the record of the prostitute Rahab whose house was built into the wall and who helped the spies Joshua sent? What about the wonderful account of the blowing of trumpets and the fall of the wall? Keller notes the findings of archaeologist Kathleen Kenyon who excavated Jericho from 1952-1958.

According to her findings the walls of Jericho had to be rebuilt during the Bronze Age no less than seventeen times. The walls were repeatedly destroyed either by earthquakes or erosion. Perhaps this weakness of the walls of Jericho found expression in the Bible account of how the children of Israel, in order to

22. Warner Keller, *The Bible as History* (Bantam Books, New York, 1982), pp. 163 and 164.

conquer Jericho, merely had to shout their war cry when the priests blew the trumpets.²³

Is Keller serious when he writes that the record in the Bible is a fable, and the idea that the walls of Jericho fell when the people shouted and blew trumpets most likely came from the fact that Jericho was known to have weak walls? Sadly, he is. Let me restate that according to many modern archaeologists, archaeology actually disproves the Bible. This “disproving” happens over and over with record after record until there is little of the biblical account that they believe.



Pottery excavated by the author
from the biblical city of Dan.

The truth about Jericho is that the weak walls were built *after* Joshua destroyed the Canaanite city of Jericho. Those who believe the Bible realize that the massive wall and associated burn layer in Jericho is good evidence the Bible is true; and there is more evidence from many more archaeological excavations all over Israel and the Middle East that also supports Scripture. Thankfully, in spite of the fact that archaeologists who do not believe the Bible hold very important positions in many universities, there are some who reject the “accepted” chronology and show that archaeological evidence, if interpreted properly, does support the Bible.²⁴ One who understands what has occurred in archaeology, and has information to help correct it is David Rohl. He does a good job of

23. *Ibid.*, p. 162. These weak walls would have postdated Joshua.

24. A good example is Joseph P. Free, author of *Archaeology and Bible History* (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1969), revised and updated by Howard Vos in 1992.

summarizing the position of modern archaeologists who do not believe the Bible, and notes why there is a problem:

What lies behind this jaundiced opinion of the Bible as history? Peeling away all the layers of scholarly debate which have tended to obscure the issue over the years, we are left with one fundamental problem for those who would advocate using the Bible as a source for history: archaeological excavations in Egypt and THE LEVANT, ongoing for the best part of the last two centuries, have produced no tangible evidence to demonstrate the historical veracity of the early biblical narratives.²⁵ Direct material support for the traditional history of the Israelite nation, as handed down in the books of Genesis, Exodus, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings and Chronicles, is virtually non-existent. It is as if the Israelites had somehow failed to leave their archaeological footprint in the ancient lands of the Bible.

Of course, if you are a devout Christian, Jew or Muslim you may have no doubts about the historical accuracy of the Old Testament or TANAKH [The Jewish Bible] narratives and the parallel stories found in the Koran. Your weapon against this critical biblical scholarship is your absolute faith. If, on the other hand, like me, you are primarily interested in the search for historical truth—without the sustaining support of any particular religious belief—it is essential to find archaeological evidence to demonstrate that the events recorded in the Bible actually happened and that characters such as Joseph, Moses, Saul, David and Solomon really walked this Earth some three to four thousand years ago. It is the lack of such evidence which, in essence, lies at the very heart of the academic skepticism now prevalent in some areas of biblical scholarship.²⁶

25. "Levant" is a general term for all the countries on the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea.

26. David M. Rohl, *Pharaohs and Kings: A Biblical Quest* (Crown Publishers, Inc., New York, 1995), pp. 7 and 8.

Rohl concludes that the reason that archaeologists do not have evidence for the biblical events is they are looking in the wrong layers of the dirt. They have misdated the layers and assigned the wrong dates to the evidence in the ground. Rohl writes about the need to reinterpret the dating of the evidence in the earth:

This book will demonstrate that all is not well with the “conventional” chronology and that the only real solution to the archaeological problems which have been created is to pull down the whole structure and start again, reconstructing from the foundation upwards.²⁷

Once the chronology of the layers in the ground is correctly interpreted, the earth yields wonderful evidence for the biblical events and helps us picture exactly what happened in the biblical records. The depth of ash at Jericho, the strong walls of Megiddo, the pool at Gibeon, the pieces of ivory at Ahab’s “ivory palace,” the household utensils, the weapons, and much more, allow us to get a mental picture of what life was really like when the biblical characters lived. Rohl is one historian who has seen that picture, and he writes about what is there to see when the chronology is corrected.



A tower in the wall of Jericho.

I will endeavor to guide you to a Promised Land ablaze with the destructions of Joshua and the twelve tribes. We can then

27. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

take another step back into the distant past to try and identify the cultural remains of the Israelites left behind in Egypt after the Exodus. A tantalizing prospect presents itself. We will be given the opportunity to wander along the dusty lanes between the houses of Jacob's descendants and look into their courtyards to see bread-baking clay ovens, grain silos and the mudbrick vaults of their tombs. If the overall chronological framework proposed in this book is anywhere near historical reality, then the period of the Israelite Sojourn will become readily apparent in the archaeology of Egypt's eastern delta. The mass graves of the victims of the final horrendous plague which fell upon Egypt will lie at our feet. The archaeological remains of the store-city built with the sweat of Israelite slaves during the Bondage period will be identified. Finally, I intend to take you into the Egyptian tomb of the patriarch Joseph.²⁸

Although it may be debated whether or not Rohl has properly reconstructed the ancient chronology, it cannot be debated that in order to reestablish a correct chronology, the one accepted today by most archaeologists needs to be completely reconstructed. Another scholar who recognized the need to completely reconstruct the chronology of the Exodus and the early years of the Israelite occupation of the land of Israel is the late Donovan Courville. His rare two-volume work, *The Exodus Problem and Its Ramifications*, is a masterpiece offering a very plausible explanation of the chronology of the Exodus, including the name of the Pharaoh who opposed Moses.²⁹ The late Joseph P. Free, author of *Archaeology and Bible History*, is another scholar who recognized the need to adjust the "accepted dating" of many of the archaeological sites

28. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

29. Donovan A. Courville, *The Exodus Problem and Its Ramifications* (Challenge Books, Loma Linda, CA, 1971). It is unfortunate that this set of books is so rare. Courville was ahead of his time, and since his views were considered absurd by archaeologists who hold the high positions in the discipline, his book was not widely published or distributed.

in Israel.³⁰ Once the chronology of the Middle East is corrected and the layers of dirt the archaeologists are digging in are correctly labeled, all the “missing evidence” for the biblical accounts will be right there in front of our eyes.

When you walk up the steps to the Temple that Jesus walked up, when you hold a 3,000 year old oil lamp, when you stand on the remains of the castle wall at Samaria, or walk through the water tunnel Hezekiah built to protect his people from the Assyrians, there is a powerful emotional connection that occurs between you and the Bible, you and the biblical characters, and you and your God. That is why many people visiting Israel weep at the ancient and holy sites. The misdating of the layers of the earth by modern archaeologists has prevented many people from seeing the rich evidence for the truth of the Bible. Furthermore, it has contributed to their being skeptical of the Bible and disconnected from God. It is a blessing that we live in a time when there are some historians and archaeologists who are not content to accept the standard chronology with all the doubt and unbelief that goes along with it, but rather are working to restore the true chronology of the layers in the earth. Anyone searching for the truth can read what these men and women have to say. It is my sincere prayer that there will come a day when the histories and chronologies of the archaeological sites are corrected, and the discipline of archaeology itself is reconstructed to reflect the true history of the world.

Does history support the Bible?

The Bible is a very detailed document, and there are many things it says about the ancient world that have not been substantiated by secular historians. However, more of the people, places, and events mentioned in the Bible are substantiated by historians as more historical texts are read and translated, and as archaeologists and historians discover more about the ancient world. It has taken years and years to ferret out the

30. Joseph P. Free, *Archaeology and Bible History* (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1969).

details of ancient history, and often, century after century went by without any secular substantiation for historical information given in the Bible. Unfortunately, there have been occasions during those times when critics of the Bible took the opportunity to try to discredit it. Instead of looking at the track record of the Bible and believing that historical evidence would one day be brought to light to substantiate it, they claimed the Bible was “wrong” and “inaccurate.”



Steps on the south side of the Temple. Debris from the Roman destruction of Jerusalem covered and preserved these steps which would have been used by Jesus although some restoration has been done to them.

A notable example of recent finds vindicating God’s Word is in Daniel 5, which lists “Belshazzar” as the king of Babylon. The “problem” arose when ancient records were discovered listing the kings of Babylon, and Belshazzar was not on the list. Critics used this fact to “prove” the book of Daniel was fiction and not history. Later, however, the Bible was vindicated as archaeologists uncovered texts showing that the actual king, Nabonidus, had left Babylon and appointed Belshazzar to reign in his stead while he traveled. Thus, Belshazzar, the second in command, was the acting king. This fact is actually alluded to in Daniel 5:7 because Belshazzar offered the position of “...third highest ruler in the kingdom” to whoever could read the mysterious writing that appeared on the wall of his palace. He could not make anyone the “second highest ruler”

because he was holding that position himself. This is just one example, and there are many others.

Another question scholars have asked concerns the dates of the books of the Bible themselves. One of the important evidences that God is the Author of Scripture is that it contains predictive prophecy, i.e., foretelling the future. It is widely known that it is impossible for men to accurately tell the future because things change so quickly and unpredictably. Yet the Bible accurately foretells the future, which proves that God is its Author. The primary way critics get rid of the foretelling in Scripture is to say that the books of the Bible were written after the events actually occurred. For example, they say parts of the book of Isaiah were written in the Greek period, long after the events “foretold” in Isaiah occurred. If that criticism were true, then there would not really be any foretelling at all in the Bible. It would simply contain fairy tales about great prophets who could foresee the future, when in fact the stories were made up and the events that were being written about had already occurred.

As “proof” of the late dates of the biblical books, until 70 to 100 years ago scholars asserted that a number of Hebrew words used in the Old Testament appeared late in the development of the Hebrew language. They said this was proof that the Old Testament books were not written as early as Moses, Joshua, David, and even Isaiah, but were written as late as the Hellenistic (Greek) period, 332 B.C. and later. In the last 70 years, however, a large number of tablets and texts have been unearthed in various excavations around the Middle East, showing that the words critics said were “late” are not late at all. In fact, the evidence available now shows that the vocabulary used in the Bible fits exactly into the ages and places given in Scripture. Far from disproving it, the very vocabulary used in Scripture supports its historical accuracy.

Although some people may claim that the Bible is not historically accurate, it is—and this fact speaks very loudly as to its divine authorship. It is the rule, not the exception, that non-biblical ancient historical texts have inaccuracies and inconsistencies. This is easy to understand. How

accurate would our histories be if there were no cameras, no telephones or quick communication devices, no accurate maps or way to locate things, and no way to quickly and easily record what was happening? The only things available in the ancient world to record what had happened were memory, word of mouth, and limited means to write what had happened. This means if the Bible, which contains historical information from many centuries and many countries had been authored by man, we should expect some degree of historical inaccuracies, but those inaccuracies are not there.



A Roman aqueduct north of Caesarea. Many Roman ruins still exist.

The account of Sir William Ramsay, an English historian, scholar, and author from the late 1800s is noteworthy. Ramsay was taught at school that the Bible was not reliable, and believed his professors. He wrote, “But about 1880 to 1890 the book of Acts was regarded as the weakest part of the New Testament. No one who had any regard for his reputation as a scholar cared to say a word in its defense.”³¹ Ramsay studied the Roman Empire while living in Turkey, and since the book of Acts records many

31. William M. Ramsay, *The Bearing of Recent Discoveries on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament* (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, Reprinted 1979), p. 38.

events that happened there, he began to study it. Because his professors had filled his mind with doubt about the Bible, he stated, “I began then to study the Acts in search of geographical and antiquarian evidence, hardly expecting to find any....”³²

As Ramsay studied the book of Acts for himself, he gradually became convinced it was accurate. This process continued until eventually he wrote: “I adopted this argument [that the history in the New Testament was not factual] from others: but I made it my own by believing it and judging accordingly. We are all equally condemned for bad critical method and wrong judgment.” He then wrote of Acts, “The present writer takes the view that Luke’s history is unsurpassed in respect of its trustworthiness.”³³ It is interesting that Ramsay, like so many others, only “heard” the Bible was historically inaccurate, and he believed it until he did his own research, something that, as a trained historian, fluent in both Greek and Latin, he was able to do. The historical research of Ramsay and many others has been examined and rechecked many times, and it can be said with confidence that the Bible is historically accurate.

Time after time, when the Bible mentions a person, place, nation, language, or custom, it has been proven to be correct. More than one historian has come to Christ by studying the accuracy of the history revealed in the Bible. If it is so amazingly accurate about things we can verify, why would we doubt its accuracy about things we cannot verify, such as everlasting life through Christ?

Do miracles happen?

Some people say they cannot believe the Bible because they do not believe the miracles in the Bible are possible. It is true that there are some very notable miracles in the Bible, but they do not disprove the existence of God or the truth of Scripture. If anything, they prove God’s existence

32. Ibid. p. 38.

33. Ibid. pp. 41 and 81.

and show His love and concern for His people. If you doubt the miracles in the Bible, the first question you should ask yourself is, “Do I believe in God?” If the answer to that is “No,” then the reason you are doubting the miracles in the Bible is obvious: you do not believe in a God who could do those miracles.

If you believe in God, but do not believe in the miracles in the Bible, you would be wise to ask yourself why you do not believe. God created the heavens and earth, and each year we know more about the vastness of space and the complexity of the things in it. Is it really so hard to believe that the God who created millions of galaxies could have stopped the sun for a day (Josh. 10:13)? Is it hard to believe that the God who created the great oceans could have brought water out of a rock (Exod. 17:6)? Is it really so difficult to believe that the God who created the life force in all living things, including plants, animals, and mankind could put that life force in a dead body and bring it back to life (Matt. 28:7; John 11:1-45)?

Anyone who observes the creation and believes there is a God who created it all should have no reason to doubt the miracles in the Bible. The people who lived at the time the Bible was written knew these miracles occurred. As we have said earlier, it is unrealistic to think that the words of a liar or lunatic would be carefully preserved and passed down from one generation to the next as the truth. When Moses wrote about the crossing of the sea, or water coming from a rock, the people at the time had witnessed those events, and readily accepted his writings. When Daniel wrote about being in the lion’s den, the people of that time knew it was true, and carefully preserved what he penned. Numerous biblical records document that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead. In Acts 1:3 we learn that Jesus “...gave many convincing proofs that he was alive....” 1 Corinthians 15:2-8 documents that Jesus appeared after his resurrection to not only the apostles, but also to more than 500 people at one time. The people of the time knew the truth about the miracles and accepted the biblical account. It is neither wise nor good scholarship to decide today that the biblical events that were well attested to in their own time did not occur.

Doesn't the Bible contain some false and even harmful teachings?

The Bible was given by God to be a blessing to mankind. It does not contain false or harmful teachings. That does not mean that everything it says will be a blessing to every person. A career criminal may think the punishments for crime demanded in the Bible are “unjust.” A stingy person may consider God’s command to give to the poor “unfair.” A bitter person may feel that God’s command to forgive is “unreasonable.” A person who believes “free sexual expression” is healthy will assert that God’s commands about sexual purity are “harmful.” Proverbs 8:9 says that the laws of God are right to those who are discerning. They will not seem “right” or “just” to someone who follows human reasoning and fleshly desires. However, as we obey God and learn about Him, the blessing in all He says becomes clear.

Although ungodly people may have a hard time seeing the blessing in God’s commands, there is another scenario that must be considered: there are well-meaning people who doubt the Bible because they heard someone say, “The Bible says ...” when in fact the Bible does not say that at all. These widely believed falsehoods might well be called “Christian myths” or even “urban Christian legends.” To see how widespread the misinformation about the Bible is, consider the following simple question: “How many sheep got on Noah’s ark?” If you thought “two,” you have been listening to some of the common misinformation that floats around in Christian circles. Genesis records that God said to Noah, “Of every clean beast you shall receive *and* take with you seven pairs...” (Gen. 7:2a-AMP).³⁴ Sheep are considered “clean” according to Levitical Law, so 14 of them would have gotten on the Ark. Seven pairs of the bird genus were also taken on the Ark (Gen. 7:3-AMP). It was the “unclean” animals that came on by twos (Gen. 7:2).

34. The Hebrew text indicates seven pairs, which is well represented in the Amplified Version. Most versions simply read “by sevens” or something similar, which does not make the fact that there were seven pairs as clear to the reader.

If something as easy as the number of animals that got on Noah's ark is distorted and misrepresented in Christian circles, does it not make sense that other doctrines and practices are misrepresented as well? Just because you heard the Bible says something that to you seems false or even harmful does not mean it is actually in the Bible. Some people, for example, reject the record of Noah's ark because they think that Noah could not have built a boat big enough for all the animals. However, these people make false assumptions, such as that Noah would have to have brought animals from every species and subspecies onto the ark. Research done by the *Institute for Creation Research* shows that Noah would have had to take only individual *genera* into the Ark, not the individual *species* and subspecies of each animal, and the size of the Ark mentioned in the Bible is plenty big enough for the job Noah was asked to do.³⁵

Another example of something that is widely believed, but not biblical, is that Jonah was *alive* inside the belly of the fish for three days and three nights.³⁶ The biblical truth is that Jonah was swallowed whole, but died inside the fish after saying a short prayer. That Jonah was dead for three days and three nights and then raised from the dead was the great "...sign of the prophet Jonah" mentioned by Jesus in Matthew 12:38-41. How could Jonah have foreshadowed the Messiah if he did not die in the fish, but Jesus Christ did die on the Cross? How can a living man be a "sign" for a dead man? The great "sign" of Jonah was that he was dead for three days and nights in the fish and then was raised from the dead, just as Jesus was dead for three days and three nights in the tomb and then was raised from the dead. Although it is widely believed by Christians that Jonah was alive in the fish, the Bible never makes that claim. There are some well respected Christian commentators who show

35. John C. Whitcomb and Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Flood: The Biblical Record and its Scientific Implications* (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Phillipsburg, NJ, 1961), pp. 10-14, 63-88.

36. The creature that swallowed Jonah might have been a large fish or a whale—the Hebrew and Greek languages do not make a distinction between a fish and a sea-going mammal.

from Scripture that Jonah was dead. A very good example is J. Vernon McGee, author of the book, *Jonah: Dead or Alive?*³⁷

Another doctrine that is commonly taught but not in the Bible is that when an unsaved person dies, he goes to “Hell” and burns forever. That teaching, based on the misunderstanding of a few verses and the false doctrine of “the immortal soul,” a phrase never used in the Bible, has caused many people to doubt the love and mercy of God. The true biblical teaching is clear even in the most often quoted verse in the Bible, John 3:16. Although it is common to hear John 3:16 quoted, and it often appears on banners that are hung over the railings at professional football games, the truth it sets forth is not well known.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

God offers every person a choice between two things: everlasting life and everlasting death. We can live forever or we can “perish.” Not burn forever—*perish*, that is, come to an end, be completely destroyed. Romans 6:23 tells us the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is everlasting life. The choice is death or life. This choice between life and *death* is set before people in verses throughout the entire Bible. There is not one verse that says the choice is everlasting life or everlasting torment. “Eternal torment” is not in the Bible, it does not fit with what we know about God, and it does not make sense. All through the Bible, God is the God of justice, and in the civil laws in Exodus through Deuteronomy, God commands that the punishment always fits the crime. There is no “overkill” in the justice of God: the punishment is always appropriate. But that would certainly not be the case if unbelievers burned forever. What crime could a human possibly commit in a lifetime that the just and fitting punishment would be burning *forever*? The lake of fire is

37. J. Vernon McGee, *Jonah: Dead or Alive?* (The Church Press, Farson and Sons, Glendale, CA).

specifically called “the second death” (Rev. 20:14) because the unsaved people who are thrown into it burn up and die.³⁸

Our Choice	
Everlasting Life (John 3:16)	Everlasting Death (Rev. 20:14)

Not only do Christians sometimes believe things that are not in the Bible, they also sometimes have traditions, practices, or customs that are not biblical. These can cause other people to turn away from the Bible, which is sad because it is not the Bible that is at fault, but rather people who say they are obeying it when in fact they are not. For example, a prominent denomination insists that full-time ministers not marry, and that has caused some people to think the Bible cannot be a good book to live by. When you actually read it, however, you find that it clearly says ministers can marry (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6).

Another example of some Christians living by rules that are not in the Bible involves the consumption of alcohol. There are Christians who teach that drinking any alcohol at all is a sin. That erroneous teaching has caused some people to doubt the truth and relevance of Scripture. The truth is that believers are allowed to drink alcohol. It would indeed be incredulous if God forbade the use of alcohol, but Jesus changed more than 120 gallons of water into wine at a wedding (John 2:1-11). The truth is Christians are told in Scripture not to get drunk (Eph. 5:18).

Still another example involves the Christians who think dancing is a sin. There is little doubt that dancing can be ungodly or sinful, depending

38. Entire books have been written showing the biblical truth that the doctrine of “eternal torment” is unbiblical. We have a little about it in our book Mark Graeser, John Lynn, John Schoenheit, *Is There Death After Life?* (Christian Educational Services, Indianapolis, IN, 2004), and a two hour teaching video *The Dead are Dead*, but the most definitive work we are aware of on the subject is, Edward Fudge, *The Fire that Consumes: A Biblical and Historical Study of the Doctrine of Final Punishment* (Providential Press, Houston, TX, 1982).

on the music and the movements of the dancers, but there is also godly dancing. Note verse four in the following verses, which are describing how to praise God:

Psalm 150:3-5

(3) Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre,

(4) praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute,

(5) praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals.

It is not right to say, “Dancing is a sin,” when Scripture says people can praise God in their dancing.

The list of such Christian myths is a long one, but the point is simple: there are things Christians say and believe that are not what the Bible says, so never doubt God’s Word just because a Christian says or does something you find “unreasonable.” Take time to check for yourself what the Bible actually says before you draw a conclusion.

Doesn’t the hypocrisy in the Christian Church show the Bible is not true?

The fact that there are sinners and hypocrites in the Church does not prove that the Bible is false. Rather, it shows that God, in His love, has given men free will, and they can behave as they please. Nevertheless, a common reason people ignore the Bible and Christianity is Christians themselves. They are often the most flagrant sinners on God’s green earth. Prisons are full of Christians, bankers regularly write off bad debt incurred by Christians, and it is far too common to meet Christians who are ungodly, unthankful, mean-spirited, jealous, liars, conniving, and just plain inconsiderate. Of course, there are people who call themselves Christians who are not—they go to church but have never given their

heart to Jesus. However, even committed Christians can be overcome by their weaknesses and sin against God and man. Christ, speaking of his disciples' failure to obey, commented that, "...The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matt. 26:41-NASB). Scripture is honest about men's faults and failures. Ecclesiastes 7:20 says, "There is not a righteous man on earth who does what is right and never sins," and Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Even Christians who try hard to be godly cannot escape the weakness of their flesh. The great apostle Paul wrote, "I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do" (Rom. 7:15).

A great truth of Christianity is that God saves sinners, and a great blessing of Christianity is that we do not have to be perfect or even close to perfect to be saved. The Bible makes it clear that God saves sinners, not saints: "...While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8b). If we had to be holy before we could be saved, it would be like having to take a bath before we could take a shower. Jesus Christ saves the unholy. When unholy sinners do get saved, they still sin (ask any Christian, and he will tell you that is true). Christians should try to live holy lives, certainly, but they often fail. It is unrealistic for those who are not yet saved to judge God or the Bible because of the behavior of His children, us Christians. If you are unsaved, the fact that Christians sin should actually give you comfort because it proves conclusively that God will save anyone who comes to Him and asks for salvation—including you.

Christians should try to live exemplary lives, and God commands us to not lie, steal, commit sexual sins, etc., but that does not mean Christians will ever get to the point of perfect obedience. On the other hand, if you are a Christian, you need to be aware that your personal behavior can either draw people to Christ or drive them away, and it is very important to the Lord that you live in a manner worthy of your calling as a Christian (Eph. 4:1).

If you are not a Christian and are considering Christianity, but you are "turned off" by Christians who are hypocrites, take comfort in the fact

that Jesus Christ was not a hypocrite, but was loving and giving. Also take comfort that Christ saves sinners. Being a disciplined Christian is challenging, and if you become a Christian it will not be long before you fall short of perfection. When this happens to you, you will want others to understand your human weaknesses, and you can be confident that Christ still accepts and loves you.

Don't Christians disagree about even the most basic Christian truths?

Although Christians vary greatly in their doctrines, they agree on most of the basic Christian truths. It is sad that some people use the fact that Christians disagree with each other as an excuse to not believe the Bible. It is not news that Christians disagree about some things the Bible says. There are many denominations in the world, and most of them claim to base what they believe on the Bible. Because of these disagreements, there are some people who have ignored the Christian faith. They say, "There are so many opinions, I just do not know what to believe." While on the surface this looks like a good reason for ignoring Christianity, the Bible, and the biblical claim of everlasting life through Jesus Christ, a deeper look reveals that it is not.

While it is true that Christians argue about rituals and doctrines, there are some very basic doctrines all Christians adhere to and believe. One is that there is a God who has made everlasting life available through His Son, Jesus Christ. Everlasting life is not a small issue, and the fact that all Christians agree that it is available through Jesus Christ should not be taken lightly. Since all Christians agree salvation is available through Christ, we can be quite sure that is what the Bible says.

Another thing Christians agree on is that God is love, and Christians should love God and their neighbors. Christians also agree that clear commandments such as do not murder, do not steal, do not covet, do not lie, etc., should be followed. Christians agree that prayer is important,

and so is giving to the needy. A deeper look at Christianity reveals there are many things about which Christians agree. Thus, the argument that “Christians disagree over everything” is not correct. Since all Christians believe God has made everlasting life available through His Son, Jesus Christ, and since obtaining everlasting life is the most important thing anyone can do in this life, it makes sense to check out Christianity even if Christians disagree about some other points of Scripture.

It is also important to realize that although Christians argue about some points of doctrine, all of them claim they are comforted by what they believe and that it has enriched their lives. This makes sense even though it does not mean, “Whatever you want to believe is okay with God.” There is no question that some Christians misunderstand what the Bible actually teaches. Nevertheless, God may bless these people anyway because each Christian is a child of God, a member of His family. Like any father, God works to bless His children even if they misunderstand what He says. God knows people are fallible, and so He shows grace and mercy to those who have come to Him for salvation and everlasting life. The fact Christians disagree about some points of doctrine should not cause anyone to turn away from the Bible; rather it should cause people to renew their efforts to study the Bible and discover for themselves exactly what God does say.

CHAPTER TWO

IMPORTANT POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND

God is the Bible's sole Author

The Bible is the most unique book in history. Even the circumstances of its being written and what it contains are evidence it had one Author—God. The Bible was written:

- By one Author, God, who spoke to many different writers through the ages
- By more than 40 different writers
- By writers who have vastly different personal backgrounds
- By writers who lived in different countries with differing customs, some of whom wrote contemporaneously without being able to access one another's writing
- During a period of more than 1,500 years
- In three languages
- In many styles: prose, poetry, allegory, proverb, prayer, judicious interpretation, epistle, sermon, etc.
- About many controversial issues (which people today can barely agree on)

It is astounding that under these circumstances a finished product was produced that has continuity and no contradictions.

A sampling of the writers of the Bible who hailed from different cultures, different backgrounds, and even different languages, includes:

- Moses—raised in the royal family and given the best education in Egypt; wrote in the desert (about 1450-1410 B.C.).

- Samuel—an Israelite priest trained in the master-disciple method (about 1050-1020 B.C.).
- David—a shepherd who became the king of Israel (about 1020-980 B.C.).
- Amos—a simple herdsman who lived close to the desert of Judea (about 775-750 B.C.).
- Ezekiel—an Israelite priest who wrote from Babylon (about 595-570 B.C.).
- Daniel—a captive from Judah who was given the best education available in Babylon (about 540-530 B.C.).
- Peter—a fisherman from Galilee (The New Testament was compiled between 45 and 90 A.D.).
- Matthew—a Jewish tax collector working for the Roman authorities in Galilee.
- Luke—an educated Greek and a medical doctor.
- Paul—a Jewish rabbi who converted to Christianity.
- James—the half-brother of Jesus and the head of the Church at Jerusalem.

If you put such diversified people in a room today to discuss the topics in the Bible, which are some of the most controversial known to man, you would most certainly have nothing but an argument. When you consider the diversity of the writers, the subject matter they wrote about, and the consistency with which details and important life issues are handled, it is difficult not to conclude that *God* is the sole source of Scripture.

The Bible sets forth both doctrine and practice on highly complex and emotionally charged topics such as marriage and divorce; sexuality and chastity; raising and discipline of children; punishments for criminal offenses, including the death penalty; the nature and causes of good and evil; how to be holy; how to be saved; and much more. Yet students of the Bible have seen over and over that these subjects are presented with a unity and single-mindedness that could not have been accomplished unless God were in fact its sole Author. At this point, we can either

accept the groundless assertion that God does not speak to men, or we can accept the testimony of the Bible and the internal evidence of the text that God spoke to the men who wrote down what He said.

The Bible accurately foretells the future

The Bible is the only known religious document with historically verifiable prophecies that have consistently been fulfilled. This point cannot be overstated. That the Bible has dozens of prophecies that can be verified by historians as having been accurately fulfilled is very strong proof that God is its Author. There are some critics who claim the foretelling in the Bible is not really foretelling, but men writing down both the “prophecy” and the “fulfillment” after the event occurred. However, there is no historical or textual basis for their claim. What is, in fact, true, is that the Bible contains numerous records of accurate, verified foretelling. No human can consistently predict the future. We cannot even tell what is going to happen to us in the next few days or weeks. Only God could be the source of the accurate prophecies in the Bible.¹

If you are seriously ill, and someone suggests you visit a doctor who uses a non-standard method to treat his patients, you would normally ask, “Who else has gone to this doctor and were they healed?” In other words you would ask about his “track record.” Similarly, if you move into a new town and need an auto mechanic, you ask around to see what shop has done good work for people in the past. It is wise to investigate what someone has done in the past to see if what he claims can be believed and trusted. Finding that there is a good track record is sometimes the surest way of knowing what someone can do, and businesses establish good credibility by having one.

1. Through the ages there have been so called prophets, seers, and psychics who occasionally get a prophecy correct. However, they are wrong much more than they are right, a sure sign that they are false prophets (Duet. 18:20-22). As was stated above, the Bible is the only religious document with prophecies that have consistently been fulfilled. The Bible does not “hit and miss” as the psychics and false seers do.

It is common to hear an advertisement such as, “We have been in this business for 30 years.” Why would someone make that claim? Because potential buyers know if a business has been successful in the past, there is a good chance it will be in the future. Just as there are many businesses claiming to have the best service, there are a lot of religions whose “holy books” claim to have the truth and reveal what will happen on earth in the future and what happens when we die. How can we tell if these books accurately predict the future and tell us the truth about what will happen to us after we die? It seems logical that we would choose the book to trust by using the same technique we use to choose the right auto mechanic or doctor—look at its track record.



God has a perfect track record.

As stated above, the Bible is the only known religious document with historically verifiable prophecies that have consistently been fulfilled. God has been establishing His track record for millennia. He has consistently predicted future events that have been fulfilled just as He said they would be. We are very fortunate to be living when we are, because so many of the prophecies recorded in the Bible have been fulfilled. Spirit & Truth

Fellowship International and other ministries have more complete works on prophecy than this short work can contain, because there are dozens of them that have been fulfilled in a way that can be confirmed by secular history. Nevertheless, here are a few examples:

Genesis 12:2. God said He would make Abraham's name great and make him into a great nation. Although God spoke to Abraham about 2,000 B.C., and Moses, by revelation, wrote this prophecy down about 1,450 B.C., today the people of three great religions of the world, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all know about and honor Abraham. How could anyone have known so long ago that Abraham would have a great name and become a great nation? Moses could not have known this when he wrote, but God, who has His hand on history, reveals Himself as the God of all creation by foretelling the future. Interestingly, the "great nations" at the time the prophecy was spoken have disappeared. The Sumerians, Elamites, and Hittites were powerful nations contemporary with Abraham, but the majority of people today, even if well educated, know little about them. That the prophecy about Abraham was so accurately spoken by God thousands of years before Christ gives us confidence that when He speaks of what is still future He is just as accurate.

Genesis 16:10. The Word of the LORD given to Hagar, the slave of Sarah, Abraham's wife, was, "...I will so increase your descendants that they will be too numerous to count." Who would have ever thought that Ishmael, the only child of Abraham and Hagar, would grow into a nation of millions and millions of people? Man could not possibly have known that, but God reveals He is the God of creation by foretelling the future. Today, thousands of years after the prophecy was spoken, we know those descendants as Arabs, and it is well known they trace their own ancestry to Abraham through Ishmael.

Numbers 24:5-7. The prophet Balaam foretold that Israel would have a king. Moses foretold the same thing in Deuteronomy 17:14-20. These prophecies were spoken in the 40th and last year of Israel's wilderness wanderings and almost 400 years before Israel had its first king—Saul.

Both Balaam and Moses were long dead when the prophecies that God inspired them to speak were fulfilled.

1 Kings 14:15. The prophet Ahijah foretold around 940 B.C. that the country of Israel (the ten Northern Tribes; the southern kingdom was called “Judah”) would be deported and scattered beyond the Euphrates River. The Assyrians did exactly that about 720 B.C., more than 200 years later. When Ahijah gave this prophecy, the country of Israel was only a few years old, and there was no way to tell what its history was going to be. How would anyone have known the people would have been uprooted and deported to the other side of the Euphrates River? It is through accurate prophecies like these that God reveals to us who He is, and in the case of the nation of Israel, His words were fulfilled more than 200 years after they were spoken.

Isaiah 44:26-45:6. Isaiah the prophet foretold that Jerusalem and the Temple would be rebuilt at the command of Cyrus. We know that Isaiah prophesied between 776-696 B.C. because Isaiah 1:1 says Isaiah lived in the time of Uzziah (who started reigning in 776 B.C.), Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (who ended his reign in 696 B.C.). Cyrus was a king of the Persian Empire, and he came to the throne in 559 B.C., almost 150 years after Isaiah died. In 538 B.C., he entered Babylon and shortly thereafter commanded that Jerusalem and the Temple be rebuilt (Ezra 1:1-4).

When Isaiah foretold the rebuilding of the Temple, it had not even been destroyed yet! It was still standing, and it continued to stand for more than 100 years after his prophecy. In 586 B.C. it was burned to the ground by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. God told Isaiah what the future had in store for the kingdom and people of Israel, and even told Isaiah that a man named “Cyrus” would command that the Temple be rebuilt. Only God can predict the future with that kind of accuracy, and the Bible is the only book ever written that contains prophecy so clear and exact. The history of the reign of Cyrus and what he did for Israel is common knowledge and can be read in any good encyclopedia.

The accuracy of Isaiah's prophecy is so "unreal" to some historians that they have said the book of Isaiah was written during the Greek empire, after Cyrus lived, or they have claimed there were two, or even three, Isaiahs. Conservative scholars have refuted these erroneous accusations and ably defended the truth of the book of Isaiah.

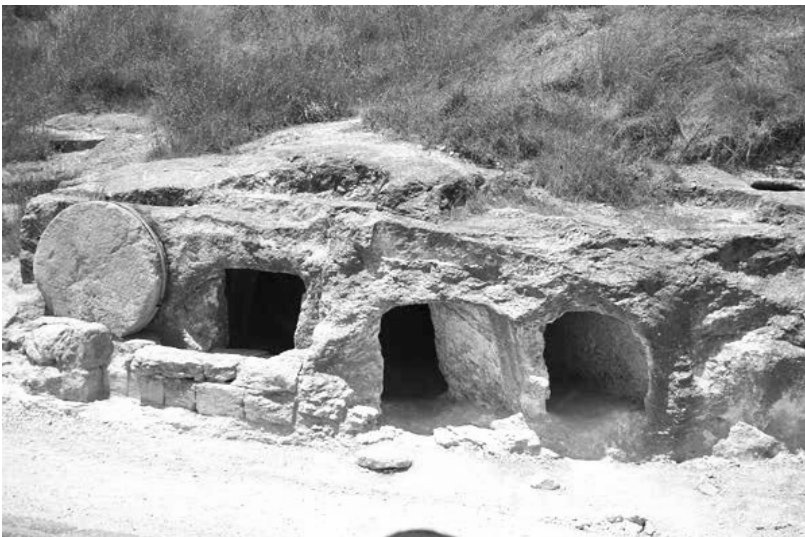
This is just a small sampling of the many prophecies spoken long ago, recorded in Scripture, and fulfilled in such a way that their accuracy can be seen and documented, not only in the Bible, but in secular history as well. That future events are accurately predicted over and over again in the Bible is one of the great proofs that God authored it. As we stated earlier, God has been establishing His track record for millennia.

The Old Testament prophets also foretold the coming of the Messiah in great detail. According to the Old Testament, the Messiah would:

- be a descendant of Abraham (Gen. 12:3; Gen. 22:18)
- be from the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:10)
- be a descendant of David (2 Sam. 7:12 and 13)
- come from the "stump" of Jesse, i.e., after the Davidic Kingdom was cut off (Isa. 11:1)
- be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2)
- ride into Jerusalem on a donkey (Zech. 9:9)
- suffer (Gen. 3:15; Isa. 53:5 and 6)
- be silent before his accusers (Isa. 53:7)
- be considered a criminal and executed with them (Isa. 53:12)
- make intercession for those who really were criminals (Isa. 53:12)
- be killed (Isa. 53:8)
- have his hands and feet pierced (Ps. 22:16—this is especially interesting because crucifixion was not yet practiced when Psalms was written, so there was no known reason to pierce anyone's hands and feet)

- have people gamble for his clothing (Ps. 22:18)
- as a criminal be assigned a burial place with the wicked, but actually end up being buried in the tomb of a wealthy man (Isa. 53:9)
- not decay (Ps. 16:10)
- get up from the dead (Ps. 2:7-9; Ps. 16:10 and 11; Isa. 53:9-12)
- ascend into heaven from where he will one day return to rule the earth (Ps. 110:1; Dan. 7:13 and 14)

Jesus Christ fulfilled *all* these prophecies and even more. With such amazing accuracy about the first coming of the Lord, why would any reasonable person doubt the prophecies that have not yet been fulfilled? And why would any reasonable person doubt that Jesus Christ was the man the Old Testament prophecies referred to? The fact that the Bible has been accurate in its prophecy time after time should make it easy to believe God is its Author, and that its prophecies concerning the return of Jesus Christ, the battle of Armageddon, the coming Judgment of all people, and saved people's living forever, are all true.



Tombs from the first century. These are now empty, just as Jesus' tomb is empty because God raised him from the dead.

God will prove Himself

Ultimately, whether or not you believe the Bible is up to you. If you diligently seek God, you will find Him. When God makes a promise, you can bet He will keep it. Scripture is clear that if you seek, you will find (Deut. 4:29). Of course, “seek” means *seek*, and God responds to a serious and diligent effort (Prov. 2:1-6; Matt. 7:7-11). There are millions of Christians on the earth, and each of them has a different story of how he or she came to the faith. History is filled with glowing testimonies of people who sought for the Lord Jesus Christ and whose lives have been touched and changed by him.

You do not need to be “down and out” to find God. All He requires is that you genuinely want to know Him. God and the things of God will not become clear to you if you examine them from a distance as if you were considering some object in a store window you were thinking of purchasing. People who remain distant or just want to know *about* God so they can “decide” whether to believe and obey Him will never learn the truth about Him. God created the heavens and the earth, and He made the rules. We are God’s creation; He is not our creation. Many people wonder if the Bible is really God’s Word. Jesus Christ gave us clear instructions on how to find out for ourselves if God’s Word is true:

John 7:17

If anyone chooses to do God’s will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.

This verse is very clear: the key to knowing God is choosing to do His will. As you begin to obey God, He will reveal Himself and His Word to you. Once you begin to seek and obey God, things about Him that were unclear become very understandable. God designed things such that obedience is the great key to knowing Him.

John 14:21

Whoever has my commands and **obeys** them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him **and show myself to him**.

Please closely observe the wording in the above verse. When someone loves God and obeys Him, *then* God reveals Himself. But that is not what skeptics and doubters want. They want God to show Himself so they can examine Him and make up their minds whether He is acceptable or not (Matt. 12:38 and 39). Well, the skeptics and doubters did not make the rules. God is the Living God, and He is also the Loving God. He wants a relationship with people, but, like us humans, He wants a relationship with those who honor Him and believe Him. He will not “show up to be examined” by the skeptic. Skeptics often laugh at believers and call them gullible, naive, wishful thinkers, easily fooled, etc., because they do not see or understand what the believer does. This is not new. Christ spoke very openly about the fact that people who do not belong to God cannot “hear” the truth. He told the Pharisees who did not believe in him they could not hear him because they did not belong to God:

John 8:47

He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you [Pharisees] do not hear is that you do not belong to God.

The critic and the skeptic will never “hear” the words of God. God’s wisdom is for the seeker and the believer. To others it is foolishness, and the Bible is very clear about that:

1 Corinthians 2:14

The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

There are a lot of reasons to accept the Bible as the truth. However, to the skeptic, the idea that “all Scripture is God-breathed...” (2 Tim. 3:16a) is foolishness, and so are the miracles, healings, prophecies, and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Scripture tells us these things will be foolishness to the unbeliever, so we should not be surprised when the skeptics doubt. If you are a skeptic, I urge you to begin to diligently seek God and start obeying His commands. The first step toward really understanding the things of God, and the most important step anyone can take, is to get saved and receive God’s gift of everlasting life. Because salvation is the first step most people take toward God, He has made the instructions clear and the way easy:

Romans 10:9

That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Salvation is of the utmost importance, so we must be sure we understand God’s instructions. To be saved, you must confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord. What does that mean? It means you say what the Bible clearly declares; that Jesus is Lord, i.e., he is the Son of God who died for your sins, was raised from the dead and highly exalted to the right hand of God. Have you ever said, “Jesus is Lord”? Why not say it right now? Just say, “Jesus is Lord.”

To be saved:

- Confess that Jesus is Lord
- Believe God raised him from the dead

It’s that easy! (Rom. 10:9-10)

Once you have said that Jesus is Lord, Romans 10:9 says you are to believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead. This is not difficult to do if you believe in God. If God can create entire galaxies, then surely He can give life to a dead body. Once you have confessed with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believed in your heart God raised him from the dead, you are saved. Salvation is very easy to attain because God wants everyone to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4).

When Paul was teaching in the city of Philippi, he was thrown into prison. A jailer asked him the most important question any human could ask: "...What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30). Paul's answer was short and to the point: "...Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved..." (Acts 16:31). The same is as true for you and me as it was for that jailer nearly 2,000 years ago. If you believe in the living Lord, Jesus Christ, you will be saved.² Then, as you begin to obey the commands of God and seek Him, you will find Him.

2. See our booklet *Becoming a Christian: Why? What? How?* To read it online go to www.TruthOrTradition.com, TOPIC: Recommended Reading.

What the Bible is

While critics of the Bible assert it is untrue and imperfect, the Bible confirms that those who hear and obey it are blessed (Luke 11:28). The Word of God is:¹

God-breathed (2 Tim. 3:16)

True (John 17:17)

Holy (Rom. 7:12)

Righteous (Ps. 119:172)

Perfect (Ps. 19:7)

Living (Heb. 4:12)

Enduring (1 Pet. 1:23)

Eternal (Ps. 119:89)

Flawless (Ps. 12:6)

Sure (Ps. 19:9)

Active (Heb. 4:12)

Healing (Ps. 107:20)

Useful (2 Tim. 3:16)

Wonderful (Ps. 119:129)

An encourager (Rom. 15:4)

A source of peace (Ps. 119:165)

A source of wisdom (Ps. 119:98)

A source of hope (Rom. 15:4)

The joy of my heart (Ps. 119:111)

Trustworthy (Ps. 19:7)

Right (Ps. 33:4)

Near (Rom. 10:8)

A counselor (Ps. 119:24)

Seed (Luke 8:11)

Not chained (2 Tim. 2:9)

Not burdensome (1 John 5:3)

1. The exact words of this list are taken from the New International Version of the Bible. Other versions may have different vocabulary.

A light for your path (Ps. 119:105)

More precious than gold (Ps. 19:10)

Sweeter than honey (Ps. 19:10)

The sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17)

Sharper than any double-edged sword (Heb. 4:12)

Exalted above all things (Ps. 138:2)

Conclusion

God created mankind because He wanted a family to love and be with for all eternity. Because of His desire for a loving family, God wants all men to be saved and learn the truth (1 Tim. 2:4). However, He does not force Himself on people. He gave mankind freedom of will so that everyone is free to choose to love and obey God or to walk away from Him. In order to show Himself to people as a loving God, He gave His Word as a guidebook and as a testimony of His goodness and love. Furthermore, He has moved powerfully throughout history and in people's lives to reveal Himself.

Millions of people have responded to God's love and have given their lives to Him by accepting everlasting life through Christ and by being obedient to His Word. However, millions of others have not accepted the Word of God, and doubt or even scoff at the thought that the Bible has been authored by God and is His guidance for mankind. Yet the evidence is clear: men could not have written the Bible. More than 40 men, writing over a period of some 1,500 years, could never have agreed on the important and controversial topics covered in the Bible. Those who lived when the biblical writers wrote, and the generations of men after them, would not have worked so hard to accurately preserve a book that was known to contain invented histories, fabricated miracles, and false claims about "talking with God." At the time the Bible was written, men were not able to record history as accurately as it is recorded in the Bible, nor did they have the scientific knowledge to write the scientific information that appears in it. Furthermore, men could certainly not have foretold the future clearly and accurately time after time as the Bible does.

The facts are clear to those with eyes to see and ears to hear. The Bible says it is "the truth," "God-breathed," and written "by revelation." It "never had its origin in the will of man," but "holy men" wrote as they were moved by God. The Bible is God's Word, and you can believe it.



A Tribute to the Bible

by F.J. Dake

It is a book that will work wonders in every life, here and hereafter, if acted upon and obeyed in faith and sincerity. It is God's inspired revelation of the origin and destiny of all things, written in the most simple human language possible so that the most unlearned can understand and obey its teachings.

It is the book that reveals the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts binding, its histories true, and its decisions immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. The Bible contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter. Here heaven is opened, and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand subject, our good is its design, and the glory of God its end.

It should fill your memory, rule your heart, and guide your feet in righteousness and true holiness. Read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully, meditatively, searchingly, devotionally, and study it constantly, perseveringly, and industriously. Read it through and through until it becomes part of your being and generates faith that will move mountains. The Bible is a mine of wealth, a source of health, and a world of pleasure. It is given to you in this life, will be opened at the Judgment, and will stand forever. It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the least to the greatest of labor, and will condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents.¹

1. Finis Jennings Dake, *Dake's Annotated Reference Bible* (Dake Bible Sales, Inc., Lawrenceville, GA, 1961), p. 241 (of the New Testament).



Selected Bibliography

Through the centuries there have been many Bible-believing, God-fearing scholars who have written books explaining, expounding, illuminating, and sometimes defending the Bible and the Christian faith. It would be impossible to put together a complete list of these great works. On the other hand, there are a large number of books that either attack the Bible outright or cause confusion and doubt about the Bible. This selected bibliography is provided in order to give any person seeking to believe the Bible a place to start. Some of the books included were not written to expound or defend the Bible, but they still provide valuable information that can be used in a biblical study context. These books are not wholly accurate (what work of man ever is?), but they still make significant contributions to the study of the Word of God. There are books on history, chronology, archaeology, customs, geography, canon, creationism, Bible study, and more, listed alphabetically by author. The title of any given book usually reveals its general purpose. Spirit & Truth Fellowship International is dedicated to teaching the accuracy and integrity of the Word of God, and we applaud the efforts of anyone who believes the Bible is the Word of God and endeavors to make that truth known.

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SCRIPTURE INDEX

Genesis	Judges	Psalms
3:15.....69	14:18c.....23	2:7-9.....70
7:2a.....55	1 Samuel	5:4.....3
7:2.....55	3:11.....11	8:8.....39
7:3.....55	2 Samuel	10:4.....3
12:2.....67	7:12,13.....69	12:6.....75
12:3.....69	1 Kings	16:10,11.....70
16:10.....67	3:11.....11	19:7.....75
17:14.....22	11:41b.....28	19:9.....75
22:18.....69	14:15.....68	19:10.....76
49:10.....69	2 Kings	22:16.....69
Exodus	21:13b.....27	22:18.....70
4:18.....22	22:13.....12	33:4.....75
17:6.....54	2 Chronicles	103:7.....4
17:14.....29	13:22b.....28	107:20.....75
19:3.....11	20:34b.....28	110:1.....70
Numbers	Ezra	119:24.....75
24:5-7.....67	1:1-4.....68	119:89.....75
Deuteronomy	Job	119:98.....75
4:29.....71	26:7.....40	119:105.....76
17:14-20.....67	26:8.....37	119:111.....75
18:20-22.....65	36:27,28.....37	119:129.....75
29:29.....4	37:11.....38	119:165.....75
Joshua	37:16.....38	119:172.....75
1:1.....11	38:1.....11	138:2.....76
8:31.....29	38:16.....39	150:3-5.....59
10:13.....54		

Proverbs	Daniel	17:10b.....26
2:1-5.....6	1:1.....23	17:12a.....26
2:1-6.....71	5:7.....50	17:13.....26
8:9.....55	7:13,14.....70	21:19.....24
25:2.....iii	Hosea	23:4a.....6
Ecclesiastes	1:1.....11	26:41.....60
1:6.....38	4:1.....5	28:7.....54
1:7.....37	4:1b.....5	Mark
7:20.....60	4:6.....5	11:14-21.....24
12:12.....28	Joel	12:30.....2
Isaiah	1:1.....11	14:59.....1
1:1.....68	Amos	Luke
6:8-13.....11	4:1.....23	8:11.....75
11:1.....69	7:1-9.....11	11.....21
44:26-45:6.....68	Jonah	11:8.....20
53:5,6.....69	4:1-11.....11	11:28.....75
53:7.....69	Micah	John
53:8.....69	5:2.....69	1:18b.....4
53:9.....70	Zechariah	2:1-11.....58
53:9-12.....70	9:9.....69	3:16.....57,58
53:12.....69	Malachi	7:17.....71
55:6a.....4	4:5.....25	8:47.....72
55:7.....3	Matthew	11:1-45.....54
55:8.....3	5:30a.....26	14:21.....72
Jeremiah	6:33.....7	17:17.....12,75
1:4-19.....11	7:7-11.....71	Acts
4:22a.....4	11:30.....6	1:3.....54
25:1.....23	12:38-39.....72	7:45.....20
Ezekiel	12:38-41.....56	16:30.....74
1:1-3.....11		16:31.....74
2:1ff.....11		

Romans	Titus
2:16.....14	1:6.....58
3:23.....60	Hebrews
5:8b.....60	4:12.....75,76
6:23.....57	11:6a.....2
7:12.....75	11:6.....6
7:15.....60	James
10:8.....75	1:5.....2
10:9.....73,74	1 Peter
15:4.....75	1:23.....75
1 Corinthians	2 Peter
1:19.....iii	1:20,21.....9
2:14.....72	1 John
15:2-8.....54	5:3.....75
Galatians	Revelation
1:11,12.....10,11	20:14.....58
5:2.....22	
Ephesians	
4:1.....60	
5:1.....3	
5:18.....58	
6:17.....76	
1 Timothy	
2:3b.....6	
2:4.....6,74,77	
2:4b.....6	
2 Timothy	
2:9.....75	
3:2.....v	
3:16a.....73	
3:16.....9,75	



What Is Spirit & Truth Fellowship International?

Spirit & Truth Fellowship International is a worldwide community of Christians who desire to make known the written Word of God so as to proclaim the Good News of the Lord Jesus Christ. As a legal entity, we are a non-profit, tax-exempt United States (Indiana) corporation.

The fellowship and community arm of the ministry, including our events and the infrastructure (support services and finances) operates under the banner of Spirit & Truth Fellowship International. At the same time, Christian Educational Services is the publication and production arm of our ministry. Thus, our organization, like a human body, has two arms with which to reach out.

Our Vision Statement is: “Building a global community of committed Christians living the truth in love.”

Our Mission Statement is: “To glorify the One True God and the Lord Jesus Christ by providing sound biblical teaching and a spiritually-empowered fellowship community so that all people may be saved, come to a knowledge of the truth, and become established in faithful and fruitful Christian living.”

We are accomplishing our overall mission by way of live speakers, audio and videotapes, books, and literature, as well as many different kinds of camps and conferences for all ages. Our biblically based teachings point people towards having the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord of their lives. The materials we produce are designed to assist individual spiritual growth as well as to support local fellowships and churches in the Fellowship Community. We encourage Christians to apply these teachings in their local areas in community with other like-minded believers.

We are composed of an International Headquarters and an International network of independent local groups of Christians. This “Fellowship Community” is made up of believers who freely affiliate themselves with us because they are in agreement with our Statement of Beliefs and Code of Conduct, and have seen the quality of their lives improve by their association with us and what we have to offer. Our goal is to be a “full service” ministry where people can come and find wholeness for themselves, as well as an arena in which to exercise their own unique callings in the Body of Christ.

Our name is partially derived from Jesus’ statement in John 4:23 that God is seeking people to worship Him “in spirit and in truth.” As that is the only thing stated in Scripture that God seeks, we believe it is imperative that our ministry is oriented to that way of honoring our God. We are a community of worshipers, knit together by the love of God and a common belief of His Word (“the truth”). We seek to empower each believer involved in our ministry to exercise his own unique giftings in accordance with his personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The basis for all our efforts is the Bible, which we believe to be the Word of God, perfect in its original writing. So-called errors, contradictions, or discrepancies are the result of man’s subsequent interference in the transmission of the text, mistranslations, or failure to understand what is written. We draw from all relevant sources that shed light on the integrity of Scripture, whether in the field of geography, customs, language, history, or principles governing Bible interpretation. Our goal is to seek the truth without respect to tradition or “orthodoxy.”

Jesus said that knowing the truth would set one free, and our teachings are oriented to improving one’s quality of life. Our goal is to provide healthy biblical teaching that helps people enjoy the fruits of salvation and authentic Christ-like living. When accurately understood, the Word of God brings great deliverance from fear, doubt, and worry, and leads the individual Christian to genuine freedom, confidence, and joy in

living. Beyond such practical blessings, however, our goal is to enable each believer to study the Bible for himself so that he is able to develop his own convictions, separate truth from error, and become an effective communicator of God's Word, and successfully live in community with other committed Christians.

What Is Christian Educational Services?

“Christian Educational Services,” the original name of our ministry, is the publication and production arm of Spirit & Truth Fellowship International. This includes the research, teaching, and production of books, tapes, videos, and other study and outreach materials.

Any individual willing to examine his beliefs in the light of God's Word can profit from our teachings. They are non-denominational, and are intended to strengthen one's faith in God, Jesus Christ, and the Bible, no matter what his denominational preference may be. Designed primarily for individual home study, the teachings are the result of intensive research and rational methods, making them easy to follow, verify, and practically apply.

To receive our bimonthly magazine, *The Sower*, and a complete listing of our materials, please contact us at:

Christian Educational Services (CES)

A division of Spirit & Truth Fellowship International

2144 East 52nd Street

Indianapolis, Indiana 46205

888-255-6189, M-F 8:30 to 5

CES@CESonline.org

www.CESonline.org

Please be sure and visit our research website:

www.TruthOrTradition.com



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Books

The Christian's Hope: The Anchor of the Soul – What the Bible really says about Death, Judgment, Rewards, Heaven, and the Future Life on a Restored Earth

The Gift of Holy Spirit: Every Christian's Divine Deposit

Is There Death After Life?

One God & One Lord: Reconsidering the Cornerstone of the Christian Faith

Don't Blame God! A Biblical Answer to the Problem of Evil, Sin, and Suffering

Sex & Scripture: A Biblical Study of Proper Sexual Behavior

Publications

22 Principles of Bible Interpretation or How to Eliminate Apparent Bible Contradictions

Beyond a Reasonable Doubt: 23 Arguments for the Historical Validity of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ

Becoming a Christian: Why? What? How?

Righteousness—Every Christian's Gift from God

What is True Baptism?

23 Reasons to Believe in a Rapture before the Great Tribulation or Why We Aren't in the Tribulation Now

25 Reasons Why Salvation is Permanent for Christians

34 Reasons Why the Holy Spirit is Not a Separate "Person" From the Only True God, The Father

47 Reasons Why our Heavenly Father has no Equals or "Co-Equals"

Defending Dispensationalism: Standing Fast in the Liberty

The Death Penalty: Godly or Ungodly?

Audio Tape Seminars

New Life in Christ—Foundations for Powerful Christian Living
(15 hrs)

The Creation-Evolution Controversy (6 hrs)

*Growing Up in Christ, Part One: The Fruit of the Spirit—
Developing the Character of Christ* (12 hrs)

*Growing Up in Christ, Part Two: Teaching and Activation in the
Manifestations of the Gift of Holy Spirit* (9 hrs)

A Journey through the Old Testament (26 hrs)

Romans (18 hrs)

The Book of Revelation (9 hrs)

Jesus Christ, the Diameter of the Ages (6 hrs)

*Dating, Courtship, & Engagement: A Journey In Preparing For
Marriage* (2 1/2 hrs)

We Highly Recommend This Class

New Life in Christ: Foundations for Powerful Christian Living

(24 Sessions/15 hours. Includes a 58 page syllabus)



This class will introduce you to the foundations of biblical study and Christian living. It covers all the topics necessary to give a beginning student the tools needed to understand and apply biblical truth in everyday life. The class is a family collaboration of John Schoenheit and his sister, Sue Carlson. The blend of their two voices, manners, and teaching styles is an extremely logical and winning presentation.

Sessions:

1. New Life In Christ
2. "Take My Word for It" - God
3. "Take My Word for It" - God (continued)
4. The Text We Have Is Reliable
5. The Workman and the Perfect Word
6. Uncovering the Perfect Word
7. Uncovering the Perfect Word (continued)
8. The Fall
9. Who Is In Control?
10. Where Are the Dead?
11. Salvation and the Savior
12. Salvation By Faith
13. The Christian Church
14. The New Birth
15. The Gift of Holy Spirit
16. The Manifestations of Holy Spirit
17. Speaking In Tongues
18. Hope - the Anchor of the Soul
19. Hope - Jobs and Judgments
20. Sonship - Blessings and Responsibilities
21. Developing the Character of Christ
22. The Power of Prayer
23. Giving, Witnessing, and Fellowship
24. Praise and Worship

Related Teaching Tapes

Good News! Read All About It! (Sep/Oct 1997)

This teaching gives a detailed explanation of “the Gospel of Christ,” relating the good news of Christ’s victory over the tyrant, sin. It exhorts us to rejoice in the privilege of bearing this “good news” to those who are in need of salvation, and relates the credibility of Scripture to the effective publishing of this good news. This news remains continually relevant in our ongoing battle against “the sin that dwells in us,” enabling us to honestly face our sinful flesh in the light of God’s acceptance and justification. This teaching shows how the concept of “good news” can help the believer separate truth from error, because false teachings are clearly not very good news at all.

Take My Word for It (Jan/Feb 1998)

This is a teaching on the subject of faith, without which, according to Scripture, it is impossible to please God. How so? That’s one thing covered in the teaching. You will also learn what faith is, how you can have it and how it can grow in your heart. Whether or not we trust God (have faith) is the bottom line for every Christian no matter how much he matures in the Lord. It is available for you to keep the faith.

Why the New Birth is the Miracle of Miracles (May/June 1998)

There is much confusion in Christian circles about all that happens in a person when he is born again. This inspirational teaching identifies and briefly expounds upon 24 biblical terms describing the New Birth and all that occurs in the believer at that one-time event: seed, adoption, inheritance, anointed, baptized, sealed, filled with the holy spirit, etc. In this teaching, these terms are likened to the spokes of a wheel, a powerful tool we use to carry heavy burdens. In the New Birth, God empowers us to carry the burdens of our own lives, as well as of those to whom we minister.

You are the Only You God Has (Nov/Dec 1999)

This tape shows how Greek philosophy has infiltrated Western theology and distorted God's revelation of Himself as a personal, loving Father into little more than an "omnipotent," "omniscient" abstraction. Closely aligned to this is the issue of what kind of "foreknowledge" God has, according to Scripture.

This teaching vividly brings to light the reciprocal relationship between the Creator and each "you" who chooses to walk with Him. It magnifies the urgency of individual obedience, and shows why prayer is such a vital tool in changing history from what it would have been.

"God Told Me to Do This Teaching," Part 1: Decision Making and the Will of God (Jan/Feb 2000)

This teaching explores the nature of God's interaction with the world, and critiques the traditional view that God micro-manages His creation, even as far as controlling the activities of every molecule. By properly emphasizing the biblical concepts of personal responsibility, accountability and moral freedom, the truth is revealed that God does not "control" His creation but has masterfully created a world in which creatures are free to develop and relate to their environments in various ways. From this perspective of God's nature, evil becomes much more understandable, because it arises from the free choice of free beings outside of God's "control." The teaching then begins to show that a "wisdom model" is supported by scriptural language more than "the personal guidance model."

"God Told Me to Do This Teaching," Part 2: Decision Making and the Will of God (Mar/Apr 2000)

The second part of the teaching demonstrates that the perspective of Scripture is that God holds man accountable to make wise and moral decisions according to His Word, and does not routinely and personally

direct the decisions of individuals. Many examples from the Old and New Testaments are cited to show that the language of Scripture highlights human choices and the reasoning processes that support them. The epistles of the apostle Paul are shown to be “revelation with a human face,” because of the many times that Paul reveals his motivations, intentions and goals. This teaching shows that it is the exception rather than the rule for biblical characters to say that “God told them” to do such and such, but the evidence for their being divinely inspired is derived from the godliness of their motivation and the deliverance that results from their actions.

Reaching Out With The Love of God or Christianity: The Come as You are Party (Mar/Apr 2001)

It is easy to see sin and problems in other people’s lives, and it seems natural that the best way to help someone is to point out how he could change and be better. However, the wrong kind of “correction” can be counterproductive. Jesus Christ showed us how to reach out with the love of God. He loved both the sinners and the Pharisees who were around him. In so doing, he left us a model to follow and showed that the language of love is universal. He told three parables in Luke 15 that clearly show God’s love for all people. This tape covers those parables and some other verses about reproof and correction that we as Christians should heed in order to best love one another as members of the Body of Christ.

Overcoming Evil with Good: A Response to the Tragedy of September 11th (Sep/Oct 2001)

Due to the terrorist bombings of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and with the continued threat on Americans worldwide, there has been an increased interest in whether or not what has happened is God’s judgment on America and whether it is part of His plan or not. Also, there is confusion about how the United States should respond to the attack and the threats of continued violence. The opinions range from

“nuke Afghanistan into a parking lot” to “do not respond at all because it will just result in more terror.” This tape examines these issues from the Word of God and shows that God is not responsible in any way for terror or death. It also examines our proper biblical response to evil so that we can have a safe and free society.

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Tape 7: Love; Don’t Blame God; How to Find Your Ministry; Tithing and Giving

Tape 8: Eli, Eli Lama Sabachthani; No Apparent Contradictions; Woman with the Issue of Blood; No Idolatry

Tape 20: Tools for Basic Bible Study Parts 1-4, (Keys to a Bible Study, Using Bible Concordances [English, Greek, and Hebrew], Young’s vs. Strong’s, Interlinear Bibles, Lexicons, Bible Dictionaries, Vine’s Expository Dictionary)

Tape 21: Tools for Basic Bible Study Parts 5-8 (Overview of Concordances, Lexicons, Dictionaries, Word Studies, Strong’s Numbering System, Theological Word Book, Synonyms of the New Testament, How to use a Bible Atlas with your Bible, Topical Bibles, Figures of Speech)

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