

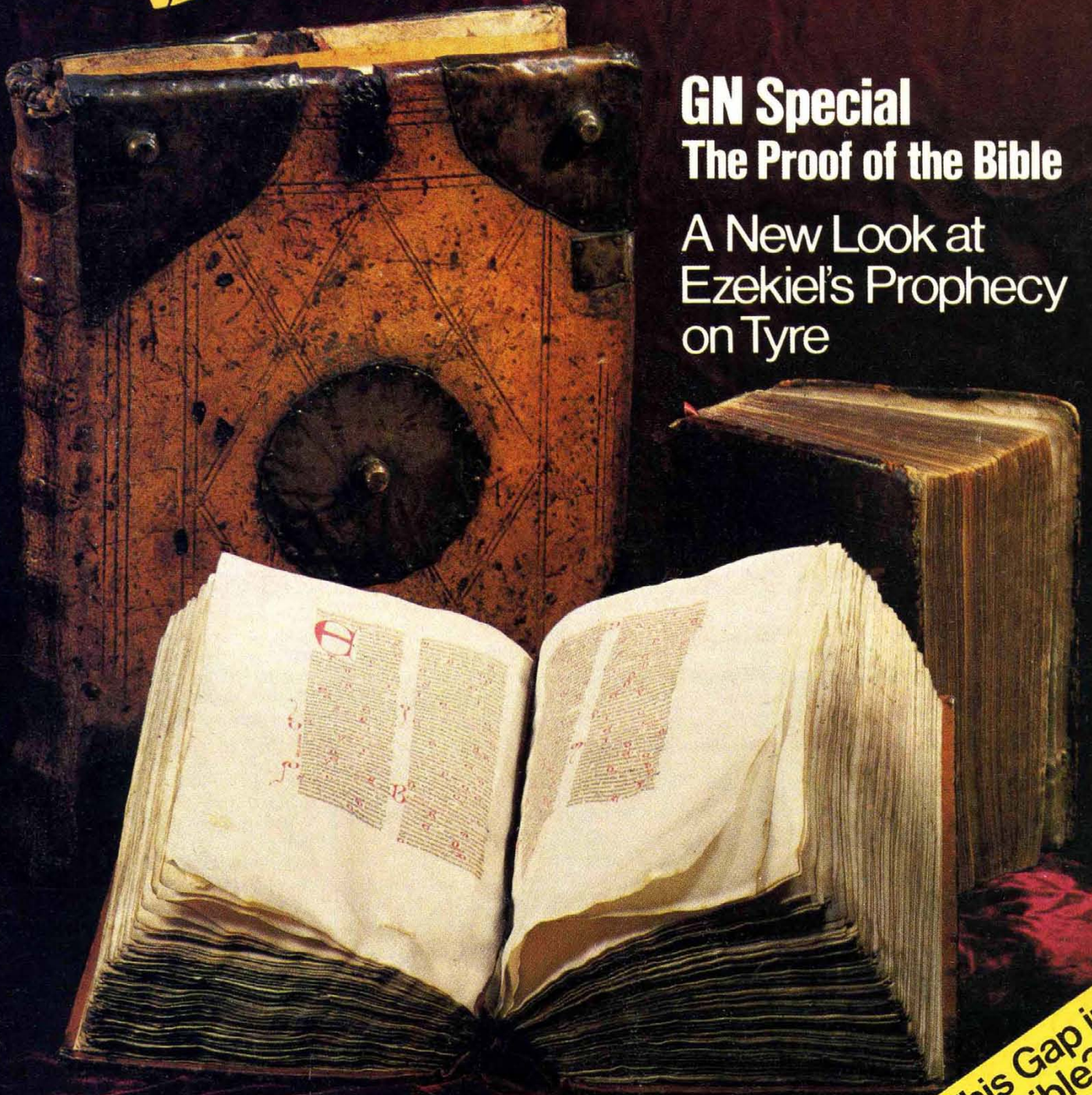
The

DECEMBER 1980

Good News

GN Special
The Proof of the Bible

A New Look at
Ezekiel's Prophecy
on Tyre



**Why This Gap in
the Bible?**
By Herbert W.
Armstrong

The Good News

December 1980

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COVER: Bibles from Ambassador College's collection. See page 39. Photo by Warren Watson.

Letters

Feast edition

Just a note of thanks for the Feast edition of *The Good News* [August]. It's simply beautiful from cover to cover. We were thrilled with every article. Now we will truly have a "best Feast ever" with God's help through the information in the *GN*.

Mr. and Mrs. J.C. Bell
San Antonio, Tex.

Singles

I would like to extend a hearty thanks of appreciation to Malcolm Tofts on his recent *Good News* article concerning single Christians [September]. Being a "never married" single I was amazed at Mr. Tofts' insight into the special problems and feelings that singles wrestle daily with. It is as if we both sat down together and compared notes. Truly, Mr. Tofts speaks like one who has "been there."

Thank you, Mr. Tofts, for a straight-from-the-shoulder article and for remembering the singles that make up a significant part of the Church of the living God.

Malcolm Thomas
Perry, Fla.

Co-worker comments

How different are the people in the Church of God! After having attended services these last two months, I am amazed at the difference in the people's attitudes. There is peace, a calmness, a quiet confidence that the world just does not have.

After having been invited to attend Sabbath meals with some of them, I cannot begin to explain the peacefulness, the refreshment, the putting into perspective of the week's happenings in regard to God's way of life that delighting in God's Sabbath actually brings on.

Before when I considered that expression of delighting in the Sabbath, all I could think of was an intensive study of God's Word to the exclusion of all else. Fellowship did not cross my mind as being a part of it.

Indeed, I wouldn't have thought that a group of people of themselves [could] sustain such qualities — but God's Spirit can, as is being proved to me by their lives. I suppose that what I've been trying to say is: The fruits of the Spirit are there and nowhere else.

Bill Caldwell
Jasper, Mo.

Personal from



Why This Gap in the Bible?

THE HOLY BIBLE COVERS three main categories: history, prophecy and instruction from God.

Through history and prophecy the Bible covers all God intended to cover of earth and world events from the creation, on into the future and the eternity beyond. But, in a sense, this Book of God — His revealed knowledge for His people — leaves a most conspicuous GAP in the progress of world events.

WHY?

For example, in its history, the Bible gives no history of anything concerning such populous nations as China, India and Japan. None regarding Russia except in yet future prophecy. History is concerned to the one nation Israel, and the few other nations only as they were involved in contact with Israel.

WHY?

Now consider the CHURCH. There are four whole books, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, devoted to the biographical sketch of the human life of Jesus, and a history of the first early years of the Church. That's all — except the symbolic prophecy of Jesus in Revelation 2 and 3 of the seven eras of the Church. But even here, many shout and scream that these two chapters are NOT a history of successive eras of the Church, but an account of the seven phases of the Church AS A WHOLE, without regard to the time sequence of periods or eras. Actually, these two chapters are depicting BOTH. For all eras have had in them the characteristics of these seven churches, with the Ephesian condition *dominating* at first, the Laodicean last.

But otherwise, there is nothing in the Bible revealing conditions in the Church from the first century to now.

WHY?

One simply cannot understand this — nor the Bible message — unless one knows the great PURPOSE of God and His MASTER PLAN for its accomplishment. We must remember that the GOVERNMENT OF GOD was once set on the earth. That was before the creation of MAN! God set His GOVERNMENT on earth over angels who first inhabited the earth! Few indeed know that. God set a super archangel, the great cherub LUCIFER, *ON EARTH'S THRONE!* But Lucifer rebelled, and led his angels into rebellion — REJECTING THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD! That is extremely important to know — and keep firmly in mind — yet the so-called Christianity does not know, and refuses to know!

After this, God decided to REPRODUCE HIMSELF — to create physical human MAN from the dust of the earth, and to CONVERT MANKIND into the GOD-KIND!

God's GREAT purpose was dual: 1) to REPRODUCE HIMSELF into billions of GOD BEINGS, and 2) through these converted GOD BEINGS, RESTORE THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD to the earth. Then, after that, to finish the creation in perfected finished form of the entire, vast, endless UNIVERSE! And, through MAN converted into GOD!

But we must remember, OVERALL, God Himself is supreme, holy, righteous, perfect SPIRITUAL CHARACTER!

The angels were put here to develop that CHARACTER. That is the most important thing God can create. That is something even God cannot all by Himself alone create by fiat. It requires the DECISION and the WILL

of the created entity — whether angel or man — to want and seek that character, which can be imparted only from God and through His Holy Spirit. Angels (Lucifer's third of them) were NOT WILLING! So God rejected them. They became demons. Lucifer became Satan the devil.

Then God created the first humans — Adam and Eve. God revealed to them His GOVERNMENT, founded on His SPIRITUAL LAW. All government is based on a foundational LAW or constitution. God told them the penalty for transgression would be certain DEATH. But God also made available to them His Holy Spirit — and through it His holy, righteous CHARACTER and the gift of eternal life, through which they might be BORN AGAIN as very GOD BEINGS — born children of GOD.

Yet Lucifer, now become SATAN, was still on that throne — and by God's decree MUST REMAIN there UNTIL Satan's Successor sits on that throne, having RESTORED THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD (Acts 3:19-21).

But Adam and Eve made the decision for all MANKIND — since they were the progenitors of the human race — ALL humans are their children. They REJECTED the government of God, the LAW and way of life of God, made the decision to follow the way of "GET" that Satan had chosen.

God's LAW, the foundation of GODLY CHARACTER, of the GOVERNMENT OF GOD, is outflowing LOVE. It is a WAY OF LIFE! It is the way of love to God first of all, then love to fellow man by serving, helping, giving, sharing, cooperating.

Adam and Eve chose to decide for themselves instead of believing GOD'S LAW. And they chose the OPPOSITE way of life — that of

SELF-love, vanity, coveting, envy and jealousy, hostile competition, strife, violence, war — rebellion against authority.

I simplify these two ways — God's LAW and its transgression — by the terms "GIVE" and "GET."

When Adam chose, for all his children who compose THE WORLD, the way of "GET" — rejecting God and the government of God, HE CUT ALL HIS FAMILY OF HUMANITY OFF FROM GOD!

And God made his decision binding UNTIL the GOVERNMENT OF GOD is RESTORED to earth — EXCEPT the infinitesimally FEW God purposed to specially call into His service prior to that time.

THEREFORE THE WORLD AS A WHOLE HAS BEEN CUT OFF FROM ANY CONTACT with — or even knowledge of — GOD for the past 6,000 years! BEAR THAT CAREFULLY IN MIND!

Now God designed a MASTER PLAN for working out His PURPOSE here on earth.

As Adam was wholly physical, God started the PHYSICAL creation of MAN through Adam. But God purposes to convert mankind into GOD BEINGS WITH THE PERFECT SPIRITUAL CHARACTER OF GOD! So this SPIRITUAL CREATION OF MAN began with the SECOND ADAM — Jesus Christ!

Meanwhile God's MASTER PLAN called for a very FEW — the prophets of the Old Testament, and the CHURCH of the New Testament — to be called to receive HIS HOLY SPIRIT, and to be JUDGED FOR ETERNAL LIFE OR DEATH in this present life.

God also called and chose the ancient nation ISRAEL, descended from Abraham, to be His NATION. To them, He made Himself KNOWN — He gave His spiritual LAW — also temporary sacrificial and ceremonial religious laws, as well as national civil statutes and judgments for their nation. BUT GOD DID NOT GIVE THE NATION ISRAEL HIS HOLY SPIRIT. He PROVED, through them, that even with the KNOWLEDGE of GOD and of HIS BASIC SPIRITUAL LAW, humans without the addition of God's Holy Spirit would not LIVE according to God's spiritual law of "GIVE." God made His Holy Spirit, and eternal life, available *only* to Israel's prophets. They and they only, of all on

earth in those years, were being then JUDGED as to final salvation or final DEATH!

FOR ALL OTHERS — the nation Israel, and all other people on earth — God's MASTER PLAN called for their JUDGMENT to come in a later life — after the thousand-year soon-coming reign with CHRIST in a peaceful and happy WORLD TOMORROW. In that thousand years, CHRIST WILL RULE ALL NATIONS. Those truly converted and "saved" of the CHURCH will be kings and priests, ruling with and under Christ, serving in the work of converting with salvation to eternal life all others then still living on earth.

As for ALL OTHERS — ancient Israel, those of ancient nations such as China, India, Japan, Indonesia, Russia, Africa — they have not been JUDGED during their earthly life. Remember, it is appointed to man "once to die, and after that the judgment." All who ever lived will be resurrected — those already judged righteous through repentance, belief, Christ's sacrifice and having lived GOD'S WAY as led by the Holy Spirit, to eternal life as spirit-composed GOD BEINGS — all the unjudged to mortal, flesh-and-blood life again.

Now WHY?

WHY did God call Old Testament prophets and His CHURCH? Why may they receive salvation — that is, be JUDGED as righteous NOW — and WHY are all the billions of others uncalled and unjudged now? That is what a so-called Christianity simply does not understand!

It is because SATAN is still on that throne. Adam rejected God for all his family — for MANKIND! Adam FAILED to QUALIFY to RESTORE the GOVERNMENT OF GOD! That left SATAN on the throne of the whole earth! Satan is the most powerful being next to God. He is the "prince of the power of the air." He has been able to completely SWAY, influence, cause humanity to live his satanic way of "GET" — to transgress God's holy spiritual LAW — to live in SIN!

If Adam could not resist him — if Satan was able to overthrow the first created man — created as a PERFECT physical and mental specimen of mankind — most assuredly none of Adam's children or descendants,

inheriting Adam's moral, mental and physical weaknesses, could have overcome the superpowerful, wily, cunning Satan!

This is a basic TRUTH traditional Christian teaching is in total ignorance of! So God's perfect MASTER PLAN for His wonderful PURPOSE provided for leaving all MANKIND — except those specially called — unjudged now. It provided for their resurrection at a LATER TIME WHEN the GOVERNMENT OF GOD shall have been restored, and SATAN shall have been removed from that throne and from the whole earth.

Since no ordinary human son of Adam, with Adamic heredity, could overpower Satan — could QUALIFY to RESTORE the government of God — God provided to send, IN DUE TIME, His own Son Jesus Christ to conquer Satan and to QUALIFY to sit on that throne, RULING ALL NATIONS — with the GOVERNMENT OF GOD!

Jesus was born a son of Adam through His virgin mother Mary. But Jesus was begotten NOT by a son of Adam, but by GOD THE FATHER HIMSELF! Jesus was GOD as well as MAN. Jesus actually was Lucifer's Creator — for God created all things BY Jesus Christ (Eph. 3:9).

Jesus, and He alone, was able to live, being HUMAN as well as God, in PERFECT RIGHTEOUSNESS. Jesus had the supreme, high, spiritual CHARACTER of God from BIRTH! No other human ever did! Jesus resisted and conquered SATAN! Jesus QUALIFIED to RESTORE THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD. By His perfect life, always tempted even as we — but NEVER once sinning as we — He lived WITHOUT EVER BRINGING ON HIMSELF THE PENALTY OF SIN, WHICH IS DEATH!

Get this thoroughly in mind! Jesus did not have to die FOR HIS OWN SINS — for there were none! HE DID NOT HAVE TO DIE — PERIOD! Yet He did submit to legal action by false human government of the Roman empire. He did submit to false punishment through false allegations of His own people who betrayed Him! WHY? NEVER would He have done this under normal circumstances, just as His Church did not submit to GOVERNMENT persecution by false allegations from OUR OWN FALSE BRETH-

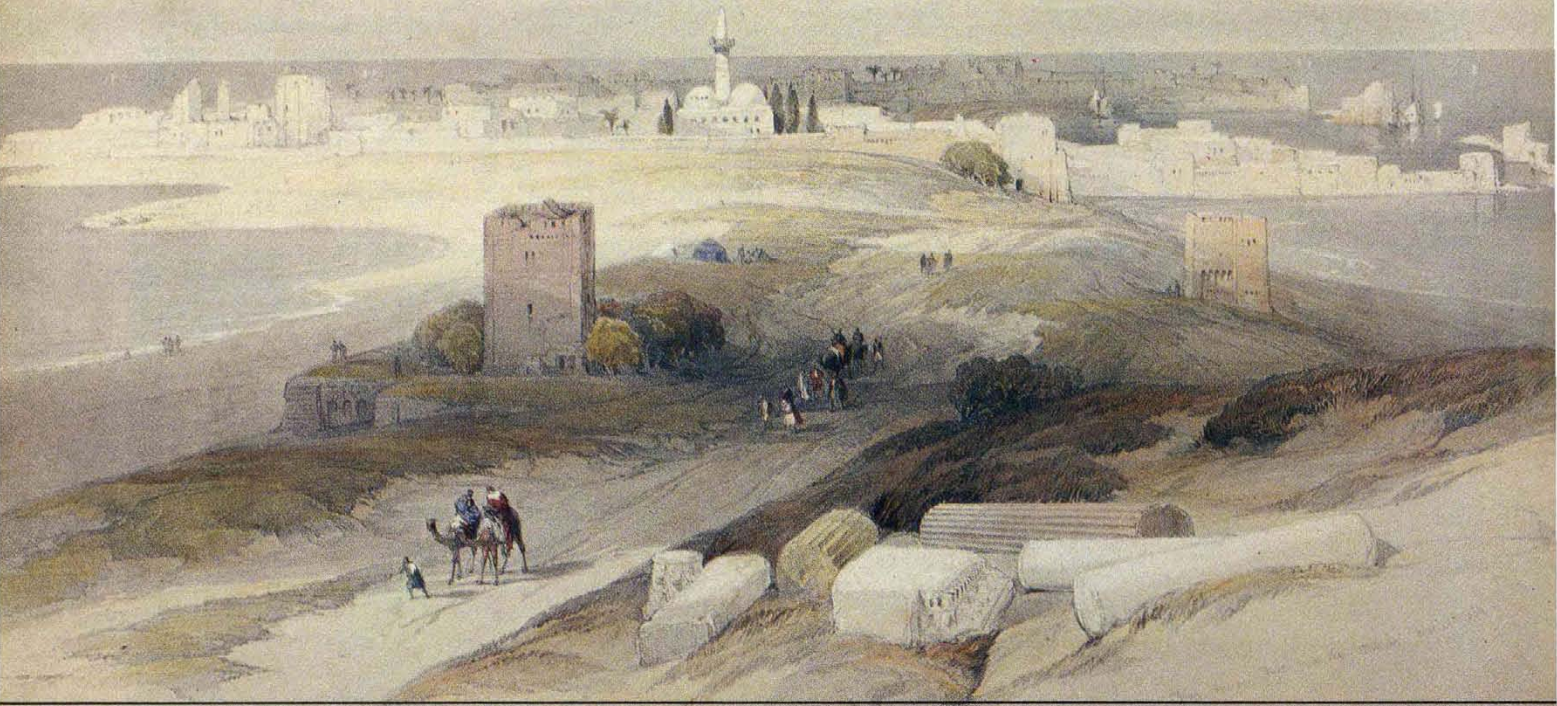
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The Proof of the Bible



GN BIBLE SPECIAL

TYRE 141 years ago



A New Look at Ezekiel's Prophecy on Tyre

Here is clarification on a long misunderstood point.

By Herman L. Hoeh

In the early years of Ambassador College we all read an intriguing booklet challenging the agnostic and the atheist. It was titled *Prophecy Speaks!* In it the author quoted Ezekiel's prophecy — actually, God's prophetic warning — concerning Tyre, the famous port-city of the Phoenicians. The author dared his doubting readers to face the challenge of Ezekiel 26:14:

“And I will make thee like the top

of a rock: thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built no more: for I the Lord have spoken it, saith the Lord God.”

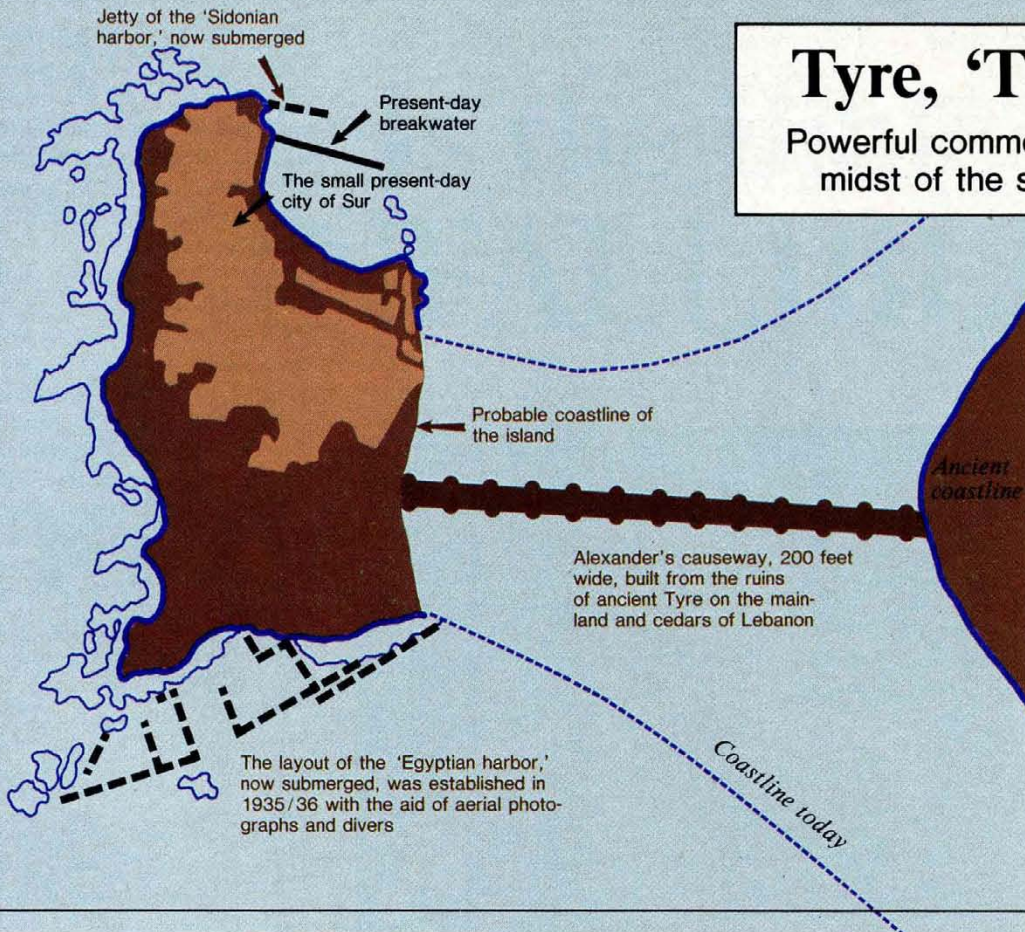
Here, declared the author, is God's challenge to the atheist. Try to rebuild ancient Tyre! Dare to defy God's Word, which said of this city, “Thou shalt be built no more.”

It did seem quite a challenge. It was a time when people were interested in proving the Bible — in

contrast to the self-centered “me generation,” interested only in its own personal problems. We looked into the author's claims. Some of his historical interpretation about Tyre was inaccurate, as anyone reading the encyclopedias could readily see. We visited the site of Tyre in Lebanon to acquaint ourselves better with the facts. Still, the author's claim that this prophecy was a challenge to the skeptic today seemed very real.

Tyre, 'The Rock'

Powerful commercial city, 'in the midst of the sea' (Ezek. 26)



A beautiful hand-colored black-and-white lithograph by Louis Haghe of the site of Tyre, modern Sur, based on a drawing by David Roberts, as he saw the city on April 24, 1839. Roberts drew this view from the isthmus now linking Sur, the island city, to the mainland. The Sidonian port on the north is still used for coastal shipping. Sur, the Arabic city of Tyre, overlies, in part, the Crusader, the Roman and the Phoenician cities, each rebuilt after the ravages of war. Modern archaeological techniques make clear the intent of Ezekiel's prophecy, long misunderstood by Bible students.

And so for years we assumed that Ezekiel 26:14 was a prophecy already fulfilled — a living challenge to the atheist and skeptic. That is what I thought, when visiting the site of Tyre in the summer of 1957 with Dr. C. Paul Meredith.

But I was wrong.

I presupposed the prophecy already to have been fulfilled. After all, Adam Clarke, in his commentary, assured his readers that the Chaldean king Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Old Tyre on the mainland and it was "never rebuilt." And the island city with its ports was demolished by the Mamelukes from Egypt in A.D. 1291.

The truth is, Adam Clarke was wrong. And so was the author of that booklet *Prophecy Speaks!* published by the Seventh-day Adventists. Ezekiel 26:14 will not be completely fulfilled until the return of Jesus Christ to reestablish the government of God on earth and to begin to save the world as a whole. Verse 20 makes it plain that Tyre will not finally be uninhabited until the time when God says, "I shall set glory in the land of the living" — which will occur when

Jesus Christ returns in divine glory.

It is at that time that Jesus will command: "And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations" (Isa. 61:4; 58:12). But not Tyre! Of it God says, "And I will make thee like the top of a rock: thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built no more: for I the Lord have spoken it."

That is when this prophecy of Ezekiel will be enforced.

Now consider the evidence of history.

Archaeologists have only begun to scratch the surface at Tyre. See the February, 1970, and the August, 1974, issues of *National Geographic*. But the records of history are sufficient to make the history of Tyre plain. Tyre (Hebrew: *Sor*) was already an important Phoenician city in the 15th century B.C. Joshua 19:29 refers to it as "the fortified city of Tyre" (Revised Standard Version). It is mentioned again in II Samuel 24:7 as a fortress in the days of David.

Between these two periods of time

the Egyptians make reference to Tyre's important geographic situation. An Egyptian school text of the period of the judges in Israel reads: "Pray, instruct me about Beirut, about Sidon and Sarepta. . . . They say another town is in the sea, named Tyre-the-Port" (John A. Wilson, "An Egyptian Letter," *Papyrus Anastasi I*, ANET, p. 477). Tyre was a dual city. Part lay on the coast, part offshore on islands of rock.

Skipping over the numerous biblical references to Tyre in the days of Solomon and the later kings of Israel and Assyria, we come to the time of Nebuchadnezzar. God revealed to Ezekiel in the year that Jerusalem fell that He would bring upon Tyre (Tyrus) Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon "from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people. . . . And he shall set engines of war against thy walls, and with his axes he shall break down thy towers. . . . thy walls shall shake at the noise of the horsemen, and of the wheels, and of the chariots, when he shall enter into thy gates . . . and

thy strong garrisons shall go down to the ground" (Ezek. 26:7-11).

Verse 11 ends the prophecy about Nebuchadnezzar's siege. Up to this point the singular forms "he" and "his" are exclusively used to refer to the king of Babylon. Suddenly the prophecy shifts to "they" in verse 12: "And they shall make a spoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy merchandise: and they shall break down thy walls . . . and they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water."

Why this sudden change in pronouns? Because Nebuchadnezzar did not fulfill this verse — but others did, years later. The king of Babylon did not make a spoil of Tyre's riches. See Ezekiel 29:17-20. The king had an immense army of horsemen and foot soldiers, but he had no fleet. He could not besiege the walled part of the city that lay on the rock offshore. During the siege the Phoenicians transported their wealth from the mainland to the offshore island fortress. When the mainland part of the city (Old Tyre) fell to the king, the defenders were slaughtered. But there was no wealth to capture (verse 18).

Yet God revealed to Ezekiel that Tyre's wealth would become a spoil (Ezek. 26:12). The prophecy was not to be fulfilled all in one generation!

In the years following Nebuchadnezzar's empty victory, the site of Old Tyre (Paleotyrus) was rebuilt — contrary to Adam Clarke and the author

of *Prophecy Speaks!* Its old walls were not restored, but it became a significant open city, extending along the shore. This was not at all clear to us when we visited Tyre in 1957.

When Alexander, the king of Macedonia, reached the Phoenician coast in 332 B.C., in his conquest of the Persian empire, he appeared before the nobles of Tyre on the mainland. Alexander requested permission to sacrifice to the Tyrian god Heracles, from whom he claimed descent. At that time there were two temples of Heracles at Tyre, one on the mainland and one on the island fortress (Quintus Curtius 4.2.4). This fact we overlooked for years. The Tyrians offered the Macedonian king the temple on the mainland at Old Tyre for his sacrifice. The king was insulted and demanded to enter the island city or he would besiege it!

The rest is history. Alexander built from the quickly abandoned mainland town a mole linking the mainland to the island. He took the masonry and large stones, the timber and the very dust of Old Tyre and laid them in the sea to form the mole. New Tyre, on the island, fell. Its riches were captured. And the mole became a peninsula as the sands washed against it over the centuries.

Both Old Tyre and New Tyre were resettled. By the time of Jesus the city Tyre had again become a thriving port (Mark 7:24-31). It is referred to in Acts 12:20-21, during the reign of

Herod. Pliny, a Roman scholar, visited Tyre in the days of the apostles and recorded its size. He computed the circuit of mainland Tyre and the island at 19 Roman miles and the circumference of the island proper at slightly less than 3 miles (Pliny, *Natural History*, 5.17.76).

But what of the prophecy that Tyre would not be rebuilt?

Look again at Ezekiel 26. Remember, verses 7 to 11 use the singular pronoun to refer to Nebuchadnezzar. Suddenly, verse 12 uses the plural pronoun "they" to refer to Alexander and numerous other generals who came after him and plundered Tyre — Greeks, Romans, Arabs, the Crusaders, the Mamelukes. Ezekiel 26:3 quotes God as saying that He "will cause many nations to come up against thee [Tyre], as the sea causeth his waves to come up." That is precisely what has happened through history. One nation after another has come against Tyre. "They" made a spoil of Tyre's riches.

The Mamelukes, after taking the city from the Crusaders near the close of the 13th century, dismantled the city so it would not again be used as a fort by so-called Christian Crusaders from Europe against Islam.

In the next century Sir John Maundeville traveled from Cyprus to Jerusalem by way of Tyre. He wrote of his experience: "In a day and night he that hath good wind may come to

(Continued on page 39)

An up-to-date photo of modern Sur, ancient Tyre, taken over a century and a quarter after Roberts drew his famous views of the site. Fishermen are on the bay to the north of the isthmus, which was created over the centuries by the sands washing against the mole or breakwater built by Alexander the Great during the siege of Tyre in 332 B.C.



Is the Bible INFALLIBLE?

By Raymond F. McNair

The Bible is the world's best seller. It is the most widely distributed and read book on this planet. But it is also the most misunderstood and most maligned book ever written. Why?

Millions of people believe the Bible is the infallible Word of God; to them, the Scriptures are inerrant. But to others, the Bible is merely a collection of ancient, uninspired writings that may have some historical, poetic and inspirational value.

Is this venerable Book, referred to by U.S. President John Adams as "the Volume of Inspiration," really the unquestionable, authoritative Word of the living God?

Bruce Barton once wrote a book about the Bible, entitled *The Book Nobody Knows*. Truly, many of those who believe in the Bible don't *really* believe it — because they don't believe what it says.

Opposing views

The professed agnostic Robert G. Ingersoll (1833-1899) wrote: "The real oppressor, enslaver and corrupter of the people is the Bible. That Book is the chain that binds, the dungeon that holds the clergy. That Book spreads the pall of superstition over the colleges and schools. That Book puts out the eyes of science and makes honest investigation a crime. That Book fills the world with bigot-

ry, hy-
and fear"
Mistakes

Mr. Ingersoll also asserted: "God made a great number of promises to Abraham, but few of them were ever kept. He agreed to make him the father of a great nation, but He did not. He solemnly promised to give him a great country, including all the land between the river of Egypt and the Euphrates, but He did not. . . . Their [Israel's] God was quick-tempered, unreasonable, cruel, revengeful and dishonest. He

pocrisy
(*Some*
of Moses).

as they are set out according to Holy Writ; we may believe that they happened to people not so very different from ourselves, and that the impressions these people received were faithfully recorded, and have been transmitted across the centuries with far more accuracy than many of the telegraphed accounts we read of the goings-on of today."

Mr. Churchill went on to make this challenge: "Let the men of science and of learning expand their knowledge and probe with their researches every detail of the records

was always promising, but never performed."

What about these claims? Many of the world's great men have been readers of the Bible and confessed that some of their beliefs and wisdom came from that Book. President Abraham Lincoln, for instance, often read the Bible and regularly quoted from it.

Sir Winston Churchill was also familiar with many of the teachings of God's Word. He said:

"We reject with scorn all these learned and laboured myths that Moses was but a legendary figure. We believe that the most scientific view, the most up-to-date and rationalistic conception, will find its fullest satisfaction in taking the Bible story literally. . . . We may be sure that all these things [mentioned in the Bible] happened just

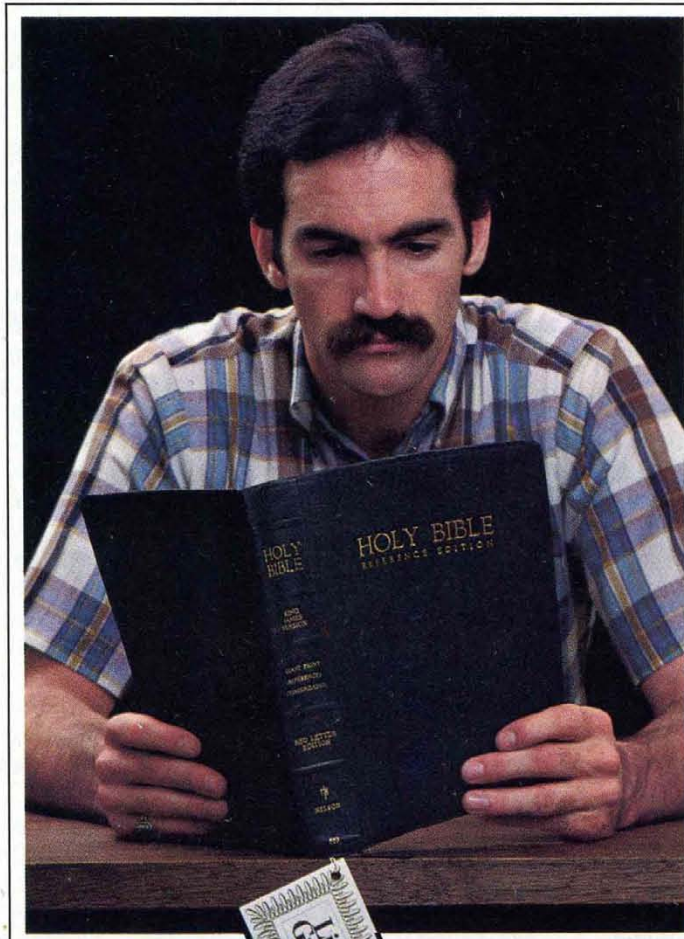


Photo by Roland Rees

which have been preserved to us from these dim ages. All they will do is to fortify the grand simplicity and essential accuracy of the recorded truths which have lighted so far the pilgrimage of man" (*Thoughts and Adventures*).

What is the truth? Is there any accuracy in either of these widely divergent views?

The Bible speaks

Now let us look at the Bible, to see what it says about itself.

David said, "The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times" (Ps. 12:6).

Jesus Christ gave ample testimony to the authenticity of the Holy Scriptures. He referred to them as being the very Word of God: "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he [Christ] expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27).

"And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you . . . that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures" (verses 44-45).

The apostle Paul, writing in the middle of the first century, said: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished, unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:16-17).

Humans visit museums and other repositories of historic documents such as Britain's Magna Carta and America's Declaration of Independence and stand in awe at the sight of those documents. How much more should we stand in awe of the very Word of the living God?

Like a puzzle

Through the prophet Isaiah God revealed that He deliberately inspired the Bible in such a way that it is not easily understood.

Isaiah asked: "Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? . . . For precept must be upon

precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little: For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people" (Isa. 28:9-11).

The Word of God is written so that its various pieces must be put together like a picture puzzle. All the scriptures on any one subject must be viewed together to get the entire picture. But why?

Isaiah answers, "That they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken" (verse 13).

When Jesus was asked why He spoke to the multitudes in parables, He said: "Unto you [His disciples] it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them" (Mark 4:11-12).

Few in the world realize that this is not the only day of salvation. It is merely "a day of salvation" (Isa. 49:8). God is not calling the masses today. He is only calling out of this world His Church (the Greek word for "church," *ekklesia*, means "the called-out ones"). Speaking of true Christians, God says, "For the time is come that judgment must begin [right now, today] at the house of God" (I Pet. 4:17). God is now judging us — His Church.

But what about the rest of this world's 4½ billion inhabitants? They are not being judged now. Their time will come later. In the meantime, Satan holds full sway over their minds and hearts (Rom. 11:8). For more information, write for our free reprint, "Is This the Only Day of Salvation?"

God has given the vast majority of mankind over to Satan to let him blind them at this time: "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world [Satan] hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (II Cor. 4:3-4).

How does Satan deceive the masses — the whole world (Rev. 12:9)? He does it primarily through false religious organizations and false

clergymen: "For such are *false apostles*, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness" (II Cor. 11:13-15).

Just as Satan often quotes scripture (e.g., Matt. 4:6), so do his ministers, but they always either quote it out of context or put a clever but perverted twist on it: "For we are not as many," wrote Paul, "which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity" (II Cor. 2:17).

Yes, God deliberately inspired the writing of the Bible in such a way that the worldly wise and the disobedient will misunderstand it and stumble over it.

The apostle Peter admitted that some of Paul's writings were not easy to understand. He said that "our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles . . . in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction" (II Pet. 3:15-16).

How, then, are we, the elect, to understand God's Word? Isaiah informs us of the attitude required: "But to this man will I look [says God], even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" (Isa. 66:2).

If we wish to truly understand the Bible, we must "Search the scriptures" (John 5:39) as did the open-minded Bereans (Acts 17:11).

One must be careful about how he handles or expounds the Word of God. Paul told Timothy, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15). Many, instead of "rightly dividing the word of truth," corrupt God's Word and, as Peter said, wrest it to their own destruction.

How inspired?

Just how was the Word of God inspired?

Peter tells us: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy . . .

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy [in the scripture] came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Pet. 1:19-21).

On some occasions when Old Testament prophets were inspired with a message, they themselves didn't even understand it.

The prophet Daniel said: "And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end" (Dan. 12:8-9).

Apparent contradictions

Is the Word of God infallible, or does it contain discrepancies, contradictions and untruths? You may have heard someone say, "The Bible is full of contradictions!" or "You can prove anything by the Bible!" But are there any real errors in the Word of God?

Let us examine some so-called biblical contradictions to prove the veracity of God's Word.

One of the most striking examples of a copyist's error is found in II Chronicles 22:2, where we are told that Ahaziah was 42 years old when he began to rule. II Kings 8:26 says he was 22. Which is correct?

None of the "original" documents extant solves the difficulty for us. Obviously a copyist's error was made thousands of years ago, and has been perpetuated to this day.

How did this mistake come about? It is clear what happened. Though the Jewish copyists were extremely meticulous and copied previous manuscripts letter for letter, human error crept in.

The Jews used letters to express numbers, and the ancient Hebrew letter for 40 was quite similar to that for 20 — so that one might easily be mistaken for the other.

But God has left us in no doubt as to which is the correct reading. Ahaziah was only 22, as mentioned in II Kings 8:26. The age given in II Chronicles 22:2 is incorrect. If Ahaziah was 42, he would have been two years older than his father, Jehoram, who was only 40 when he died (II Kings 8:17).

God makes the truth plain for

those who want to know it. But those who want to stumble or scoff certainly may.

Notice another example: "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver . . . And gave them for the potter's field" (Matt. 27:9-10).

A thorough study of the book of Jeremiah reveals no such prophecy. The prophet Zechariah did, however, write such a prophecy: "And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord" (Zech. 11:13).

Which of these prophets really gave this prophecy?

Clearly, Zechariah wrote such a prophecy, but the Bible says it "was spoken by Jeremy the prophet." There is no contradiction here. Jeremy had spoken this prophecy, and Zechariah later wrote it down.

Some think that the four accounts of what was written on Jesus' cross contradict. What was actually written on Christ's cross?

Matthew's account says, "This is Jesus the king of the Jews" (Matt. 27:37).

Mark: "The king of the Jews" (Mark 15:26).

Luke: "This is the king of the Jews" (Luke 23:38).

John: "Jesus of Nazareth the king of the Jews" (John 19:19).

The Bible shows that "Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. . . and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin" (John 19:19-20). The Bible does not say that any one of the four titles was the only title written on the cross.

Obviously, the answer to this supposed contradiction lies in the fact that the title on the cross was written in three languages. Each Gospel writer quoted from one of these, or else each combined portions of what was written in two of the three languages. There is no discrepancy.

Scientifically accurate

The Bible is not a science textbook. Nonetheless, whatever the Scriptures mention is always scientific.

Notice these accurate Bible statements:

"It is he that sitteth upon the *circle of the earth*, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers" (Isa. 40:22). This verse clearly reveals that the earth is round, even though man did not "discover" this fact by himself until centuries after this was written.

"He [God] . . . *hangeth the earth upon nothing*" (Job 26:7). The earth is held in orbit around the sun by the law of gravity. But it is not fastened to anything material.

Notice the truth in this biblical statement: "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen [the physical universe] were not made of things which do appear" (Heb. 11:3).

In plain language, this verse says that God created the physical, material, tangible world that we see out of invisible, intangible, nonphysical essence — out of spirit or spirit essence.

Most scientists, steeped in evolution, are unwilling to admit the possibility that an intelligent, all-powerful Designer of the universe exists. But they are forced to agree that, as the Bible says, the physical universe came into existence from that which does not now appear (spirit).

The British weekly newsmagazine *The Economist* offers scientific arguments that support the biblical account of special creation:

"According to modern physics, the universe began with a big bang, in which space and matter made a sudden explosive appearance — from literally nothing. There was a moment when all the material eventually used to create every star and galaxy could have been in the palm of an infinitely small hand" (*The Economist*, April 12, 1980).

It is hard for humans to realize that, just as the Bible says, "In the beginning God created [brought into existence] the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1).

"Thus you can envisage how scientists see the big bang as the sudden, explosive appearance of both space and matter from literally nothing" (ibid.).

Of course, God most certainly did not use a "big bang" to create the universe. But the more research
(Continued on page 31)

Fulfilled Prophecy— God's Challenge to the Skeptic

The trustworthiness of God's Word is at stake! The Bible must either stand or fall according to the fulfillment of the remarkable prophecies it so boldly makes.

By Leroy Neff

“For I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure” (Isa. 46:9-10).

Here is a challenge to the unbeliever and the skeptic! God says that He can and does foretell the future.

The Bible is about one-third prophecy. If the Bible is truly the inspired Word of God, every one of those prophecies must have come to pass just as predicted or must now be awaiting accurate fulfillment. If any Bible prophecy has failed (except in the case of God's direct intervention, as with Jonah's prophecy to Nineveh), then the veracity of God's Word could be suspect!

Any who will examine the record will see prophecies that have already literally come to pass — others are even now being fulfilled. But even more important — and for you this is a matter of life and death — many Bible prophecies will yet come to pass in this generation.

Three of the most remarkable Bible prophecies already fulfilled concern two ancient leaders of world empires and a Middle Eastern king. All three instances are well documented in the historical record. These three examples are representative of the absolutely sure word that is Bible prophecy.

Cyrus, ruler of Persia

The first example is that of Cyrus the Persian, the first ruler of the

Persian emperor Cyrus the Great. Isaiah foretold, almost two centuries in advance, his reconstruction of the Temple!



Persian empire, who lived in the sixth century B.C. The stories of Cyrus' birth and youth as recorded in the histories of the time are so remarkable that they seem almost like children's stories. Herodotus, the Greek historian of the fifth century B.C., recounts one of these stories, here summarized.

Astyages, the son of Cyaxeres, king of the Medes, had a daughter, Mandane. He became fearful because he dreamed that this daughter would bear a child who would rule in his place, not only his kingdom but all of Asia. He wanted to prevent this at all cost.

When Mandane had her first child, a son, Astyages instructed one of his trusted servants, Harpagus, to have the child killed. Harpagus, not wanting to do such a horrible thing, entrusted the terrible responsibility to Mitradates, a herdsman. Mitradates, on finding that his own child had just been stillborn, took and reared Mandane's son as his own. When the boy was about 10 years old his true identity became known.

His grandfather, Astyages the king, now accepted him and in due time this boy, Cyrus, ascended the throne in about 558 B.C. By about 549 B.C. Cyrus had become king over all Media, and by about 548 B.C. he ruled all Persia. He conquered Babylon in 539 B.C. and the Persian empire succeeded the Babylonian empire.

This story would not be so remarkable by itself, but predictions about Cyrus are included in Bible prophecy. You will find these predictions in the last verses of Isaiah 44 and the first part of Isaiah 45.

"That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid" (Isa. 44:28).

Isaiah gave this prophecy *almost two centuries* before Cyrus made his proclamation about rebuilding God's Temple in Jerusalem!

"Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah" (Ezra 1:2).

Not only did God name Cyrus long

before he was born, He saw to it that Satan did not succeed in having him put to death by his grandfather! He also saw that Cyrus issued the proclamation to rebuild the Temple, as God said he would! But there is more.

The two leaved gates

"Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the *two leaved gates*; and the gates shall not be shut" (Isa. 45:1).

Isaiah prophesied that God would make it possible for Cyrus to conquer the many kingdoms that ultimately made up his empire. Also, the "two leaved gates" would not be shut or locked. This refers to the remarkable way in which Cyrus was able to capture the city (and consequently the empire) of Babylon.

The large city of Babylon, with its massive high walls, appeared impregnable from the outside. When Cyrus' armies encamped around the city, the Babylonians only laughed! They could survive a siege of years.

Unbeknownst to the Babylonians, however, Cyrus' men were able to divert most of the Euphrates River, which normally flowed through massive gates into the city. Cyrus also had gotten a spy into the city, who on the appropriate night had the inner gates along the river unlocked. With the lowered river level, the army was able to invade the city by way of the river route and through these gates, taking the Babylonians by complete surprise. Part of the remarkable fulfillment of the prophecy about the "two leaved gates" is described in Daniel 5, the rest in various secular histories.

Alexander's conquest

The second prophetic personality we will consider is Alexander of Macedon, also known as Alexander the Great. He was the first king of the Graeco-Macedonian empire. Upon the death of his father Philip in 336 B.C., he ascended the Greek throne, being only about 20 years old.

Two years later he entered Asia with about 30,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry. He put to flight superior Persian forces at the battle of Grani-

cus and then in October, 333 B.C., he faced Darius III, the Persian king, who had an army 10 times greater than his own. This battle of Issus won him an overwhelming victory. Alexander later won a conclusive victory over Persia at the Battle of Arbela on Oct. 1, 331 B.C., even though Darius III fielded an army of more than one million men.

This young man went on to extend his empire to the Indus River. He died of fever when he was less than 34 years of age, after a reign of only about 13 years.

The prophecies about this man are found in Daniel, chapters 8 and 11. Part of this prophecy states: "And as I was considering, behold, an he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power" (Dan. 8:5-6).

The "notable horn" represented Alexander (the first king of Grecia, verse 21) who conquered the "ram" (the king of Persia, verse 20). Alexander is also referred to in Daniel 11:3-4.

This prophecy was given by Daniel in the sixth century B.C., but its fulfillment by Alexander did not occur until about two centuries later, in the fourth century B.C.!

Jews protected

An interesting sidelight of this prophecy concerns the city of Jerusalem and the Jewish people there.

On Alexander's drive southward, after his conquest of Syria, he bypassed Jerusalem, continuing along the seacoast to Gaza, which he took in the fall of 332 B.C. After this he headed with his armies toward Jerusalem.

He had previously written Jaddua, the Jewish leader and high priest, requiring certain provisions. Jaddua replied that he had given an oath to King Darius of Persia that he could not violate as long as Darius lived. This greatly angered Alexander.

"Now Alexander, when he had taken Gaza, made haste to go up to Jerusalem; and Jaddua the high priest, when he heard that, was in an agony, and under terror, as not know-

ing how he should meet the Macedonians, since the king was displeased at his foregoing disobedience" (Josephus, *Ant.*, Book XI, Chapter VIII, section 4).

Jaddua then exhorted the people to pray and offer sacrifices to God, whereupon God told him in a dream how to receive Alexander and his armies. Here is how the momentous meeting took place.

"Alexander, when he saw the multitude at a distance, in white garments, while the priests stood clothed with fine linen, and the high priest in purple and scarlet clothing, with his mitre on his head, having the golden plate whereon the name of God was engraved, he approached by himself, and adored that name, and first saluted the high priest."

Alexander then said: "I saw this very person in a dream, in this very habit, when I was at Dios in Macedonia, who, when I was considering with myself how I might obtain the dominion of Asia, exhorted me to make no delay . . . And when the book of Daniel was shewed him, wherein Daniel declared that one of the Greeks should destroy the empire of the Persians, he supposed that himself was the person intended" (*ibid.*, section 5).

As a result of these events, Alexander dealt kindly with the Jews. This interesting story gives a little more detail on how God brings about the fulfillment of Bible prophecy, sometimes in remarkable ways.

An abomination in God's Temple

The last event we will consider relates to Antiochus Epiphanes, who was king of Syria during the second century B.C.

After Alexander's death his empire was divided into four kingdoms (Dan. 7:6, 8:8, 22, 11:4). One of these four kingdoms was that of Syria. Here is what Daniel says about Antiochus:

"And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land. And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and

by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered" (Dan. 8:9-12).

This prophecy was fulfilled in a terrible way. Antiochus took over Jerusalem and the Temple. He stopped the daily sacrifices and forced pagan religion on the Jews. Here is one summary of the horrible details:

"The observance of the Sabbath, circumcision and abstinence from unclean food were forbidden under penalty of death. Mothers who had their infant sons circumcised were crucified with their babes hanged upon their necks. The daily sacrifice was made to cease. An altar to the Olympian Zeus was built upon the altar of burnt offering and sacrifice offered upon it. A herd of swine was driven into the temple and swine's flesh offered upon the altar. The Holy of Holies and its furniture were sprinkled with broth made from swine's flesh. The courts of the temple were polluted with indecent orgies" (*Ancient History in Bible Light*, Miller, p. 214).

This time has rarely, if ever, been equaled in the history of Israel or Judah. Not only were the people butchered, even fried in huge pans, but Antiochus personally entered into the Holy of Holies in God's Temple and took away the gold vessels in the Temple. He erected a "Greek altar on the site of the old one on 25 December 167" (*The New Bible Dictionary*, article "Antiochus").

Finally Judas Maccabaeus, his brothers and the Jews were able to recapture Jerusalem three years later, cleanse the sanctuary (Temple) and reinstitute the worship of God.

It should be noted here, however, that this prophecy of Daniel 8:9-12 is dual. Antiochus fulfilled it in type, but it is even now awaiting a much more terrible fulfillment in this end time!

Prophecy for today

These three examples show that God not only knows the end from the beginning and has predicted the

future, but He also sees to it that the prophecies are fulfilled.

Certainly many books could be written — have been written — to give all the historical details. There are scores of fulfilled prophecies about Christ alone (see "Is the Old Testament Inspired?", page 25), others about John the Baptist, Judas Iscariot and others. The fall of Israel and Judah were also foretold in great detail by Isaiah, Jeremiah and others. The fulfillment of the physical promises to Abraham is a matter of record (Write for our free booklet, *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*).

The restoration of the Jews to Judea in the sixth century B.C., the rebuilding of the Temple and the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 are major prophecies that have been fulfilled. The rise and fall of ancient Babylon is another fulfilled prophecy.

But more important than these historical fulfillments is that prophecy is *right now* being fulfilled.

The fall of the modern descendants of ancient Israel (particularly Britain and the United States) is well under way. This was prophesied as early as the time of Moses (Lev. 26 and Deut. 28). This fall will lead to another captivity during a time called *Jacob's trouble* or the *great tribulation*. Following this tribulation supernatural heavenly signs will announce the imminent return of Christ. Immediately after these signs will begin the "Day of the Lord," culminating in the actual return of Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords (For more information about the Bible prophecies concerning the end time, request your free copy of *The Book of Revelation Unveiled at Last!*).

Prophecy also shows that God will make a way of escape from all these horrors for his faithful servants who are "accounted worthy" (Luke 21:36).

We need to be about our Father's business, doing the Work He has asked us to do, cleaning up our personal lives so that we, together with others who have already qualified, may become a "glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Eph. 5:27).

If we do, we will be able to escape all these terrible events and stand before the Son of man! □

Does God's Word Contain ERRORS?

If the Bible is inspired by God it cannot contain errors. But critics continually cite supposed biblical contradictions and inaccuracies. Here are some examples that show God's Word is entirely correct.

By Robert C. Boraker

The Bible has been maligned and attacked by critics who claim that God's Word is full of errors and contradictions. And today even some "Christian" clergymen are saying that the Bible's teachings may or may not be true.

Skeptics assert that the Bible can't be completely trusted and that it is full of errors, especially in areas such as history and science. Because of these "errors," the skeptics refuse to accept the Bible as being the inspired, infallible Word of God.

What is the truth about these so-called errors? Let's look at some examples critics use in their attacks on the Bible's trustworthiness.

The two genealogies

Matthew 1 and Luke 3 both give genealogies of Christ, but they appear to contradict. Actually they complement each other.

Matthew's genealogy is clearly that of Joseph. Matthew recorded it for legal purposes; he was writing to prove to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah, and the Jews' custom in keeping records was to trace descent through the father. Legally, the Jews of Jesus' day looked on Him as a son of Joseph (John 6:42).

Also, Joseph's lineage was given to emphasize the fact that Jesus had to be born of a virgin. He could never sit upon the throne of David if Joseph were His real father, since Jechonias

John 19

13 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gab'-ba-tha.

14 And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!

15 But they cried out, Away with *him*, away with *him*, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.

Luke 23

44 And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.

45 And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.

46 And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.

A Bible Mistake?

(or Jechonias) was one of his ancestors (Matt. 1:11-12).

Jechonias, called Coniah in Jeremiah 22:24-30, was so evil God cursed him and his descendants and said "no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah" (verse 30). Jechonias did have children (I Chron. 3:17) but was childless as far as having any descendants on the throne. Joseph's children could not, therefore, ever sit on David's throne.

How, then, could Christ be a descendant of David and qualify to sit on the throne? Enter the genealogy in Luke 3.

Luke's genealogy is actually Mary's. According to Jewish usage, Mary's genealogy was given in her husband's name. The original Greek merely says Joseph was "of Heli" (Luke 3:23). In fact, Joseph was the son-in-law of Heli, since his father was Jacob (Matt. 1:16).

Unlike in Joseph's lineage, there was no block to the throne of David in Jesus' actual blood genealogy through Mary. Her ancestor was David's other son, Nathan (Luke 3:31). To fulfill His promise to establish David's throne forever, God honored Nathan by making him the ancestor of the promised King who would sit on David's throne through eternity (Luke 1:31-33).

But how could Mary transmit

David's royal inheritance — the right to the throne — to her son, since all inheritances had to pass through male descendants? According to Israel's law, when a daughter was the only heir, she could inherit her father's possessions and rights if she married within her own tribe (Num. 27:1-7, 36:6-7).

Apparently, Mary had no brothers who could be her father's heirs. Joseph became Heli's heir by marriage to Mary, and thus inherited the right to rule on David's throne. This right then passed on to Christ.

Both genealogies had to be recorded to establish Christ's right to rule on David's throne. Joseph's genealogy shows Christ was a descendant of Jeconiah and thus could not sit on the throne by inheriting the right through Joseph. It further proves the virgin birth: The curse on Jeconiah's line would have passed on to Christ if He were Joseph's real son, but He wasn't — He was begotten by the Holy Spirit and was the Son of God.

But Christ was Mary's son through Nathan and can inherit the throne legally because of her marriage to Joseph, whose genealogy shows he was of the tribe of Judah.

These two genealogies do not contradict. When studied together, they prove Christ's legal right to rule on David's throne when He returns. For more information, write for our free booklet, *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*.

Matthew's "mistakes"

Matthew 27:1-9 presents three difficulties, according to skeptics. The first concerns the death of Judas. Matthew says Judas died by hanging himself. But in Acts 1:18, Peter says Judas died from a fall.

Contradiction? No. The hanging must have been improperly carried out, since it resulted in Judas falling from the noose and bursting asunder on the ground below.

We don't have sufficient details to know whether Judas was dead before the fall. He may have been hanging dead for some time, and his body decomposed and fell, or he may have slipped from the noose and died from the fall. If the rope was hung from a tree, the weight of his suspended body could have caused the branch to

break. Or did he hang himself from a tree on or near the side of a cliff and suffer a much higher fall? This information is not given, but the details that are recorded are enough to show the manner of his suicide.

Matthew's and Peter's accounts also differ as to how the 30 pieces of silver were used. Matthew says the chief priests bought the potter's field, while Peter indicates Judas bought the field.

When the two accounts are put together we can conclude that when Judas saw Jesus condemned to death, he felt remorse over his treachery. He returned the 30 pieces of silver to the priests and then committed suicide in a potter's field. The chief priests used the money to buy this field in Judas' name to bury aliens in.

There are no
real errors in
the Bible . . . There are
only alleged discrepancies
that might at
first appear to be
errors. If a
seeming contradiction cannot
be immediately solved, we
don't need to
be overly concerned.

Biblical passages add to each other's meaning; they do not detract from or contradict other scriptures.

The third "difficulty" is that Matthew 27:9 purports to be a quotation from Jeremiah. But you can search the 52 chapters of Jeremiah's book and you will not find it. So the critics say Matthew made a mistake. Instead a similar quotation is found in Zechariah 11:12-13; although Zechariah mentions 30 pieces of silver and a potter, there is nothing about a potter's field.

But notice carefully Matthew's words again: "Then was fulfilled that which was *spoken* by Jeremy the prophet . . ." This prophecy was spoken by Jeremiah and for some reason was not recorded in his book.

Matthew obviously had access to it, though, through other records.

"Historical errors" disproved

What some consider classic examples of errors in the Bible's historical sections can also be explained.

Some think the apostle Paul's statement in I Corinthians 10:8 contradicts Numbers 25:9. Did 23,000 or 24,000 die in the plague? When we read both accounts carefully, we see that the Old Testament version gives the total number of people who died in the plague. Paul relates that most of them, or 23,000, died in one day. The remaining thousand died later.

Another possible explanation is that round numbers were used by both writers. If the actual number was around 23,500 it would be correct to round it off to either 23,000 or 24,000.

Time and again the Bible's accuracy has been vindicated by archaeologists. One example is Daniel's statement that Belshazzar was the last king of Babylon (Dan. 5:30-31). For centuries historians said Daniel was wrong — according to them Nabonidus was the last king.

But the critics were silenced when archaeologists dug up some Babylonian documents that stated Nabonidus named his son "Belsarusus" — a variation of Belshazzar. According to a document now called the Nabonidus Chronicle, Nabonidus "entrusted the army and the kingship" to Belshazzar while he campaigned in central Arabia.

Belshazzar was therefore the *second ruler* of Babylon who reigned in his father's absence. This explains why Belshazzar wanted to make Daniel the "third ruler" in the kingdom (Dan. 5:16).

Critics also once attacked the historical accuracy of the account in II Kings 18. It describes the struggle between King Sennacherib of Assyria and King Hezekiah of Judah. For the sake of peace, Hezekiah offered whatever tribute would satisfy the Assyrian ruler. Sennacherib asked for 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold (verse 14).

A problem developed with this account when archaeologists found Sennacherib's official records, which described the settlement as being 800

talents of silver and 30 of gold. This was 500 more talents of silver than what the Bible said.

But more recent discoveries revealed that Assyria and Judah used different standards for calculating silver, just as countries today have different standards for currency. It turned out that 800 Assyrian talents of silver equaled 300 Jewish talents of silver. The Bible account stood vindicated.

Bible scientifically accurate

Did Joshua make a mistake in astronomy? Critics cite Joshua 10 and other passages as proof that the Bible is scientifically inaccurate.

In order to give the Israelites more time to defeat their enemies, God lengthened the day by causing the sun to "stand still" (verses 12-13). Didn't Joshua know that the earth rotates around the sun? He probably did. Technically speaking, he should have said, "Earth, stop rotating!" But the Bible wasn't written for astronomers, in scientific language. Though the Bible does give the foundation for understanding science, it is written in language for the average man.

Technically, the earth stopped rotating during Joshua's long day, but to the observer on earth the "sun stood still." We still use "unscientific" expressions like "the sun sets" and "the kettle is boiling." Critics should not construe such expressions in the Bible as errors in science.

In Matthew 13:31-32, Christ said the kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed, which He referred to as the smallest of all seeds. At least one theologian claimed this was an error in botany, since we know today that there are smaller seeds than the mustard seed. For instance, mushroom spores are smaller, although some would not consider them seeds.

In any case, we must consider the audience to whom Christ spoke. Many of His listeners were farmers, and the smallest seed they sowed was the mustard seed. They had no knowledge of anything smaller. Christ's object was not to teach science, but spiritual truth.

All biologists know that the hare or rabbit does not chew the cud like a cow. Yet the Bible says it does (Lev. 11:6, Deut. 14:7). If this is an error, it

wasn't Moses who made it — he only told the Israelites what God wanted him to say. And God certainly knows what a hare does and doesn't do, since He created them.

The answer to this difficulty is that the hare *appears* to chew the cud, and God used that as a sign to help identify clean and unclean animals. In any case, the hare is still unfit for human consumption because it "divides not the hoof," the other requirement of clean animals.

Biblical measurements

Many supposed contradictions in the Bible are related to time and measurement.

Israel used both a civil and sacred calendar. The civil year started in the autumn with the month Tishri. The sacred year began in the spring with the month Nisan or Abib. If two writers disagree on the month and day of an event, we must see which calendar they use for reckoning.

John 19:14 appears to disagree with Matthew 27:45. John describes events *before* the crucifixion and says they took place about the "sixth hour." Matthew agrees with Mark 15:33 and Luke 23:44 when he says darkness covered the land *after* the crucifixion from the sixth to the ninth hours. Is there disagreement as to when the crucifixion occurred?

The Jewish state was then under Roman control. John used the Roman reckoning of time — counting from midnight. To John, the "sixth hour" was six o'clock in the morning. But according to the Jews' reckoning of time, which the other Gospel writers used, this was the *first hour* of the day. The sixth hour, to them, was noon, Roman time. The crucifixion occurred between these times. The four versions do not contradict; they add to each other.

An apparent mathematical error occurs in the dimensions of the "molten sea" in II Chronicles 4:2. The Bible says this huge vessel was 10 cubits from brim to brim and 30 cubits in circumference (a cubit was about 18 inches). Since the circumference of a circle is found by multiplying pi (3.14) with the diameter, a vessel 10 cubits in diameter must have a circumference of 31.4 cubits. Didn't the Israelites know about pi and its value?

All evidence indicates that people during that age had a detailed understanding of science and technology. We cannot assume that their knowledge of geometry and basic mathematics was so poor that they didn't know how to calculate circles.

Picture the molten sea vessel in your mind. It had a thickness of a "handbreadth" (6-8 inches) with a curved brim "like a lily blossom" (II Chron. 4:5, New International Version). Looking at it from the top, we could see three circles: 1) around the outside of the curved brim, 2) around the outside below the brim and 3) around the inside. Which one was 30 cubits in circumference? Probably the one outside below the brim where the figures of bulls were inscribed (verse 3).

If the diameter was 10 cubits from brim to brim, the outside circumference around the brim would actually be 31.4 cubits, because the thickness of the brim would be included in the measurement. There is no mathematical error when we determine where the measurement was made.

There are no real errors in the Bible. There are only *alleged* discrepancies that might at first appear to be errors. On occasion what appears to be an error is caused by a faulty translation, of which there are several among the many different versions of the Bible. If a seeming contradiction cannot be immediately solved, we don't need to be overly concerned.

Jesus Christ said, "The scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). There is a solution to all the so-called discrepancies. The Scriptures are unified in teaching the truth — not error. All Scripture is profitable (II Tim. 3:16) — error isn't. The Bible is the inspired Word of God and we can rely on its trustworthiness. It is a sure foundation for our faith.

"The word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirits, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart" (Heb. 4:12, New International Version). The Bible is what we are to live by — and by it we are being judged. We need to study this inspired and inerrant Word of God. □

Has the Bible Been Preserved Accurately?

By Neil Earle

Is the Bible, as some far-out critics contend, a hodgepodge of scribal errors, spurious manuscripts and copyists' forgeries? You need to know the encouraging truth!

Could a collection of writings scattered over 1,500 years of composition, spanning 60 generations and authored by 40-plus writers in three languages survive such a journey intact?

Jesus Christ said yes. "Heaven and earth shall pass away," He pronounced, "but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35).

The skeptics disagree. Accusations of linguistic errors, slips of the pen, unwarranted interpolations and pious forgeries have been trumpeted far and wide. Even to the average person it somehow seems unreasonable for manuscripts and

documents to survive unblemished after 3½ millennia of copying and recopying.

And yet, the existence of the 66 books encompassing Genesis to Revelation is a fact, an observable, demonstrable reality. The Bible exists. Where did it come from?

Scientific literary analysis demands that the benefit of the doubt be given to the documents! Shakespeare's plays exist. Every year someone attempts to prove that someone other than Shakespeare wrote them or that counterfeit material was later inserted into his original writings. Yet until hard, unshakable evidence appears to the contrary, most all scholars assume Shakespeare's authorship.

It is the same with the Bible. Critical doubts and scholarly questions do not constitute refutation; skeptical research begs authoritative conclusions.

The document gets the benefit

of any doubt. The burden of proof lies with the skeptic!

A nation of priests

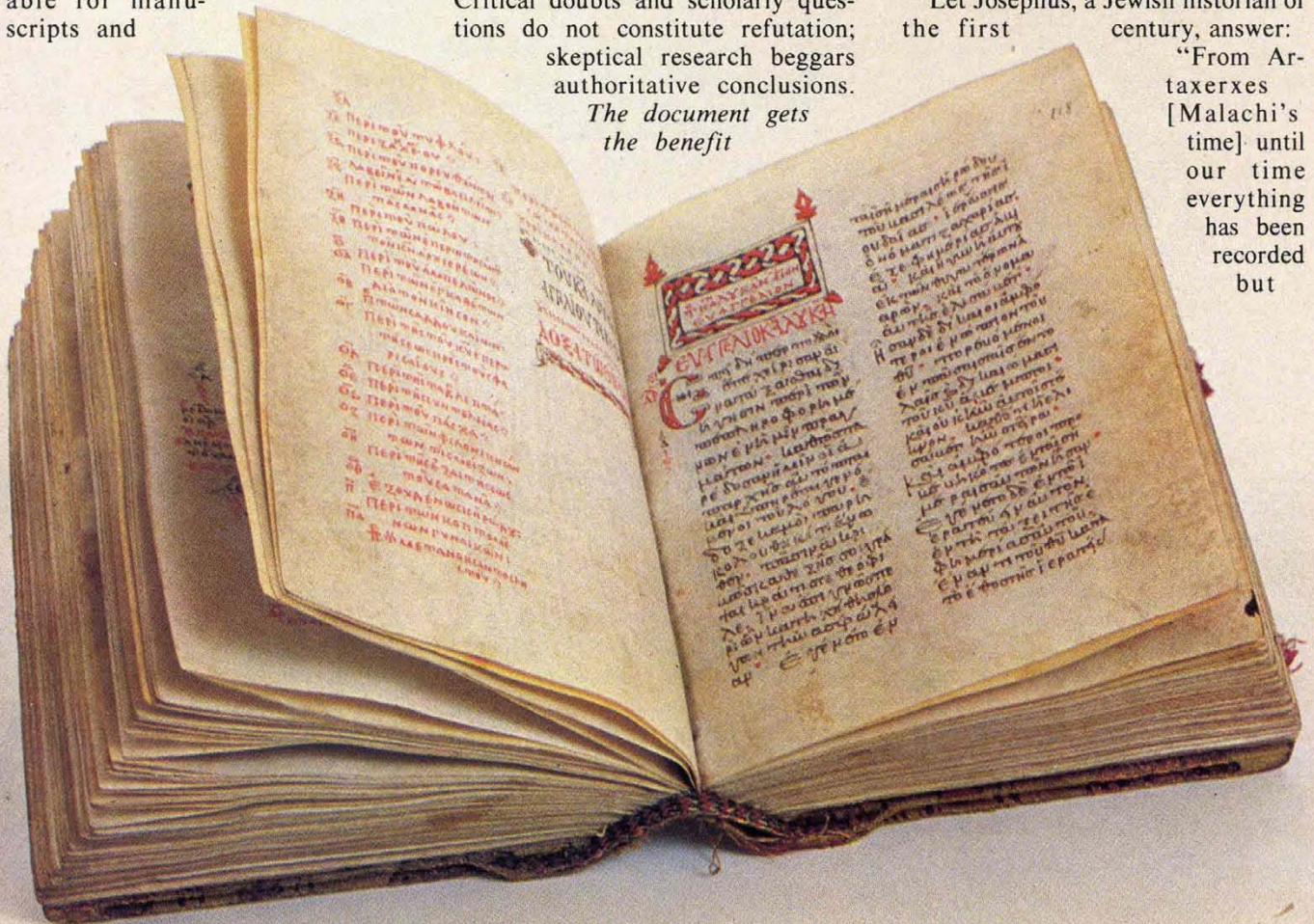
The evidence for the integrity, authenticity and accuracy of the documents underlying the biblical text makes a fascinating story.

It begins with the Eternal God's selection of an entire nation as a "kingdom of priests" (Ex. 19:6). The care and preservation of Israel's lively oracles was a solemn duty of professionals called scribes.

In these conditions, how easy was it to palm off forgeries on the specially chosen teachers of the tribe of Levi (Deut. 33:10)? How did educated Jews feel about the authenticity of the documents they venerated as the "holy scriptures" (II Tim. 3:15)?

Let Josephus, a Jewish historian of the first century, answer:

"From Artaxerxes [Malachi's time] until our time everything has been recorded but



has not been deemed worthy of like credit with what has preceded, because the exact succession of prophets ceased. But what faith we have placed in our own writings is evident by our conduct; for though so long a time has now passed, no one has dared to add anything to them, or alter anything in them" (*Contra Apion*, Whiston's Josephus, p. 609).

Often overlooked is that the law, prophets and writings, which were accepted by Christ (Luke 24:44), formed the constitutional and legal basis of the Jewish nation. The Old Testament writings had national impact equal to Britain's Magna Carta, Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and Petition of Right, or America's Plymouth Rock Covenant and Declaration of Independence. Every Sabbath (Acts 15:21) for three millennia the Old Testament has been read, discussed, expounded by Jews. Genesis to Malachi underlined the Jewish people's unique position in the world and their claim to the land of Israel. As one rabbi observed, "More than Israel has kept the Sabbath, the Sabbath has kept Israel."

Even the many sects and divisions within Judaism acted as unwitting guarantors of the purity of the Old Testament text, the vital record of their ancestors' deeds (John 8:33-59).

Animosity was, paradoxically, a powerful force in preserving the unimpeachability of Scripture. The appeal to the text was the common arbiter in theological debate (Matt. 19:7). The Scriptures were known at the grass-roots level as well (Luke 4:16-20). Deletions, insertions or corruptions would have triggered an outcry in a nation zealous for their law (Acts 22:3).

Tamper with the Old Testament text? One may as well consider editing the Declaration of Independence, deleting a sentence in a new copy of the Gettysburg Address or printing the Lord's Prayer with the beginning "Our Mother." Vital literary productions of national significance are too well known to be tampered with.

Today thousands of people have committed the Ten Commandments to memory. Imagine the protests if a new Bible translation inserted an extra commandment! Also consider the astounding memory powers of the

ancients. Even in this century a Cairo, Egypt, university required entering students to memorize the entire Koran, a book as large as the New Testament.

The thread of conveyance

Scripture itself speaks of a systematic, organized preservation of the law, prophets and writings.

Moses entrusted the law to the Levites guarding the ark, centerpiece of Israel's religion (Deut. 31:24-26). Joshua 1:8 comments upon "this book of the law" that Moses' successor read to the entire nation (Josh. 8:32-35).

Literate, proficient scholars functioned even through the chaotic Judges period (Judg. 5:14, I Sam. 1:3, 9). Under Samuel and David and Solomon, during Israel's Golden Age, inspired writers laid the basis for the historical narratives in Samuel, Kings and Chronicles. David revered the sacred writings (Ps. 119:97), and he and Solomon contributed and collected many psalms and proverbs.

These writings formed the basis for successive national revivals and reforms (II Chron. 17:7-9, II Kings 22:8). Later on Isaiah and Hezekiah updated the text (Prov. 25:1, Isa. 8:16). In this way "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Pet. 1:21). The writings of the prophets were accepted because of God's evident approval and inspiration, shown through dramatic fulfillments (Isa. 38:4-7).

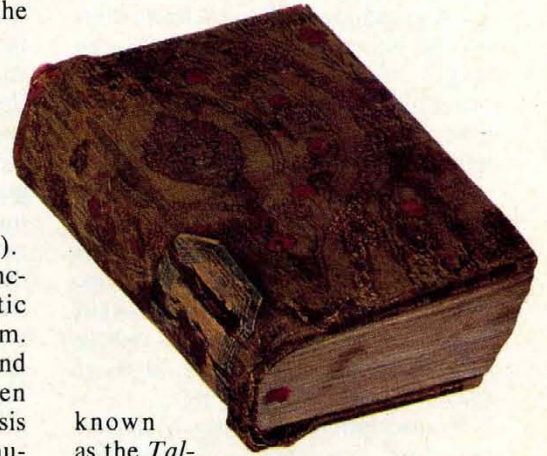
Even during the Babylonian captivity Daniel had access to the Scriptures (Dan. 9:2), and the return to Jerusalem was greatly influenced by Ezra, a "ready scribe" and guardian of the text (Ezra 7:6, 10). According to Jewish tradition, Ezra actually updated and clarified the text in certain places (e.g., Deut. 34:5). Shortly after his time, Malachi, the last Old Testament book, was written.

Ancient computers

How scientific was the transmission of the text? We can get a good insight by surveying two periods of transcription: from the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 to about A.D. 500, and from A.D. 500 to A.D. 916.

In the first five centuries a group

No one translation of the Bible is absolutely correctly translated in every verse. But the truth of God is fully clear by comparing translations. Similarly, no one manuscript copy of the Greek New Testament, illustrated here, is absolutely accurate in all details, but a comparison of manuscripts makes the text clear.



known as the *Talmudists*

guarded and copied the text. A supreme effort to safeguard the Old Testament accompanied the scattering of the Jewish people after A.D. 70.

"A great rabbi — Yochanan ben Zakkia by name — [reconstituted] the Sanhedrin at Jannia, between Joppa and Azotus. They considered whether canonical recognition should be accorded to Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs and Esther . . . the upshot was the firm acknowledgment of all these books as Holy Scripture" (Bruce, *The Books and the Parchments*, p. 97).

Why wasn't canonical recognition granted to the controversial "apocryphal" books such as *Maccabees*, *Judith* and *Bel and the Dragon*? Because they abounded, in varying degree, in historical and geographical inaccuracies, displayed an artificial and sometimes vulgar style and taught doctrines and practices inconsistent with true Scripture.

In *Bel and the Dragon*, for example, Cyrus brags to Daniel about the superiority of the god Bel since the god actually ate food offered every night on his altar. Daniel secretly scatters ashes on the temple floor and afterwards shows Cyrus the unmistakable footprints of the priests who ate the food offered to Bel.

No self-respecting rabbi would dare equate this polite Jewish fiction with the biblical Daniel. It would be

like equating the majesty of Winston Churchill's best speeches with the poem "Casey at the Bat." Professionalism purged this spurious literature from serious consideration.

Notice some of the demanding discipline of the transcribers who worked from A.D. 70 to A.D. 500:

"A synagogue roll must be written on the skins of clean animals, the length of each column must not extend less than 48 or more than 80 lines; the breadth must consist of 30 letters. No word or letter, not even a yod, must be written from memory. . . . Between every consonant the space of a hair or thread must intervene, between every book three lines. Besides this the copyist must sit in full Jewish dress, wash his whole body" (Davidson, *Hebrew Text of the Old Testament*, p. 89).

Transcription was letter by letter, not word for word or phrase for phrase! Diligence. Veneration. Professionalism. The hallmarks of the Talmudist tradition!

The Masoretes (Hebrew *Masorah*, meaning "to deliver something into the hands of another") safeguarded the text from about A.D. 500 to A.D. 916. These dedicated scholars based in Tiberias produced the Masoretic Text used today; it is the basis for our English Old Testament of 1611. "The Massorah is called 'a fence to the scriptures' because it locked all words and letters in their places. It records the

number of times the several letters occur in the Bible; the number of words and the middle word; the number of verses and the middle verses, etc., for the set purpose of preventing the loss or misplacement of a single letter or word" (Bullinger, *Companion Bible*, Appendix 30).

Designating the middle letter of the Pentateuch and the middle letter and verse of each book as well as of the entire Old Testament was not enough for these technicians. Phrases were counted, enumerated, distinguished. "House of Israel" was computed separately from "sons of Israel" and the number of times each occurred was well noted. The expression "sins of Jeroboam" is noted separately from the phrase "the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat." Thus the Jewish zeal for God was turned to good use (Rom. 10:2).

So confident were the Talmudists and Masoretes that older documents were discarded. In the words of Sir Frederick Kenyon, late curator of the British Museum, "Age gave no advantage to a manuscript." Understanding the precision and skill of the Jewish scribes explains why. Who has ever counted the letters of Shakespeare, the words of Herodotus, the phrases of Homer?

The text and the Dead Sea Scrolls

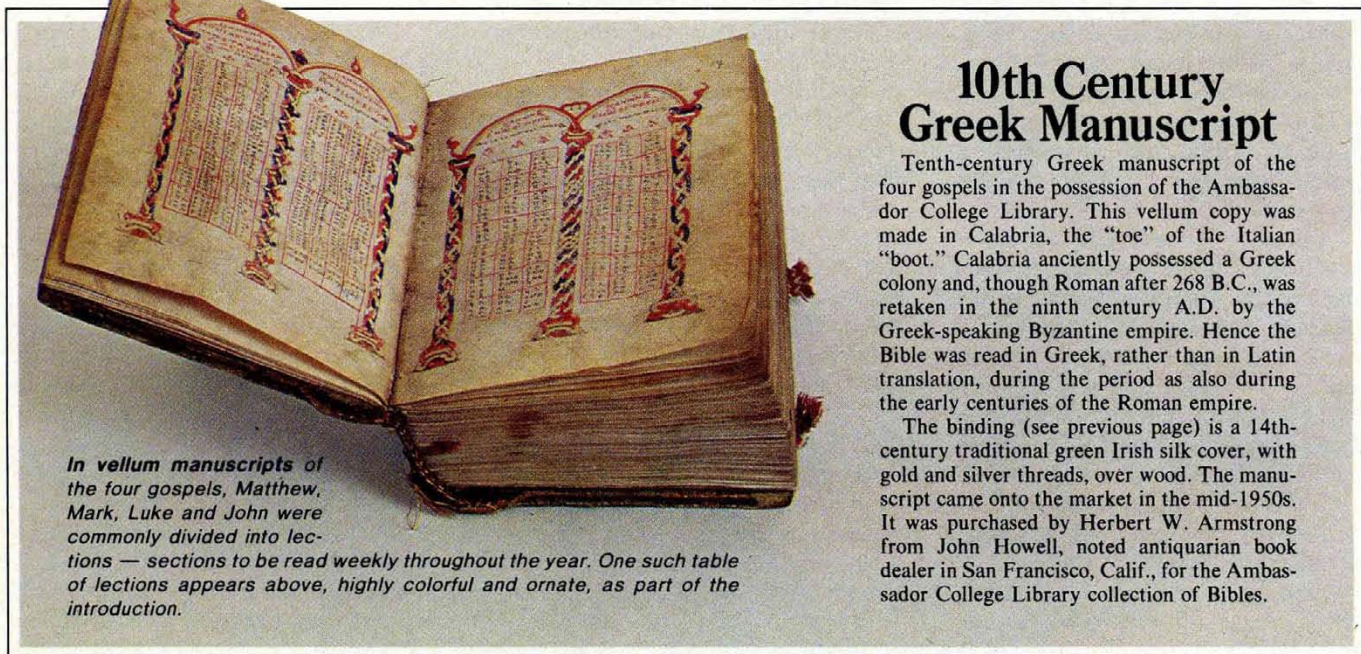
What external evidence exists for checking the Masoretic Text of A.D.

916? A.D. 916 is 1,300 years from the last Old Testament writing, Malachi, in the fifth century B.C. Should this gap alarm us?

"It is nothing to that which parts most of the great classical authors from their earliest manuscripts. We believe that we have the seven plays of Sophocles; yet the earliest substantial manuscript upon which it is based was written more than 1,400 years after the poet's death" (Kenyon, *Handbook to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, p. 4). In other words, our Old Testament text is closer to its time of original composition than the major classical works of antiquity.

Traditionally, the major sources for cross-checking the Masoretic Text were the fifth century B.C. *Samaritan Pentateuch* ("variations from the Masoretic quite insignificant" — F.F. Bruce), the *Targums* — oral paraphrases from the sixth century B.C., the *Mishnah* — scriptural quotes and commentary from A.D. 200 and the *Midrash* (100 B.C.-A.D. 300) — rabbinical studies on doctrine. The net result of these literary cross-references was the strengthening of the authenticity of the Masoretic Text.

Then came 1947. One of the famous Dead Sea Scrolls found was a complete Isaiah manuscript. Its date? Approximately 125 B.C. This is a thousand years earlier than the Masoretic Text. How did it compare?



10th Century Greek Manuscript

Tenth-century Greek manuscript of the four gospels in the possession of the Ambassador College Library. This vellum copy was made in Calabria, the "toe" of the Italian "boot." Calabria anciently possessed a Greek colony and, though Roman after 268 B.C., was retaken in the ninth century A.D. by the Greek-speaking Byzantine empire. Hence the Bible was read in Greek, rather than in Latin translation, during the period as also during the early centuries of the Roman empire.

The binding (see previous page) is a 14th-century traditional green Irish silk cover, with gold and silver threads, over wood. The manuscript came onto the market in the mid-1950s. It was purchased by Herbert W. Armstrong from John Howell, noted antiquarian book dealer in San Francisco, Calif., for the Ambassador College Library collection of Bibles.

In vellum manuscripts of the four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were commonly divided into lections — sections to be read weekly throughout the year. One such table of lections appears above, highly colorful and ornate, as part of the introduction.

Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix report:

"In one chapter of 166 words (Isa. 53) there is only *one word* (three letters) in question after a thousand years of transmission — and this word does not significantly change the meaning of the passage" (*General Introduction to the Bible*, p. 263).

Minor stylistic and spelling variations pale before the fact that the Isaiah scroll "proved to be word for word identical with our standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95 percent of the text" (Archer, *A Survey of the Old Testament*, p. 19).

In the words of Mr. Geisler and Mr. Nix, "the King James Bible is 98.33 percent pure" when compared with the Dead Sea Scrolls. Yet, as the accuracy of the Talmudists and Masoretes should demonstrate, the sectarians' Dead Sea Scrolls need to be evaluated by the Masoretic text, not vice versa.

Sound external evidence attests the accuracy of the transmitters of the Old Testament. It is also consistent in its doctrinal harmony and texture. Josephus put the case very well:

"It becomes natural to all Jews to esteem those books to contain divine doctrines and, if occasion be, willingly to die for them [rather than] to say one word against our laws and the records that contain them . . . whereas there are none at all among the Greeks who would undergo the least harm on that account."

How true! The lives of Abraham, Moses and David have the force and weight of reality; the traditions and fictions of Homer and Virgil — while valuable as support material — lack that ring of truth.

The New Testament documents

How reliable are the New Testament books we possess, and can we cross-check them for accuracy?

Here again we possess no original writings. Here we must depend on the total manuscript material available.

"Perhaps we can appreciate how wealthy the New Testament is in manuscript attestation if we compare the textual material for other ancient historical works. For Caesar's *Gallic Wars* (composed between 58 and 50 B.C.) only nine or 10 [manuscripts] are good, and the oldest is some 900

years later than Caesar's day. Of the 142 books of Livy (59 B.C.-A.D. 17) only 35 survive known to us from no more than 20 manuscripts . . . only one of which is as old as the fourth century. Of the 14 books of Tacitus (c. A.D. 100) . . . the text of these historical works depends entirely on two manuscripts, one of the ninth century and one of the 11th. The History of Thucydides (c. 460-400 B.C.) is known to us from eight manuscripts, the earliest belonging to A.D. 900. . . . The same is true of the history of Herodotus (488-428 B.C.). Yet no classical scholar would listen to an argument that the

The accuracy of Scripture,
its infallible transmission
through the centuries,
is verifiable by
its internal thrust
alone. The great
truths of the human
potential — the purpose
of human life,
that the Bible shouts
from its pages —
bespeaks *inspiration!*

authenticity of Herodotus or Thucydides is in doubt because the earliest manuscripts of their works of any use to us are over 1,000 years later than the originals" (Bruce, *The New Testament Documents*, pp. 16-17).

How much manuscript evidence is there to support and verify the 27 New Testament books?

"There are some 8,000 manuscripts of the Latin Vulgate and at least 1,000 for other early versions. Add over 4,000 Greek manuscripts (some say 5,000), and we have 13,000 manuscript copies of portions of the New Testament" (Robertson, *Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, p. 29).

Thirteen thousand New Testament manuscripts compared to 10 good copies for Caesar's *Gallic Wars!* The

verification of the 27 New Testament books is easier than for any other piece of classical writing. The overwhelming manuscript data makes it much simpler to reconstruct the original reading for disputed or unclear passages.

How close are these manuscripts to the time when the New Testament writings were completed? Near-contemporary support material is a crucial test of authenticity.

John Rylands Library in Manchester, England, owns a papyrus fragment of John 18:31-33, which they date to about A.D. 130. This is within 40 years of John's autograph. The Chester Beatty Museum in Dublin, Ireland, holds papyrus copies of the gospels, Acts, Paul's epistles. The date? Around A.D. 200. The Bodmer Papyrus (A.D. 150-200) contains most of John's gospel.

No other ancient writing has such sterling verification from near-contemporary sources.

The great codices such as *Codex Sinaiticus* (composed about A.D. 350 and discovered in the Mt. Sinai Monastery in 1844 — containing the entire New Testament except Mark 16:9-20, John 7:53-8:11) — and *Codex Alexandrinus* (composed about A.D. 325-350) — containing virtually the whole Bible in Greek — are other valuable sources of documentary evidence for the 27 New Testament books.

These large rolls of Greek writing held by the British Museum, with the *Codex Vaticanus* (A.D. 325-350) in the Vatican Library, aid in verifying the integrity of our New Testament.

Indeed, no other body of literature can be so well attested by such a wealth of documentary evidence. None has been so scrutinized and cross-checked by almost coexistent manuscripts as the New Testament.

External and internal evidence

The first centuries after Christ and the apostles abounded in religious literature.

Numerous theologians like Irenaeus, Tertullian and Augustine argued their doctrines by quoting the extant writings and/or copies of the New Testament books. The gospels, Acts, epistles and Revelation were appealed to as the final authority.

(Continued on page 45)

The Stones Cry Out! And Confirm Bible History

Disbelieving critics have challenged the accuracy of Bible history at every turn — and have lost!

By Keith W. Stump



Photo by Michael Snyder

For centuries the Bible was accepted throughout the Western world as an accurate history of ancient times. It was considered to be *literally true* and authentic in every detail.

The events in the Garden of Eden, the Flood, the building of the Tower of Babel, the deeds of the patriarchs, the Exodus from Egypt — all were believed to have occurred exactly as recounted in Scripture.

But then came the so-called “Enlightenment” or Age of Reason of the 17th and 18th centuries. European intellectuals began to claim that only through human, “scientific” reason-

ing could true knowledge be acquired.

Scriptural revelation came under direct attack!

On its heels arose the 19th-century theory of evolution, offering an alternative explanation to divine creation for the presence of life on earth. God and the Bible were completely excluded from the picture.

Soon many scholars began to totally dismiss Scripture as unhistorical, with no reliable basis in fact. They began to view biblical history as mere legend, primitive superstition and folklore — placing it in the same category as the ancient Greek and Roman myths.

These scholars claimed that many Old Testament books were not contemporary records at all, but were actually written centuries after the events they described. They declared them to have been based solely on garbled, orally transmitted traditions, later put to paper by ignorant, albeit sincere, men.

Some scholars and “higher critics” came to deny the very existence of

such major biblical personalities as Noah, Abraham, Joseph and Moses.

These supposedly learned men were committing the same folly as those Roman scoffers of old, so aptly described by the apostle Paul: “[They] became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” (Rom. 1:21-22). Like the ancient Roman philosophers, “they did not like to retain God in their knowledge” (verse 28).

British logician and philosopher Bertrand Russell provides a good example. He declared as late as 1944 in his *History of Western Philosophy*, “The early history of the Israelites cannot be confirmed from any source outside the Old Testament, and it is impossible to know at what point it ceases to be purely legendary.”

Historian and philosopher R.G. Collingwood, in his posthumous book *The Idea of History* (1946), also dismissed the Bible, labeling it as nothing but “theocratic history and myth.”

These two scholars — and many like them — unfortunately chose not to be confused by the facts. They chose to ignore other scholars’ dramatic, epoch-making discoveries in the Near East, which were rapidly putting an entirely new light on the biblical record — and showing their modern ideas to be hollow, unfounded rubbish!

The Fertile Crescent

The new science of archaeology — the study of the material remains of man’s past — was to severely shake

the confident anti-God prejudice of critical "scholarship."

For centuries, looters and religious pilgrims had unearthed and carried away multiple thousands of ancient artifacts from sites throughout the Near East. But few understood the real significance of these items.

Shortly after the year 1800, systematic study and evaluation of Near Eastern sites began. Archaeology enjoyed a steady and rapid growth. For well over a century and a half now, the region of the Fertile Crescent has been the object of intense archaeological scrutiny.

The term *Fertile Crescent* was coined by Egyptologist James Henry Breasted for the area where civilization began — a crescent-shaped region of rich, well-watered land extending from the Persian Gulf up the Tigris-Euphrates Valley, then westward over Syria and southward along the Mediterranean through Palestine. Egypt's fertile Nile Valley is sometimes included within its boundaries.

It was in the Fertile Crescent that the lands and peoples that figure so prominently in Old Testament history were found. It is not surprising, therefore, that there has been relatively strong public interest in the findings uncovered by the spade of the archaeologist in this region.

It is also not surprising that these discoveries have caused disbelieving scholars to sit up and take notice. In fact, the spectacular archaeological finds of the past century and a half by sound-minded men of learning have prompted a radical reevaluation by scholars of the Bible's reliability as a historical document!

Critics eat crow

Whereas previously many scholars held the Bible to be suspect and probably false unless substantiated by secular records and other extrabiblical evidence, now increasingly the world of learning has been forced to admit that the Bible is indeed remarkably factual as a historical record!

Modern archaeology has provided solid extrabiblical corroboration of historical facts otherwise known to us only from Scripture. It has proved beyond all reasonable doubt the accu-

racy of the Bible as a historical document.

Even still, it should come as no surprise that some scholars remain determined to discredit the Bible as a divinely inspired historical record, stubbornly overlooking the overwhelming array of proof and documentation. Carnal man is disinclined to accept and submit to God's Word.

These critics will blithely gloss over mounds of facts and plain evidence rather than accept the Bible for what it is. Some few have even chosen to pervert and twist the clear testimony of archaeology to suit their own purposes — deliberately misinterpreting and misrepresenting the facts rather than concede the authenticity of Scripture!

in Egypt by Howard Carter and Lord Carnarvon. Yet many less-heralded finds have proved infinitely more important to the evaluation of the Bible record.

Without question the most vital of these early discoveries was the unlocking of the secret of Behistun Rock. This momentous breakthrough in the last century opened wide the door to further inquiry, which has since confirmed and reconfirmed Bible history many times over.

Located on a cliff on Behistun Mountain at the foot of the Zagros Range in Persia is a smoothed rock surface with ancient cuneiform carvings in three languages — Old Persian, Elamite and Babylonian. Cuneiform was a mode of writing, employ-



Photo by Eric Warren

Nevertheless, the past 150 years have witnessed remarkable archaeological confirmation of the Old Testament. We can rely on the biblical record!

Key discovery

Let us briefly examine a few of the scores of archaeological discoveries that bear upon the history of biblical times — finds that have provided dramatic corroboration of the millennia-old Bible record.

Not all archaeological finds have been as highly publicized over the decades as the spectacular discovery in 1922 of the tomb of Tutankhamen

ing wedge-shaped marks, used by many of the ancient peoples of western Asia.

The Behistun Inscription, dating from 516 B.C., is an account of the assumption of the Persian throne by Darius the Great (550-486). Beginning in 1835, Sir Henry C. Rawlinson, an officer in the British East India Company, painstakingly copied the three inscriptions from the rock face. He then set to work unlocking their secrets. By 1846 he had deciphered the Persian part of the inscription. As a result of this achievement, he and other scholars were able to translate the Babylonian

and Elamite portions soon afterwards.

The trilingual Behistun Inscription thus proved to be the vital key to ancient cuneiform writing — just as the famous Rosetta Stone had unlocked the mysteries of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics. The writings unearthed at hundreds of sites throughout the Near East could now be understood!

Excavation, however, is slow, painstaking work. A single site may be worked for a decade or more. Subsequent analysis of finds can take even longer. For this reason, Mr. Rawlinson's success did not have an immediate impact on biblical studies. Translation of previously unearthed cuneiform tablets — as well as those uncovered later — was a prolonged

In the latter half of the 19th century, Hittite monuments were discovered at Carchemish on the Euphrates River in Syria, amply vindicating the Bible narrative. Later, in 1906, excavations at Boghazkoy (ancient Hattusas, capital of the Hittite empire) in Turkey uncovered thousands of Hittite documents, revealing a wealth of information about Hittite history and culture.

The Hittites, it is now known, were a very real and formidable power. They were once one of the dominant peoples of Asia Minor and the Near East, at times exercising control over Syria and parts of Palestine.

The Bible had been correct after all! Today, books abound on the history, art, culture and society of the

With the flowering of Near Eastern archaeology, however, came overwhelming proof that writing was in common use for centuries before the time of Moses! In both Egypt and Mesopotamia multiple thousands of inscriptions have been uncovered, unquestionably antedating Moses by many hundreds of years.

Moreover, pre-Flood (Early Bronze) inscriptions and writings abound, now known to antedate by many generations the Noachian Deluge of the 24th century B.C. The 17,000 cuneiform tablets and fragments of tablets unearthed by Italian archaeologists in 1974 and thereafter at the site of ancient Ebla in northern Syria exemplify the plethora of pre-Flood and post-Flood writings.

Again, Bible critics were proved to be grossly in error!

Another Jewish "myth"?

Some critics had also disputed the historicity of the Babylonian captivity. The Bible recounts, in great detail, the carrying away into slavery of the nation of Judah by the armies of Babylon early in the 6th century B.C. (II Kings 24-25). "Another Jewish myth" was their scholarly consensus.

In 1935 to 1938, however, an important discovery was made at a site thought to be ancient Lachish, 30 miles southwest of Jerusalem. Lachish was one of the cities recorded in the Bible as having been besieged by the king of Babylon at the same time as the siege of Jerusalem (Jer. 34:7).

Twenty-one pottery fragments inscribed in the ancient Hebrew script were unearthed in the latest preexilic levels of the site. Commonly called the Lachish Letters or Lachish Ostraca, they were written during the very time of the Babylonian siege. Some of them proved to be communications exchanged between the city's military commander and the commander of an outlying observation post, vividly picturing the final days of Judah's desperate struggle against Babylon!

Subsequent finds in Mesopotamia of Babylonian historical texts describing the conquest of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar have provided additional proof. The historical fact of the



and time-consuming task. But gradually — year by year, decade by decade — a clear picture began to emerge.

The "mythical" Hittites

Bible critics had long scoffed at references in the biblical record to a people called the Hittites (Gen. 15:20, Ex. 3:8, 17, Num. 13:29, Josh. 1:4, Judg. 1:26 and elsewhere). Their evaluation was that the Hittites were simply "one of the many mythical peoples" fabricated by Bible writers — or, at best, a small and unimportant tribe.

But the critics were wrong!

Hittites — a strong witness by competent scholars against those critics who had once been so quick to challenge the Word of God!

Moses illiterate?

Many critics had also long ridiculed the idea that writing had been in existence in the days of Moses. Writing was unknown at that time, they asserted, implying that the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament) could not possibly have been recorded by Moses or his near contemporaries, but rather were oral traditions recorded at a much later time.

Babylonian captivity has been firmly established.

Dead Sea Scrolls

Probably one of the most spectacular finds in Near Eastern archaeology of the present century was that of the famed Dead Sea Scrolls. These tattered manuscripts were first discovered by a Bedouin shepherd boy in 1947 in desert caves in the Judean wilderness near the Dead Sea. Subsequently, additional scrolls were uncovered at various locations in the region.

The majority of the manuscripts were composed between 100 B.C. and A.D. 68. Some of them contain the oldest-known versions of passages and books from the Old Testament — including the entire book of Isaiah. Before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the oldest and fullest manuscript in Hebrew was the Codex Petropolitanus dating from A.D. 916.

It was determined that the scrolls had been part of a library located at Qumran and belonging to the Essenes, a small, heretical Jewish sect. As a result, the manuscripts evidence occasional spurious textual readings, additions, deletions and careless copying mistakes. As Jesus stated (Matt. 23:2), the scribes and Pharisees, not the Qumran sect, sat in Moses' seat and had authority over the preservation of the original inspired Hebrew text.

Nevertheless, the Dead Sea Scrolls lend support to the high degree of accuracy in the transmission of the Old Testament text. The 2,000-year-old documents demonstrate clearly that the authoritative Masoretic Hebrew Old Testament as we have it today is remarkably faithful to the ancient texts.

Also noteworthy in this regard are fragments of 14 parchment scrolls — including parts of the books of Genesis, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Psalms and Ezekiel — discovered at Masada, the site of the Jews' last stand against the Romans in A.D. 73. In text and spelling they are identical with the traditional Hebrew Bible.

Noah's Flood — fact or fable?

Many efforts have been made to establish the historicity of the Flood or Noachian Deluge (Gen. 5-8) by

archaeological means. The Flood account has probably been one of the most assailed of all biblical narratives.

Though many critics continue to relegate the story to the realm of myth, this is more a result of their refusal to accept the possibility of divine intervention in history than of any lack of evidence.

Thick layers of silt and clay found in numerous Babylonian excavations were unquestionably deposited by flood waters. In some cases, these layers of sediment — with the ruins of earlier cities buried beneath them — correspond to the time of the Flood as demanded by biblical chronology. Many authorities thus consider them to be aqueous deposits laid down by Noah's Flood in the 24th

history amply accounts for the sediment found at other levels.

Perhaps even more telling than the study of flood deposits is the testimony of history as reconstructed for the 24th century B.C. Terms and phrases such as *anarchy, destruction, dark ages, breaks in continuity* and *major population reductions* keep cropping up for this time period — the time of the biblical Deluge!

The break between the Egyptian Old Kingdom and the rise of the Middle Kingdom is one such example, as is the period before the third dynasty of ancient Ur in southern Mesopotamia (Sumer). The period between the Early Bronze culture and Middle Bronze culture in Palestine bespeaks the same type of interruption. "Civilization suffers an



Ambassador College Photo

century B.C. Critics, on the other hand, claim "coincidence."

At other sites, critics are quick to point out, sediment layers have been found dating from time periods other than the 24th century. And at some sites there is a total absence of flood deposits at levels where they should be found were the biblical account true.

What these critics fail to recognize is the simple fact that local variations in terrain would have naturally left differing types and degrees of Flood evidence — or no evidence at all — from one site to another. In addition, localized flooding (of the Euphrates River, for example) at other times in

eclipse, history becomes misty and indefinite, literacy almost disappears," summarizes archaeologist Kathleen Kenyon.

What clearer evidence could we require for the cataclysmic disruption the Bible describes?

Finally, we should note that ancient Flood stories are found in widespread areas of the globe — including America, Britain, India, China, Tibet, Kashmir, Polynesia, Greece and Australia. Almost all races have a tradition of a major catastrophe very similar in detail to the Genesis account! The Sumerian *Epic of Gilgamesh* — an ancient flood story on a

series of clay tablets from the library of King Ashurbanipal of Nineveh — is one of the best known. Since all races descended from the sons of Noah, it should come as no surprise that they handed the same story down to their children.

More proof

Other important corroborative discoveries can be briefly mentioned:

- Many critics had scoffed at the assertion that Joseph shaved before being presented to Pharaoh (Gen. 41:14). They asserted that the razor was not known in Egypt until many centuries later. But, as usual, archaeology uncovered proof to the contrary, demonstrating that razors were known in Egypt long before the time of Joseph (the 17th century B.C.). Solid

gold and copper razors have been found in Egyptian tombs dating as early as the fourth millennium B.C.

- At one time the 39 kings of ancient Israel and Judah during the period of the divided monarchy were known only from the biblical books of Kings and Chronicles. Some critics again charged fabrication. But then emerged a large number of cuneiform records from the excavated libraries of numerous Assyrian kings, mentioning many of the kings of Israel and Judah including Omri, Ahab, Jehu, Menahem, Hoshea, Pekah, Hezekiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoram and Jehoshaphat. The biblical record was again proved correct.

- The biblical account of the destruction of the Egyptian firstborn on the night before the Exodus is well

known to even the casual student of the Bible. Scripture states, "It came to pass, that at midnight the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon" (Ex. 12:29).

cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 18-19) by fire and brimstone is also a well-known account. Archaeology has uncovered the remains of these cities submerged beneath the southeastern part of the Dead Sea. Evidence has also been found of an abrupt "cessation of population" in the cities — just as required by the Bible.

- The Moabite Stone created a veritable sensation when it was discovered in 1868. A basalt stela erected by Mesha, king of Moab, about 830 B.C., it commemorates his wars against Omri, king of Israel (II Kings 1, 3). As it was written from Moab's viewpoint, there are naturally some variations between it and the biblical account. Yet it provides solid extrabiblical evidence of the veracity of the book of Kings.

- The campaign of Sennacherib of Assyria against Judah is recorded in II Kings 18-19 and II Chronicles 32. The biblical account states that he besieged Jerusalem, but returned without taking the city after his army was miraculously destroyed. Sennacherib's own account of the invasion has been found on a clay prism. Though he boasts of numerous other victories, he does not claim to have captured Jerusalem. Again, the Bible has been confirmed.

Unerring accuracy

Literally scores of additional discoveries of archaeology could be cited as corroboration of Bible history. Examples of archaeological illustration of the Old Testament are continually increasing as new discoveries are being made.

The claims of disbelieving critics have been completely exploded. Archaeology has abundantly confirmed Bible history many times over. The clear message is that we can rely on the Bible record. It is consistently historical in every detail.

The Bible challenges disbelieving critics to prove it false. Many have tried desperately to do so — and failed. God's Word cannot be broken (John 10:35)!

The Bible is not the work of fallible man. It is not a book of ancient fables. It is truly the infallible Word of God! "Thy word is truth," Jesus declared in John 17:17. Archaeology has lent its voice in support of this unassailable fact! □



Ambassador College Photo

Archaeology has completely exploded the claims of disbelieving Bible critics. Photos accompanying this article show scattered stones and mosaics on the site of Capernaum, echoing Christ's prediction that the once-bustling international city would fall into insignificance (page 20); a mud-brick city gate, built about the time of Abraham in the wall of the city that later became known as Dan (page 21); a second-century representation of the ark of the covenant, from a synagogue at Capernaum (page 22); part of the excavations at Jerusalem, showing the Omayyad Palace with older Byzantine building in the foreground and, in the background, a wall built by the Crusaders (page 23); and the Jerusalem diggings near the ancient City of David, with the dome of the Al Aksa Mosque in the background (this page).

known to even the casual student of the Bible. Scripture states, "It came to pass, that at midnight the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon" (Ex. 12:29).

Archaeology has revealed that Thutmose IV — successor to Amenhotep (Amenophis) II, pharaoh of the Exodus — was *not* Amenhotep's firstborn nor the heir apparent. He rather succeeded to the throne after his *elder brother's death* — just as required by the biblical account.

- The destruction of the biblical

Is the Old Testament Inspired?

By Dibar Apartian

Do you believe the Old Testament is inspired of God? Many Christians don't. They don't accept the Old Testament as completely accurate and reliable. If they happen to read it at all, they read it like an ordinary book, without really believing its teachings or wanting to abide by them.

Jesus Christ and the apostles did accept the Old Testament. They lived by it. How about you? Have you honestly studied and proved the writings of the Old Testament, pages that constitute two thirds of the Bible?

Ironically, to many Christians the Old Testament is not an integral part of the Holy Scriptures. They often consider it only a collection of Jewish literature. Just as ironically, most Jews reject the New Testament and only consider the Old holy.

As a result of this confusion, the Jews — who don't accept Jesus as the Christ — are still waiting for the Messiah to come, while many Christians — who supposedly believe in Him — no longer wait for Christ's Second Coming! No wonder neither Jews nor Christians, as a whole, really understand the Bible.

"Scriptures" defined

Examine the New Testament. To which "scriptures" did Christ and His apostles refer? What "scripture" did Christ read in the synagogue every Sabbath? What "scripture" did His disciples use to preach the Gospel after His death and resurrection? What "scripture" did the apostle Peter have in mind when he wrote that "no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the

will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Pet. 1:20-21)?

The answer is obvious.

Christ said that the Scripture cannot be broken (John 10:35). At the time He spoke, none of the New Testament writings were yet available. Only the Old Testament constituted the "scripture"!

A man came one day to Christ, knelt before Him and asked what he should do to inherit eternal life. Christ told him, "Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother" (Mark 10:19).

Christ here quoted some of the Ten Commandments. These commandments were given by God to Moses — in the Old Testament. They are part of the Holy Scriptures.

Several years later, the apostle Paul, under God's inspiration, wrote: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:16-17).

Again, when Paul wrote, the only "scripture" in existence was the Old Testament. The New Testament was not completed.

Paul further told Timothy that the "scriptures" were holy: "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the *holy scriptures*,

which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (verses 14-15).

Think! What "holy scriptures" had Timothy learned as a child? He could only have had knowledge of the Old Testament writings. The apostles had no doubt that the Old Testament was God's inspired Word.

The New Testament refers to the Old Testament about 250 times. You cannot accept the New Testament without recognizing the authority of the Old. The two don't contradict; they complete each other. The Bible is one book. It cannot be divided.

Christ foretold

How many pay attention to the numerous references the Old Testament makes to Christ, His birth, His mission, His sufferings and His death?

When John the Baptist heard of the works of Christ, he sent Him two of his own disciples to inquire, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" (Matt. 11:3).

How did John the Baptist know that a Messiah was to come? Where had he read about Him? In the writings of the Old Testament.

The Pharisees and scribes at the time of Christ boasted of their knowledge of Scripture. However, they did not understand it. Blinded as they were, they only expected the Messiah to come in all His glory; they had not seen — in Scripture — that He first would come as a human being to die for the sins of mankind.

Notice what Christ told His disciples after His death and resurrection: "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you,

that all things must be fulfilled, which were written *in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms*, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand *the scriptures*. And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day" (Luke 24:44-46).

Read it again! Notice that Christ divided the Old Testament into three sections: the law of Moses, the prophets and the psalms. Any student of theology knows that the Old Testament canon is divided into:

1) *The law (Torah)*: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

2) *The prophets (Nebim)*: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the minor prophets (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi).

3) *The psalms or writings (Kethubim)*: Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles.

These, then, are the "scriptures" spoken of by Christ. They form the entirety of the Old Testament. The Apocrypha, *not* inspired by God, is not included in these three groups. It never was a part of the Old Testament canon. (For more information, why not write for our free reprint article, "Do We Have A Complete Bible?")

Astounding details

The prophets of old gave in the Scriptures astounding details about the birth, death and resurrection of Christ. Here are a few examples:

Micah foretold the birthplace of the Messiah: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Mic. 5:2, see also Matt. 2:6). The "scripture" revealed that "Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem" (John 7:42).

David spoke of the "stone which the builders refused" that became the "head stone of the corner" (Ps.

118:22). Who was this "stone"? Jesus said, "Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?" (Matt. 21:42).

Daniel, in his "70 weeks" prophecy, indicated the times of both the birth and crucifixion of Christ (Dan. 9). He spoke of the Messiah who would "be cut off" (verse 26). Jesus was indeed cut off after 3½ years of His ministry.

The prophet Isaiah described the sufferings and crucifixion of Christ: "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:3-5, see also I Pet. 2:24).

Isaiah further revealed: "As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men: So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider" (Isa. 52:14-15).

The prophets even foretold that Christ, when thirsty on the cross, would be given vinegar to drink (Ps. 69:21, John 19:29), and that Judas would betray His Master for 30 pieces of silver (Zech. 11:12, Matt. 26:14-15).

The sign of Jonah

Strange as it may seem, Christianity today rejects the *only* sign Christ gave to prove His Messiahship. When the scribes and Pharisees asked of Him a sign, He answered, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt. 12:39-40).

Jonah is one of the minor prophets mentioned in the Old Testament. Sent by God on a mission to Nineveh, he first attempted to flee to Tarshish. Overtaken by a storm, and cast into the sea by the ship's captain and crew, he was swallowed by a great fish. "And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights" (Jonah 1:17).

Hardly anyone questions the length of time Jonah spent in the belly of the fish. Why, then, do most Christians reject the very sign Jesus gave to show that He Himself would be buried *three days and three nights*?

Try to count three days and three nights between Friday afternoon (supposedly the time of Christ's death) and Sunday morning at dawn (the presumed time of His resurrection). It can't be done! Don't Christians know how to count? The Old Testament and Christ's statement are accurate; Christ was dead for three days and three nights. But you must understand how this time period is counted. Write for our free booklet, *The Resurrection Was Not on Sunday*.

Old Testament confirmed

The apostle Peter, upon receiving the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, gave a powerful sermon and showed the people their sins — theirs as well as their forefathers'. He also spoke of prophecies concerning the Messiah. "And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things, which *God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets*, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. . . For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, and *all the prophets* from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, *have likewise*

(Continued on page 31)

Mankind's Greatest Experiment- What Will It Prove?

By Allen L. Stout

Has "science" made you skeptical of the Bible? For nearly 6,000 years men have tried to negate what God says, but their efforts are utterly hopeless.

Satan has deceived the whole world and would deceive the very elect if it were possible (Rev. 12:9, Matt. 24:24)!

How? One way is through scientific knowledge, falsely so called. Paul warned Timothy, "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of *science falsely so called*: Which some professing have erred concerning the faith" (I Tim. 6:20-21).

Scientific knowledge doubles every decade. Science has radically changed mankind's way of life and beliefs. But the fruits of science have been both good and evil, concur-

rently bestowing on mankind ingenious and useful technical capabilities as well as weapons of mass destruction that now threaten to erase all life from this planet! Now, with the pooling of scientific knowledge, we may again be at a time when "nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do" (Gen. 11:6).

The attitude of science

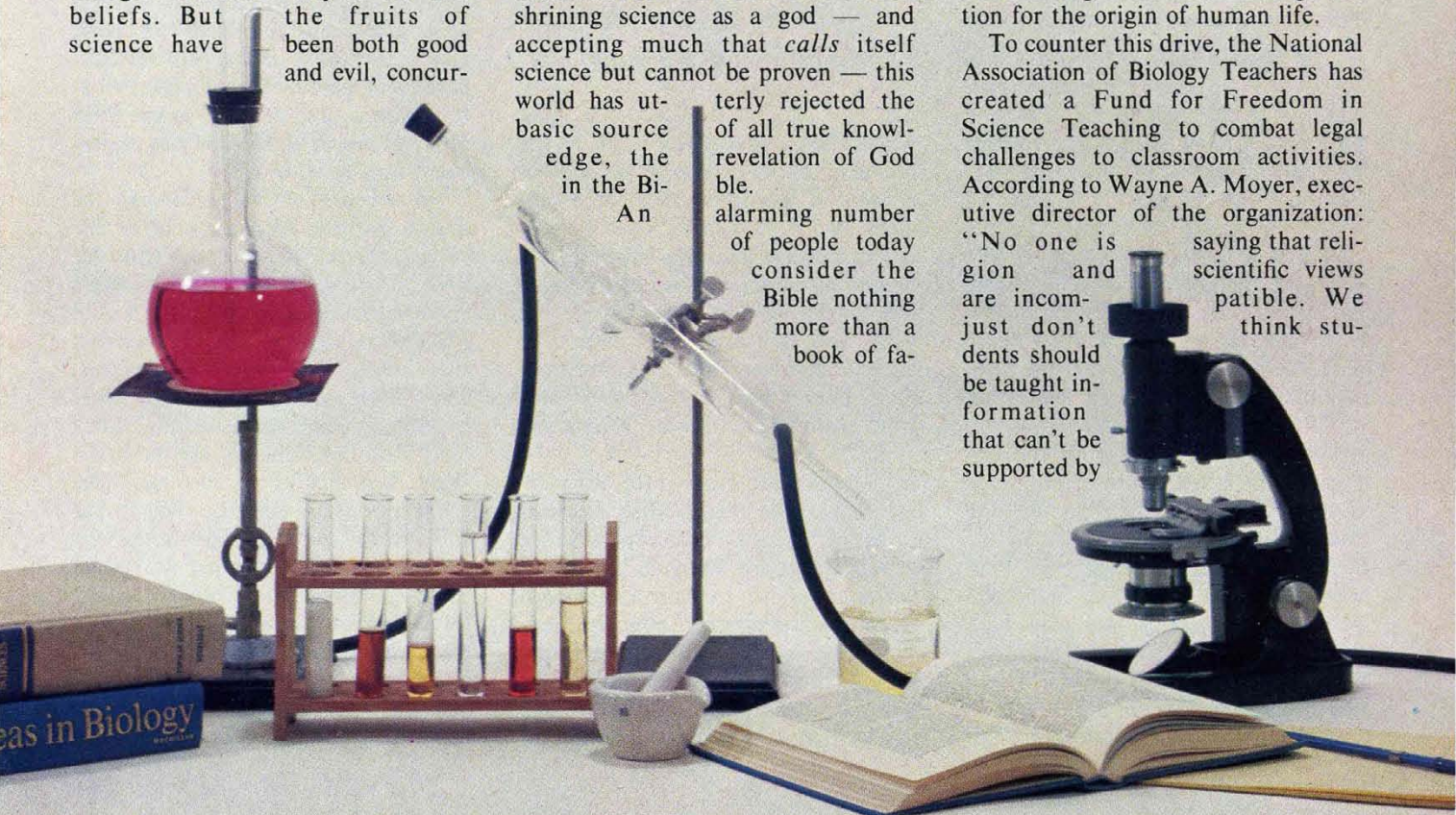
Man looks with awe at the achievements of science. We expect science to provide our needs and solve our problems. Science has become a veritable modern messiah. But in enshrining science as a god — and accepting much that *calls* itself science but cannot be proven — this world has utterly rejected the of all true knowledge, the revelation of God in the Bible.

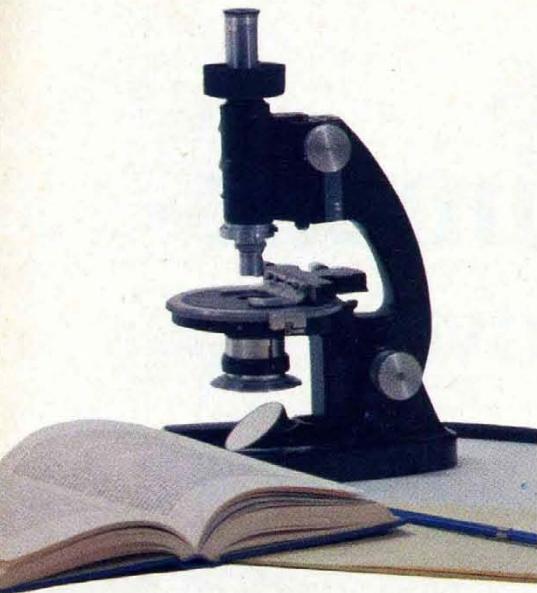
An alarming number of people today consider the Bible nothing more than a book of fa-

bles and mythology, unproven and unprovable by science. Consequently, the Bible has been virtually banned from all public schools in the United States. The major controversy is the conflict between the biblical account of creation and the "scientific" doctrine of evolution.

Recently, supporters of the Bible account (and creationists even disagree among themselves, not understanding what the Bible means) have begun an all-out drive in courtrooms, classrooms and state legislatures across the nation to gain equal time for teaching creation as an explanation for the origin of human life.

To counter this drive, the National Association of Biology Teachers has created a Fund for Freedom in Science Teaching to combat legal challenges to classroom activities. According to Wayne A. Moyer, executive director of the organization: "No one is saying that religion and scientific views are incompatible. We just don't think students should be taught information that can't be supported by





a shred of scientific proof" ("New Battle Over Teaching of Evolution," *U.S. News & World Report*, June 9, 1980, p. 81).

Science has had a clear influence on our society as far as biblical truth is concerned. Satan has mixed truth and error in education. Can you discern between scientific truth and the *oppositions of science falsely so called*? Very few in this world, including most scientists, can. Few scientists accept the biblical narrative, though some profess belief in a god.

The scientific method

The word *science* (from the Latin *scientia* — to know) means knowledge of facts, phenomena, laws and proximate causes, gained and verified by exact observation, organized experiment and ordered thinking.

At the heart of science is the "scientific method." What is the scientific method? According to the authors of *The Scientists*, published by Time, Inc., in 1964: "To begin with, it should be noted that the term *scientific method* is itself somewhat of a misnomer. It furnishes no detailed map for exploring the unknown, no surefire prescription for discovery. It is, rather, an attitude and a philosophy" (p. 51).

Is it only coincidence that Paul warned, "Beware lest any man spoil you through *philosophy* and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. 2:8)?

The "attitude and philosophy" of

science is probably best summed up by E. Bright Wilson in his book, *An Introduction to Scientific Research*: "He [the scientist] rejects authority as an ultimate basis for truth. . . . Each generation of scientists has to decide for itself what it will believe" (p. 21).

But Jesus said, "Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep *your own tradition*" (Mark 7:9).

According to Robert Jastrow, director of the National Aeronautic and Space Administration's Goddard Institute for Space Studies and a professed agnostic in theological matters: "There is a kind of religion in science; it is the religion of a person

*Man is about
to complete the greatest
experiment he has
ever undertaken . . .
carried out in the
most scientific manner
possible. It has been
repeated countless times
. . . it will yield
the most conclusively
proven result ever
discovered by man.*

who believes that every event in the universe can be explained in a rational way as the product of some previous event. This faith is violated by the discovery that the world had a beginning under conditions in which the known laws of physics are not valid, and as a product of forces we cannot discover" ("Have Astronomers Found God?" by Robert Jastrow, *New York Times Magazine*, June 25, 1978).

The scientific method for discovering knowledge begins with observations of nature. Observations are grouped together in some hypothetical manner to explain cause-and-effect relationships. Inductive reasoning is used to formulate hypotheses, which when verified may become scientific fact or law.

Contrast this with the Word of

almighty God, who says, "Come now, and let us reason together" (Isa. 1:18). God expects man to think and reason, but how? "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (verses 19-20). This is not inductive reasoning, but deductive. Deductive reasoning begins with a known law and predicts the consequences that will arise as a result of various actions relating to the law.

God speaks with authority — He is the Lawgiver (Jas. 4:12). He formulated and upholds all the natural laws scientists have been able to discover. Yet man, in his vanity, has rejected the authority of the great Creator God and the knowledge He has revealed for man's benefit in favor of discovering and deciding for himself, through inductive reasoning, what he will believe.

Revelation rejected

Adam and Eve, in the Garden of Eden, rejected revelation as the basis of all other knowledge. God had described the blessings they would receive if they obeyed Him — and told them they would die if they disobeyed by taking of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

But Satan appeared in the form of a serpent and began to discredit God's authority. He urged our first parents to decide for themselves what they wanted to believe — to use their physical senses alone to try to understand how to live.

So Adam and Eve performed the first scientific experiment. They *observed* and saw the tree was good for food. They *reasoned*, with Satan's encouragement, that the fruit would make them as wise as God, and that they could then govern themselves. They *tried* the fruit to see if their hypothesis was correct. Result? They died! And this failure to accept God's Word and live by it has been the cause of every evil this world has suffered for the last 6,000 years!

But man has continued to rely on "science" alone, and scoffed at God's revelation of knowledge he cannot otherwise obtain. Controversies and questions about the biblical record basically arise because man is unwilling to believe what God says.

In many cases people misinterpret the Bible or tacitly accept assertions that science itself has not proven. Several areas of science are speculative, based on hypotheses usually not subject to testing and scientific proof. Mr. Wilson explains: "The difficulty of testing hypotheses in the social sciences has led to an abbreviation of the scientific method in which this step is simply omitted. Plausible hypotheses are merely set down as facts without further ado. To a certain deplorable extent this same practice occurs in medicine as well" (ibid., pp. 26-27).

The same is true of evolution and geologic history. "Most events with which geologists deal were not directly witnessed or recorded by anyone [except the biblical record of Noah's Flood, which scientists do not accept] and cannot be repeated at our convenience like a chemical experiment. For this reason, the usual methods of scientific proof involving experiments that can be repeated and mathematically analyzed are not applicable" (*Essentials of Earth History*, by William Stokes, 1960, p. 5).

"If the facts are not sufficient to justify immediate and positive answers, the investigator may have to substitute a theory or 'educated guess' until additional information is discovered" (ibid., p. 3). Unfortunately, many of these theories and "educated guesses" become accepted as fact and are even taught as such in schools.

The fact is, according to Mr. Stokes: "They [scientists] had to decide whether the physical world had originated in its entirety within the very short time span suggested by Genesis [a misinterpretation of Genesis 1:1-2] or had required a much larger period. . . . The idea [of uniformitarianism — that natural forces presently working can explain the past] emerged as a reaction against the time-honored and almost universal belief that the earth and its physical features are products of mysterious and supernatural events [creation and Noah's Flood]. . . .

"Since an infinite variety of things could [presumably] have happened in an infinity of time, some thinkers were led [not by scientific fact or proofs] to believe that man and his world are merely chance occurrences

among all manner of other possible occurrences. If, however, the period of time involved was short or limited, the problems of explaining the development of the universe become more difficult and factors other than chance must be considered" (ibid., pp. 30-31).

Human wisdom foolishness with God

Factors other than chance must be considered indeed! Theories of *science falsely so called* often ignore and even contradict proven natural laws. The theory that life could come from nonlife was conclusively disproven by the famous French scientist, Louis Pasteur. Biogenesis — that

*Why has God allowed
man to go his
own way — to produce
his own knowledge,
set up his own laws
and govern himself?
It is not God's
desire that men suffer . . .
He is allowing man to
taste for himself the
fruits of obedience
or disobedience.*

life comes only from living things — became recognized as a law. Yet evolutionists do not accept biogenesis as a law, despite the fact that all scientific research and evidence supports it.

Scientists and philosophers concede that with the existing laws, it would be impossible for life to begin without a Creator or greater power or intelligence. However, they propose an alternative "materialism hypothesis" that says the laws did not come into existence until after matter became organized, by chance processes, to higher levels in some step-wise fashion.

The biased attitude of many scientists is reflected in the statement of Norman Newell, a paleobiologist at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, "Creationist

views are filled with naivete, falsehood and pseudoscience," and that of John W. Patterson, an engineering professor at Iowa State University: "Committed religious believers in general, and creationists in particular, are the enemies of higher education because they cannot seek an honest, critical inquiry into nature. They must be drawn into open and highly visible confrontation with capable scientists who will candidly expose them and their views for what they really are" (*U.S. News & World Report*, June 9, 1980, pp. 80-81).

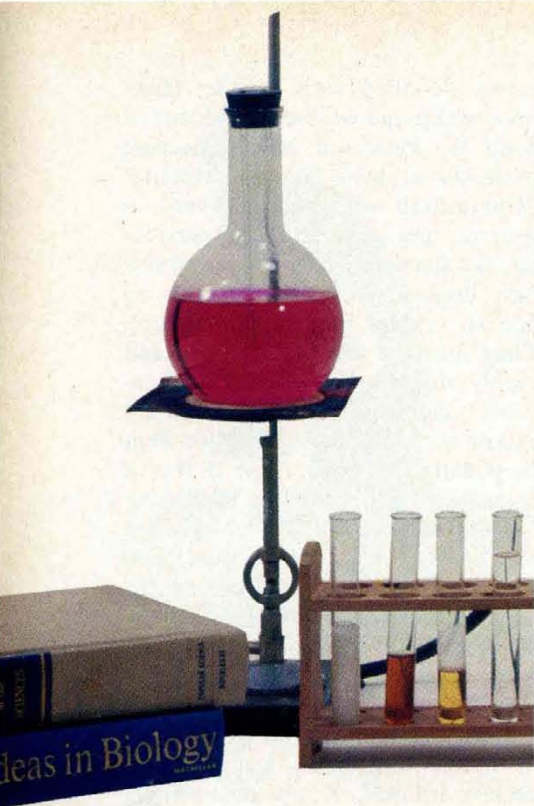
God challenged Job's vanity when He asked him, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding." Job could only reply, "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee?" (Job 38:4, 40:4).

God warns those who would trust in human wisdom: "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. Therefore let no man glory in men" (I Cor. 3:18-21).

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold [suppress] the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools . . . And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient" (Rom. 1:18-22, 28).

Man's greatest experiment

Man is about to complete the greatest experiment he has ever



undertaken. It is far more sophisticated and grandiose than all medical research, geologic studies and space programs put together. This experiment has been carried out in the most scientific manner possible. It has been repeated countless times in completely random fashion, generation after generation. By the time this experiment is finished, it will yield the most conclusively proven result ever discovered by man.

This colossal experiment has profoundly affected every man, woman and child who ever lived. Countless wars have been waged and multiple millions mutilated or killed for the purpose of testing the basic hypothesis of this experiment. Millions more have died from famine and pestilence for the same reason, not to mention the crimes, upset lives, broken homes and other untold miseries resulting from it. The results have always been the same, yet plans are now in motion for the grand finale — the epitome of all experiments, as the final attempt to prove the original hypothesis.

Mankind's greatest experiment has been the attempt to prove that God is wrong — that His laws and Word are not valid. The same lie Satan foisted on Adam and Eve. But 6,000 years of research and experimentation have proven the opposite — the results have always been just as God said they would. What greater scientific

proof of God's Word could there be than 6,000 years of human experience? Yet Paul warned, "that in the last days perilous times shall come. . . . men shall be . . . Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (II Tim. 3:1-2, 7).

Why has God allowed man to go his own way — to produce his own knowledge, set up his own laws and govern himself? It is not God's desire that men suffer. But to produce righteous, godly character, He is allowing man to taste for himself the fruits of obedience or disobedience. "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil . . . therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live" (Deut. 30:15, 19). God wants men to choose obedience (Deut. 5:29).

There are two ways to prove God's Word. One is to believe and obey it, and enjoy the promised blessings. The other way is to reject and disobey God's Word, and suffer the consequences. Sadly, mankind in general, deceived by Satan, has chosen the second method.

Proving true science

How can we discern true science from *science falsely so called*? David gives the key: "Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts. . . . Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way" (Ps. 119:98-100, 104).

And in Psalm 111:10, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments."

God's Word is truth (John 17:17). All truth begins with God, who made all things. True science does not conflict with God's Word. In fact, true science corroborates, substantiates and further proves God's Word.

Science begins with the observation of selected parts of nature. Scientists merely discover and describe what God made, and define the physical laws He set in motion. A botanist observes and describes

plants. Chemists and physicists search out knowledge concerning energy and matter. But it is God who made and upholds the laws.

Scientists can describe what God has created, but not how, when or what the universe was created from. Mr. Stokes admits, "Geologists cannot conclusively verify by experiment or prove by observation their conclusions regarding the age of the earth" (*Essentials of Earth History*, p. 11).

Mr. Jastrow concurs: "The scientists' pursuit of the past ends in the moment of creation. Who or what put the matter and energy into the universe? Was the universe created out of nothing, or was it gathered together out of preexisting materials? . . . science cannot answer these questions. Now we would like to pursue that inquiry further back in time, but the barrier seems insurmountable. For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is able to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries" ("Have Astronomers Found God?").

Paul explains, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Heb. 11:3). God's Word says, "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Deut. 29:29).

Solomon, one of the wisest men who ever lived, expended all his energy "to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven" (Eccl. 1:13). In his proverbs he noted, "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter" (Prov. 25:2).

Solomon offered the conclusion of the whole matter — the basis of true science and successful living: "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccl. 12:13-14). □

Old Testament

(Continued from page 26)

foretold of these days" (Acts 3:17-19, 22-24).

Once again the writings of the Old Testament — the Scripture that cannot be broken — confirm the coming of the Messiah.

The apostle Paul, who was taught at the feet of the famous Jewish scholar Gamaliel, bitterly persecuted Christians before his conversion. However, Christ opened his understanding, and thus began a new life for Paul. He surrendered totally to Christ and consecrated his whole life to proclaiming the Gospel: "But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ" (Acts 9:22).

But what were the Scriptures he used in order to convince the people — Jews as well as gentiles? The books of the Old Testament, of course.

Later in his life, Paul, at Rome, "expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening" (Acts 28:23).

Did you catch that? Paul preached the Gospel from the books of the law of Moses (the Pentateuch) and the writings of the prophets, and explained to the gentiles just what the Kingdom of God is. Throughout his ministry, he used the same "holy scriptures" — the books of the Old Testament — to prove that Jesus Christ is the foretold Messiah.

In Thessalonica, three Sabbaths consecutively, he "reasoned with them out of the scriptures, Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ" (Acts 17:3).

Remember that at the time of these teachings, the New Testament did not yet exist. Not only Paul but also all the other apostles and disciples used the books of the Old Testament to prove that Jesus is the Christ: "And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and *mighty in the scriptures*, came to Ephesus. . . . And he

began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, *shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ*" (Acts 18:24, 26-28).

One has to be blind not to see these truths revealed in the Bible! However, humanity as a whole is blind, because men have cut themselves off from God. They have turned away from His teachings. They continue to reject the authenticity and the authority of the Bible — both the Old and New Testaments.

Afraid to be convinced?

For more than 45 years, this Work has been proclaiming that Jesus Christ — the Messiah, the Anointed One prophesied in the Old Testament — will soon return to establish God's Kingdom on earth.

At His first coming, He had another mission. He came to die for our sins and to proclaim the good news of God's coming government on earth. This is what the "scriptures" reveal — both the Old Testament and the New.

Are you beginning to see that the Old Testament is as much a part of the inspired Word of God as is the New Testament? To merely believe the Bible is of little value, unless you live by its teachings. A true Christian lives by "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). And every word means *every word* — that is, the whole Bible, including all of the books of the Old Testament.

Be honest with yourself and examine your beliefs! Are they in harmony with the Bible's teachings? Are you persuaded that Jesus Christ — your Lord and Savior — is truly the promised Messiah of whom the prophets of old, as well as the law and the writings, have spoken, and who will soon return to establish His Kingdom on earth?

If you are not, it's high time to wake up! His coming may catch you by surprise — and unprepared! □

Bible Infallible?

(Continued from page 9)

scientists perform, the more they are forced to admit that what the Bible says is true.

The Bible is true not only scientifically, but historically. Again, though the Bible is not a history book, whatever is mentioned as history in the Bible is always true.

For example, a few decades ago, skeptics doubted the very existence of ancient cities such as Nineveh and Sodom. But archaeologists have uncovered abundant testimony to prove that those ancient cities actually existed, just as the Bible said thousands of years ago.

Bible infallible?

Is the Word of God infallible? It certainly is.

Christ said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35).

Through the centuries, many have tried — unsuccessfully — to discredit or destroy the Bible, "But the word of the Lord endureth for ever" (I Pet. 1:25).

Just how important is the Word of God — the Bible — in God's eyes?

We know that God is very concerned about magnifying and protecting His name: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (Ex. 20:7).

But God is even more jealous concerning His Word than He is His own name! "For thou [God] hast magnified thy word above all thy name" (Ps. 138:2).

Of what real value is this Word of God? Why has God given it to men?

David said, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Ps. 119:105). Without that brilliant lamp, this world would be in total darkness. It is only through the light of God's infallible Word that man can ever come to know who he is, where he came from, what is his ultimate destiny and how he is to attain that incredible potential.

Let us all thank the great God for the precious gift of His infallible Word! □



Photo by Warren Watson

The Bible Speaks with Divine Authority

By Roderick C. Meredith

Most people don't believe the Bible is inspired. Can you be absolutely sure the Bible speaks with divine authority?

“When Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having *authority*, and not as the scribes” (Matt. 7:28-29).

Either Jesus had the authority from God to set forth His revolutionary teachings, or else He perpetrated one of the most colossal frauds in human history, involving the

deception of most of the Western, Christian-professing world. He did not claim merely to tell us *about* the right way of life. He said, “I *am* the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).

What supreme *egotism* for a man to say such things — *unless they are true!* And what about the book that contains all these shocking statements?

Jesus referred to the Bible as “the scriptures” and told men to “Search the scriptures . . . they are they which testify of me” (John 5:39). Again, Jesus said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4). Later, the apostle Paul declared, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God” (II Tim. 3:16). And Peter instructed Chris-

tians to heed the "sure word of prophecy" (II Pet. 1:19).

There is much compelling evidence that the Christian Bible was and is *inspired* of the great Creator God who governs the universe, and who in this Book is revealing to mankind divine truths that could not be learned any other way. Here is an examination of some of that evidence.

Only the Bible reveals God and His plan

Literally thousands of different "religious books" purport to tell us about spiritual truths, spiritual powers and correct ways of living. Many more appear every year.

But there is and always has been only one Book that speaks with the authority of God — that reveals and describes the details of creation, and of His plan and purpose for all mankind.

The Bible details the creation of man and the purpose behind man's creation. Paul wrote: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20). The vast, orderly creation with its intricate and unchanging laws of gravity, inertia and aerodynamics demand a great Creator, Designer and Lawgiver.

It didn't just happen by blind chance!

Furthermore, only the Bible reveals the purpose for man and his creation. "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion" (Gen. 1:26). Man was made like God, in limited fashion, and is the only creature given God-like potential: a mind with which to reason, creative imagination and the ability to discern right from wrong, among other things.

Man is to develop these God-like capacities, grow in grace and in knowledge (II Pet. 3:18), overcome human nature through God's help and finally to qualify to rule with God and Christ over all creation (Rev. 2:26, Heb. 2:6-10).

Paul says that vain men who reject the simple, obvious truth are fools — often, today, "educated fools" (Rom. 1:22). Yet the only book thoroughly

describing this creation is the Bible. *No other book even comes close* to revealing the answers to how we got here, why we were born and where we are headed.

Detailed, accurate prophecies

In a unique manner, the Bible sets forth scores of *specific prophecies* affecting the major peoples, nations and cities of the world. We will have room to discuss only a few of these astounding Bible predictions here. Leroy Neff details some others in an accompanying article in this issue.

Herbert W. Armstrong in his remarkable book, *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*, highlights one of the greatest prophecies of all time — details given thousands of years in advance as to how and why the United States and Britain rose to world supremacy within the last two centuries, and why this national pride and power is being taken away in a continuing national decline!

Only a great God, through His inspired Word, could foretell and then bring to pass the events described in these Bible prophecies! One striking series of prophecies, written hundreds of years ahead of time, concerns the coming of Christ and His purpose in living as a human on earth.

In Genesis 3:15, we find the first hint of the promised "seed" of the woman, who was to conquer Satan. As early as Genesis 4:1-7, God indicated that He wanted a blood sacrifice — the slaying of an animal — pointing to Christ's sacrifice as the "lamb of God." For "the life of the flesh is in the blood . . . for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Lev. 17:11).

Then, nearly 2,000 years before Jesus was born, Abraham showed that he was willing to offer his only legitimate son as a sacrifice (Gen. 22:1-12). This dramatic event prefigured what was to happen to the promised Son of God. Just as Abraham, the "father of the faithful," gave Isaac, his "son of promise," God the Father was to give His Son for us all.

Remember the momentous events surrounding Israel's exodus from Egypt (Ex. 12)? Literally millions of Israelites prophetically preenacted what would happen to the Messiah nearly 1,500 years later. Each house-

hold set aside an unblemished male lamb. On the 14th day of Nisan, they killed it and poured out its blood. It was called "the Lord's passover" (verse 11). And if they were "under the blood" of this Passover lamb, they would be spared from the death penalty (verses 12-13).

Isn't it remarkable that God caused an entire nation to act out *1,500 years in advance* the details of the coming sacrifice of His Son — the perfect, unblemished Lamb of God whose blood was also shed on Nisan 14 to pay the death penalty for all mankind?

The prophet Isaiah revealed that Jesus would have "no form nor comeliness; and . . . there is no beauty that we should desire him" (Isa. 53:2). Seven hundred years later, Matthew points out that Judas had to kiss Jesus so that the Jewish leaders coming to arrest him would know who He was (Matt. 26:48).

Isaiah also described how Jesus would not answer His accusers (Isa. 53:7), how He was not kept overnight but rather given a rushed, illegal trial (verse 8), how He would be put in a wealthy man's sepulchre (verse 9) and even how in dying He would make "intercession for the transgressors" (verse 12). Note the striking fulfillment in Luke 23:34, "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

The vivid description of Jesus' sufferings set forth in Isaiah 52 and 53 demonstrate, again, that the supreme God of heaven and earth is speaking through the Bible!

"As many were astonished at him — his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the sons of men" (Isa. 52:14, Revised Standard Version). John's gospel describes the horrible beating Jesus received the Passover morning: "Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe. And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands" (John 19:1-3).

More than 200 years after Isaiah, Zechariah foretold how Jesus would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver, and that this blood money would be thrown down in the Temple and

eventually used to buy a potter's field (Zech. 11:12-13). Five hundred years later, Judas and the Jewish priests did exactly that with the money pledged for Jesus' betrayal (Matt. 27:3-8).

Dozens of men, in different times and different places, set forth intricate details of the coming birth, life and death of the promised Messiah. An entire nation acted out yearly the mode of His death, and did it on the exact date his death would take place, nearly 1,500 years in advance.

Could anything but the direct inspiration of God account for all this?

Bible promises

Throughout the Bible are promises that are *binding* on the great God who inspired this Book — if we do our part!

James 5:14-15 states: "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."

Literally thousands of you *Good News* readers can personally vouch for the authenticity of that promise, as I can also.

Like all our longtime ministers, I have been personally acquainted with dozens of people who have been genuinely healed in response to fervent prayers claiming God's biblical promises to heal. And I have read many of the hundreds of letters from all over in response to the anointed cloths (see Acts 19:11-12) Mr. Armstrong sends out for healing the sick. These letters describe in thankful, glowing terms how God has heard the prayers of His servant and has healed people from every conceivable disease and sickness.

If the vital truth of God's promise to heal is new to you, be sure to write immediately for Mr. Armstrong's eye-opening booklet, *The Plain Truth About Healing*.

God also promises to bless the faithful tither: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of

heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Mal. 3:10).

God challenges us to "prove" Him in this matter — to faithfully do our part in a right attitude — then witness His promised blessing.

After 28 years in the ministry, I can truthfully say that I have seen God keep that promise again and again. He does bless us physically and financially if we put Him and His ways first, including obedience to the law of tithing.

Also, most people don't realize that our Creator has promised that good results will come if we follow His instructions for properly training our children. Notice, "Train up a child in

There is much compelling evidence that the Christian Bible was and is inspired of the great Creator God . . . who in this Book is revealing to mankind divine truths that could not be learned any other way.

the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6).

Over the years, I have noted that those who consistently follow God's method of childrearing always get good results. Their children may not be perfect, but they will be so much better off than the average youth in our degenerate society that the difference will be obvious.

Even then, a young person may lapse for a few years in his appreciation of the approach and the way of life loving parents have instilled in him. But even if he departs somewhat from the straight path for a few years, God promises, "When he is old, he will not depart from it." Training your children to follow God's laws will pay in the long run.

God's laws and ways

In a sense, all God's laws have promises connected with them, as the

examples above show. And God Himself stands directly behind *all* the laws and teachings of the Bible! This Book shows the hand of God's inspiration because it reveals to mankind vital information man could not learn from any other source, or *would not learn* until it was too late to avoid disaster.

The application of God's laws of sanitation finally stopped the Black Death of the Dark Ages. The Black Death was estimated to have taken the lives of one out of four persons in the 14th century alone! Many historians feel it was the worst disaster ever recorded in human history.

What finally turned the tide against this dreaded plague?

The procedures came from Leviticus 13:46: "All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be." Discerning historians credit the Bible for the dawning of a new era in effective disease control.

"The laws against leprosy in Leviticus 13 may be regarded as the first model of a sanitary legislation. . . . As soon as the European nations saw that the application of Scriptural quarantine brought leprosy under control, they applied the same principle against the Black Death. The results were equally spectacular, and millions of lives were saved" (from *None of These Diseases*, by S.I. McMillen, M.D.).

Astonishing? It shouldn't be.

But for people who think that the Bible is a collection of mere religious traditions, myths and sentimentalities, exciting examples such as these should prove particularly instructive. Not only in the realm of the "hereafter," but here and now, our willingness to do exactly what the Bible says can spell the difference between life and death. For the Creator, the Supreme Mind of the universe, is the direct Author of the Holy Bible. And He tells us in this Word, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" (Isa. 66:2).

We can do so with an ever-growing faith and abounding confidence in Him who gave us the Book of books. □

“Ask, and You SHALL Receive!”

By Richard Rice

You don't have to be a scholar to prove that the Bible is inspired. You don't need to be an expert in the Greek or Hebrew languages. It isn't necessary to spend hundreds of hours in historical or archaeological research.

Don't misunderstand! These tools are useful in fine tuning unclear passages or supporting biblical claims. But there is a more practical, down-to-earth way to absolutely prove to yourself that the Bible is the authoritative Word of God. All it takes is *prayer* and a simple, real faith in the living God who stands behind His Word.

The importance of prayer

How can prayer prove the Bible?

God methodically and accurately thought His Word out even before He created the world or man. He knew long before how He would handle every situation that would arise.

Before He made man, God assumed the responsibility of taking care of man's needs. Jesus assured His disciples, “Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him” (Matt. 6:8). This provision for man's needs is reflected in the Bible's promises. God repeatedly challenges us to try Him, to test Him, to unquestionably prove that His Word is absolute (Mal. 3:10). He says to “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (I Thess. 5:21).

As we act on God's Word — as we pray and receive answers — we will experience that God's Word is true. The Bible works because God infuses His power to make it work. As God said in Isaiah 55:11: “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that

which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”

There is power in the Word of God and His “exceeding great and precious promises” (II Pet. 1:4). The inspiration of the Bible is proved by God making His promises come to pass!

And whether God is fulfilling prophecy or answering our personal prayers, the principle is the same. The Bible's inspiration is being proven.

If God can foresee thousands of years in advance and make prophecy come to pass, then surely He is able to see into our personal futures for one day, two weeks or three months. And He can make our requests come to pass in the same way He makes prophecy stand.

Prayer molds us

Prayer is important in proving the Bible's inspiration for the direct, personal effect it can have on us. God literally uses our prayers to help us develop His mind and attitude.

Research indicates that man's speech and thought emanate from the same center. So when a person prays, he activates his thinking processes. (Try speaking without thinking, and you will understand how the principle works.) When a person believes the Bible and prays with all his heart, God's thoughts enter and work in his mind. The human mind becomes saturated with God's mind:

“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the

working of his mighty power” (Eph. 1:17-19).

It's a marvelous process. Prayer turns on power in the mind. It allows God's Spirit to flow — like completing a circuit — as the human mind reaches out to God.

Requires patience

Because God's character upholds His Word, we can take the Bible for what it says, believe it and act on it with perfect confidence.

However, the fulfillment of prayer often requires time — a patient waiting on God. David wrote, “Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him” (Ps. 37:7).

This is an area where we frequently fall short. We don't always realize that God's answers frequently take time to be accomplished. God is working out a purpose in human life, and He is not doing a hasty, makeshift job. We need not become suspicious, impatient or troubled when God doesn't answer right away. There is never a reason to doubt the promises of God. Since God knows what we need before we ask Him, He also knows exactly when and how to answer.

The best answer may take several days, weeks or months. But if we become worried, we may press for an answer too soon or give up on God altogether and try to solve our problems our own way. We then lose faith and God's blessings as well. We need to patiently trust Him as He carries out His promises for us.

The inspiration of God's Word can be proven by prayer. When we communicate with God — when we believe and act on His Word and see its effect in our lives — we unleash the power of God. That power is in the Bible (Heb. 4:12).

Prayer makes this Word a living reality in our lives! □

How YOU Can Prove the Bible

Any person who seeks to please God must live by His every word! If you do, you will develop the very mind of Christ and reap abundant blessings.

Put It to Work

By Selmer L. Hegvold

Why do so many millions who read and study the Bible remain in ignorance of what it really says? Why do most students of religion never reap the blessings found in God's promises?

How about you? Even though God has revealed His truth to you, do you lack the prosperity, peace and happiness God's Word promises Christians? If so, why?

The answer is simple. The Bible is a *working* phenomenon. Put it to work! Challenge the God who proclaims it His divine revelation to mankind.

Locate the promises God has given — the Bible is replete with guarantees you can personally claim. And unlike man, God has never broken a promise — not one: "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" (Num. 23:19).

God challenges you to prove Him. But He is not obligated to show you the veracity of His Word unless and until you *act* to prove it — until you put it to work in your life.

Claim God's promises

God's Word reveals the way to everything good — the way to every blessing you could possibly desire in life. God wants you to have the very best, and He will work miracles to accomplish His promises for you.

But He will not hand these things to anyone on a silver platter. He attaches to His gifts certain stipulations. If you accept and perform those conditions,

the gifts He promises are yours. You must do something.

Note how steadfast God is in what He has committed Himself to do for you. "The Strength of Israel [God Almighty] will not lie nor repent" (I Sam. 15:29). "I the Lord have spoken it: it shall come to pass, and I will do it" (Ezek. 24:14). "He abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself" (II Tim. 2:13). "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Tit. 1:2).

How did Herbert W. Armstrong, God's apostle for this age, attain so great a responsibility in God's Work? He was angered into putting God to the test of His Word.

Mr. Armstrong could not accept what Loma, his first wife, had come to believe and practice in her life — the seventh-day Sabbath. So strong was his aversion to her newfound belief that he would have considered divorce had it not violated his personal principles about the sanctity of marriage. So he set out to deliver her from what he believed was religious fanaticism. Since she rested her conviction on the Bible, he was determined to use the Bible to prove her wrong.

Many of you faced a similar crisis in your lives. You could not believe Mr. Armstrong was right in what he was expounding before the whole world. And in attempting to prove him wrong with the very Bible he quoted so profusely, you found yourself convicted instead. You, like Mr. Armstrong, failed and the Bible was the victor. Why?

When I returned from military service to civilian life in October, 1945, I found my father deeply engrossed in a radio program called *The World Tomorrow*. Night after

night he sat glued to his radio for that half-hour program. He was, in fact, purely antisocial toward anyone who came around him and would not listen as he did. Until Mr. Armstrong's intense, thundering presentation ended, nothing could interrupt my father.

To rescue him from this fanaticism, I challenged him. My father accepted the challenge. He rested his case on the Bible, so, for the first time in my 30 years of life, I delved into God's Word. Inexperienced as I was in religion, I just knew I could convince him by the very Bible to whose truths he now adhered — truths I knew the rest of the world in no way espoused.

Like Mr. Armstrong many years before — like you — I, too, lost that encounter. The Bible proved itself to be the Word of God. Losing that battle totally changed my life, just as it changed yours. Understanding God's Word can open to you more happiness, real meaning and productivity than you have ever experienced in your life.

Act on God's directives

Have you read biblical passages of instruction that God clearly expected you to practice, only to defer doing so after reflecting on the tremendous impact obedience would have on your way of living — perhaps altering it drastically? I can think of many such passages. God says, "You do this, and I will do that for you." Promises! But just reading them and being aware of what He says is not the way to receive what He promises. Knowing alone will not induce Him to respond.

"Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble" (Jas. 2:19). Satan believes the Word of God, but

he continues to disobey His Maker's instruction, and his understanding grows darker and darker. "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that **faith [and hearing and understanding] without works is dead?**" (verse 20).

Until you act on every directive from God, He will not reveal to you the next degree of knowledge or grant you the blessing promised in that particular passage. Years ago, Mr. Armstrong stated the key: **God is not obligated to do one more thing for you unless and until you act on what He has just revealed to you in your study of His Word (or through His ministry).**

In my life, the Sabbath question loomed big. In my vain attempts to negate Mr. Armstrong's influence on my father, I was forced to read the Bible. I was shocked to learn that most of "Christianity" was not honoring God on the day He commanded! The Saturday Sabbath stood proven before my eyes. But would I change and obey?

What an alarming, total reversal it would create for me and my family! I decided, with a shrug, that the point was interesting and left the matter. I continued my study and continued listening to *The World Tomorrow*, but found my understanding stagnating even though my interest remained high. I became restless and unhappy, and my study brought none of the blessings the Bible promised.

God is marvelously patient and merciful. Everything I did in the next few months ended in one calamity after another. I attempted to disprove the Sabbath in other ways, but always came up short before God. Finally, I capitulated. I surrendered my will and began to keep the Sabbath in my weak way. God responded almost immediately. My understanding increased. The blessings began to come. I learned God is the great Healer, and when I turned to Him miraculous healings brought my family out of one health crisis after another. Still, I did not understand fully.

Take the big step

I was always afraid Mr. Armstrong would not be able to pay for the radio broadcasts. I knew the costs must be considerable, and yet he made no appeal for financial assistance, though other religious broadcasters

did. I felt impelled to send him a dollar bill now and then, though with my growing family I never thought I could spare even the dollar. I concluded that Mr. Armstrong was surely a wealthy philanthropist, but because I wasn't sure, I continued to send my paltry support.

Suddenly in my studies I stumbled on Malachi 3:10, and the subject of tithing loomed before my startled eyes. I studied the subject and could not escape the truth that a tithe was a tenth of my income. Again the battle began. Would I or wouldn't I? Weeks slid by and my family's financial problems multiplied. How could God expect me to give up one earning day a week — the Sabbath — and now, on top of that, give Him a tenth of all I earned? What kind of poverty would my family suffer?

You have also faced this question. Both the Sabbath and tithing directly hit the element of security in your life. God expects you to abandon your reliance on the false god of money. Once you begin to tithe, the physical and spiritual battle has been won. You have put God to the test. In my case God responded, and has been adding to our blessings ever since. To apply the rest of God's directives as soon as we learned of them became less and less traumatic.

It took a long time to understand the key I've described here. If you have not known what it is, you do now. God challenges you:

"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightful land, saith the Lord of hosts" (Mal. 3:8-12).

Put the Word of God to work in your life now more than ever, as you

see the day of Christ's return approaching! Never neglect this very positive Bible proof — tithing.

How to prove the Bible

Do you have difficulty studying the Word of God and understanding it because you have lost this key? Has the Scripture caught up with you? **Has God been waiting for you to do something you haven't thought important enough to act on?**

The Bible is a **workman's Book, and you must put it to work in your life.** If you have neglected God's previous instructions, He is not now interested in revealing new, important truths to you. **No other book is so jam-packed with exciting promises, most of which require absolute miracles from the divine Creator to fulfill in your life.**

What further proof do you need to reinforce the authenticity of the Bible? Atheists and agnostics will deny this proof, but their days are numbered. What surprises await them in the day of the Lord, when their minds are opened. In that great day none will remain to refute the veracity of God's Word. But remember! The reason you are among the few thousand who *have* proven it is because God's Holy Spirit moved you to put the Bible to work in your life!

...And Reap the Blessings!

By Clayton Steep

The Bible is true. Its authority, accuracy and timeliness are unquestionable. In this issue of *The Good News* many of the abundant proofs of God's Word have been discussed.

But there is one proof of the Bible that you yourself can demonstrate on a daily basis, and it is actually one of the most convincing proofs of all.

Simply put, it is this: It works.

The Bible works. Its laws, its promises, its prophecies, its explanation of what life is all about — they all work. Consistently. Without fail. Time and time again. The old rule says the proof of the pudding is in the eating. Well, the proof of the Bible is in the doing.

Do you know how a manufacturer

of automobiles proves his product? He doesn't just look at it. He doesn't just stand back and question: "I wonder if the designer really exists. Where did the different parts come from? Who are the ones responsible for putting it together? Are some of the pieces counterfeit? Can the authenticity of all the parts be established by outside sources? I'm sure some of the parts are good, but are they all good?"

The way to prove an automobile is to try it out — to get in and drive it. That's why automobile companies have proving grounds. The product must be put through its paces. It is run over rough roads and through rigorous obstacle courses. It is subjected to wind, rain, freezing temperatures and blistering sun. Moving parts are tried time and time again until the manufacturer feels sure they will work every time. That's the way he seeks to prove to himself that his automobile can be depended upon to work under all conditions, that it has integrity and reliability.

So it is with proving the Bible. It must be "put through its paces" — made to work time and time again until there is no doubt *all* of its parts will *always* work.

Active proof

When God commands us to "Prove all things" (I Thess. 5:21), He is not talking about intellectual proof only. Intellectual proof is good and necessary, but the Greek word translated *prove* has a broader meaning. Notice how the same word is used in Luke 14:19, where a person is quoted as saying, "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to *prove* them."

This was active proof. He tested his oxen by putting them to work. That is how you can prove the Scriptures!

Consider the Sabbath. The Sabbath particularly goes against the grain of human nature. A person who does not keep it can think of endless reasons why he would never want to keep it: It could easily interfere with his job. It would make him look strange to others. It would "ruin" his weekend. After all, what about all the yard work, washing the car, shopping, the favorite hobby or pastime?

Only a person who properly keeps the Sabbath can understand what a blessing it is. The same holds true for

the Holy Days ordained in the Bible. The same holds true for any of God's laws, any of His precepts, any of His instructions.

A person who does not keep them is like one who strolls past an elaborate, abundant banquet table without trying the food. He does not know — he cannot know — how good it is. "O taste and see that the Lord is good," exclaimed David in Psalm 34:8. Yes, taste God. **Try Him out. Prove His Word — by doing it.**

Try it — you'll like it!

Being observant

In Psalm 19 David praised God's laws, testimonies, statutes, commandments and judgments. It was praise based upon experience. David knew what he was talking about. He had *proved* to himself that when he obeyed God's instructions he reaped great benefits. That's why he declared "in *keeping* of them [this involves action; it requires doing] there is great reward" (verse 11).

God's ways work. The laws revealed in the Scriptures are living laws. You break them and they break you (Rom. 6:23). You keep them and they keep you (Prov. 6:21-23).

Take note of the blessings for obedience and the penalties for disobedience in your own life. Observe these laws in action in the lives of others, in the conduct of nations and groups of nations. Not only will your faith in the Bible be confirmed, but learning from the experiences of others is just plain wisdom.

Solomon gained much wisdom from merely observing others. "For at the window of my house I have looked out through my lattice," he wrote (Prov. 7:6, Revised Standard Version). Solomon watched. The rest of the chapter describes the scene he witnessed: a foolish young man being seduced by a harlot.

Wisdom and understanding raise their voices and cry aloud in the streets for those who have ears to hear, concluded Solomon (Prov. 8:1-3). Everywhere around us the truthfulness of God's Word is confirmed in the rare triumphs and the many failures of mankind.

What a blessing it is to have confidence in the Bible and thus be able to avoid — even though witnessing — the suffering because of the trans-

gression of living laws! "Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked," God promises those who obey His instructions (Ps. 91:8).

Being observant also includes watching world events as they fulfill Bible prophecy. The "sure word of prophecy" (II Pet. 1:19) is confirmed daily in newspapers and magazines, on radio and television. Following Jesus' admonition to watch world events (Luke 21:36) is an essential key to developing unshakable faith in the Scriptures.

Increasing faith

In one respect proving the Bible is really a matter of building faith. And faith is built by works. "Faith without works is dead" (Jas. 2:26). But, as Abraham demonstrated, faith is increased — it is made perfect — by works (verse 22).

Once the apostles asked Jesus to increase their faith (Luke 17:5). Jesus replied with the story of the unprofitable servant. What does the story have to do with faith? It's really quite clear.

First Jesus told what can be accomplished by faith that increases as a grain of mustard seed (verse 6). Then, in verses 7 to 10, He described how to increase faith. It is a question of faith being perfected by works. Jesus said that to increase faith we must go beyond merely fulfilling what is commanded. We must go beyond the letter of the law, doing more than what is required. We must live by every word, every precept, yes, every thought of God.

The more we put the Bible to work in our lives — the more we absorb its teachings — the more confidence we will have in it. The Bible is like no other book. It is extraordinary. And it is true.

Millions of people do not believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Why? Because they do not test it. They do not put it into practice to prove it. "If any man will do [yes, do — doing comes first!] his [God's] will," Jesus said, then "he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God" (John 7:17).

If anybody will put the Bible into practice, will live by it, he shall know it is of God. That is one of the greatest proofs of the Bible. □

Prophecy on Tyre

(Continued from page 6)

the haven of Tyre, which is now called Sur. [This is the Arabic word for Tyre and means "rock."] Here was once a great and good city of the Christians, but the Saracens have destroyed it in great part, and they guard that haven carefully for fear of the Christians" ("The Book of Sir John Maundeville, A.D. 1322-1356" in Thomas Wright, *Early Travels in Palestine*, p. 141).

A similar indication of the life of the Moslem town is given by Bertrandon de La Brocquière, one of the last medieval travelers, in 1432 (*Early Travels in Palestine*, pp. 282-283).

Tyre continued to sink into obscurity until the Metualis occupied the district in 1766. It once again grew to a few thousand inhabitants. With the coming of the state of Israel, Tyre rapidly expanded to accommodate those Islamic Arabs who fled Palestine and settled in southern Lebanon.

And that is where we are today in history. Tyre is still inhabited, still a minor port. Its wealth is gone.

But Ezekiel 26:13-14 reveals something yet to happen: "And I" — no longer "they," but "I" — "will cause the noise of thy songs [they are Arabic songs today] to cease; and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard. And I" — not "they" — "will make thee like the top of a rock: thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built no more: for I the Lord have spoken it . . ."

This is God's doing. He will cause the waters of the Mediterranean to wash over the site of Tyre till the accumulated millennia of rubble are washed away, and it is suitable only for the spreading of nets between tides. This has never fully happened. Oh yes, a small part of New Tyre on its western edge is under water. We saw it clearly in 1957. But the major part of the Phoenician city is covered by sand and the accumulated rubble of later buildings, roads and burial grounds. A significant part lies today beneath the modern Arab town.

This prophecy, much misunderstood, is not the challenge to the skeptic we assumed. It is a prophecy yet to be fulfilled by Jesus Christ when He brings peace to the world! □

PERSONAL

(Continued from page 2)

REN! But ONE THING WAS DIFFERENT in Jesus' case — HE SUBMITTED IN ORDER TO TAKE YOUR SINS AND MINE ON HIMSELF AND PAY OUR PENALTY IN OUR STEAD! He did it ONLY FOR US!

I have shown you WHY God left the world UNjudged UNTIL after the government of God is restored to earth and Satan is BANISHED from the earth.

But WHY, then, did He give His Holy Spirit to the prophets, and WHY did He call the CHURCH and give those of us CALLED out of the world His Holy Spirit and opportunity for eternal salvation NOW?

Because when Christ returns to sit on earth's throne, and RESTORE the government of God, Christ will need an ORGANIZED GOVERNMENT with many in many positions of government responsibility under Him to administer that government to the millions and billions of people over which it shall rule.

We of the Church were not called for special favors. Not just to "GET" salvation before the others. But, in order to sit with Christ on His throne right here in Jerusalem (where this is being written), we need 1) to turn from Satan's way of "GET" — to qualify to sit on that throne — and 2) to develop in *this* human life the SPIRITUAL CHARACTER of God — for to rule in the KINGDOM OF GOD we must have acquired the spiritual CHARACTER of God and become immortal GOD BEINGS.

God is calling us NOW — WHY? For the sake of the billions NOT yet called — so we may by overcoming Satan's way and growing in grace and developing GOD'S CHARACTER, become GOD BEINGS in order to HELP those other now unjudged humans to find the righteous way of life, and themselves to be given eternal salvation and eternal life IN PEACE, HAPPINESS AND JOY!

HOW PERFECT! HOW WONDERFUL! — are GOD'S WAYS — His grand PURPOSE and MASTER PLAN!

So finally, WHY does the BIBLE not record the history of all the gentile pagan nations? WHY this gap in the Bible?

The Bible is the revealed knowledge of God. Its PURPOSE is to reveal GOD'S PURPOSE, His master plan and its working out.

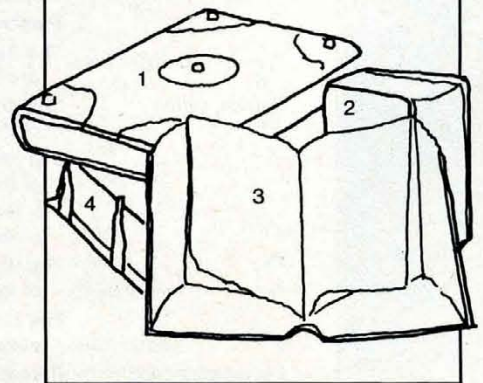
And that has involved Adam, the Flood, ancient Abraham and his family, national ISRAEL and Israel's prophets and His Church.

For this purpose, Church history, except what is revealed, was not necessary for God's purpose in His revealed knowledge. God has revealed all that is pertinent to His PURPOSE AND HIS MASTER PLAN!

Most biblical prophecies relate to our time now, on through the next very few years to the Second Coming of Christ. Church history from mid-first century until now is a GAP — unmentioned — and it was not pertinent to the purpose of the Bible! □

Bibles from Ambassador College Collection

- 1) A particularly fine unrestored copy of the ninth German Bible (1483) finely printed in Gothic Letter. The Bible is encased in an early 16th-century German binding of blind-stamped vellum over oak boards with metal cornerpieces.
- 2) The first edition of the Douai Bible, containing the first volume of the Old Testament. This very rare book is the English Romanist version of the Bible. The Douai Bible had great influence on the Authorized version of the English Bible.
- 3) An excellent example of the 13th-century Latin Bible, 50 lines to a page, double columns, written in a minute but regular Gothic hand of remarkable clarity.
- 4) A fine German Bible, translated in 1522 and published in Nuremberg in 1788. Handsomely illustrated with very fine woodcuts, the book is bound in stamped leather with metal cornerpieces. See photograph on page 3.



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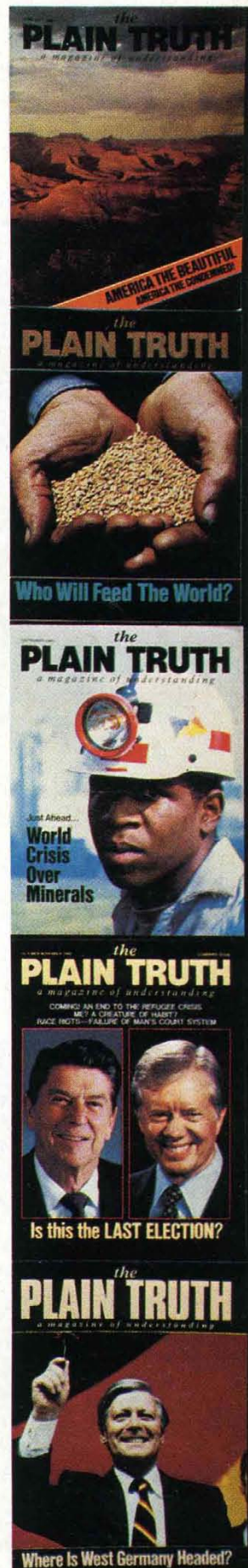


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Preserved

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Sir David Dalrymple thus reconstructed our entire New Testament except for 11 verses from the writings of those prolific theologians. This is an amazing corroboration and verification of our New Testament, for if every Bible were to disappear overnight, we could virtually reconstruct it from other sources!

Even with textual errors or disputed readings in centuries of production, it is good to remember that no fundamental doctrine rests upon a questionable scripture.

Doctrine is revealed to God's apostles (Acts 10:17-20) "here a little, and there a little" (Isa. 28:10) as they search the entire context of God's will revealed from Genesis to Revelation.

The Bible's nobility and balance bespeaks one Author. A book that begins with a garden, a river, a tree of life and an invitation to enjoy it and man and God in intimate relationship and then ends developing the same theme possesses an obvious unity and structure (Gen. 2-3, Rev. 22). Only a prejudiced observer would fail to be struck by it!

The New Testament, in particular, boldly claims to be the work of eyewitnesses (II Pet. 1:16). Its authoritative tone and vivid immediacy trumpet accurate transmission: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life" (I John 1:1).

Literature of such dramatic force and power does not survive for millennia without the convincing weight of sincerity and authenticity! Only a simpleton could confuse the fanciful tales of "Sinbad the Sailor" with the authentic historicity of the book of Acts.

Some stumble at the obvious supernatural thread woven throughout the fabric of Scripture. Yet biblical miracles and allegories are obviously not of the same fictional caliber and texture as *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Surely the drama of the raising of Lazarus in John 11 is not of the same literary quality as *Gulliver's Travels*. To claim the

opposite runs the danger of willful ignorance (II Pet. 3:5).

The apostles spoke their truths in the laboratory of experience — live audiences composed of fanatical enemies eager to refute their testimonies (Acts 2:22, 26:24). Their appeal was always to literal, demonstrable fact (Acts 4:10, 7:52), often at their peril.

Consider this: Who in 1980 could write a biography of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and claim that the late American president rose from the dead in 1945? Who would believe such a hoax and stick to it for a lifetime? The allegation could easily

**Add to this . . . the
care taken by the
transmitters and attestation
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upon the Bible
any authority it did
not already possess!**

be refuted by relatives and witnesses, still living, who knew the truth. Who would die for such a fraud?

Yet the apostles suffered and finally were martyred for their beliefs (I Cor. 15:3-8)!

Christ's resurrection, plus the direct manifestation of God's Spirit, inspired unswerving loyalty. Events in the spring of A.D. 31 welded 12 wavering apostles into a formidable force that "turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6).

To believe that the New Testament Church rests on a pious fiction, a "cunningly devised fable" (II Pet. 1:16) is, in light of these considerations, more incredible than the doubts of Thomas.

Why did no hostile author ever succeed in explaining away Christ's empty tomb? The best excuse ene-

mies could dredge up is recorded in Matthew 28:13.

Why was no serious attempt made to refute — point by point — the claims made in the gospels? If such attempts were made why haven't they survived?

Why have the so-called idle tales (Luke 24:11) been sent to the ends of the earth (Matt. 24:14), just as the Bible predicted they would be? As one scholar said, "The silence of the Jews is as significant as the speeches of the apostles."

No other conclusion

Philosophical skepticism makes a nice intellectual game, but one cannot live by it. Doubting the strength of historical evidence means one cannot be sure that a marriage certificate documents one's own wedding!

Would a clever editor bent on perpetrating literary fraud retain the seemingly extraneous Levitical laws, the census rolls in the book of Numbers, the stereotyped repetition of the parables? The arcane or so-called redundant parts of Scripture are only another evidence of the purity of each separate document composing the Bible.

Do not the presence of problems, difficulties and apparent "contradictions" in the Bible demonstrate that the text was not doctored to have it turn out right? (See "Can God's Word Contain Errors?" beginning on page 13). Unsolved questions are only incentives to deeper study (Prov. 25:2).

The accuracy of Scripture, its infallible transmission through the centuries, is verifiable by its internal thrust alone. The great truths of the human potential — the purpose of human life, that the Bible shouts from its pages — bespeaks *inspiration!*

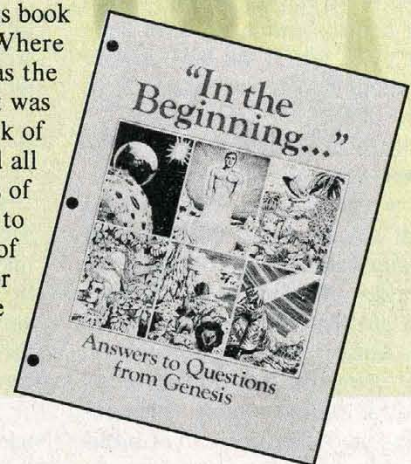
Add to this the evidence of the care taken by the transmitters and the wealth of attestation from near-contemporary manuscripts, and we can conclude that no council of men, no synod, no committee of scholars ever conferred upon the Bible any authority it did not already possess!

"The sayings of the wise are like goads, and like nails *firmly fixed* are the collected sayings which are given by one Shepherd" (Eccl. 12:11, Revised Standard Version). □

How Did Life Begin?



How did the world begin? Where did life and human civilization come from? Scientists over the years have proposed various theories. But can we truly *know*? Yes! God gives us the answers in Genesis, the first book of the Bible. Genesis is the book of origins. The name *Genesis* is derived from the Greek translation of the Hebrew word *bereshith*, meaning "in the beginning." Genesis covers the first 2,000 years and more of man's history, from the creation of Adam and Eve to the settlement of the children of Israel in Egypt. Because this book is written in abbreviated form certain questions are frequently asked: Where did God come from? What about the devil and his demons? Where was the Garden of Eden? Were the days of creation only 24 hours long? What was the "forbidden fruit," and did Adam and Eve "fall" when they partook of it? How did the different races originate? How could Noah have saved all the world's animal species in the ark? The answers to these and dozens of other questions are covered in our reprint, "In the Beginning: Answers to Questions from Genesis." This new reprint explains "the book of origins" in simple, straightforward language and is absolutely free for the asking. Why not write for your copy today? Or you may use the special tear-out card inside this magazine.



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