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Bible Study #1: *What is the Bible?*

Introduction

Dear friend,

Welcome to correspondence Bible study! We are so glad that you have decided to study the Bible, God's perfect Word to mankind. To complete these studies, you will need a copy of the Bible. Throughout this course we use the King James Version of the Bible (KJV), the standard English Bible for the last four hundred years. You can be confident that when you read the KJV, you are reading the very Word of God preserved intact for you in English. If you do not have a King James Bible, contact us and we will send you one for free. Also, please note that at the end of each of these studies you have some questions to answer so that we can see that you have understood the Biblical teaching, and some blank space upon which you can write down any questions that you have. Also, please use this space to provide us with the names and addresses of any friends or acquaintances of yours who would also be interested in studying the Bible, so that we can send this free correspondence course to them as well. This Bible study course is provided to you courtesy of Mukwonago Baptist Church, 1610 Honeywell Road, Mukwonago, WI 53149 (262) 363-4197, mukbaptist@centurytel.net. Please let us know if you would like a personal visit for Bible study, and feel free to visit us for Sunday school at 9:30 a.m., Sunday morning worship at 10:30 a.m., Sunday evening worship at 6:30 p.m., or Wednesday prayer and Bible study at 7:00 p.m. Once again, we are overjoyed that we can assist you in studying the Bible.

Basics about your Bible

If you turn to the front section of your Bible, you will see the table of contents. The Bible is one Book, yet it is made up of 66 different books, with about forty different authors, who wrote from a period stretching from before 1,400 B. C. to almost A. D. 100. In the table of contents, you will notice that the books of the Bible are divided into two major sections, the Old Testament, which was composed before the coming of Jesus Christ, and the New Testament, which was written after His coming. The Bible begins with "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1), and ends with an account of the end of all things and the establishment of the eternal reign of God in its last book, the book of Revelation. As you do this Bible study, you will learn more and more about the content and teachings of the books of the Bible.

Throughout this study, you will see references, like the "Genesis 1:1" in the paragraph above, following (or in some cases, before) quotations from the Bible. It is essential that you know how to look these up. (If you already know how to do this, great—don't worry, soon we will cover something that is almost surely new for you. If you do not know this, though, you cannot do any of the rest of this Bible study.) In a reference like "Genesis 1:1," the word at the front, here "Genesis," refers to the book of the Bible from which the quotation comes. To find a book of the Bible, look in the table of contents. You will notice that Genesis is the first book of the Old Testament. A page number is given so that you can find the book; you will find Genesis shortly after the table of contents. The "1:1" refers to the chapter and the verse in the book of the Bible specified by the word that comes before it; the "1" before the colon refers to the chapter in the book of Genesis, and the "1" after the colon to the verse in that chapter. Turn to the first page of the book of Genesis. Find the heading that says "chapter 1." Then look in the left column, and you will see numbers going down the side of the page. Those are the verse numbers. If you look at chapter one, the first verse, you will see "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," the reference quoted in the previous paragraph. Look down to verse 26 of chapter one; there you see "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." The reference for that verse would be Genesis 1:26, since it is in the book of Genesis, chapter one, and is verse 26 in chapter one. Flip over now to Genesis chapter two, and verse eight, or Genesis 2:8; there you will see "And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden: and there he put the man whom he had formed." Now go back to the table of contents, and find Proverbs 30:5; locate the book of Proverbs, which is in the Old Testament, then go to chapter thirty, and to verse five. Fill in the blank for this verse:

Every __ __ __ __ of God *is* pure: he *is* a shield unto them that put their trust in him.

Did you find the verse? Good job! You now know how to look up references in the Bible.[1]

Also, notice in Proverbs 30:5, that the word "is" in the verse is italicized *(like this)* twice, in "God *is* pure" and in "he *is* a shield." The italics are there to represent words that are not in the original languages of the Bible, Hebrew for the Old Testament (except for a few chapters in Aramaic), and Greek for the New Testament, but are needed in an English translation. The scholars who gave us the King James Version made it into a very literal, word-for-word translation, so that the Word of God would be faithfully represented in our language. In this verse, for example, "every" translates the Hebrew word for "every," *kol*, "word" translates the Hebrew for "word," *'imrah*, "of God" translates the Hebrew for "of God," *'eloha*, and "pure" translates the Hebrew word for "pure," *tserupha*. The "is" in italics represents a word that is needed in English, but is not in the original Hebrew; in Hebrew, to say "Every word of God is pure," you could just say "Every word of God—pure," meaning the same thing we do in our English Bible, but just not using the verb "is." The King James Bible is so accurate that it even puts words needed in English like this in italics, so that you can tell what English words directly represent Hebrew and Greek words, and what words are needed in English but do not directly represent a word in the original. How blessed we are to have, in the King James Version, a Bible so accurate that even these little details of the original language texts are preserved!

Now turn to John 3:7 in the New Testament. This verse says:

"Marvel not that I said unto __ __ __ __, __ __ must be born again."

What is the meaning of this "thee" and "ye"? Today, in ordinary speech we would simply say "you" both times—that is what both "thee" and "ye" mean—speaking technically, the words are 2nd person pronouns. However, both the Hebrew and the Greek languages have a different word

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[1] You should also know that books of the Bible that have only one chapter just put the verse number in the numerical part of a reference. For example, to quote verse four in the book of Jude, which has only one chapter, one would write (Jude 4), not (Jude 1:4). For books of the Bible with a number of chapters, if someone wishes to cite an entire chapter rather than a specific verse only, the chapter number would appear without a verse number. For example, to reference the entire thirtieth chapter of the book of Proverbs, one would write (Proverbs 30). The twentieth chapter of Exodus would be (Exodus 20), while the first verse in the twentieth chapter would be (Exodus 20:1). Notice that (Jude 4) and (Exodus 4) mean different things: the one is the fourth *verse* in the only chapter in Jude, while the other is the entire fourth *chapter* of the book of Exodus. Also, if a particular chapter is the topic of discussion, a reference such as (v. 20) means the twentieth verse in that chapter. If we were discussing Exodus chapter 20, (v. 4) would be the fourth verse of that chapter, while (v. 8) would mean the eighth verse. You should also know that the annotation "cf." means "compare." Sometimes people will abbreviate the books of the Bible; they might write (Gen 1:1) instead of (Genesis 1:1), or (Ex 20:4) instead of (Exodus 20:4), to designate the books of Genesis or Exodus. Usually such abbreviations are self-explanatory. In fact, looking up verses is pretty self-explanatory. We have given you all this explanation just in case, but it really is not very hard. You can definitely figure it out.

for “you” when referring to only one person, (for example, “You, John, need to come here.”) and for “you” when referring to more than one person (“You, Jack and Jill, both need to run up the hill.”). In modern English, we have lost this distinction, so that one cannot tell from the word "you" if the speaker refers to only one person or thing or to a group. However, the King James Bible preserves the distinction; when the Bible says “thou,” or “thee,” or “thy,” it translates the Hebrew or Greek words for “you” referring to only one person: “Thou, John, needest[2] to come here,” while when it uses “ye” or “you,” it translates a Hebrew or Greek word that refers to “you” as more than one person: “You people, Jack and Jill, come ye up the hill over here.” When distinctions such as these are preserved, and, for such a literal and accurate translation, it has such remarkable beauty and amazing literary style, can we wonder that the King James Bible has been, and continues to be, the standard English Bible? When you hold it in your hands, you hold the very Word of God, pure and powerful just as when it was originally given. You can trust your Bible! We will consider this subject in more detail later.

As we continue in these studies, it is essential that you look up the verses with words missing and blanks to fill in. Other verse references will be mentioned for further study—if you look them up too, you are doing very well, but they are not as essential to the main point. You are far better off looking up only the verses with blanks and finishing the study than looking up everything, getting bogged down, and never sending it back in the mail because you never finish! Also, it is very possible that you will not complete the entire Bible study in one sitting. If you stop somewhere to take a break, give yourself a definite time, perhaps the next day, or the day after, when you will return to it, set a schedule, and work at it regularly until you finish. If you misplace or lose it, do not hesitate to contact us for another copy. If God says that laziness in general is sinful and brings terrible consequences in life (Proverbs 6:6-11), how much more sinful is laziness in learning about God’s Word?

You now know how to look up verses, and understand some of the basic features of your English Bible. Having gained this knowledge, let us see what Scripture claims for itself.

The Inspiration of the Bible:

What the Bible claims for itself

Look at 2 Timothy 3:16. The Bible states there that “All scripture *is* given by __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for

[2] Note as well that when a verb has an *est* or *eth* ending, you can just drop it; *needeth* means *needs, heareth* means *hears, doest* means *does, walkest* means *walks,* and so on.

instruction in righteousness." The word "inspiration" means "God-breathed." The Bible claims that its words are God's Words; it records Him speaking. Look at Matthew 4:4:

> But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every __ __ __ __ that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Here Jesus Christ is speaking about the Bible, as an examination of the verses before and after 4:4 demonstrates. He states that man is to live by every "word" of the Bible, for each one "proceedeth out of the mouth of God." In fact, look at what He said in Matthew 5:17-18:

> Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one __ __ __ or one __ __ __ __ __ __ shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Here, Christ spoke about the "law and the prophets" (the Old Testament, the part of the Bible that had already been written; sometimes it was also called "the law," as you can see by comparing v. 17 and v. 18). The "jot" was the smallest letter in the Hebrew language, the *yod,* just like the "i" is our smallest English letter. The "tittle" referred to the smallest details of the Hebrew text; it would be similar to the dot on the "i." Christ said that the Bible was so sure that, as it were, not one "i" or even the dot on the "i" would pass away! The Bible clearly claims that its own words are inspired.

Furthermore, the entire Bible from cover to cover is God's Word; there are no parts that are "less inspired" then others. Look back again at 2 Timothy 3:16. Note that it says that "__ __ __ Scripture is given by inspiration of God." The whole Book, from Genesis to Revelation, is God's perfect Word.

Peter gives us a powerful statement about the inspiration of the Bible in 2 Peter 1:16-21:

> For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, __ __ __ __ is my beloved __ __ __, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more __ __ __ __ word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ 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.

The apostle Peter was with Jesus Christ throughout His ministry upon the earth, was with Him in the times surrounding His crucifixion, and was an eyewitness of His resurrection and His

ascension back to heaven. He assures the readers of 2 Peter that he and the other apostles did not just make everything up, or follow "cunningly devised fables," and testifies that he had been an eyewitness to the "majesty" of Christ. He then refers to a time when he was with Jesus Christ in the "holy mount" and heard the voice of the heavenly Father. (Matthew 17:1-9 describes what took place). You will see in that passage that the Lord Jesus took Peter up a mountain with James and John, and appeared to them in His glory. You will also notice in Matthew 17:5 the statement "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," which Peter quotes again in the passage we are talking about, 2 Peter 1:16-21. Peter had heard the actual audible voice of God the Father! We can only imagine how incredible that must have been; no wonder that he and the other disciples, when they heard it, "fell on their face, and were sore afraid" (Matthew 17:6). However, here in 2 Peter chapter one, he says that the "prophecy of the Scripture" (v. 20) is "more sure" (v. 19) than even the audible voice of God! How highly Peter viewed the Scriptures! Every word, phrase, line, chapter, and book is God speaking. Furthermore, note that Peter in 2 Peter 1:20 says that the Scripture is not "of any __ __ __ __ __ __ __ interpretation." This means that we cannot say that anything in the Bible is "just how you interpret it" or "just how I interpret it." It means exactly what it says, and it has one correct interpretation, the one that God meant when He inspired it. Think about it. God gave us the Bible so that we could learn about Him; do you think He would make it so that nobody could understand what He said, or people could have thousands of conflicting "interpretations" of it that were all "true," even though they all totally contradicted each other? We don't say "that's just your interpretation of the law" to a police officer when he pulls us over for running a red light or speeding—we know it will not work. God says that we can't say that with His Word either.

Finally, in 2 Peter 1:21, we find out how God used man to write the Bible. The words of the Bible did not come "in old time by the will of __ __ __, but holy men of God spake as they were __ __ __ __ __ by the Holy Ghost." The human writers of Scripture were not writing whatever they wanted, but the Holy Spirit controlled them so that their very words were God's. We can compare God's authorship and the human recording of the Bible to what we do when we write a letter with a pen. The words of our letter are our words, but it is the pen that actually puts our words on the paper. Just like that, God wrote the Bible, but He used "holy men of God" as His "pens." We can see this process described in Acts 4:24-25: "Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: __ __ __ by the __ __ __ __ __ of thy servant __ __ __ __ __ hast said," etc. God's servant David wrote the words that follow in Acts 4:25, which quotes Psalm 2:1. However, it was God who really said it "by [David's] mouth." Since the Bible is, from cover to cover, the Word of God, and Titus 1:2 tells us that God "cannot lie," we can be sure that everything the Bible says about God, life, history, science, and everything else is entirely free from error. We can say, as Jesus Christ said in prayer to God

the Father, "thy __ __ __ __ is truth" (John 17:17). Considering all of this, we should have the utmost reverence and respect for the Holy Bible. God says, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" (Isaiah 66:2).

We have seen what the Bible claims for itself. However, cannot someone say, "These claims are all very well, but I could write a book and claim that its very words were God's words as well; how do we know that the Bible is any better than something I could just make up?" This is an important question. What evidence do we have for these Biblical claims?

The Inspiration of the Bible:

Evidences for it

First of all, we have internal evidence for the inspiration of the Bible. The Bible is self-attesting—it claims to be the very Word of God, and all who read it know that it is so—however, those who do not wish to submit to the God of the Bible suppress that knowledge. In John chapter 7, the enemies of Jesus Christ sent officers to arrest Him, but they did not do as they were commanded. They were then asked "Why have ye not brought him?" (John 7:45). John 7:46 says, "The officers answered, __ __ __ __ __ man __ __ __ __ __ like this man." The people who heard Jesus preach, according to Matthew 7:28-29, "were __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ at his doctrine: for he taught them as *one* having __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __, and not as the scribes." In Luke 4:22, "all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth." The Bible is the Word of God, and all who read it know it to be so deep within. Hebrews 4:12 states that the Word of God is "quick [which means living], and __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __, and sharper than any twoedged sword, __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ of the __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ and intents of the heart." Jesus Christ said in John 7:17 that "If any man __ __ __ __ do his will, he shall __ __ __ __ of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or *whether* I speak of myself." All who are willing to follow God, when they come to the Bible with a willing and a seeking heart, will know that it is indeed the Word of God, just as it claims. The fundamental question is not intellectual; as we will see by the end of this study, the evidence for the Bible's inspiration is so overwhelming that those who reject it are "professing themselves to be wise, [but] they [are] fools" (Romans 1:22). The fundamental issue is moral; are we willing to submit to God and the Bible? Are we willing to do His will? If we are, we will "know of the doctrine, whether it be of God" or not. If we are not willing to obey the Lord, we will always be able to think up some flimsy excuse to do what we want to do. Scripture tells us that there would "come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts" (2 Peter 3:3). They do not reject the Bible because of a lack of evidence, but, knowing that it is true, they

rejected the evidence so that they would not have to give up their sins. The Bible simply is the Word of God—and when God speaks, man knows He has spoken.

The Bible also has powerful external evidences. It contains many scientific facts. For example, many hundreds of years before science could confirm it, the Bible stated:

1.) The world is round. Isaiah 40:22, "*It is* he that sitteth upon the __ __ __ __ __ __ of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof *are* as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in."

2.) The earth hangs in space. Job 26:7, "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, *and* __ __ __ __ __ __ __ the earth upon __ __ __ __ __ __ __."

3.) The ocean has currents. Psalm 8:8 refers to the "the __ __ __ __ __ of the seas," and Isaiah 43:16 to "a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters."

4.) The importance of blood for life. Leviticus 17:11 states that "the __ __ __ __ of the flesh is in the blood."

5.) Air has weight. Job 28:25, "To make the __ __ __ __ __ __ for the __ __ __ __ __; and he weigheth the waters by measure."

6.) No new matter is being created, as the First Law of Thermodynamics affirms. After His work of creation, Genesis 2:2 states that "God __ __ __ __ __ his work which he had made."

7.) The universe is running down, as the Second Law of Thermodynamics affirms. Psalm 102:25-27 states, "Of old thou hast laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall __ __ __ __ __ __, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall __ __ __ __ __ __ like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but thou *art* the same, and thy years shall have no end."

The Bible also contains no scientific errors—or any other kinds of errors, despite being penned by over forty different people over a period of some 1,500 years![3] In addition to its scientific accuracy, the Bible is historically accurate; archeology has confirmed, over and over again, its accuracy in its statements about nations, peoples, and cities; and no archeological evidence has ever contradicted a Biblical statement.

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[3] Some might say that the theory of evolution is proof that the Bible is not true. However, the Biblical account of the creation of the world is far more scientifically reasonable than evolution. An objective investigation of the evidence reveals that evolution is not only unbiblical but also is unreasonable pseudo-science. For evidence in favor of creation and against evolution, please ask us for a free copy of the booklets *The Scientific Case Against Evolution,* which deals generally with scientific evidence in relation to the issue, and *Biblical Catastrophism and Geology,* which deals more specifically with the Biblical worldview and the issue of the flood in the days of Noah. Both pamphlets were written by Dr. Henry M. Morris, former professor of Hydraulics and head of the Civil Engineering department at Virginia Tech University, and current president of the Institute for Creation Research. For a book length treatment of the issue, please read *Evolution: The Fossils Still Say No!* by Duane T. Gish (PhD, Biochemistry, University of California, Berkeley), available through our church bookstore, at www.icr.org, or at your local library through interlibrary loan.

In Isaiah chapter 44, God states that His ability to predict the future shows that He is the true God, for by doing this He can do what no idol or false god, or mere man, is able to do. Isaiah 44:6-8 reads, "Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I *am* the first, and I *am* the last; and beside me *there is* no God. And who, as I, shall call, and __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the __ __ __ __ __ __ that are __ __ __ __ __ __, and shall come, let them shew unto them. Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared *it*? ye *are* even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, *there is* no God; I know not *any*." The God of the Bible affirms that we can know He truly exists as the Lord of all through His ability to predict the future. The Bible stands alone in its numerous, clear, and specific prophecies, often made hundreds of years in advance of their subsequent fulfillment. By one count there are 1,817 predictions in the Bible, 1,239 in the Old Testament and 578 in the New. No other book that alleges to be from God, whether the Koran, the Book of Mormon, the Vedas, etc. has prophecy like the Bible. The predictive prophecies of Scripture are an irrefutable evidence of its inspiration by God. Many of these prophecies deal with Jesus Christ; we will study some of these later (in Bible study #4)—but the Bible has many other prophecies. Let us look at three examples:

1.) Around 700 B. C., the prophet Isaiah predicted, in the same context where God stated He would show that He was the true God by predicting the future (Isaiah 44:6-8; cited above), that the nation of Judah would be taken into exile by the Babylonians and Jerusalem would be destroyed (Isaiah 39:5-7; 2 Chronicles 36:14-19). Isaiah then prophesied that, after the time of captivity, a king named Cyrus would allow Judah to return to the Promised Land from exile and rebuild the Jerusalem temple. Isaiah 44:28 states, "That saith of __ __ __ __ __, *He is* my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid." Over 150 years later, c. 536 B. C. (see Ezra 1), this is exactly what happened. Who besides God could predict the exact name and actions of a world ruler 150 years before he was born?

2.) The prophet Ezekiel, writing around 587 B. C., made astoundingly accurate predictions about the fate of the city of Tyre (KJV "Tyrus") in Ezekiel chapter 26. He predicted that the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar (or "Nebuchadrezzar") would devastate the mainland city of Tyre: "For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will bring upon Tyrus Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, a king of kings, from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people. He shall __ __ __ __ with the __ __ __ __ __ thy daughters in the field: and he shall make a fort against thee, and cast a mount against thee, and lift up the buckler against thee" (Ezekiel 26:7-8). Ezekiel predicted that many nations would come

against Tyre: "Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I *am* against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up" (Ezekiel 26:3). He predicted that the city would be made bare like the top of a rock: "And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the __ __ __ of a __ __ __ __" (Ezek 26:4). He predicted that fishermen would spread nets to fish over the site of the city, which would somehow be in the ocean: "It shall be *a place for* the __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ of nets in the __ __ __ __ __ of the __ __ __: for I have spoken *it*, saith the Lord GOD: and it shall become a spoil to the nations" (Ezekiel 26:5). A somewhat related prediction was that the debris from the city would be thrown into the water: "And they shall make a spoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy merchandise: and they shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy pleasant houses: and they shall __ __ __ thy __ __ __ __ __ __ and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the __ __ __ __ __" (Ezek 26:12). The city would also never be rebuilt: "And I will make thee like the top of a rock: thou shalt be *a place* to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built __ __ __ __ __ __: for I the LORD have spoken *it*, saith the Lord GOD" (Ezekiel 26:14). Some of these predictions would have sounded, when they were made, far-fetched and contradictory. How, for example, could Nebuchadnezzar, the king of the nation of Babylon, crush the city, but "many nations" come against it? How could a city end up in an ocean so that fishermen would spread nets over it? And would it be likely that the great and famous city of Tyre, the capital of the Phoenician empire, would never again be rebuilt?

Future history, however, confirmed the accuracy of Ezekiel's prediction in an amazing way. In 573 B. C., Nebuchadnezzar broke down the gates of the mainland city of Tyre and subdued it after a long and difficult siege. When he did, however, he found the city almost empty; the majority of the remaining populace had moved by ship to an island a half mile off the coast and fortified a city there. Despite the defeat of the mainland city, this island city of Tyre remained powerful for several hundred years. In 332 B. C., Alexander the Great sought to subdue the island city of Tyre. To accomplish this, he took the stones of the old mainland city and built a land bridge with them to reach the island city, which he then defeated. He made the site of the mainland city bare as the top of a rock, as the Bible had predicted. The debris of the city was thrown into the water, as Ezekiel had foretold. The land bridge is used even to this day for fishing, and fishermen spread their nets out to dry over the flattened rock that once held the mainland city; indeed, down the coast from the location of the original city is a small fishing village. After being sacked by Alexander the Great, the island city of Tyre managed to recover somewhat, but was again reduced by Antigonus in 314 B. C. Many centuries later, after the rise of Islam, the city was taken by Muslim armies, which caused the Crusaders to fight for it, which they did successfully. It became an important base

for the Catholic armies, but was reconquered for Islam in A. D. 1291 and the population was massacred and sold into slavery. After that time, the former capital of the Phoenician empire was never rebuilt, despite the fact that Tyre has a fresh water supply sufficient for a large modern city. All of the Biblical predictions concerning the city have been fulfilled, in all their richness and specificity, some of them many centuries after they were originally made. Could anyone other than the all-foreseeing God make predictions such as these?

3.) Moses, writing around 1,400 B. C., predicted the future history of Israel in absolutely astounding detail. Please take your Bible and read Deuteronomy 28:47-68. Some refer the events of this passage to the removal of the northern ten tribes of Israel from the land of Canaan under the Assyrians in 722 B. C. and the leading of the southern two tribes to Babylon in 586 B. C. If this were the case, it would prove a most remarkable prediction, since it was made at the very least over 700 years in advance. However, a careful examination of the text indicates that the exile predicted goes beyond the days of Assyria and Babylon to the expulsions of the Jewish nation from the land in A. D. 70 and A. D. 135, and it includes the subsequent history of the nation for the years that follow. Notice that in v. 49 the invaders come "from the __ __ __ of the __ __ __ __ __, *as swift* as the __ __ __ __ __ flieth." From the viewpoint of the land of Israel, it would have been considerably more appropriate to designate Rome and the Roman armies as enemies from "the end of the earth" than the Babylonians or Assyrians. It is also noteworthy that the eagle was the Roman ensign. Consider as well that these enemies would be "a nation whose __ __ __ __ __ __ thou shalt not __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __" (v.49); a statement more applicable to the Roman language Latin, which was utterly alien to Hebrew, than the speech of the Babylonians and Assyrians, which was, although different, a related tongue. Moses predicted, in v. 64, that "the LORD shall scatter thee among __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __, from the one __ __ __ of the __ __ __ __ __ even unto the other." This did not take place in the days of Babylon or before, but the Romans in A. D. 135 utterly crushed the Jews that remained in Palestine after their terrible defeat in A. D. 70, confiscated all their land, and sold it to non-Jews. A worldwide scattering, as predicted here by Moses c. 1,400 B. C., was also confirmed as a future event by Christ around A. D. 33 as recorded in Luke 21:24. From the time the Romans scattered Israel, for close to two millennia (until 1948, when the Jews returned to their land, which also relates to Bible prophecy, as we shall see), the land was under Gentile (non-Jewish) control by those strongly hostile to the sons of Israel. Jews were scattered "from the one end of the earth even unto the other" (v. 64) for many hundreds of years, and in these lands they experienced the terrible fulfillment of v. 65-67:

> And among these nations shalt thou find no __ __ __ __, neither shall the sole of thy foot have __ __ __ __: but the LORD shall give thee there a __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ heart, and failing of eyes, and __ __ __ __ __ __ of mind: And thy __ __ __ __ shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt __ __ __ __ day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life: In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.

Hated by the Romans, and later by the Catholic nations of Europe and the Islamic nations of the Arab world, the Jews were driven from nation to nation, despised, oppressed, banished, and massacred, unable to find a place of safety and protection by the law. These verses provide a remarkable commentary on the sad history of centuries of anti-Semitism, from the days of Israel's dispersion from Palestine until modern times. Jewish history since the exile from the land is a tale of constant persecution. Also, the statement of Deuteronomy 28:68 that "the LORD shall bring thee into Egypt again with __ __ __ __ __, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be __ __ __ __ unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and __ __ __ __ __ shall __ __ __ *you*," never took place in connection with the Babylonian or other earlier captivities, but was literally fulfilled after Jerusalem fell to the Roman armies under Titus in A. D. 70. The first century historian Josephus records that 97,000 prisoners were taken at that time, and huge numbers of Jews were enslaved and conveyed to Egypt by ship, where they proved to be a glut on the slave market, so that nobody bought them. Who other than the God of the universe could predict what would happen around 1,500 years later?

However, the evidence for the truth of God and His Word in the history of Israel is yet more evident in the Bible's predictions of the continued existence of Israel as a nation. This is implied in Deuteronomy 28; the Israelites would have to continue as a distinct body if they were to continue to be persecuted. It is also very clearly stated in Romans chapter 11 and many other portions of the Bible. This constitutes a very remarkable prophecy in itself. The nations of Israel's past have vanished—today we have no more Ammonites, Philistines, Moabites, Jebusites, Edomites, Hittites, Amorites, and so on, as identifiable ethnic groups—but the Jews, despite having no homeland for nearly two thousand years, have remained a distinct nation to the present day. No other people destitute of a homeland in this manner have remained unassimilated in the history of the world. The Jews have done so because the Bible said they would. Furthermore, the return of Israel to the Promised Land and her restoration as a nation was also predicted in Scripture, and we are beginning to see this fulfilled in our own day. In 1948 Israel became a nation again. In 1967, the Six Day War made Jerusalem a united Jewish city. Ezekiel 36:24 states, "I will take you from among the

heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land." Ezekiel 11:17 reads, "Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel." Amos 9:14-15 reads, "And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit *them*; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God." Shortly after the passage in Deuteronomy 28 where Moses predicts the dispersion and persecution of the Jews, he says that there will come a day when "the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and __ __ __ __ __ __ thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee. If *any* of thine be driven out unto the outmost *parts* of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God __ __ __ __ __ __ thee, and from thence will he __ __ __ __ __ thee: and the LORD thy God will __ __ __ __ __ thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers" (Deuteronomy 30:3-5). The ultimate restoration of Israel to the Promised Land in Scripture is associated with the second coming of Jesus Christ, when He will set up His throne and reign over all the earth from Jerusalem for 1,000 years (see Zechariah 12:10-14:21; Isaiah 9:6-7; Micah 4-5; Romans 11:26-27; Revelation 19-20; etc.). The predictions of the Bible that dealt with Israel's past have been fulfilled in an unmistakably supernatural way, and we see Biblical prophecy in the process of fulfillment before our eyes today. The complete restoration of Israel will also soon come to pass in the future upon Jesus Christ's return; then nobody will be able to deny that the Bible is the Word of God, but it will be too late to get any saving benefit from this recognition.

God said in Isaiah 44, as we saw, that He would prove that He was the true God through His ability to predict the future. We have seen, in these three prophecies, undeniable evidence that validates His claim. Biblical prophecy is absolutely unique; no other religious or secular book in the world, whether the writings of Buddha, Confucius, Mohammed, Nostradamus, Joseph Smith, or anyone else, contains inerrant written prophecies as the Bible does. We have also just scratched the surface of Biblical prophecy; in Bible study #4 we will look at some of the hundreds of prophecies concerning Jesus Christ Himself. For anyone who desires more evidence, we also offer a booklet, free for the asking, entitled *The Book of Daniel: Proof that the Bible is the Word of the Living God.* This booklet explains some more astounding Bible prophecies, including the prediction by the prophet Daniel, writing around 500 B. C., of the exact year and day that Jesus Christ would present Himself as the Messiah and King of Israel. We have seen that the Bible claims to be inspired by God, error-free, and perfect, so that its very

words are God's words, as much so as if one heard Him speak audibly. We have also seen that Scripture contains overwhelming evidence for the truthfulness of this claim. Intellectual honesty demands that we accept the claims of the Bible for itself as true; people reject the Bible because they do not wish to accept its moral demands upon their lives, not because there is insufficient evidence to believe it.

The Preservation of the Bible

Some people say, "The Bible was God's Word when it was originally given, but since then there have been so many different copies and translations and changes that now we cannot believe anything that it says." Is this true? The evidence given above that Scripture was originally from God is irrefutable; but has the Bible been changed? Is the infallible Word of God available today, or has mankind so twisted it that we now have nothing sure to depend upon? We will consider, first of all, what the Bible promises about its own preservation, and then we will look at historical evidence that validates these promises.

The Preservation of the Bible:

What the Bible claims for itself

The Bible not only claims that its very words are inspired, that is, are God's words, as we saw above, but that every one of those inspired words would be preserved forever. Psalm 12:6-7 says, "The __ __ __ __ __ of the LORD *are* pure words: *as* silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. 7 Thou shalt __ __ __ __ them, O LORD, thou shalt __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ them from this generation __ __ __ __ __ __ __." Jesus Christ said in Matthew 24:35, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my __ __ __ __ __ shall not __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __." These are very clear promises that God would preserve every word of the Bible. In Matthew 5:18, the Lord Jesus said, "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one __ __ __ or one __ __ __ __ __ __ shall in no wise __ __ __ __ from the law, till all be fulfilled." We mentioned earlier that the "jot" was the smallest Hebrew letter, and the "tittle" referred to the minutest parts of their language, like the dot on our letter "i." The Bible claims that not one word of its inspired text will ever be lost. In fact, not even one letter, one consonant or vowel, or even the smallest part of a letter, would ever be corrupted! This is because, as Matthew 4:4 states, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." If we are to live by every one of God's words, they must all be preserved for us. Furthermore, they must be accessible, not just preserved somewhere where nobody knows about them or uses them. God promises us in Isaiah 59:21, "As for me, this *is* my covenant with them,

saith the LORD; My spirit that *is* upon thee, and my __ __ __ __ __ which I have put in thy mouth, shall not __ __ __ __ __ __ out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy __ __ __ __, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and __ __ __ __ __ __ __." God promised that His people would have His words in their mouths, and so would their seed (descendants), in every generation. The Bible teaches that all of God's inspired words will be preserved forever, and that they will be available to those who want to live by them. God did not give us a perfect Bible and then let it disappear. He preserved it for us today. In the standard English Bible, the King James Version that you hold in your hand, which was accurately translated from the Hebrew Masoretic text and the Greek Received Text, you hold a copy of this preserved Word of God. His Word has not been lost. Surely God, who is powerful enough to ensure the fulfillment of His prophetic predictions, as we have seen earlier in this study, is able to keep His promises about the preservation of His Word. Let us, however, examine the historical evidence that confirms these promises of perfect preservation.

The Preservation of the Bible:

The Confirmation of History

The Bible is by far the best-attested document of antiquity. There are over 5,600 known Greek manuscripts (abbreviated MSS) of the New Testament in existence, along with over 10,000 Latin manuscripts and at least 9,300 of other early versions,[4] for a total of more than 24,000 manuscript copies or portions. The book with the second largest number of copies is the *Illiad* of Homer, with 643 manuscripts, less than 2.7% of the evidence for the New Testament, although it was the most widely read book of antiquity! Furthermore, New Testament MSS date back to the era of the composition of the books themselves; a number of papyri from the Qumran caves where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered have been dated as early as A. D. 50, and New Testament papyri from other locations date to close to A. D. 100, shortly after the final books of the New Testament were written. After this time the amount of evidence begins to grow with tremendous speed. In contrast to this early evidence, of the 643 MSS of Homer's *Illiad,* the earliest complete preserved text dates from the 13th century A. D.! Furthermore, all but 11 of the 7,957 verses of the New Testament could be reproduced without a single manuscript from the 36,289 quotes made by early writers in Christendom from the second to the fourth century. With this kind of evidence, to assert that the New Testament has been corrupted requires one to not only reject God's promises of perfect preservation but to throw out all of

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4 These would include the Ethiopic, Slavic, Armenian, Syriac Peshitta, Bohairic, Arabic, Old Latin, Anglo-Saxon, Gothic, Sogdian, Old Syriac, Persian, and Frankish versions.

ancient history. Compare the evidence for the New Testament to that for these other representative ancient documents:

AUTHOR	When Written	Earliest Copy	Time Span	No. of Copies
Casear	100-44 B. C.	A. D. 900	1,000 yrs.	10
Plato (Tetralogies)	427-347 B. C.	A. D. 900	1,200 yrs.	7
Tacitus (Annals)	A. D. 100	A. D. 1100	1,000 yrs.	20
Pliny the Younger	A. D. 61-113	A. D. 850	750 yrs.	7
Thucydides (History)	460-400 B. C.	A. D. 900	1,300 yrs.	8
Suetonius	A. D. 75-160	A. D. 950	800 yrs.	8
Herodotus (History)	480-425 B. C.	A. D. 900	1,300 yrs.	8
Sophocles	496-406 B. C.	A. D. 100	1,400 yrs.	193
Catullus	54 B. C.	A. D. 1550	1,600 yrs.	3
Euripides	480-406 B. C.	A. D. 1100	1,500 yrs.	9
Aristotle	384-322 B. C.	A. D. 1100	1,400 yrs.	49
Aristophanes	450-385 B. C.	A. D. 900	1,200 yrs.	10
NEW TESTAMENT	c. A. D. 35-95 for different books	Papyri 7Q5-7 c. A. D. 50	negligible	24,000+

If the New Testament is not preserved, accurate, and historical, nothing is.[5]

What about the Old Testament? Can God's promises to perfectly preserve it be trusted? We also have a great many Hebrew manuscripts and a wide variety of other sorts of attestation for it. For example, one source, the Cairo synagogue geniza (a storehouse for manuscripts), discovered in the 1890s, held over 10,000 manuscript portions. Thousands of other Hebrew manuscripts from a wide variety of sources also exist elsewhere.

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 provided an opportunity to test the validity of the promises of Biblical preservation. The Scrolls were over a thousand years older than previously known Old Testament MSS—if men had changed or corrupted the Bible, their actions would now be exposed by the discovery of the much older text. Furthermore, all the books of the Old Testament, except the short book of Esther, were discovered among the scrolls, so the test would either validate or invalidate the whole Hebrew Bible. They turned out to provide an

[5] Much of the material in this section is compiled from the *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* by Norman Geisler (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999) and *Evidence That Demands a Verdict, vol. 1* by Josh McDowell (San Bernardino, CA: Here's Life Publishers, 1979). For more information, please contact us or examine these resources.

astounding confirmation of the accuracy of the Old Testament—the Hebrew Masoretic text, which underlies the King James Bible and most other Bible versions, was found in the scrolls. The Bible had not been changed! Other early manuscripts found in other locations, such as those in the ancient fortress of Masada, also evidence the accuracy of the Hebrew text; for example, fragments from the Psalms, Leviticus, Ezekiel, and Deuteronomy were found that were letter-by-letter identical to our printed Hebrew texts.[6]

The Jewish scribes were also phenomenally careful in their copying of the Hebrew text. They followed elaborate sets of rules to ensure an accurate textual transmission. The Jewish Talmud, for example, mandated, among other rules, that a scribe needed to: 1.) Write no word or letter from memory, but have an authentic copy before him and read and pronounce each word before writing it. 2.) Wipe his pen each time before writing the word for "God" (*Eloheim*) and wash his whole body before writing the name *Jehovah.* 3.) Finish a roll within thirty days; otherwise the work was worthless. One mistake on a sheet condemned the sheet—three copying mistakes on any page and the entire manuscript was condemned. 4.) Every word and every letter was counted, and if a letter was omitted, an extra letter inserted, or if one letter touched another, the manuscript was condemned or destroyed at once. Evidence for the use of these rules is seen in the Masoretic notes found in the Hebrew Bible. For example, at the end of the book of Genesis, we find a note that reads in part:

> "The number of the verses of the book of Genesis is a thousand and five hundred and thirty and four. . . . And its middle point is, 'And by thy sword shalt thou live' (27:40). And the words are twenty thousand and six hundred and twelve. And the letters are eight and seventy thousand and sixty and four."

Think of it! Every verse, word, and letter was counted and accurately tabulated! Another note, this one at the end of the first five books of the Bible, referred to as the Pentateuch or the Law, reads in part:

> "The number of the verses of the whole Law is five thousand and eight hundred and forty and five. . . . And its middle point is, 'And he placed on the breastplate the Urim and the Thummim' (Lev. 8:8). The number of all the words is eighty-one thousand four hundred and forty. The number of all the letters is three hundred and four thousand and eight hundred and seven."[7]

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[6] pg. 45-46, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction,* Gleason Archer, rev. ed. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1994.

[7] The translation is that on pgs. 63, 67-68 of *Introduction to the Ginsburg Edition of the Hebrew Old Testament* (C. D. Ginsburg, London: British and Foreign Bible Society, 1928). The notes are found at the end of the Ginsburg edition of the traditional Hebrew Masoretic text as published by the Trinitarian Bible Society.

This kind of stunningly meticulous care for the accurate transmission of the Hebrew text provides amazing confirmation that God's promises of preservation have been fulfilled. The Bible we have today in our hands is indeed the same as that which was originally given by inspiration. To say otherwise not only requires one to reject God's promises, but to deliberately close one's mind to overwhelming evidence.

The Conclusion:
The Bible is the inspired, infallible, perfect Word of God!

We have seen, over the course of this Bible study, that the Bible claims that it is the inspired Word of God. We saw that this means that the Bible is as much God's Word as if you actually heard Him speak audibly to you. The Bible is not just God's Word in some vague and general sense, but each and every one of its words is from God. We then saw some of the powerful evidence that backs up this fact. Finally, we saw both that God had promised to perfectly preserve His Word for us today, and that history provides very powerful corroboration for this claim. Since all of this is true, what should you do? 2 Timothy 2:15 says you should "__ __ __ __ __ to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). In John 5:39, Jesus Christ said "__ __ __ __ __ __ the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39). Let us, therefore, search and study the Bible with reverence and with a willingness to immediately submit to all that we see that it teaches. Psalm 19:7-11 says, "The law of the LORD *is* __ __ __ __ __ __ __, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD *are* right, __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ the heart: the commandment of the LORD *is* __ __ __ __, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD *are* __ __ __ __ *and* righteous altogether. More to be desired *are they* than __ __ __ __, yea, than much __ __ __ __ __ __ __: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: *and* in keeping of them *there is* great __ __ __ __ __ __." The Bible is a priceless treasure that God has given to us. Let us see, then, what it says about who He is! This will be the subject of the next Bible study: *Who is God?*

Review Quiz For Bible Study #1

1.) The Bible is a good religious book, but it has some minor errors in it since it was written by man. True False

2.) Every word of the Bible is as much God's Word as if the Lord actually spoke it directly to you out loud. True False

3.) Words in the Bible are in italics to show that they are important, to emphasize them. True False

4.) Science, archeology, and history all confirm that the Bible is true. True False

5.) There is more historical evidence that the text of the Bible has been preserved than there is for any other ancient document. True False

6.) The main reason that some people do not believe in the Bible is because there is not enough evidence for it. True False

7.) We must reverently study the Bible, since every one of its words is inspired by God and preserved by Him for us today. True False

Materials Mentioned in Study #1 and a Request for Study #2

___ I have returned the first Bible study to you with the answer blanks filled in and have answered the review quiz questions. Please send me the next Bible study, *Who is God?*

___ I would like more evidence that the Bible is the Word of God. Please send me the booklet *The Book of Daniel: Proof that the Bible is the Word of the Living God.*

___ I have questions about creation and evolution. Please send me the booklet *The Scientific Case Against Evolution.*

___ I have questions about how science relates to the flood of Noah's day. Please send me the booklet *Biblical Catastrophism and Geology.*

___ I do not own a King James Version of the Bible. Please send me a free copy.

___ I would like to meet with or talk to someone in person. I have put information in the spaces below (phone number, times available, etc.) to contact me.

Please use the spaces below to write down any other questions that you have. You can also write down any changes of address. Please also put down the names and addresses of people you know who might also like to do this Bible study.

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