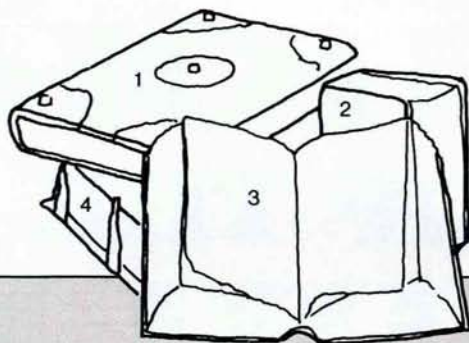

THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE



Can you trust the Bible? Are its prophecies, promises and teachings reliable? This collection of ancient writings claims to be the inspired and authoritative word of God. Is it really? How can you know?



Bibles from Ambassador College Collection

Cover shows: 1) A particularly fine un-restored 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.

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The Bible Speaks with Authority!

Agnostics doubt it. Most Christians vaguely believe the Bible is inspired. But can you absolutely prove the Bible speaks with divine authority?

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

Jesus did not merely 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 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 Christians to heed the "sure word of prophecy" (II Pet. 1:19).

Only the Bible reveals God

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 mankind and the purpose behind that 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

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 the need of a blood sacrifice—the slaying of an animal—pointing to the Messiah'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.

The prophet Isaiah revealed that the Messiah 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 the Messiah or Christ 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

of the sons of men" (Isa. 52:14, Revised Standard Version). John's gospel account 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, the prophet 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

sanitation finally stopped the Black Death, which 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. □

The Bible details the creation of mankind and the purpose behind that creation. . . . *No other book even comes close* to revealing the answers to how we got here, why we were born and where we are headed.

(Isa. 53:7), how He was not kept overnight but rather given a rushed 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 His written Word the Bible!

"As many were astonished at him—his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that

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?

God's laws and ways

The application of God's laws of

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.

Three of the most remarkable Bible prophecies 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 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.

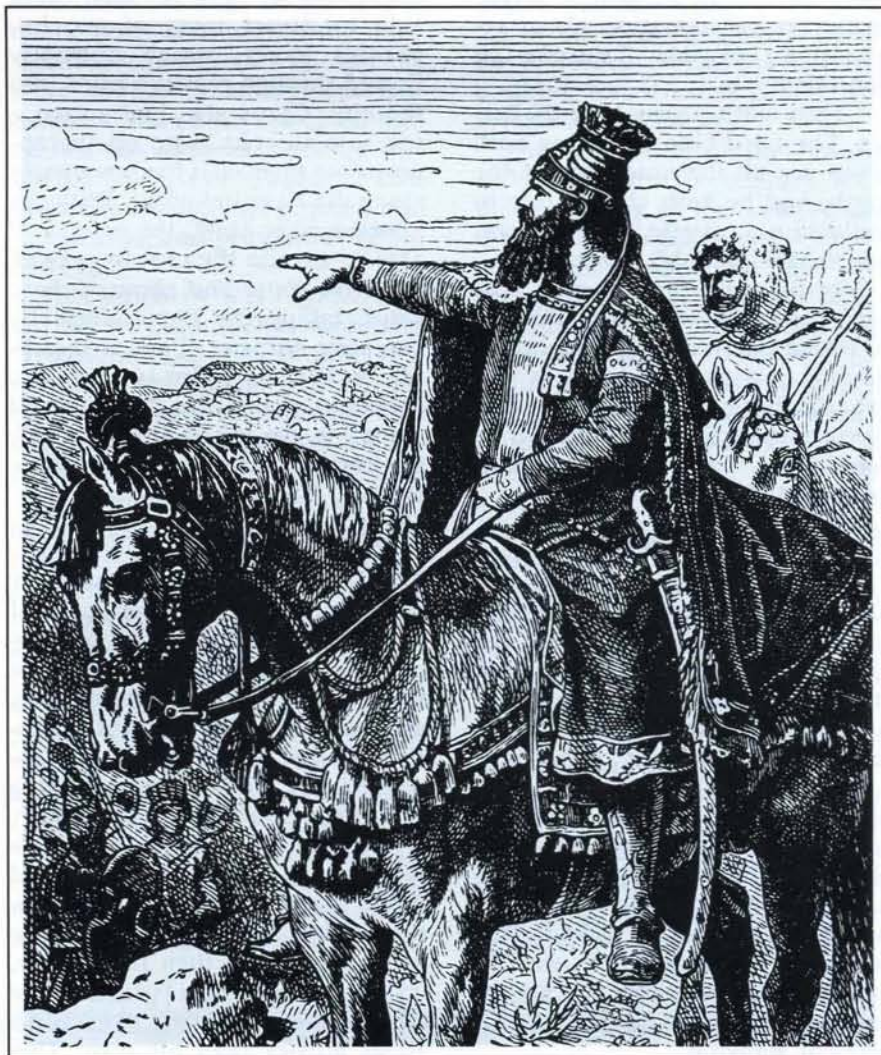
When Mandane had her first child, a son, Astyages instructed one of his trusted servants, Harpagus, to have the child killed. Harpagus, not wanting to do such a horrible thing, entrusted the terrible responsibility to Mitrdates, a herdsman. Mitrdates, on finding that his own child had just been stillborn, took and reared Mandane's son as his own. When

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

FULFILLED PROPHECY

God's Challenge to the Skeptic

Agnostics say the trustworthiness of God's Word is at stake. The Bible either stands or falls according to the fulfillment of the remarkable prophecies it boldly makes.



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.

Isaiah prophesied that God would make it possible for Cyrus to conquer the many kingdoms that ultimately made up his empire.

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 Granicus 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 Greece, 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 knowing 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

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.

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, burned copies of the Hebrew Bible and forced pagan religion on the Jews.

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 [sic] 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 (Tem-

ple) 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 6), 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*. All this will lead to 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!*). □

Is the Old Testament Inspired?

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 a relevant 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 Testament holy.

As a result of such 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! 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 prof-

itable 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*: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

2) *The prophets*: 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*: 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 Hebrew Bible. (For information about Bible study write for our free reprint article, "Seven Keys to Understanding the Bible")

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 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.

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).

All the 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, ... 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, 28).

Afraid to be convinced?

For decades 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, Jesus 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.

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 time to wake up! His coming may catch you by surprise—and unprepared! □



A New Look at Ezekiel's Prophecy on Tyre

Here is clarification of a prophecy long misunderstood by Christians and atheists alike.

Perhaps you have heard of the preacher who thought to challenge the agnostic and the atheist. He quoted Ezekiel's prophecy—actually, God's prophetic warning—concerning Tyre, the famous port-city of the Phoenicians.

The preacher dared his audience 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 preacher, 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."

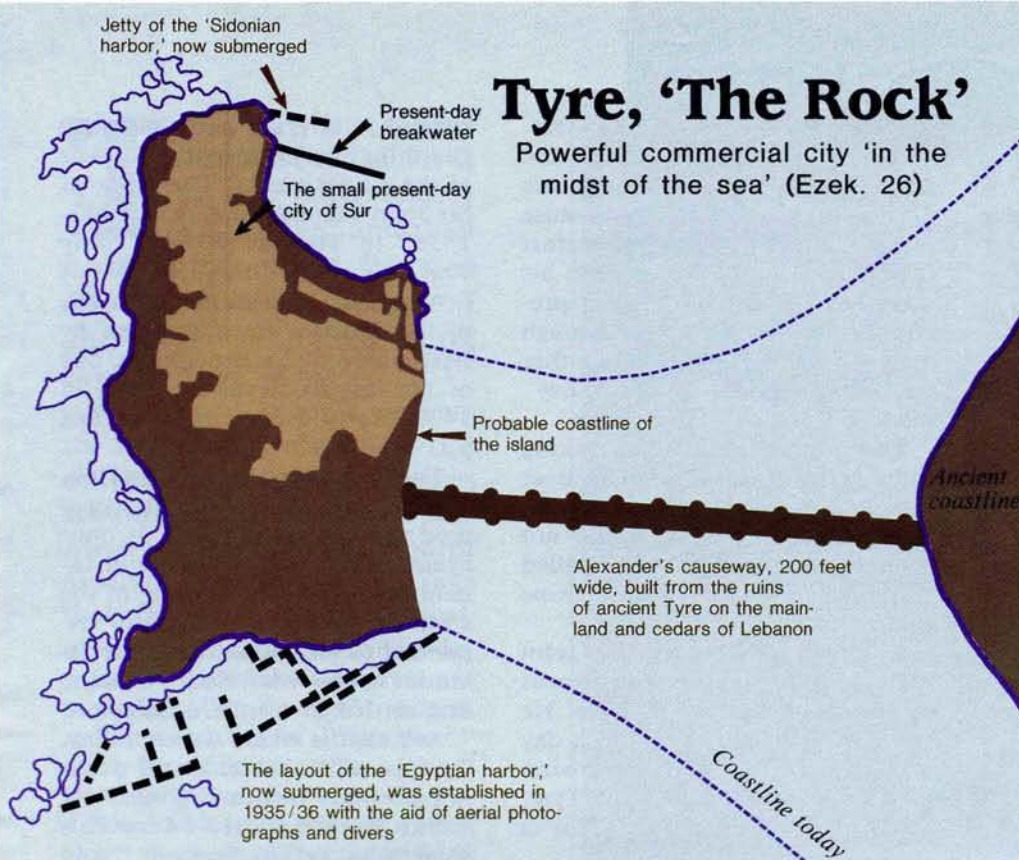
It did seem quite a challenge. After all, Adam Clarke, in his commentary, assured his readers that the Chaldean king Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Old Tyre on the mainland and it was "never rebuilt." And the island city with its ports was demolished by the Mamelukes from Egypt in A.D. 1291.

The truth is, the preacher and Adam Clarke were wrong. Ezekiel 26:20 makes it plain that Tyre will not finally be uninhabited until Jesus Christ returns.

Now consider the evidence of history.

Archaeologists have only begun to scratch the surface at Tyre. 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



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.

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 (Tyros) 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 . . . 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 take (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 Neb-

uchadnezzar's empty victory, the site of Old Tyre (Paleotyrus) was rebuilt—contrary to Adam Clarke and the preacher. 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 Neb-

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 the haven of Tyre, which is now called Sur. [This is

stroyed 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).

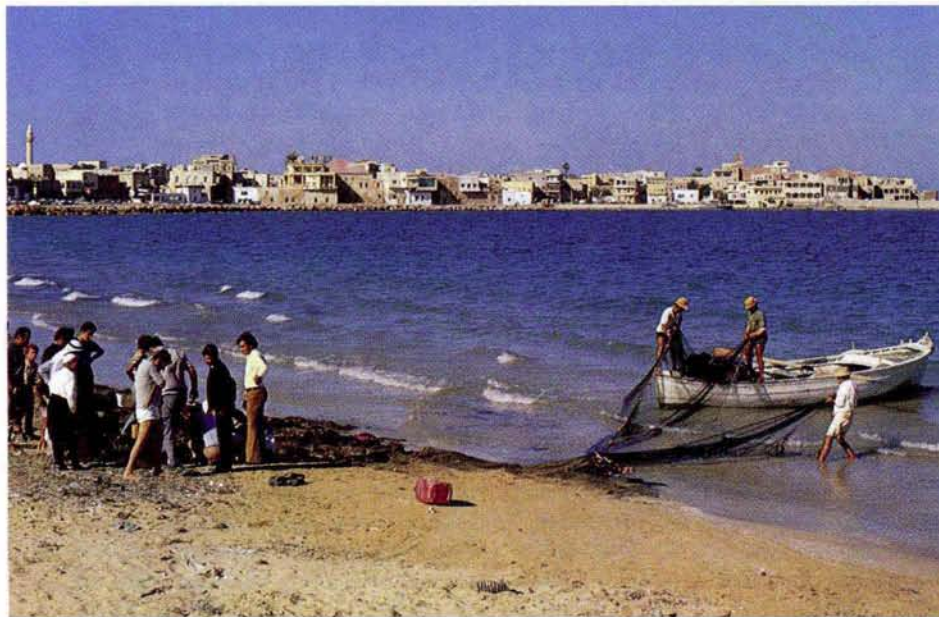
Tyre continued to sink into obscurity until the Metualis occupied the district in 1766. It once again grew to a few thousand inhabitants. With the coming of the state of Israel, Tyre rapidly expanded to accommodate those Islamic Arabs who fled Palestine and settled in southern Lebanon.

And that is where we are today. 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 millennia of accumulated 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. But the major part of the Phoenician city is covered by sand and the 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 the preacher assumed. It is a prophecy yet to be fulfilled by Jesus Christ when He brings peace to the world! □



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.

uchadnezzar. Suddenly, verse 12 uses the plural pronoun “they” to refer to Alexander and numerous other generals who came after him

the Arabic word for Tyre and means “rock.”] Here was once a great and good city of the Christians, but the Saracens have de-

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?

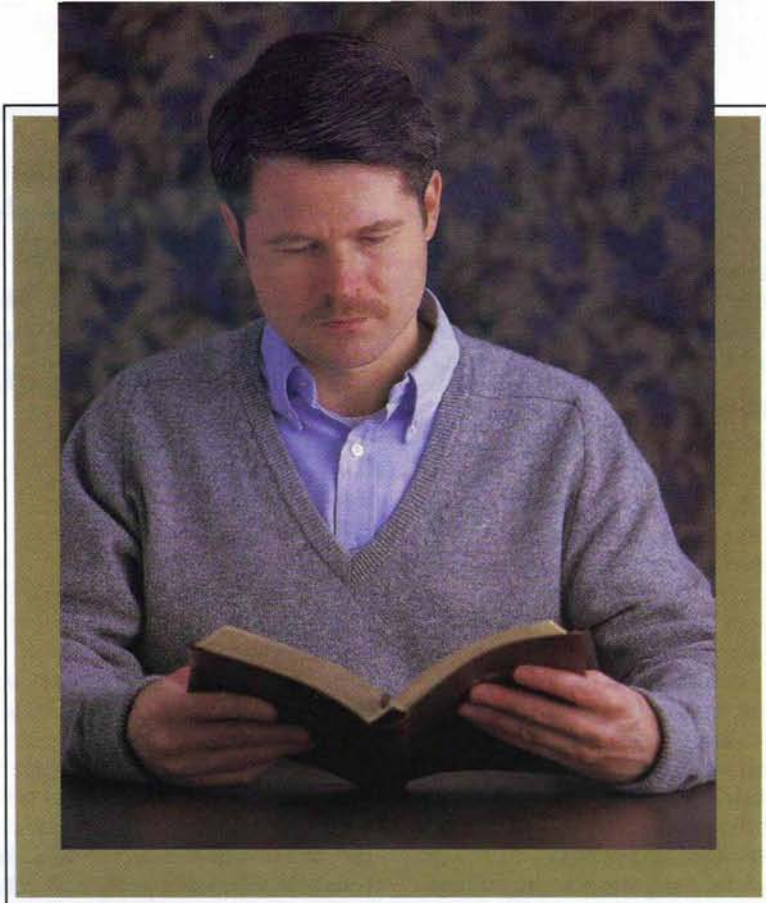
Bruce Barton once wrote a book about the Bible, entitled *The Book Nobody Knows*. Truly, many of those who believe in the Bible don't really believe it—because they don't believe what it says.

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 bigotry, hypocrisy and fear" (*Some Mistakes of Moses*).

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 was always promising, but never performed."

What about these claims? Many



Is the Bible INFALLIBLE?

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 [men-

tioned in the Bible] happened just 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 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 inspired the Bible in such a way that it can be misunderstood by those who disobey it.

Isaiah asked: "Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall

Through the prophet Isaiah God revealed that He inspired the Bible in such a way that it can be misunderstood by those who disobey it.

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" (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 5 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.

Not Easily Understood

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).

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

Most scientists, steeped in evolution, are unable to admit the possibility of an intelligent, all powerful Designer of the universe.

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]... *hangeeth 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 unable to admit the possibility of an intelligent, all-powerful Designer of the universe. 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 news-magazine *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).

The more research 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).

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 by what means he may attain that incredible potential.

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

Revealed 2,500 Years Ago

FEW understand that God revealed a most amazing prophecy in detail 2,500 years in advance for us today to read and take warning.

It's time we woke up to the proof of divine authority in this longest prophecy of the Bible. It's time we knew what the 11th chapter of the book of Daniel reveals. It's time we knew the background—the vital factors that have led up to this world danger—the significance of this series of crises!

Unveiling the Future!

This is one of the most amazing prophecies in the Bible. It is most specific, describing historical events, up to the present, in more detail than any other prophecy. It is the longest prophecy in the Bible. It is found in Daniel, chapter 11. It describes the impending war!

The prelude is found in the 10th chapter of the book of Daniel. The prophecy came to Daniel in the third year of the reign of Cyrus, king of the Persian Empire (Dan. 10:1). A "man," apparently the archangel Gabriel (Dan. 9:21), appears before Daniel, to make him understand what shall befall God's people in these present "latter days" (10:14).

Two Major Lines of Kings

The first verse of the 11th chapter is a continuation from the last verse of the 10th chapter. The an-

gel says to Daniel, "Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia. And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will" (Dan. 11:2-3).

Actually there were 12 more kings in the Persian Empire, but only the first four following Cyrus were of importance for the purpose of this prophecy. They were Cambyzes, pseudo-Smerdis, Darius and Xerxes. It was the last, or Xerxes, who was the richest of all and stirred up war with Greece.

Then King Philip of Macedonia planned a great war to conquer the Persian Empire, with an army made up mostly of Grecians. He died before the plans were completed. But his son, Alexander the Great, took over his plans, and invaded Persia. He met the Persian army at the Battle of Issus, 333 B.C. (Dan. 8:2, 5-6). Then he swept down into Egypt, and then to a final crushing defeat of the Persian Empire at the Battle of Arbella, 331 B.C. after which Alexander marched on a conquest clear to India, sweeping all before him.

Notice now verse 4 of the prophecy: "And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those."

How marvelously—how accurately—that came to pass. We quote from one of the authoritative English-language histories published in the last century, *A Manual of Ancient History* (Clarendon Press Series, 1880) by Rawlinson: "Cut off unexpectedly in the vigor of early manhood [the 33rd year of his age, June, 323 B.C.], he [Alexander] left no inheritor, either of his power or of his projects" (p. 208). The empire was left leaderless and in confusion, but out of this emerged, by the year 301 B.C., four divisions, just as prophesied, as a result of a division of the empire into four divisions by Alexander's generals. They were

1. Ptolemy Soter, ruling Egypt, part of Syria and Judea.

2. Seleucus Nicator, ruling Syria, Babylonia and territory east to India.

3. Lysimachus, ruling Asia Minor.

4. Cassander, ruling Greece and Macedonia.

Thus was the prophecy of verse 4 fulfilled to the letter.

Now notice what follows. From here the prophecy foretells the activities only of two of these four divisions: Egypt, called "king of the south," because it is south of Jerusalem; and the Syrian kingdom, the "king of the north," just north of Judea. It is because the Holy Land passed back and forth between those two divisions, and because their different wars were principally over possession of Judea, that the prophecy is concerned with them. Here is verse 5:

"And the king of the south [Egypt] shall be strong, and one of his princes; and he shall be strong above him, and have dominion; his dominion shall be a great dominion." In history, we learn that the original Ptolemy I, called Soter, became strong and powerful, developing Egypt beyond the greatest dreams of Alexander. One of his princes, or generals, Seleucus Nicator, also became strong and powerful. And, in 312 B.C., taking advantage of Ptolemy's being tied up in a war, he established himself in Syria, and assumed the diadem as king.

Verse 6 says, "And in the end of years they shall join themselves together; for the king's daughter of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement [margin, "rights" or "equitable conditions," or "marriage union"]: but she shall not retain the power of the arm; neither shall he stand, nor his arm: but she shall be given up, and they that brought her, and he that begat her, and he that strengthened her in these times."

Fulfilled to the Letter!

At the end of 50 years, this occurred exactly as described!

Syria's ruler, the king of the north, at this time was Antiochus II, called Theos. His wife was named Laodice. And, says Rawlinson's *Ancient History*, page 251, "Her influence . . . engaged him in a war with Ptolemy Philadelphus [king of the south], B.C. 260, which is terminated, B.C. 252, by a marriage between Antiochus and Bernice, Ptolemy's daughter."

The prophecy says "he that begat her" shall be given up. Also that she shall not retain the power of the arm, neither shall the king of the north, whom she married, stand. All three are to come to their end. Notice how accurately this came to pass.

Says Rawlinson's *History*, pages 251 and 252: "On the death of Philadelphus [he that begat her], B.C. 247, Antiochus repudiated Bernice, and took back his former wife, Laodice, who, however, doubtful of his constancy, murdered him to secure the throne for her son Seleucus (II) B.C. 246 . . . Bernice . . . had been put to death by Laodice."

Nowhere in all the Bible is there so literal a prophecy, giving so many details of future history. And to read an ancient history of these kingdoms is simply to see unfolded before your eyes, step by step, verse by verse, this marvelous prophecy. There can be no doubt of its right application!

The Holy Land Changes Hands

Next let us notice verse 7: "But out of a branch of her roots shall one stand up in his estate [margin,

"in his office"], which shall come with an army, and shall enter into the fortress of the king of the north, and shall deal against them, and shall prevail."

"Out of a branch," or "shoot," of her roots. Her parents were her roots. Hence, this must be her brother, who next should occupy the throne of king of the south and fulfill this prophecy. Now listen to this accurate fulfillment, quoted word for word from the same page of Rawlinson's work (p. 252):

"Ptolemy Euergetes [the III, eldest son of Philadelphus (p. 272) and therefore Bernice's brother, a branch of her roots] invaded Syria, B.C. 245, to avenge the murder of his sister, Bernice. . . . In the war which followed, he carried everything before him."

The eighth verse of Daniel 11 says this king of the south would carry captives and vessels of silver and gold into Egypt, and continue to reign more years than the king of the north, who at that time was Seleucus II, and verse 9 says he (Seleucus II) shall come into Egypt. As verse 7 said he should "enter into the fortress of the king of the north," Ptolemy III did seize the fortress of Syria, Seleu-

Both of these two sons of Seleucus II assembled immense forces to war against Egypt, avenge their father, and recover their port and fortress, Seleucia.

And this was accurately prophesied in verse 10: "But his sons shall be stirred up, and shall assemble a multitude of great forces: and one shall certainly come, and overflow, and pass through: then shall he return and be stirred up [margin, "be stirred up again"], even to his fortress."

"And," continues verse 11, "the king of the south shall be moved with choler, and shall come forth and fight with him, even with the king of the north: and he shall set forth a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into his hand."

In fulfillment of the latter part of verse 10, Antiochus the Great, after 27 years, recovered his fortress, Seleucia, and he also conquered the territory of Syria, as far as Gaza, including Judea. But the young Egyptian king, now Ptolemy IV (Philopator), was roused, and with an army of 20,000 inflicted severe defeat on Antiochus the Great; and fulfilling verse 12, he killed tens of thou-

When the coming revived Roman Empire takes the Holy Land, then the nations will be plunged into the initial phase of the crisis at the close of this age!

cia, the port of Antioch, capital of the kingdom! Then he carried back to Egypt immense booty and 2,500 molten images and idolatrous vessels which, in 526 B.C. Cambyses had carried away from Egypt. He continued to rule until 222 B.C., while the king of the north, Seleucus II, died in 226 B.C.

When he died, his two sons took over the kingdom of the north; first Seleucus III, 226-223 B.C., who ruled only three years, and then his brother Antiochus III, called "the Great," 223-187 B.C.

sands and again annexed Judea to Egypt. But he was not strengthened, for he made a rash and speedy peace with Antiochus, and returned to dissipation, throwing away the fruits of victory. Says verse 12, "And when he hath taken away the multitude, his heart shall be lifted up; and he shall cast down many ten thousands: but he shall not be strengthened by it ["prevail"—NKJ, RSV]."

"For," as verse 13 continues, "the king of the north shall return,

and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come after certain years with a great army and with much riches." It was "after certain years," or 12 years later, 205 B.C., that Ptolemy Philopator died, leaving his throne to an infant son, Ptolemy Epiphanes. Then Antiochus assembled a greater army, and won great victories.

He then made a treaty allying Philip of Macedonia with him, and others, against Egypt, and they wrested Phoenicia and southern Syria from the king of the south. In this they were assisted by some of the Jews. Josephus' Jewish history says many Jews helped Antiochus. But notice how accurately Almighty God had foretold this, hundreds of years before it happened:

"And in those times many shall rise up against the king of the South; also certain violent men of your people shall exalt themselves in fulfillment of the vision, but they shall fall" (v. 14, NKJ).

Read It in Your Own Bible!

To save space, the reader is asked from this point to read each verse of the prophecy from his own Bible, thus saving us reprinting the prophecy in full here. We give here only the facts in history.

Verses 15-16—"The glorious land," of course, refers to Judea, the Holy Land. Antiochus the Great besieged and took Sidon from Egypt, ruined the interests of Egypt in Judea at the Battle of Mount Panium, 198 B.C., and then Antiochus took possession of Judea.

Verse 17—"Upright ones" (see margin) in Hebrew means "equal conditions, or marriage," but the one for whom he arranges a marriage will not stand on his side. In 198 B.C., Antiochus arranged a marriage between his daughter, Cleopatra (not the Cleopatra of 31 B.C. in Egypt) and young Ptolemy Epiphanes, king of the south, by which he hoped subtly to gain complete possession of Egypt; but the plan failed.

Says Rawlinson, page 254, "Coele-Syria and Palestine promised as a dowry, but not de-

livered." Cleopatra did not truly stand on the side of Antiochus, for it was only a trick to gain possession of Egypt.

Verse 18—And so Antiochus turned his attention in another direction and tried to conquer, 197 to 196 B.C., the islands and coasts of Asia Minor. But the Roman general, Lucius Cornelius Scipio Asiaticus, utterly defeated him at the Battle of Magnesia, 190 B.C.

Verse 19—Antiochus next turned his attention to the fortresses of his own land, in the east and west. But, attempting to recruit his dissipated wealth by the plunder of the Oriental Temple of Belus, in Elymais, he was killed, 187 B.C.

Verse 20—Seleucus IV Philopator (187-176), his son, in an effort to raise money, sent a tax collector, Heliodorus, through Judea. But he reigned only 11 years, when Heliodorus poisoned him.

Verse 21—He left no heir. But his brother, a younger son of Antiochus the Great, named Epiphanes (Antiochus IV), a contemptible reprobate, came by surprise and through flattery took the kingdom. To his aid came his assistant, Eumenes. Rawlinson says, page 255, "Antiochus [Epiphanes], assisted by Eumenes, drives out Heliodorus, and obtains the throne, B.C. 176. He astonishes his subjects by an affectation of Roman manners" and "good-natured profuseness [flattery]."

Antiochus Epiphanes

Verse 22—"The prince of the covenant" does not refer to Christ. This was the attempt of Antiochus to replace the Jewish high priest by another who would be subservient to him.

Verses 23-24—Although only a few were with him at first, yet by this "Roman manner," by deceit and flattery, he crept into power and prospered. He also invaded Galilee and Lower Egypt. His fathers, the former kings of Syria, had favored the Jews, but says Rawlinson, page 255, they "were driven to desperation by the mad project of this self-willed monarch."

Verse 25—Rawlinson, pages 255-256, says, "Threatened with war by the ministers of Ptolemy Philometor [now king of the south], who claim Coele-Syria and Palestine as the dowry of Cleopatra, the late queen-mother, Antiochus marches against Egypt ... B.C. 171" (pp. 277-278). But he was met by his nephew, Ptolemy Philometor, king of the south, with another immense army. But the Egyptian king was defeated through the treachery of his own officers and was outwitted by Antiochus.

Verses 26-27—Continuing in Rawlinson, page 278: "After his victory at Pelusium, Antiochus advanced to Memphis, and having obtained possession of the young king's person [Ptolemy Philometor, king of the south], endeavored to use him as a tool for effecting the entire reduction of the country." In 174 B.C., the uncle of the king of the south sat at a banquet. Antiochus pretended to ally himself with the young Ptolemy, against his brother, Euergetes II, but each was trying to deceive the other.

The Abomination of Desolation

Verse 28—In 168 B.C., returning from Egypt with great plunder, Antiochus set himself against the Jews, massacred many, and then returned to Antioch with golden vessels from the Temple at Jerusalem.

Verse 29—The same year, he again invaded Egypt, but with none of his former success, because Philometor, king of the south, got help from Rome.

Verse 30—The Roman fleet came against Antiochus, he was forced to surrender to the terms of Popilius, commander of the Roman fleet, and retire from Egypt and restore Cyprus to Egypt. Returning through Judea, smarting under the defeat, he vented his exasperation against the Jews, and extended special favors to those Jews who would turn from their religion.

Verse 31—Then, 167 B.C., the next year, came the climax of the horror. Antiochus sent troops to the Holy Land, who desecrated

the Temple and sanctuary, abolished the daily sacrifice (see also Daniel 8:11, 24) and (Kislev 15, Hebrew calendar) placed the abomination—an image—on the altar in the Temple precincts, making it desolate (Rawlinson, p. 255). Many who claim to teach the Bible try to apply the prophecy of this verse to Moslems in the seventh century A.D., building the Dome of the Rock on the supposed site of the ancient Temple at Jerusalem! But every verse of this prophecy, step by step, verse by verse, unfolded in actual history, just as here recounted, so there can be not the slightest shadow of doubt as to this abomination that “maketh desolate”—it was the armies that set up an idol in 167 B.C.

The Prophecy Comes to Christ and the Apostles

Verse 32—Antiochus tried to end the religion of the Jews. He took away the daily sacrifice, forbade the ministration at the Temple. He perverted by flatteries the Jews who were willing to forsake their religion.

But, right here, the prophecy cuts off from the continuation of events in the history of those ancient north and south kingdoms. Up to this point, the prophecy was unfolded, step by step, in the actual history of the northern kingdom of the Seleucidae, or Syria, and the southern kingdom of Egypt. But, say most commentaries, all accurate details seem suddenly to stop short with this verse.

Now let us notice verse 32 in detail, and particularly the last part:

“And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries.” This, Antiochus Epiphanes did do. But now notice the last part of the verse: “but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.”

So our question now is, when, beginning with and following 167 B.C., did people begin to know God and to be spiritually strong and to do exploits in the Lord’s service? The answer is, at the time of the Maccabees, beginning in 166 B.C., and, two centuries later, at the first appearing of Jesus Christ and in the days of the apostles!

Verse 33—“And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days.”

Jesus and the apostles did instruct many. But Jesus was put to death, and history indicates that

17. And notice the vision carries on down to this present time of the end.

Verse 36—The king of the north—who is he, now, in the early and middle New Testament times, to which our prophecy has come? In 65 B.C., Syria was swallowed up by the Roman Empire, and became a Roman province. The Roman emperor now controlled Judea, and therefore the king of the north, here referred to, is, at this time, the emperor of the Roman Empire. This verse says he should do according to his will, and he did—exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god—and he did; for the Roman emperors required all to worship them and sacrifice to them as a god. He was as a god. He was to speak against the true God, and he did, and persecuted all Christians.

Verse 37—His fathers had worshiped idols, but the Roman emperors set themselves up as gods.

Verse 38—The Roman emperors honored the god of forces, or (margin) munitions, and developed the greatest war-making power the world ever knew. “And a god whom his fathers knew not shall he

honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things.” After setting themselves up as gods, before A.D. 476, the emperors who followed, beginning with Justinian, A.D. 554, began to honor with gold, silver and power a god in a high religious office never known to their fathers. (Compare this prophecy of Daniel with Revelation 17:4, 5, and 18:3, 16.)

Verse 39—The emperors did acknowledge the supremacy of religion, increased it with material glory and caused it to rule over many.

Prophecy Skips to Present

Now we come to the very present century.



King Menelik (left) and Benito Mussolini (right) had roles in the end-time fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecy.

all the early apostles were martyred, except John. And this continued many days, even into the Middle Ages, when millions were martyred for their faith.

Verse 34—“Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries. And [verse 35] some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed.”

Here is described in general the whole course of God’s people, from the days of Christ to the present. Compare with such passages as Revelation 12:6, 11, 13-

Verse 40—"And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him..." Who is today the "king of the south"?

It cannot be the king of Egypt, for in 31 B.C. Egypt became a province of the Roman Empire, swallowed up by the king of the north. Today Egypt is a republic ruled by native Arabs. It has no king of its own.

But, in the reign of Ptolemy III Euergetes (verse 7), 247-222 B.C., Egypt annexed part of Ethiopia, immediately south of Egypt (Rawlinson, pp. 272, 273). Since that time, the 11th edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* says (article "Ethiopia") Egypt and Ethiopia were two or three times under the same government. Thus, the two were as one land. And the only portion of that land of the "king of the south" that remained independent until the 20th century is Ethiopia!

Ethiopia, the King of the South

Ethiopia was the only country in all East Africa that continued independent, and had a government and kingdom dating back before the Roman Empire. It was the southern part of the kingdom of the south. So it is the only possible government that could be the king of the south.

At the time of the end—our time—this king of the south was to push at the king of the north, now at Rome!

In 1895 King Menelik, of Ethiopia, sent an army of 9,000 to 10,000 men against General Baratieri's Italian army.

North of Ethiopia was Eritrea, belonging to Italy. And southeast was Italian Somaliland.

In 1896 General Baratieri with 13,000 men tried to defend Eritrea against the Ethiopians. They lost 4,600 whites and 3,000 native troops, and more than 3,500 were taken prisoner.

In a later engagement the Italians were cut to pieces because of their inexperience in fighting in

mountainous country and because they were greatly outnumbered. This defeat was disastrous to Italian expansion in Africa.

Ever since, Italy demanded revenge! In 1927 Mussolini set the time, at just 40 years from that defeat, or 1935, when he would be ready "finally to make our voice heard, and see our rights recognized!"

1935 came. The hour struck! Mussolini attacked! Now notice verse 40: "... and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over."

A whirlwind comes in the air, sweeping all before it. Mussolini did send a great air force into Africa! Also many modern "chariots"—trucks, tanks, etc.—and ships, loaded with soldiers. More than 100,000 sailed to Ethiopia.

And, notice it, Mussolini's forces were to pass over—in the air! It is at this precise point in this astounding prophecy that Mussolini's struggle in Ethiopia and in World War II ended. Mussolini did not finish the prophecy. There is yet another leader to arise in Europe! Notice what will next happen!

Verse 41—"He shall enter also into the glorious land..."—the Holy Land. This is yet to be fulfilled.

When the coming revival of the Roman Empire takes the Holy Land, then the nations will be plunged into the initial phase of the great, last and final crisis at the close of this age! Other prophecies reveal that this revival of the Roman Empire will bring into subjection the U.S. and Britain! (Request our free booklet *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*.)

"And," continues verse 41, "many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the chil-

dren of Ammon"—the modern land of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The coming dictator will unite many others with him—10 in all (Rev. 17:12)—reviving the ancient Roman Empire.

Verse 42 says Egypt shall not escape, proving Egypt is not now the "king of the south."

Verse 43 says the Libyans and Ethiopians (observe that after its conquest by Mussolini, Ethiopia is not again referred to as the king of the south) shall be at his steps—and he will then control them. Italy lost control of Libya and Ethiopia after the war.

Verse 44—But news out of the east and out of the north—Russia and the Orient—shall trouble the revived Roman Empire. Russia will enter the war!

Verse 45—The coming Roman Empire shall establish its palace, as capital of the revived Roman Empire, and eventually its religious headquarters, at Jerusalem! Zechariah 14:2 says the city shall be taken! "Yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him"! This language signifies the end of the "beast" and the "false prophet" at the hand of God! You will find this end described in Revelation 19:19-20 and Zechariah 14:12.

And now what is the time of this end, at the close of this marvelous prophecy? The next verse, Daniel 12:1, says at the time of the resurrection of the just—at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ!

This prophecy begins with the kingdoms of Syria and Egypt, soon after the death of Alexander the Great—2,300 years ago. But it ends at the time of the resurrection and the Second Coming of Christ to bring peace at last to the region—and to the entire world! It is so plain, there can be no doubt of its right application!

Are you ready for that event? Are you any longer a skeptic? It is fast approaching. Now is the time to get ready, for Jesus said, "Be ye also ready"! □

Does God's Word Contain ERRORS?

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

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," skeptics cannot 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 to support their doubts.

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

Jeconiah, 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). Jeconiah 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

A Bible Mistake?

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.

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.

Matthew's "mistakes"

Matthew 27:1-9 presents three difficulties, according to skeptics. The first concerns the death of

There are, in the Bible, discrepancies that might at first appear to be errors. Under examination they prove not to be errors.

Judas. Matthew says Judas died by hanging himself. But in Acts 1:18, Peter says Judas fell.

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.

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 Judas had made arrangements to buy the field. But 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.

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

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 "Bel-sarusus"—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.

The Bible is what we are to live by—and by it a few now are being judged. We need to study this inspired and inerrant Word of God.

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.

Measurement of time

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.

There are, in the Bible, discrepancies that might at first appear to be errors. Under examination they prove not 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.

The Bible is the inspired Word of God and we can rely on its trustworthiness. It is a sure foundation for our faith. □

The Stones Cry Out and Confirm Bible History!

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



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” reasoning 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).

Many scholars unfortunately 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

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 accuracy 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!

Nevertheless, the past 150 years have witnessed remarkable archaeological confirmation of the Old Testament.

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 in Egypt by

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, employing 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 schol-



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

ars were able to translate the Babylonian and Elamite portions soon afterwards.

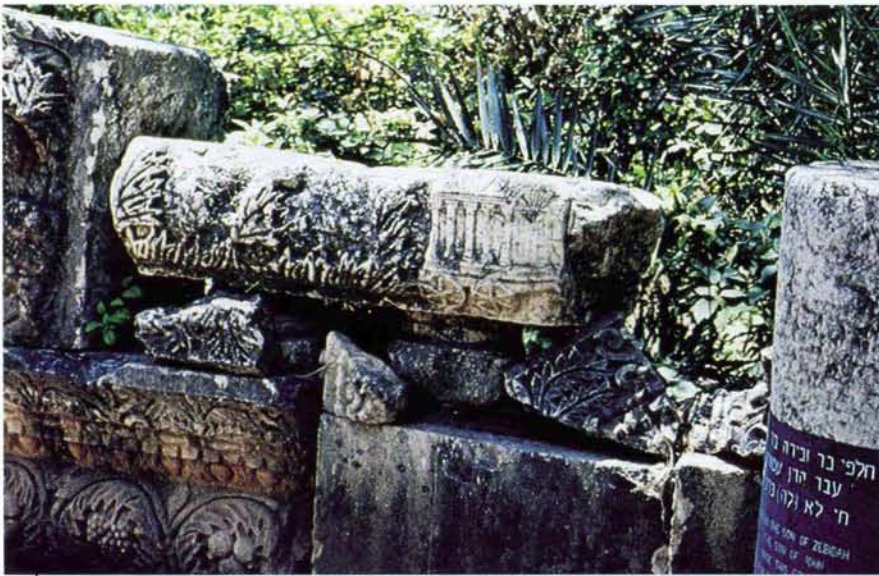
The trilingual Behistun Inscription thus proved to be the vital key to ancient cuneiform writing—just as the famous Rosetta Stone had unlocked the mysteries of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics. The writings unearthed at hundreds of sites throughout the Near East could now be understood!

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 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! 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 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.

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.

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 communiques 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 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 has been thought that the scrolls had been part of a library belonging to the Essenes. 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?

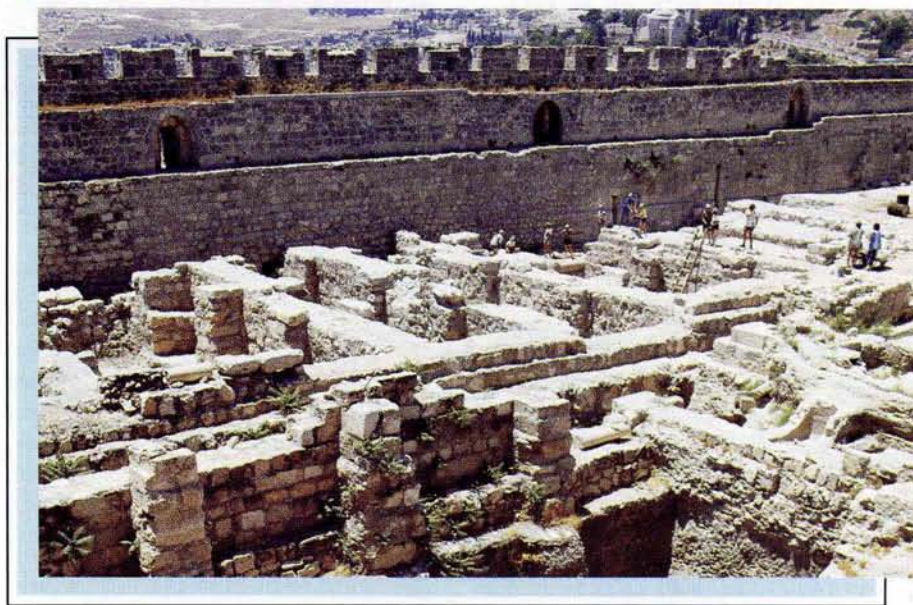
Many efforts have been made to establish the historicity of the Flood or Noachian Deluge (Gen. 5-8) by archaeological means. The Flood account has probably been one of the most assailed of all biblical narratives.

Though many critics continue to relegate the story to the realm of myth, this is more a result of their refusal to accept the possibil-

ity 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 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 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 Akkadian Dynasty 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 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 an-

cient 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 sur-

prise 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).

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 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! □



Scattered stones and mosaics on the site of Capernaum echo Christ's prediction that the once-bustling international city would fall into insignificance (page 22); a mud-brick city gate, built about the time of Abraham in the wall of the city that later became known as Dan (page 23); a second-century representation of the ark of the

covenant, from a synagogue at Capernaum (page 24); at Jerusalem, the Omayyad Palace with older Byzantine building in the foreground and, in the background, a wall built by the Crusaders (page 25); and the Jerusalem diggings near the dome of the Al Aksa Mosque in the background (this page).

Ask, and You SHALL Receive...

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 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).

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 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.

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! □

...And Reap the Blessings

The Bible is true. Its authority, accuracy and timeliness are unquestionable. In this special brochure 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. 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.

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 transgression 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. □

"Thou Shalt NOT!"



The Ten Commandments represent God's eternal law of love. These great positive and negative principles are in force today. In fact, the breaking of them is the direct cause of all the unhappiness in today's world. To find out how each of the Ten Commandments applies to your personal life, write for your free copy of the booklet titled *The Ten Commandments*.

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