

# Is The Bible True?

*Is Jesus truly the Messiah?*

*Is the Bible historically accurate?*

*What evidence is there about the Bible?*

*Can the Bible really change my life?*

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## IS THE BIBLE TRUE?

Determined and proud, Captain William Bligh of the British ship "Bounty," drove his crew to the point of desperation as they sailed the South Pacific in 1789. Mutineers, led by Fletcher Christian, took control of the "Bounty" and forced Bligh and 18 non-mutineers into a 23-foot boat with little food or water. The captain and his skeleton crew miraculously sailed 3,900 miles across the Pacific to the Dutch colony of Timor, in what is now Indonesia. In the meantime, nine of the mutineers settled on Pitcairn, a 2-mile square island in the South Pacific, 5,000 miles east of Australia. These sailors brought 19 Polynesians with them – 6 men, 12 women, and a young girl. This new "civilization" was characterized by drunkenness, immorality, and fighting, and resulted in only one mutineer, John Adams, being left alive. Adams rummaged through old barrels from their ship looking for more whiskey. Instead of alcohol, he found a Bible. He read the Bible, trusted Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord and began to practice and teach the Scriptures among the people on Pitcairn. In 1808, an American ship discovered the mutineer's hideout and civilized group of God-fearing people living in a virtual paradise.

Today, about 80 people live on Pitcairn. Most are descendants of "The Bounty" mutineers and their Polynesian wives and possess a strong faith in Jesus Christ. Their chapel contains, under glass, the Bible John Adams found and used to transform their destiny.<sup>1</sup>

The Bible claims to be the Word of God thousands of times and has been used throughout history to transform millions of lives.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 in the New Testament says, "*All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching,*

*for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."*

Note that the Scripture is inspired, not the human authors. Inspired literally means "God breathed." Scripture is sourced in God and "breathed out" to man.

2 Peter 1:20-21 says, *"But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."*

God used the language, culture, and writing style of each biblical author to record exactly what God wanted recorded. Note that verse 21 says that the authors were not moved by their own will, but by the Holy Spirit. The word translated "moved" literally means "borne along." The same phrase is used in the Book of Acts to describe a ship being moved along by the wind over the sea. The Holy Spirit "moved" the authors to write what God wanted written while maintaining their unique style.

Inspiration of Scripture asserts that the Bible speaks with authority and, therefore, what it affirms to be true is true whether it be scientific, historical, or spiritual. If the Bible is the inspired Word of God, then one would expect a solid trail of evidence to support the claim.

- One would expect the Bible to be the unique book in history – with no close rival.
- One would expect it to contain the supernatural, like prophecy, predicting events in the future that literally came true.
- One would expect it to be historically reliable.
- One would expect it to be a book that changes the lives of people for the better

The Bible fulfills these expectations.

<sup>1</sup>World Book Encyclopedia, 1988 edition, Vol. 2, "B", p. 416 (Bligh, Williams); Vol. 15, "P", p. 504 (Pitcairn Island)

<sup>2</sup>A Ready Defense, Josh McDowell, Compiled by Bill Wilson, pp. 27-28; Here's Life Publishers, Inc., Oct., 1990.

<sup>3</sup>A General Introduction to the Bible, Geisler, Norman L. and Nix, William E., p. 123-124; Chicago, Moody Press, 1968.

<sup>4</sup>A Ready Defense, Josh McDowell, Compiled by Bill Wilson, p. 29; Here's Life Publishers, Inc., Oct., 1990.

<sup>5</sup>Many Infallible Proofs, Morris, Henry, p. 229; Master Books, 1974, El Cajon, Ca

<sup>6</sup>Science Speaks, Stone, Peter, pp. 101-108; Chicago, Moody Press 1963.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid, pp. 72-79

<sup>8</sup>Rivers in the Desert, Glueck, Norman, p. 31; New York, Farrar-Streus & Giroux, Inc., 1959.

<sup>9</sup>St. Paul, the Traveler and Roman Citizen, Ramsey, William, pp. 81, 222; Grand Rapids, Baker, 1962

<sup>10</sup>When Skeptics Ask, Geisler, Norman, p. 103; Victor Books

<sup>11</sup>The Books and the Parchments, Bruce, F.F., p. 117; Westwood-Fleming-Revell, 1953.

<sup>12</sup>Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts, Kenyon, Fredrick, p. 38, New York, Harper & Row, 1941.

<sup>13</sup>Encyclopedia of Bible?, Archer, Gleason, p. 25, Zondervan

<sup>14</sup>Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts, Kenyon, Fredrick, p. 23; New York, Harper & Row, 1941.

<sup>15</sup>Class Notes – Dr. Donald Launstein; Western Baptist Seminary, 1976.

- 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, *“He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”*
- Galatians 3:13 says, *“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us – for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.’”*

The God of the universe raised Jesus Christ from the dead, demonstrating that He is the Son of God and that His payment for your sins was accepted by God. Jesus Christ wants to come into your life and empower you with his lovely presence. The only requirement is that you believe. Believe in the biblical sense means “to rely on” or “trust in.” It is an act of the will. Will you choose to rely on Jesus Christ to pay for your sins and to give you eternal life? Before I trusted Christ, the Bible was to me a dull, uninteresting book full of contradictions. After I trusted Jesus Christ, the Bible became the foundation for my life. The evidence of the Bible’s trustworthiness is abundant. What will your verdict be? Let the Word of God transform you as it did John Adams and the people of Pitcairn.

## The Uniqueness of the Bible

The Bible possesses a profound **unity** found in no other book. Its sixty-six books combine to form one book. The Scriptures were written over a period of fifteen hundred years by forty-five plus authors. These authors lived on three different continents (Africa, Europe, and Asia), and spoke three different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek). They were peasants, fishermen, politicians, kings, farmers, prisoners, soldiers, and doctors. In spite of these vast differences, the sixty-six books form one harmonious story with agreement on hundreds of controversial subjects.<sup>2</sup>

Gather five people, who speak the same language, share the same culture and background, and possess the same world view. Put them in a room and ask them to write, individually, on one controversial subject. The product of their labors would not be one harmonious book with a single story line, possessing no contradictions. Yet the Bible speaks on hundreds of controversial subjects and never contradicts itself. Forty-five plus authors, writing over a period of fifteen hundred years, unfold a unified story line that would have been impossible to collaborate.

The Bible has been **miraculously preserved**. It has been banned, burned, and viciously attacked generation after generation. The French skeptic and opponent of Christianity, Voltaire, arrogantly asserted that by the end of his century, the Bible would not longer exist. Fifty years after he made that prediction, the Geneva Bible Society used his home and his printing press to produce thousands of Bibles!<sup>3</sup> There is not other book with greater world-wide circulation that continues to be the world’s number one best-seller. No other book rivals the Bible in the number of languages into which it has been translated – to date, 1,700!<sup>4</sup>

As an ancient spiritual book, the Bible possesses a unique **non-myth-like** character. Compare the Bible to all other sacred books from other religions, and its uniqueness is dramatic. Its miracles are rooted in sober history. In seminary, I studied the myth-tales of the flood and creation from all over the world. Compare those to the biblical account and the difference is obvious. The biblical account is sober and follows a logical sequence. The other accounts take the original Genesis story line and add myth and fantasy.

The Bible is the most ancient of books. Herodotus, “the father of history,” wrote about the time that Nehemiah and Malachi were being recorded in the Old Testament. Homer wrote about the time that 1 Samuel was being penned.<sup>5</sup> The Bible displays a profound uniqueness in its unity, preservation, circulation, non-myth-like character, and age.

### Biblical Prophecy

When the Bible was written, more than one-fourth of it was prophetic – predictions of the future. The Jews had a way of getting rid of false prophets that worked very well.

Deuteronomy 18:20-22 says:

*“But the prophet who shall speak a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he shall speak in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. And you may say in your heart, ‘How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken? When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.’”*

My professor also told the story of an Eskimo.

*This Eskimo lived in the north, far away from civilization. Once a year, he would come into town to get supplies. On one visit he met a man selling Bibles. Somebody said to him, “Don’t buy that book. It’s the devil’s book.” This provoked the Eskimo, so he bought one. He took the Bible home with him. He told his Eskimo wife not to bother him as he was reading this book to find out if it was God’s book or the devil’s. He read through the whole Bible in one sitting. When he was finished he said to his wife, “I think it’s God’s book, not the devil’s. I’m going to read it again.” He read through the whole Bible again and embraced Christ as his Savior and Lord. He began to teach the Scriptures to his family and community. Years went by and when missionaries finally reached his area, they found a growing, thriving church where Jesus Christ was honored and the Scriptures taught!<sup>15</sup>*

The Bible has the power to change your life if you believe its message! The Bible’s message is that God has His arms open wide to you. He is seeking a personal love relationship with you. He has entered the human race in the person of Jesus Christ and has already paid for your sins. The Supreme Court of the Universe has declared that all of your sins – past, present and future – were laid on Christ. They are paid for.

- 1 Peter 3:18 says, “For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit.”
- Isaiah 53:6 says, “All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.”

Jesus said in John 8:31-32:

*“ . . . If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”*

There are hundreds of additional promises given to the believer about the power of Scripture to change lives.

One of my seminary professors, Dr. Donald Laustein, had a hobby of collecting and documenting stories from missionaries. To qualify for his collection, the stories had to fit these criteria: (1) it must be documented; and (2) the stories were to be of people whose lives were transformed through reading the Bible with no human messenger involved. The professor fascinated us with many amazing stories. I remember two that impressed me.

A story from South America in the early 1900's of a bandit:

*The bandit lived in the wilderness and waited for travelers to come through so he could kill and rob them. One day a preacher passed through and the bandit killed him and found in his pocket a little book, the New Testament. The bandit enjoyed the book because he could tear the pages out and use them to roll his cigarettes and smoke every night. Each night he would sit by the campfire, pull out another page, and smoke it. One night he was bored and decided to read the book. He soon stopped his nightly ritual of burning its pages and instead eagerly read them. He believed the Bible's message, repented of his sins and became a preacher of the Gospel of Christ.<sup>15</sup>*

There are two thousand prophecies in the Old Testament alone, with a gap between the Old Testament and the New Testament of four hundred years. Examine hundreds of prophecies from the Old Testament age that were fulfilled in the New Testament age and the miraculous nature of the Bible is evident.

### Prophecies Concerning the Messiah

Sixty specific prophecies in the Old Testament about the one God-Man, tells us where He would be born, where He would live, and what He would be like, His death on the cross, and His resurrection. In addition to those 60, there are 273 ramifications of the sixty, a total of 333 prophecies about the coming Messiah, all fulfilled in one person, Jesus Christ.

In his book, Science Speaks, Peter Stoner discusses the probability that any man might have lived from the day of these prophecies down to the present time and have fulfilled all the Messianic prophecies. The probability of only eight, not 333, of these being fulfilled in the life of one man is one in ten to the seventeenth power. Stone says that would be like going to the State of Texas, filling it two feet deep with silver dollars, blindfolding a man, marking one of the silver dollars with a red X, letting him walk through the State and he gets one pick. The probability that he would select the right silver dollar is the same probability of one man fulfilling only eight of the prophecies about the Messiah. Stoner also considered the possibility of sixteen prophecies being fulfilled in the life of one man a chance of 1 in 10<sup>45</sup>. “Take this number of silver dollars. If you make these into a solid ball, you will have a great sphere with a center at the earth, and extending in all directions more than 30 times as far as from the earth to the sun. Imagine marking one of these silver dollars, and the blindfolding a man and telling him to pick out one

dollar. The probability that he would select the marked dollar is the same as just sixteen of the prophecies being fulfilled in Jesus Christ.<sup>6</sup>

Yet Jesus Christ fulfilled, not 8 or 16, but hundreds of prophecies. This same Jesus said that the Bible is the Word of God. He confirmed the historicity of Adam and Eve, Jonah, Moses, Elijah, Sodom and Gomorrah, and the complete authority of the Scriptures.

### Prophecies Concerning Nations

One of my favorite passages in the Old Testament is Daniel, Chapter 11. This one chapter contains 135 specific prophecies, all literally fulfilled in history, including a prophecy about Cleopatra!

Ezekiel 16:1-5 pre-records God's judgment on an ancient empire, Tyre.

<sup>1</sup>Now in the eleventh year, on the first of the month, the word of the LORD came to me saying,  
<sup>2</sup>"Son of man, because Tyre has said concerning Jerusalem, 'Aha, the gateway of the peoples is broken; it has opened to me. I shall be filled, now that she is laid waste,'  
<sup>3</sup>therefore thus says the Lord GOD, 'Behold, I am against you, O Tyre, and I will bring up many nations against you, as the sea brings up its waves.  
<sup>4</sup>"They will destroy the walls of Tyre and break down her towers; and I will scrape her debris from her and make her a bare rock.  
<sup>5</sup>"She will be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea, for I have spoken,' declares the Lord GOD, 'and she will become spoil for the nations.'"

### The Bible's Power to Change People's Lives

The Bible claims to have the power to radically change the lives of those who hear and apply its message. 1 Peter 1:23 says:

*"... For you have been born again not of seed, which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God."*

Hebrews 4:12 says:

*"for the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."*

Psalm 1:1-3 gives us a wonderful promise:

*"<sup>1</sup>How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers!  
<sup>2</sup>But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night.  
<sup>3</sup>He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers."*

Joshua 1:8-9 says:

*"This book of the law shall not depart from our mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."*

Testament Hebrew Scriptures. They would wash, wear certain robes, and be in a certain room under watch-care, before they would begin to make copies. They counted every single letter, and found the middle letter. Once a copy was made, they would count the letter again, and if the middle letter didn't match the original, they would tear it up and start all over again! This elaborate process resulted in the preservation of the Old Testament with amazing accuracy.<sup>11</sup>

In 1947, the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered. These Old Testament Scrolls pre-dated the Massorete text by one thousand years. Compare the Dead Sea Scrolls to what the Massorettes had and they are virtually identical!<sup>13</sup>

The New Testament fares even better! We have more than 24,000 different manuscript copies of portions of the New Testament. Schools of textual criticism study ancient copies of the New Testament to discover if any changes occurred through the years. Dr. Frederic Kenyon, who spent forty years of his life as a textual critic, says, "The Christian can take the whole Bible in his hand and say without fear or hesitation, that he holds in it the true Word of God handed down without essential loss from generation to generation throughout the centuries. We possess the text of the Bible today in a form that is substantially identical with the originals."<sup>14</sup> You cannot say that about any other piece of literature! Kenyon says further, "It cannot be too strongly asserted that in substance the text of the Bible is certain, especially as in the case of the New Testament. The number of manuscripts of the New Testament, the early translations from it, quotations from the oldest writings of the church, is so large that it is practically certain that the true reading of every doubtful passage is preserved in some form or another of the ancient authorities." This can be said of no other book in the whole world.

If you continue to read Ezekiel, Chapter 26, you will discover seven specific prophecies concerning the destruction of Tyre. Peter Stoner, in the book *Science Speaks*, says that the probability of all seven coming true is one in 75 million! Yet, history records their fulfillment exactly as God said. Ezekiel 27, verse 7 says, "For thus says the Lord God, 'Behold, I will bring upon Tyre from the north Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, king of kings, with horses, chariots cavalry, and a great army.'" Four years after Ezekiel made this prophecy, it was fulfilled. Nations led by Nebuchadnezzar surrounded Tyre. The people of Tyre fled to a small island and Nebuchadnezzar ended the siege. Four hundred years go by. Will the prophecy be fulfilled? Alexander the Great, attacked Tyre. He ordered his troops to scrape ancient Tyre into the sea, forming a causeway out to the island city. He used the causeway to defeat Tyre. Tyre, today, is a flat, bare rock. The Arabs in the area say it is cursed and will never be rebuilt. Fisherman lay their nets to dry on the bare rocks as Ezekiel prophesied thousands of years before! Two thousand of these kinds of prophecies are recorded in the Old Testament.

### Prophecies Concerning the Jews

The fact that the Jews still exist as a distinct people today, while other ancient peoples have long ago perished, demonstrates the authority of Scripture.

- God promised Abraham in Genesis 12:2 that his descendants would become a great nation. That was fulfilled.
- Genesis 15:13-16 says, <sup>13</sup>*God said to Abram, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. <sup>14</sup>But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come*

*out with many possessions. <sup>15</sup>"As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age. <sup>16</sup>"Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete."* This was all literally fulfilled.

- Isaiah and Daniel prophesied Israel's captivity in Babylon for 70 years and their return to Jerusalem. This was literally fulfilled.
- The Hebrew prophets proclaimed that in the latter days, they would come from every nation and become a strong people again. In 1948, Israel became a nation. It was also prophesied that they would continue to be like a weight around the nations' necks and conflicts would constantly surround Israel. This is true today. This area of Biblical prophecy alone is enough to convince us that the Bible is the Word of God.

### The Bible is Historically Reliable

In Israel today, there are over 25,000 different archeological sites built around specific cities and events mentioned in the Old Testament. The Bible's accuracy is astounding! For example, for years the only record of 40 kings mentioned in the Old Testament were not recorded any other place but in the Bible. Archeology has discovered all 40. Today, you can earn your doctorate by studying those 40 kings!

The Bible asserts that Moses wrote the first books of the Old Testament. For years critics said that Moses could not have written these books because there were no languages in his day. Today, you can get your Ph.D. in six different languages, spoken not only in Moses' time, but all the way back to Abraham! Moses was a well-educated man who could have easily written those first five books.

The Hittites are mentioned 40 times in the Old Testament. In the early nineteenth century, there was no record of the Hittites ever existing except in the biblical account. Today, you can go back to those same universities which questioned the Bible because of the Hittites and major in Hittiteology! The Bible was right all along. Nelson Glueck, renowned Jewish archeologist, made this remarkable statement: ". . . It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference."<sup>8</sup>

The New Testament books of Luke and Acts were written by Dr. Luke, the Apostle Paul's traveling companion. The great historian, Sir William Ramsey spent his life studying the sites and the places mentioned in Luke and Acts, and says "Luke's history is unsurpassed in respect of its trustworthiness"<sup>9</sup> Luke cited 32 countries, 42 cities, and 9 islands and never made a mistake.<sup>10</sup> He also referred to many names of political leaders and when they served, but no other ancient sources referred to these leaders. Archeologists have documented that Luke was right each time.

In December, 1974, Time Magazine did a feature article on the Bible. The article ended by saying, "After more than two centuries facing the heaviest scientific guns that could be brought to bear, the Bible survived, and it is better for the siege. Even on the critics' own terms, historical fact, the Scriptures seem more acceptable now than they did when the rationalists began the attack."

### The Biblical Manuscript Evidence

Today, we possess the text of the Bible that is virtually identical to the original.

The Masoretes who lived from 500-900 A.D. had an elaborate system for making copies of the Old