

INTRODUCTION TO BIBLE APOLOGETICS

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PREFACE

The Bible contains many major doctrines to lead us to salvation and eternal life: the sinfulness of man, our inability to save ourselves, our need for a Savior, the need for repentance and faith, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and many others.

This book is not written to expound on any of those doctrines. Instead, it is written to answer objections by those who do not care about Christian doctrine because they do not believe that the Bible is the Word of God. Some would say that is just an old book full of Jewish fables, that it is full of errors and contradictions, or that it has been copied, recopied, translated, and retranslated so many times that we cannot be sure that what we have is what was originally written. Such a person would not care what the Bible says about anything.

On the other hand, many do care what the Bible says. But if asked how they know the Bible is true, they often say “By faith.” This is wrong! If the Bible is true it is true whether you believe it or not; if it is false it is false whether you believe it or not. We know the Bible is true not only because of faith but also because of historical fact and solid evidence.

The most important evidence for the truth of the Christian faith is the testimony of over 500 eyewitnesses who saw Jesus after He rose from the dead (1 Cor. 15:3-8) and were willing to die rather than change their story. As will be seen in the following pages, though, there is far more evidence than this.

Though one could spend years learning how to defend the authority and accuracy of the Bible, this book is intended for those who want a quick introduction to the subject. It is intended as a stand alone course in Bible Apologetics, which should then lead to a lifelong study of the Word of God.

“... for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.” Psalms 138:2

INTRODUCTION TO BIBLE APOLOGETICS

CHAPTER 1

What does it mean to know things?

Visual
#1-1

There are many religions in the world. Why do we Christians believe that our faith is the only one that is correct, and that all the others are wrong?

Visual
#1-2

As Christians, we are commanded to “be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Peter 3:15). This is the reason for the field of study known as Bible apologetics. The word apologetics comes from the Greek word *απολογία*, which means “a speech in defense.” This in turn comes from the two words *απο*, which means “from,” and *λογος*, often translated “word” or “logical argument” but more deeply meaning an expression of the essence of something. The expression “I give you my word” conveys something of this meaning; it implies that I support a statement with everything that I am. Likewise, when the Bible calls Jesus the *λογος* of God, it means that He is the expression of everything God is.

Visual
#1-3

Apologetics has to do with how we know the Bible is true. At an even deeper level, how do we know anything at all? As we go through this course, we will deal with the following questions.

1. How do I know I really exist?
2. How do I know the rest of the universe really exists?
3. How do I know the things I think I know?
4. How do I know there is a God?
5. How do I know if any of the world’s “holy books” has a valid claim to be supernatural in origin?
6. How can I be sure the Bible is really the Word of God?
7. How can I be confident that the Bible has been accurately preserved since it was originally written?
8. Does the Bible contain errors?

This chapter will attempt to answer the first four questions. The others will come later.

1. HOW DO I KNOW I REALLY EXIST?

The study of what it means to “know” things belongs to the branch of philosophy called *epistemology*. In light of movies such as the “Matrix” trilogy, we might wonder how we know anything at all for sure. Is there really a universe out there, or is it all just an illusion?

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#1-4

The noted French philosopher Descartes struggled with this question hundreds of years ago. He wondered what, if anything, he could be absolutely certain about. After all, most people recognize that their senses are not always completely trustworthy. What if you are all alone in the universe and everything is just a figment of your imagination, made up either to prevent you from going insane or because you already *are* insane? (If this thought has ever occurred to you, you are not alone. It is common enough that it has a name, *solipsism*.)

If you follow Descartes’ logic to its extreme, you must conclude, as he did, that the only thing you can be absolutely certain about is that you exist. As he put it, “I think, therefore I am.” In order for a question to be asked, there must be a questioner. That questioner is you. You could not ask whether you existed unless you existed to ask the question.

Beyond the certainty of your own existence, though, everything else you think you know is based on a greater or lesser amount of faith.

2. HOW DO I KNOW THE REST OF THE UNIVERSE EXISTS?

Since you do exist, where did you come from? If you think you have existed forever, you are insane and are wasting your time reading this material. You must have had a beginning.

Visual #1-5

How did you begin to exist? Either (1) you made yourself and forgot about it, or (2) you came from some source outside yourself. If you choose to believe the former, there is probably nothing anyone could say or do to persuade you otherwise. However, if it seems more reasonable to you that you had a definite beginning, you would naturally conclude that someone or something outside yourself is responsible for your existence. Thus, at least one thing outside yourself must exist. This could be either some impersonal process such as evolution, or a personal being (your concept of God). As the Bible puts it, “Know ye that the LORD he [is] God: [it is] he [that] hath made us, and not we ourselves” (Ps. 100:3)

What about the rest of the universe? As you look around you every day you notice that there are other people, animals, plants, planets, and so on. Do those other entities really exist? Are your senses giving you valid information?

Visual #1-6

Suppose you do not believe in God, but that instead you are the result of some random natural process such as evolution. Evolution is not a conscious entity, so it could not deliberately choose to make sure your senses deceive you at all times about everything.

Or if you take the step of faith to believe that there is a God, do you believe – by faith – that He wants you to be totally deceived at all times about everything you perceive? (Similar to “The Matrix” movies.) The alternative is to believe -- again, by faith -- that God made you in such a way that, even though your senses may not be totally trustworthy, they are at least somewhat reliable.

Whether you believe you came into existence by random evolution or by the actions of God, your senses must be at least partially reliable. The world is real and you are not alone!

Visual #1-7

2A. HINDUISM.

Hinduism presents a middle view between the idea of a personal god and impersonal forces. While there is no one authority setting doctrine that all Hindus must accept, many believe that the universe is not really real but is instead a dream in the mind of the great god Vishnu. Each of us exists only as a part of Vishnu’s dream. If he ever wakes up, the present universe will end and a new one will start the next time he begins to dream.

In this view, your senses are unreliable not because Vishnu is deliberately deceiving you, but because the whole universe is merely a dream. Though you could never absolutely prove to devout Hindus that this is wrong, in their day to day lives they do not act as if reality is just an illusion. They recognize that if a bus hits them they really will die, so they still look both ways before crossing a road. Or, even though their religion says an object such as a pot of boiling water is an illusion, they will still try to back away if you attempt to pour one on their heads.

Though it is not the purpose of this work to expose all the flaws in Hinduism, let us note that it contains many logical contradictions. For instance, Hinduism says each person will be reincarnated many times. Their lot in each life depends on their *karma*, determined by their actions in the previous life. But how can each person be held accountable for what happened inside Vishnu’s dream? And since everything is part of his dream, who is keeping track of their actions to determine their position in the next life?

If we accept the possibility that we can know some things with varying degrees of certainty, what things would be the most important to know? Since we are all destined to die, it would be important to find out what happens on the other side of death. The Bible tells us details about the afterlife that we cannot find anywhere else. So how can we know if the Bible is correct? For that matter, how can we know anything?

3. HOW DO I KNOW THE THINGS I THINK I KNOW?

Visual #1-8

People often say they know things, but have probably not thought about exactly how they know. There are at least four valid ways we can know things.

A. SENSES.

Many of the things we say we know are learned through our senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell. (We also have other senses such as hunger and balance, but they are not nearly so important in gaining information about the world outside our own bodies.) For instance, anyone with normal vision can see colors in much the same way as others who also have normal vision. If you have been stung by a bee you know what it feels like. If you have ever smelled a dead animal you know what it smells like.

Though our senses are probably fairly reliable, they are not perfect. There may be things beyond the range of our senses. For instance, if you have access to a projector of some sort, you can project white light onto a screen and hold a burning candle between the light and the screen. You may be surprised at how the air currents, which you normally cannot see, affect the light on the screen. Or, if you have a remote control for an electronic device, you cannot see anything when you push a button, but if you point it at an electronic camera you will see flashes of light imperceptible to your eyes.

B. AUTHORITY.

Many people can confidently tell you their birthday. How do they know? They certainly do not remember being born. Instead, their mother probably told them. But how do they know she really is their mother? Because she told them that too.

Many of the things we say we know in life are because we decided to trust an authority. For instance, most students will never attempt all the experiments they read about in a science textbook, yet they think they know things because the book said so. Likewise, many religious beliefs are based on the authority of a supposedly holy book, or of the culture around us.

C. LOGIC.

There are many things that we think we know because they make sense to us. For instance, just about everyone would say they know they have a brain. But how do they know?

- Almost nobody has ever seen or felt their own brain. That is, they do not have evidence from their **senses**.
- Only a relatively small number of people have had brain surgery or a medical test such as an MRI or X-ray, which would be performed by an **authority** such as a doctor. Yet the rest still believe they have a brain. Why? It is because most people would recognize that they couldn't live unless they had a brain. They are using **logic**.

There are two types of logic: **Inductive**, in which we look at many phenomena and try to find a pattern, and **Deductive**, in which we start with certain assumptions accepted as true.

1. Inductive Logic.

Inductive logic is the basis of science. An honest scientist would never claim that anything is absolutely proven, only that every time we have observed some process it has always worked the same way and so we expect it to do so in the future. For example, for thousands of years people noticed that whatever they sent upward eventually came back down. Thus, the principle "what goes up must come down" was widely accepted. However, the idea was falsified the first time we shot up a rocket that did not come back down but kept going out into space. We had overlooked the possibility that an object traveling fast enough might be able to overcome the pull of gravity.

Science is a self-correcting process. Because it depends on inductive logic, we will never know if we are absolutely right. At least we can be confident that we are less wrong than we used to be.

2. Deductive Logic.

Deductive logic, on the other hand, is the basis of mathematics. It starts with certain statements accepted as absolute truth then builds on those statements to develop a system of thought which is also accepted as absolute truth. For instance, the ancient

mathematician Euclid came up with a set of twenty-three *postulates*, assumptions which he said were self-evident but could not prove. Once we accept those postulates, the rest of Euclidean geometry follows logically.

If any of our assumptions is not true, we may draw false conclusions. For instance, suppose you are told, “All dogs bark. Snoopy is a dog.” Therefore, you are forced to the conclusion that Snoopy barks. However, this is not true. If there is even one dog in the world who does not bark, then perhaps Snoopy does not bark either. (There is an entire breed of dogs in Africa, Basenjis, that does not bark.)

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The question of whether we can be sure we have a brain actually depends on both inductive and deductive logic. First, there have been thousands of people who have had medical tests, autopsies, brain surgeries, and the like. Not a single one has ever been found without a brain. Thus, we conclude by inductive logic that “all humans must have brains.” Now, accepting this statement as true, we as humans use deductive logic to conclude that “I must have a brain.” But if even one living person were ever found who did not have a brain, the rest of us would need to undergo some sort of medical tests in order to be certain that we ourselves had one.

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The point is that we need to be careful with logic. Its reliability depends on the reliability of the underlying assumptions. As we will see later, many of the assumptions used in atheistic or evolutionary world views are clearly false, making those world views unreliable.

Whatever knowledge we gain through the senses, authority, and logic has the potential to be checked for correctness. We can reexamine things we have perceived through our senses or we can get others to verify what we have observed; we can investigate to see whether the authority is reliable; and we can check our logic to be sure there are no false premises.

There is another type of knowledge which cannot be verified but may also possibly be correct.

D. INTUITION.

Everyone has certain inner feelings that they accept as true. For instance, you probably love your mother. You cannot prove it, but you still love her. Or, you may have a sense that something is not right. You may not be able to prove it but you are still sure that it is wrong.

This type of knowledge, **intuition**, is not gained by using your physical senses. Somehow, you just know on the inside. It would also include such things as divine revelation. If you were standing next to the prophet Jeremiah and the Word of the Lord came to him, you would not hear anything.

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Intuitive knowledge is a very personal thing. It may be correct, or it may be wrong. Unless you have some outside confirmation, it is probably not a good idea to base major life decisions on your intuition. You should certainly not base your decisions on somebody else’s intuition.

E. FALSE KNOWLEDGE.

There are at least two other ways people say that they know things, but they really do not. For instance, if a young man is strongly attracted to a young woman, he may try to persuade himself that if he gives her a bouquet of flowers he “knows” that she will fall in love with him. This is called **wishful thinking**. He wants it to be true and tries to persuade himself that it is, but he really doesn’t know.

It is also possible for someone to claim they know something when they do not even believe it themselves, but are trying to persuade others to believe it for an ulterior motive. Perhaps they have an old car that they have seen pieces falling off of, so they hide the pieces and try to sell it to someone else by pretending it’s a great car. This is called **bluffing** or **lying**. Sadly, bluffing is very common. We should always check anything we are not

sure of, especially in spiritual matters. As the Bible puts it, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” (1 John 4:1)

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To summarize: knowledge based on senses, authority, or logic is not perfect, but at least it can be tested. If it passes the test, it may be trustworthy. Knowledge based on intuition, on the other hand, cannot be tested. We should always be cautious before making major life decisions based on intuition. And watch out for wishful thinking or bluffing!

4. HOW CAN I BE SURE THERE IS A GOD?

Throughout human history, the death rate has been 100%. Each and every one of us is going to die. What happens then? If you are an atheist, you expect to simply go out of existence. But if there is a God, perhaps there is some sort of afterlife.

Very few people can claim to have observed God through their **senses**. The Bible claims to be the **authority** He sent to us, but let’s just use **logic** to see whether it is reasonable to believe He exists.

(The following is an expansion of the principle in Romans 1:19 - 20, “Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.”)

A. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GOD OF THE BIBLE.

The God of the Bible is a personal, intelligent being Who has revealed many things about Himself.

1. Atheists often scoff at Christians, asking how we can believe in something we can’t see. They are correct. We cannot directly observe God, but can only detect His presence through what He does. He is **INVISIBLE**.
2. If God established the laws of nature, He is obviously not subject to those laws. (He would not be pulled down to the earth by gravity.) He is above nature, or **SUPERNATURAL**.
3. He has existed since before what we call “time” began. He is **ETERNAL**.
4. Where is God? Everywhere. His influence extends throughout the universe. He is **OMNIPRESENT**.
5. If God brought matter and energy into existence and then brought about laws to govern their operation, then He is either directly or indirectly responsible for everything that has ever happened. He is all-powerful, or **OMNIPOTENT**.
6. Who made God? Nobody. *He is **SELF-EXISTENT**.*

B. CHARACTERISTICS OF THEISTIC EVOLUTIONIST’S GOD.

It would seem that Bible-believing Christians are in trouble. After all, we need to appeal to something invisible, eternal, supernatural, omnipresent, omnipotent, and self-existent in order to justify our belief. But those who believe in some other God are no better off. The vast majority believe that the universe is the result of some sort of evolutionary process directed by God (*theistic evolution*). Since this belief depends upon the existence of God it has no scientific advantage over creation. It seems that atheists hold the only truly scientific position. Or do they?

C. CHARACTERISTICS OF ATHEIST’S “RANDOM CHANCE.”

For the sake of argument, let’s assume that the atheists are right. We’ll rule out God. If this is the case, how did the universe get here? Call it “Mother Nature,” accident, quantum fluctuation, or whatever you will, but the universe would have to be the product of a collection of forces, processes, and events operating for billions of years without any particular purpose. Let’s call the whole collection Random Chance for short, with the

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understanding that Random Chance is not a tangible thing in itself but is a term used to describe the whole series of forces, processes, and events. Following are some of the characteristics that logic demands it must have.

1. It cannot be seen directly. Its presence can only be detected by what it does. It is **INVISIBLE**. (You can turn the tables on your atheist friends and ask them, “You mean you believe in something you can’t see?”)
2. If Random Chance established the laws of nature, it is obviously not subject to those laws. It is above nature, or **SUPERNATURAL**.
3. It has existed since before what we call “time” began. It is **ETERNAL**.
4. Where is Random Chance? Everywhere. Its influence extends throughout the Universe. It is **OMNIPRESENT**.
5. If Random Chance brought matter and energy into existence and then brought about laws to govern their operation, then it is either directly or indirectly responsible for everything that has ever happened. It is all-powerful, or **OMNIPOTENT**.
6. “Who made Random Chance?” Nobody. It is **SELF-EXISTENT**.

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#1-18

Neither belief in the Biblical God, some other God, or Atheism has any scientific advantage over the others on this point. All require us to believe in something invisible, supernatural, eternal, omnipresent, omnipotent, and self-existent. That is, ***THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY THAT GOD DOES NOT EXIST!*** You may call your God Jehovah, Yahweh, Allah, or Random Chance, but you **HAVE TO** believe in some sort of a god. Even the most determined atheist has no choice but to admit that he, too, has a god - Random Chance. Since the Bible tells us that “Whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists...” (Heb. 11:6 RSV), the greatest service you can do for your atheist friends is to confront them with the realization that it is impossible **NOT** to believe in a god of some sort. By lovingly confronting your atheist friends, you may start them on a quest which will ultimately lead them to the **REAL** God.

D. PASCAL’S WAGER.

Whichever choice we make, we must take a step of faith. Suppose we choose to believe in the God of the Bible, and live accordingly. There are two possibilities: either we are right or wrong. (Some of your well-read students may recognize the following as “Pascal’s Wager.”)

1. If we are right, at the end of our earthly lives we are headed to a glorious eternity in heaven.
 2. If we are wrong, we will live a life of joy and expectation, come to our death- bed fully expecting to meet our Savior, lose consciousness at our death, and never know we were wrong. Meanwhile, we will have lived a happy and fulfilled life -- so we’re no worse off.
- Suppose instead that we reject the possibility that God exists. Again, we may either be right or wrong.
3. If we are right, we will live a life filled with the constant certainty that we will one day die. We may try to do good while we are here on earth, but for what purpose? If there is no God, then all the stars will one day burn out and all life will become extinct. All our good deeds will have counted for nothing.
 4. If we are wrong, we will go to our deathbed expecting to simply lose consciousness, then, at the moment of death, we will suddenly become aware of the presence of a dreadful being -- the God whose existence we denied -- to whom we must give an account for our lives. The Bible says that “...he that cometh to God must believe that he is...” (Heb. 11:6) -- that is, there will be no atheists in heaven. You will be headed for an eternal hell.

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#1-19

Atheists sometimes ridicule those who believe in God, saying that we believe in “an invisible man in the sky” who made everything. Let’s take it a step further. Before Jesus became a man,

He was always an intelligence. One might therefore say that we believe in an invisible **intelligence** in the sky that is so powerful that He is responsible for all the parts of the universe in all their complexity, from the largest scale (cosmology) to the smallest (subatomic).

What alternative does atheism offer? Atheists believe in an invisible **NON-intelligence** in the sky that is so powerful that it is responsible for all the parts of the universe in all their complexity, from the largest scale (cosmology) to the smallest (subatomic). And yet they claim that they are the only true scientists!

An atheist's step of faith moves him toward an impersonal god that doesn't know he exists and doesn't care about him. Our step of faith moves us toward a personal God who knows how many hairs we have on our heads and loves us so much He sent His Son to die for our sins. If atheists are right nothing matters anyway and we believers are no worse off than they are. If we are right, we are headed for heaven but atheists are headed for an eternal hell. Which step of faith is more reasonable?

In this chapter we have seen that:

1. We can be absolutely certain that we exist.
2. We can exercise a reasonable step of faith to believe that the rest of the universe exists.
3. We can know things through our senses, through reliable authorities, or correct logic.
4. We may also know through intuition, though this is not something that can be tested.
5. We need not appeal to senses or authority, but can use logic to be certain that there is a God.

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CHAPTER 2

How can we know the Bible is beyond human capability?

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The purpose of Bible apologetics is to defend the absolute truth of the Bible. However, some scoffers say that there is no such thing as absolute truth. The best response such a statement would be “Is that absolutely true?” The statement is self-contradictory.

Since it is possible that there could be such a thing as absolute truth, is there any way we could discover it? We have already seen that there are problems with human knowledge.

- Our senses are not 100 percent reliable.
- Logic may be incorrect.
- Our intuition may be wrong.

Visual
#2-2

The only way we could be absolutely certain about anything would be if we had a completely reliable authority – an infallible God – to tell us.

The search for certainty is more than just an intellectual exercise. The death rate among humans is 100%. Unless Jesus comes back and disrupts human history, each and every one of us is going to die. In order to get a trustworthy answer to the question of what happens after we die, we need to ask a whole series of questions.

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#2-3

- First, is there really a God? If not, we can probably expect to simply go out of existence.

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#2-4

We saw in Chapter One that it is impossible not to believe in some sort of God, whether a personal being or a series of impersonal forces (Random Chance).

- If we have decided to take a step of faith to believe in some sort of God, what kind of God?

Is our god a series of impersonal forces such as Hindus believe in? If so, we could never be sure about anything. However, if God is an intelligent being who is able to communicate with us, there is a possibility that we could be sure about what will happen to us, but only if He tells us.

- If we believe in a personal, intelligent God, has He told us about Himself? Are there any books in the world that claim to be a communication from Him? If not, we still could not be sure.

Visual
#2-5

There are actually only three books in the whole world that claim to be the revealed word of Almighty God: the Bible, the Qur’an, and the Book of Mormon. All the world’s other “holy books” claim nothing more than to be the wisdom of the “ascended masters,” men such as Buddha, Zoroaster, Nanak, and others who have reached a higher spiritual plane than the rest of us.

Visual
#2-6

- Is there any way to test any such books to see if they are beyond human capabilities? If there were not, we could still not be sure. Fortunately, there is a way to test them.

While humans or “familiar spirits” (demons who are intimately familiar with the details of specific people’s lives) might be able to occasionally guess what the future holds, no one but God could predict it with 100% accuracy.

Visual
#2-7

While many religions make predictions about a future day of judgment, none of them can be tested for correctness. However, the Bible also makes many predictions about events that were still in the future at the time they were foretold and then later came to pass. No other book in the world dares to make more than a few such predictions.

Visual
#2-8

- The Book of Mormon (which was written around 1830 but claims to have been written almost 2,000 years ago) only makes one, and it is wrong. In Alma 7:10 it says Jesus would be born in Jerusalem, when He had actually been born in Bethlehem almost 2,000 years earlier.
- The Qur’an makes two testable predictions. Sura 30:1 says that the Persians had defeated the Romans (the name Muhammad called the Byzantine Greeks) in a neighboring land, but that

before long the other side would win a battle. It didn't say where or when. The two sides had been fighting for many years. One would win a battle, then the other would, and so on. The other prediction was in Sura 48:27, which says Muhammad would be allowed to return to Mecca in peace. However, it did not mention that he had already signed a treaty

- Compare this to the Bible, which makes hundreds of predictions that have already come to pass. Try though skeptics might, none has ever been able to prove a single one of its prophecies false.

The study of prophecy is a powerful way to test the Bible's claims to divine origin with a degree of objectivity. Scientists routinely use probability studies such as *chi-square* tests to try to determine whether a phenomenon is random or not, without necessarily knowing why. We can apply similar principles to Bible prophecy to see if it consists of random guesses or whether it is most likely nonrandom.

Visual
#2-9

When we deal with very large numbers, it is convenient to use scientific notation. This involves the number ten with an exponent, which indicates the number of times ten must be multiplied by itself to obtain the desired result. For instance, a thousand is $10 \times 10 \times 10$, or 10^3 . A million is $10 \times 10 \times 10 \times 10 \times 10 \times 10$, or 10^6 .

Probabilities (and improbabilities) multiply rather than adding. If a number of events each have a one in ten chance of occurring, then the odds of three of them occurring are not one in thirty but instead 1 in $10 \times 10 \times 10$, or one in a thousand.

1. PROPHECIES ABOUT JESUS.

Consider just a few of the predictions about the coming of the Messiah. What is the chance that any one person would be born a descendant of Abraham? Let's assume one in ten. (It's actually much less.) Now, what's the chance that he will also be an Israelite, belong to the tribe of Judah and the family of David but not be descended from Jehoiachin (Jer. 22:30), and will be born in Bethlehem, then move to Egypt, grow up in Nazareth, die by crucifixion in Jerusalem after being betrayed by a friend for thirty pieces of silver, but have none of his bones broken, etc.? Jesus fulfilled at least sixty-one such prophecies.

In 1944, Dr. Peter Stoner calculated that the chance of any one person fulfilling just *eight* of the sixty-one prophecies. ¹ He used very conservative estimates of the probability of fulfilling each prophecy, as follows:

- Born in Bethlehem - 1 in 280,000 people.
- Someone claimed to be his forerunner - 1 in 1,000.
- Entered Jerusalem "riding on a colt, the foal of an ass" - 1 in 100.
- Betrayed by a friend, hands wounded - 1 in 1,000.
- Betrayed for 30 pieces of silver - 1 in 1,000.
- The 30 pieces of silver thrown into the Lord's house and used to buy a potter's field - 1 in 100,000.
- On trial for his life but offers no defense - 1 in 1,000.
- Died by crucifixion - 1 in 10,000.

Even with these extraordinarily conservative estimates, Stoner still calculated that the chance of any one man fulfilling all eight was about one in 10^{28} (a "1" followed by 28 zeroes). Since some believe that as many as 10^{11} people may have lived on the earth since its beginning, what is the chance that at least one of them would have randomly fulfilled all eight of these prophecies? It would be one in 10^{28} divided by one in 10^{11} , or about one in 10^{17} (one in a hundred quadrillion).

How likely is this? Suppose you covered the entire nation of France two feet (60 cm) deep with silver dollars. Take one of those dollars and put an "X" on it. Now blindfold someone, turn

Visual
#2-10

him loose in France, and give him one chance to find the marked coin. His chance of success is about the same as the probability that anyone could accidentally fulfill just eight of the Messianic prophecies.

Stoner calculated the chance of fulfilling forty-eight of the prophecies at about one in 10^{157} . To visualize this number, we need to use electrons rather than silver dollars. Imagine a solid ball of electrons 6 billion light years in diameter - a significant portion of the estimated size of the universe. Stoner calculates that it would take 6×10^{28} such balls to contain 10^{157} electrons. So in this many universe-sized balls of electrons, you get one chance to pick the one correct electron. The probability is unimaginably small.

Mathematicians usually consider any event with a probability of less than one in 10^{50} as impossible. Yet the Bible predicted not only these eight events but many others, all with perfect accuracy. For example:

Visual
#2-11

- Genesis 49:10 says “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come...”

This was always understood by the Jews as a Messianic prophecy. When Rome removed took away the right of capital punishment in about 11 A.D., Rabbi Rachmon wrote in the Jerusalem Talmud, “Woe unto us, for the scepter has departed from Judah, and the Messiah has not come.” But Jesus HAD come -- He was a teenager!

- The Messiah would be “cut off,” then Jerusalem and the Temple would be destroyed. Jesus was crucified around 30 A.D. About 40 years later, Titus destroyed the city and the sanctuary.

Visual
#2-12

- Would come while the Temple was still standing, after which it would be destroyed - Mal. 3:1, Dan. 9:26

- Gifts would be brought by kings after His birth - Ps. 72:10, Isa. 60:6
- He would be born at the “Tower of the Flock” in Bethlehem - Mic. 4:8
- Murder of children at His birth - Jer. 31:15
- Jealous for the Temple - Ps. 69:9
- Ministry begins in Galilee - Isa. 9:1
- Would perform miracles - Isa. 35:5-6 et al.
- Would teach in parables - Ps. 78:2
- Sufferings (e.g., stripes) described in detail - Isa. 53

Visual
#2-13

- Spit upon - Isa. 56
- Hands and feet pierced - Ps. 22:16
- Garments divided - Ps. 22:18
- Given gall and vinegar - Ps. 69:21
- No bones broken - Ps. 34:20
- Executed with criminals - Isa. 53:12
- Body pierced - Zech. 12:10
- Darkness at His death - Amos 8:9
- Buried in rich man’s grave - Isa. 53:9
- Would rise from the dead - Ps. 16:10. (Not many people ever did this.)

While each of these (except rising from the dead) could happen to a number of people, the odds that all of them would accidentally happen to any one individual are incomprehensible. The most reasonable explanation would be that they were intended to be about Him and Him alone.

2. PROPHECIES ABOUT OTHER INDIVIDUALS.

Some Bible prophecies relate to specific individuals besides the Messiah.

Visual
#2-14

- Isa. 44 and 45 called King Cyrus of Persia by name hundreds of years before he was born.
- Likewise, King Josiah of the nation of Judah was identified by name several hundred years before his birth (1 Kgs. 13: 1 - 2).

Visual
#2-15

- The place and manner of Queen Jezebel's death was foretold about 14 years before it happened (1 Kings 21:23, 2 Kings 9:30-36).

3. PROPHECIES ABOUT FOREIGN CITIES AND NATIONS.

Foreign nations and cities were often the subjects of Bible prophecies.

Visual
#2-16

a. TYRE.

Tyre was once a major center of commerce on the east end of the Mediterranean. It had an island portion and a mainland part. In roughly 590 B.C., Ezekiel 26:1-21) said that:

- Many nations would come against it.
- The inhabitants would be slain.
- Nebuchadnezzar would build a siege mound against it.

First, Nebuchadnezzar and his armies destroyed the mainland city. The rest of the inhabitants moved to the island portion offshore, where he could not reach them.

- Its walls, houses, stones, timber, and soil would be laid in the water.
- It would be scraped clean like the top of a rock.

The island was later attacked by Persia, Egypt, Cyprus, Syria, Greece, Rome, and many others. The city was still not completely destroyed, though, until Alexander the Great used the rubble from the mainland city to build a half mile long causeway to the island offshore. He had his soldiers scrape the rocks clean to obtain enough material.

- It would become a place for fishermen to spread their nets.
- It would never be rebuilt.

After the island city was destroyed, it became a place where fishermen spread their nets. It was never rebuilt. (The modern city of Tyre is at a different location than the original one.)

b. BABYLON.

The 13th chapter of Isaiah (written about 730 B.C.) and the 51st chapter of Jeremiah (sometime before 586 B.C.) foretold that the great city of Babylon would be conquered by the Medes. At the time, Babylon was the greatest empire in the world, and Medea was a relatively obscure kingdom only beginning to gain influence.

The Medes conquered Babylon in 538 B.C., about 200 years after Isaiah's prophecy and 50 years after Jeremiah's.

c. EGYPT.

Isaiah 20:3 – 5 (written ca. 730 B.C.) predicted that Egypt and Ethiopia would be conquered by Assyria. This was fulfilled about 60 years later, ca. 670 B.C. Ezekiel 29:13 – 15 (ca. 588 B.C.) said that Egypt would be allowed to return to its land after 40 years, but would never rule over other nations again. This was fulfilled around 548 B.C.

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#2-17

4. PROPHECIES ABOUT THE CITY OF JERUSALEM.

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#2-18

The city of Jerusalem and the Temple were the subjects of specific prophecies.

In Luke 21, Jesus said that there would not be one stone left on another in the Temple. This was literally fulfilled in the year 70 A.D. when the Romans finally captured it after a lengthy battle. In the course of the attack, the interior furnishings caught fire and burned so hot that all the metal objects used in the Jewish rituals, such as the golden utensils, melted. When the Roman general Titus realized that the molten gold had flowed down into the cracks between the stones, he ordered that every two stones be separated and the gold scraped off.

In the same chapter, Jesus also spoke of the future siege and destruction of Jerusalem. This came true at the time of Titus' attack. He also put a time limit on the occupation of Jerusalem by the Gentiles. Sure enough, Israel finally regained title to Jerusalem in the Six Day War. This came to pass only recently, in 1967. God is not done with fulfilling prophecies.

5. PROPHECIES ABOUT THE NATION OF ISRAEL.

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#2-19

There were also detailed prophecies about the nation of Israel. After Solomon's death, his kingdom split into Judah and Israel. About 200 years later, Israel was taken captive by Assyria and ceased to be a nation. Judah still maintained its identity, but there was no such nation as Israel. Yet prophecies about Israel continued to come. Since there was no Israel, for over 2,000 years many commentators took the prophecies as merely symbolic.

After the nation of Israel ceased to exist, Isa. 66:8 – 9 predicted that Zion (another name for Israel) would be born in one day. Later, Ezek. 17:11 said that God would give His people the land of Israel, and Ezek. 37 said that Judah and Israel would no longer be two separate nations but would together comprise the nation of Israel. These prophecies were fulfilled in 1948, when the United Nations reestablished the nation of Israel in ONE DAY.

6. PROPHECIES OF DANIEL CHAPTER 11.

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#2-20

Though there are many examples of fulfilled prophecy throughout the Bible, Daniel chapter 11 is particularly amazing because of the number of details it gives about the future history of the Jewish homeland. In this passage an angel reveals to Daniel what will take place in the Middle East for the next few hundred years. Without mentioning names he outlines the conquest of the area by Alexander the Great and the splitting of Alexander's kingdom into four parts after his death. The angel then describes in meticulous detail the interaction between the Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt (even the Cleopatra made famous by the movies) and the Seleucids in Syria, hundreds of years in advance. The prophecy is so accurate and detailed that many skeptics refuse to believe it was written beforehand, and claim that it must have been put together after the fact. They have to ignore the testimony of history because of their hostility toward the Bible.

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#2-21

The Bible's 100% accuracy in fulfilled prophecy shows that it is beyond the abilities of human beings. A reasonable person would have to conclude that it is the work of a supernatural being. It is indeed the word of God.

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CHAPTER 3

How can we know the Bible we have is the same as what was originally written?

Though the Bible is the Word of God, humans are the ones who wrote it down thousands of years ago. Many people believe that it has been copied, translated, and retranslated so many times that we can't be sure that what we have today is what was originally written. Is this true? Have the Biblical texts been altered or corrupted?

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#3-1

1. THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The New Testament was written in Koine Greek, the common business language of its day. Many churches and Bible schools offer classes in Koine Greek, allowing the student to verify the accuracy of translation for himself.

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#3-2

Until the New Testament books were written, the early Christian church relied on many eyewitnesses who were still alive. Then, beginning around 50 A.D. (less than two decades after the resurrection of Jesus), the inspired authors began to write individual books. The apostle Paul is credited with writing about half of the 27 in the New Testament. Hebrews is anonymous, but has traditionally been considered his work. Others named as authors include Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, Jude, and James. Since there is no mention of the destruction of Jerusalem which took place in 70 A.D., all the books except those authored by John are believed to have been written before that date. His Gospel, three epistles, and Revelation were completed before his death around 100 A.D.

The original author of each book might have written only one copy, e.g., Paul to the Colossians. Once the books arrived, they were read aloud and copied for further distribution (e.g., Col. 4:16 – And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea) and sent to other churches where they would be copied again. At the beginning, any one local church might possess only a few of the books. However, they were all available within the church as a whole.

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#3-3

Unlike modern books, the writings of the New Testament were done on extremely durable materials such as papyrus and animal skins. These could last for centuries without falling apart. As the writing faded, the letters were simply rewritten on top of the existing ones. Then, beginning in the fourth century, a new type of written material began to gain popularity. Instead of individual scrolls, writings were compiled into *codices*, similar to our modern books. Several New Testament codices dating to the fourth and fifth centuries (Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus) have survived until the present. These ancient copies are the basis of our modern New Testament.

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#3-4

Since the original scrolls were so durable, the New Testament codices copied from them were not copies made from many earlier generations of copies. For example, suppose an original scroll dated to 70 A.D. If we make the conservative assumption that it only survived until 270 A.D. before it was copied onto another scroll, that second generation scroll could easily have survived for hundreds more years, and would have been available when the codices were being assembled. There are some differences between them (perhaps due to copyist errors in the early stages), but those codices are still available. Thus, what we have is probably at worst a third or fourth third generation copy. (Original = first generation; copy = second generation; codex = third or fourth third generation.)

A. OBJECTIVE TEST OF MANUSCRIPT RELIABILITY.

How can we determine whether the New Testament is reliable? We can apply the same tests used on any other ancient manuscript. Among the factors scholars consider are: (1) Date of Composition, (2) Date of Oldest Surviving Copy, (3) Time Lapse Between Composition and Oldest Surviving Copy, (4) Number of Copies, and (5) Agreement between Copies. The Bible stands up extraordinarily well compared to other ancient books.

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#3-5

We have more manuscript evidence for the New Testament than for any other ancient manuscript. To see just how compelling this evidence is, we can compare it to the commonly estimated numbers ² of other ancient documents regarded as authoritative.

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Author	Date Written	Earliest Copy	Time Lapse	# of Copies
Herodotus	488-428 B.C.	900 A.D.	1300 yrs.	75
Thucydides	460-400 B.C.	900 A.D.	1300 yrs.	20
Tacitus	100 A.D.	1100	1000 yrs.	20
Caesar's <i>Gallic War</i>	58-50 B.C.	900 A.D.	950 yrs.	9-10
Livy's <i>Roman History</i>	59 B.C. - 17 A.D.	900 A.D.	900 yrs.	27

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#3-7

Even better is the second-best attested ancient document, Homer's *Iliad*, probably written sometime around 700 B.C. The oldest surviving complete copy dates to the 13th century, about 2,000 years after the original. The oldest partial copy dates about 500 years after the original. Even though there is such a large gap between the date of composition and the date of the oldest manuscripts, the existence of 643 ancient copies is enough to persuade scholars that the *Iliad* is reliable.

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#3-8

Compare this to the New Testament. The 643 surviving manuscripts of the *Iliad* sound impressive until we learn how much evidence supports the New Testament. Though there is no known single volume containing the complete New Testament from the first three centuries, there are over 24,000 ancient manuscripts or fragments of manuscripts of individual books or of several books together. Many are stored in libraries in England, Ireland, Scotland, Egypt, and Rome and are available for scholars to view. About 5,000 are Greek, 10,000 Latin, and the rest translations into other languages. The thousands of manuscripts in other languages agree almost completely with the Greek texts from which they were translated.

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#3-9

Our present dating system of B.C. (Before Christ) and A.D. (Anno Domini, or "in the year of the Lord") was not established until the 500's. Previous to that time, dates were in reference to such events as the founding of Rome. The dates of New Testament books are not obtained from the manuscripts themselves because scribes generally did not write the date on their work. Nor are the manuscripts carbon dated, because this would require the destruction of at least part of the object being dated. Instead, researchers usually estimate the date from the style of handwriting. (To illustrate the point, consider how much different the style of penmanship is in the Declaration of Independence as compared to modern handwriting.)

Based on the style of writing, fragments of many individual New Testament books have been dated to less than a century after the originals. In one case, the John Rylands Manuscript (containing part of the Gospel of John), only about twenty-five years are believed to have elapsed from the time John put pen to paper until the surviving fragment was copied. Twenty-five years is such a short time that many eyewitnesses to the events described were still alive when this manuscript were written. But even if there were a hundred year gap, the facts were well known. No historian could get away with claiming that Abraham Lincoln walked on water because we know better. Even after two hundred years, no one could get away with claiming that George Washington could do miracles. Likewise, if any errors crept into the Christians' books in the first few centuries, hostile witnesses would have been delighted to point them out. They could not. Instead, they killed the Christians to keep them quiet.

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#3-10

The Christians were not quiet! Though the canon of New Testament Scripture was not yet finalized, first and second century Christian leaders left hundreds of thousands of quotes from the manuscripts later accepted as canonical in their letters to each other. Even if we did not have a single ancient manuscript, we could reconstruct almost the entire New Testament from their writings. This indicates that the church as a whole had access to the

entire New Testament even though we do not know which books were available in individual churches.

It has sometimes been said that all but eleven verses of the New Testament can be found in quotations of first and second century Christian writers. While this might be correct, the claim is impossible to prove.

- First, we do not have documentation showing a date when the contents of the New Testament (the Canon) became universally accepted, though it must have been before the Edict of Diocletian in 303 A.D. (He ordered the execution of anyone found in possession of books sacred to Christians. They had to know what was worth dying for by then.)
- Second, it is difficult to tell if an ancient writer meant to give an exact quote, a paraphrase, or merely an allusion to an earlier writing.³

Nevertheless, it is safe to say that the great majority of the New Testament could be reconstructed from quotes by early Christian leaders.

B. VARIANT READINGS.

Since we do not have any of the original pages (*autographs*) written by the New Testament authors, we cannot be certain of the exact letter-by-letter spelling of the words they wrote.

When a letter was received, it would be read aloud to the congregation. However, many members of the early Christian church could not read and write. Those who were able to could transcribe the reading to the best of their ability, but since spelling was not standardized, it was possible to write the words in more than one way. Nevertheless, the variants would sound the same when read aloud.

One possible explanation for variant readings such as *humeis* (your) and *hemeis* (our) is poor penmanship. The New Testament was originally written in all capital letters, so these words were written as `YMEIΣ and `HMEIΣ. The first letters, Y (upsilon) and H (eta) look different when printed but can be quite similar when written in longhand. The originals were sent to various churches where they were copied by hand for further distribution. If someone did not write clearly in producing one of the early copies, it may have been unclear to later copyists which letter to use. This could be the source of many discrepancies.

Some skeptics claim that there are up to 200,000 variant readings of the New Testament. The number is misleading. For example, suppose a scribe copying 2 Peter 1:1 added the letter *eta* or *epsilon* to Peter's name "Simon," making it "Simeon." Every time the discrepancy occurred in a later manuscript it would be considered a textual variant. If 50 later copies contained each variant, this would be counted as 100 variants even though only one letter was added. Similarly, any spelling difference between multiple copies of manuscripts is counted multiple times.

The great majority of variants have to do with spelling, word order (Christ Jesus vs. Jesus Christ), or words found in more than one place in a chapter. For instance, some of the manuscripts of Mk. 1:1 include "the Son of God," while others do not. However, the statement that Jesus is the Son of God is also found in v. 11 of the same chapter. Nevertheless, the presence or absence of the phrase is counted as a variant.

Though the word order or spelling may be different, because of the overwhelming manuscript evidence, less than one half of one percent of the text of the New Testament is in dispute. (By comparison, about five percent of the text of the *Iliad* is uncertain.)

Only three significant passages in the New Testament are the subject of any dispute. None involve any question of doctrine.

- **Mk. 16:9 - 20.**

Some manuscripts omit the conclusion of Mark's gospel, Mk. 16:9-20. This passage refers to casting out demons, speaking in unknown languages, handling serpents without harm, drinking deadly things without harm, and laying hands on the sick. Even if we were to ignore this passage, all of the concepts included in it except drinking poison

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#3-12

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#3-14

without harm are found elsewhere in the New Testament. (You shouldn't deliberately drink poison anyway. In Matt. 4:7, "Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.")

- **Jn. 7:53 - 8:11.**

Some manuscripts omit the account of the woman caught in the act of adultery. But even if we were to never use it again, the principles of repentance and forgiveness are found throughout the New Testament.

- **1 Jn. 5:7.**

Most ancient manuscripts omit this verse, which refers to the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit. Even if we ignore the verse, the three persons of the Godhead are seen throughout the New Testament. For instance, at Jesus' baptism we see the Father speaking to the Son while the Holy Spirit descends on Him: "And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." (Luke 3:22)

Suppose you had a building composed of tens of thousands of bricks and noticed that three were a slightly different color. You wouldn't knock down the whole building. Likewise, would you throw out the whole New Testament because of three disputed passages?

C. BIBLE VERSIONS THAT IGNORE THE GREEK TEXT.

i. *Cultic Versions.*

Some versions of the New Testament are put out by cults such as the Jehovah's Witnesses who feel free to change the text to support their doctrines. For instance, the Jehovah's Witness "New World Translation" makes numerous changes from the Greek to alter or eliminate statements supporting the deity of Christ. A few examples:

- The NWT renders the simple Greek word *εν* ("in") as "in union with." For example, instead of saying "Christ **in** you" (KJV) in 2 Cor. 13:5 it says "Christ **in union with** you" (NWT). That is, Christ has to come into union with you rather than you with Him.
- Jehovah's Witnesses recognize that only Almighty God could dwell in many people at the same time. Since they say that Jesus is a created, lesser God, they have to change 2 Cor. 13:5 from
"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is **in** you, except ye be reprobates?" (KJV) to
"Keep testing whether you are in the faith; keep proving what you yourselves are. Or do you not recognize that Jesus Christ is **in union with** you? Unless you are disapproved." (NWT)

The purpose of such changes are to support the Jehovah's Witness doctrine that Jesus is a created being and not Almighty God. Deliberate alterations to the Word of God are abominations to Him (Rev. 22:18-19).

ii. *Politically Motivated Versions.*

Some versions change what the Bible texts say for political purposes. For instance:

- In 1995 Oxford University Press published *The New Testament and Psalms: An Inclusive Version*. This version removed all references to gender. For example, it rendered John 3:16 as "For God so loved the world that God gave God's only Child, so that everyone who believes in that Child may not perish but may have eternal life." So as not to offend left-handed people, it also removed all negative references to the left hand and positive references to the right.
- The 2005-2011 editions of the *New International Version* also attempted to be gender neutral concerning references to humans, though not to God. For instance, "fishers of people" rather than "fishers of men." There was such an outcry that the practice was discontinued.

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D. TEXTUAL CRITICISM.

Deliberately altered Bible versions are not the topic of this section. We are referring instead to the dozens of versions produced by serious Bible scholars who love God and His Word. Some are intended to be (1) literal word for word translations, others (2) translations taking into account idioms in Greek and English, and still others (3) paraphrases in which the authors try to convey their idea of what the Greek text means while only loosely following the actual Greek words. Regardless which of the three types a particular version is, all at least claim to be based on one of three Greek manuscript families.

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#3-16

For a detailed treatment of the following, see Wallace, D. B., *The majority text and the original text: Are they identical?* <https://bible.org/article/majority-text-and-original-text-are-they-identical>.

There was no such thing as a printing press in the first century. A church fortunate enough to receive an original copy of a letter from Paul or one of the other New Testament writers would copy it by hand and pass the copies along to other churches. Unfortunately, the copyists seem to have occasionally made mistakes. As the copies were distributed and copied again, variant readings came into circulation. Since the church as a whole did not have an organized structure, there was no one to declare which was the correct variant. It was not until the development of codices, or bound books, that the texts became more or less standardized. As a result, there are several manuscript families of the Greek New Testament.

The three main New Testament manuscript families are the *Textus Receptus* (“Received Text” or TR), on which the King James Version is based; the *Majority Text* (M-Text), in which the agreement between manuscripts is given more weight than the readings found in the oldest manuscripts; and the *Critical Text*, also known as the Nestle-Aland/United Bible Society text (N/U in marginal notes in many Bibles).

i. *Textus Receptus*.

The *Textus Receptus* was the name given to the Greek manuscript of the New Testament developed between 1516 and 1598 by the Dutch Catholic priest Erasmus, then Estienne, then Beza. It is the basis of the King James Version in English, Martin Luther’s translation in German, the Reina-Valera version in Spanish, and a number of other European translations.

Erasmus compiled the TR based on the Greek manuscripts available to him. When no Greek texts were available for a passage (e.g., the last six verses of Revelation), he filled in the gaps from the Latin Vulgate.

ii. *The Majority Text (M-Text)*.

As the name implies, the Majority Text is assembled from the largest number of manuscripts agreeing on any particular passage. In the almost 500 years since Erasmus compiled the TR from the material available in his day, many older manuscripts have been found. Thus, the 1982 Majority Text published by Thomas Nelson Publishers (Hodges and Farstad, eds.) is a bit different from the 1516 Majority Text. For instance, all the gaps Erasmus faced have been filled in.

While the M-Text is extremely similar to the T-R, there are about 2,000 differences. Almost all are trivial. The vast majority are instances of spelling or word order (e.g., “Christ Jesus” vs. “Jesus Christ”). Not a single one of them makes any difference in the meaning of the passage. For example, in 1 John 1:4 the Greek word *humeis* (your) is found in “that your joy may be full.” A variant reading is *hemeis* (our), in “that our joy may be full.” This is typical. In no case of a variant reading of the New Testament is there any question of doctrinal uncertainty.

iii. *The Critical Text (N/U)*.

A discipline known as *textual criticism* has helped to bring the uncertainty between ancient manuscripts down to less than one half of one percent. The term “criticism”

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does not indicate a negative attitude toward the New Testament, but instead indicates a scholarly approach to determining which manuscripts seem closest to the original writings.

The fact that second and third century church leaders left so many quotes from the books later included in the New Testament indicates that the church as a whole had access to the entire book. By the fourth or fifth century, the individual scrolls or papyri had been compiled into bound books called codices. These followed two major groups, the Alexandrine (named for the city of Alexandria, Egypt) and the Byzantine (named for Byzantium, center of the Byzantine Empire). The Byzantine text type is believed to have originated in the region around Antioch, Syria.

Alexandrian readings tend to be shorter, Byzantine tend to have extra words. Some believe that words were left out of the Alexandrian to minimize the deity of Christ, whereas others believe Byzantine copyists added words to support their positions. Since we do not have the original manuscripts, we cannot be certain. Regardless, both manuscript traditions include the virgin birth, the sinfulness of man, the need for a Savior, the substitutionary death of Christ, the Resurrection, and the Second Coming.

The oldest known nearly complete Greek manuscript, the Codex Sinaiticus, belongs to the Alexandrian tradition. It is believed to have been written between 325 and 360 A.D. It seems to have been lost to the church until 1859, when von Tischendorf rediscovered it in a monastery in Egypt. ⁴ It contains the entire New Testament except for sections such as Mk. 16:9-20, John 8:3-11, and a few verses in the Gospels. Notes written on it by monks through the centuries indicate that it was edited many times. ⁵

Another important almost complete manuscript is the Codex Vaticanus (also Alexandrian), dated to the middle of the fourth century. No one knows how many years it lay in the Vatican library until it was discovered some time before 1475.⁶ Another important codex is Alexandrinus, dated to the fifth century.

When the Bible began to be translated into common languages such as English and German in the Middle Ages, the above mentioned codices had not yet been found. This made it difficult for scholars to be certain which manuscripts were correct. They relied on a compilation of the many thousands of fragments known as the Majority Text. This was the source of the Textus Receptus on which the King James Bible is based. As previously noted, it was incomplete in Erasmus' day.

Through the centuries, more and more manuscripts have been discovered in ancient monasteries, caves, bazaars, and even garbage dumps. (They also continue to be discovered in libraries in bundles so fragile that they have yet to be peeled apart.) Comparison of the newly discovered fragments with each other, with the writing of the early church leaders, and with early translations into other languages has increased the level of confidence that what we have is indeed what was originally written. The latest results of textual criticism are found in the Nestle-Aland and United Bible Society (abbreviated N/U in many Bible footnotes) text, commonly known as the *Critical Text*. This text is continually revised with the discovery of new manuscripts. It is in its 28th edition as of this writing. Even if one rejects the latest compilations, though, there is never any question of doctrine in any of the variant readings of the New Testament.

E. CONCLUSION.

Sinners are not saved because their Bible follows the correct spelling or word order as found in a specific manuscript family, whether Textus Receptus, the Majority Text, or the Critical Text. We are saved by believing that Jesus Christ died for our sins, was buried, rose from the dead, and is alive now and forever, and by surrendering to Him as absolute Lord of our lives. (1 Cor. 15:1-4, Rom. 10:9) Any non-cultic version of the New Testament

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can lead us to this knowledge. People in foreign lands who have never had a Bible do not argue about which version a missionary brings them.

2. THE HEBREW OLD TESTAMENT

A. THE BIBLE BEFORE MOSES.

Jesus and those of His day accepted the first five books of the Bible as the work of Moses. However, some critics say that Moses could not have written Genesis since it deals with events before his birth. They also say that the Creation account is nothing but Hebrew poetry. Those who hold such a position overlook both divine inspiration and oral tradition. An all-powerful God could easily have told Adam or Moses what happened before He created man. Then, from Adam's time onward, Genesis is divided into sections on "The Generations Of" various individuals:

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Adam, Gen. 5:1-6:8;
Noah, 6:9-9:28;
The Sons of Noah, 10:1-11:9;
Shem, 11:10-26;
Terah, 11:27-25:11;
Ishmael, 25:12-18;
Isaac, 25:19-35:29;
Esau, 36:1-43;
and Jacob, 37:2-50:26. ⁷

This division seems to indicate that each section except the creation account was compiled either by the person named or by someone familiar with them, then passed on either orally or in writing. Finally, Moses put it all together under the inspiration of God.

The oral tradition of many "primitive" cultures shows that this kind of record can be extremely accurate. The tribal historian memorizes and recites the tribe's history in great detail, usually in a poetic format. The poetry helps keep the wording precise. (If you still remember childhood nursery rhymes you can attest to this!) Since everybody in the tribe has already heard it, they quickly notice and correct him if he ever makes a mistake. Even if people before the Flood hadn't invented writing – and we can't be sure they hadn't – they would have had better memories than modern day humans. The Bible makes it plain that they were extremely intelligent and lived for centuries. If we take the genealogies of Genesis at face value, the numbers in the Massoretic Text imply that Adam may have been alive until Noah's father Lamech was over fifty years old. Adam would have been able to tell him what had happened. Lamech would then have told Noah, who preserved the record through the Flood. His son Shem lived an additional 500 years after the Flood and would certainly have passed on the narrative to his descendants. Though there may be gaps in the post-Flood genealogy, it is possible that his life overlapped with that of Abraham. From then, it was only a few hundred years until Moses put it all together in Genesis.

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In past years some liberal theologians argued that Moses could not have written the first five books of the Bible because writing was unknown in his day, ca. 1400 B.C. Archaeology has destroyed this argument. The Ebla Kingdom, a great civilization that flourished a thousand years before Moses, had extensive written records (McDowell, 1986, 68). Writing was already in wide use by the time Abraham was born, centuries before Moses. ⁸

B. ORGANIZATION OF THE HEBREW BIBLE.

Unlike the New Testament, we do not have thousands of ancient manuscripts of the the Old Testament. Nevertheless, the ones we do have are also completely reliable.

The Old Testament was written almost entirely in Hebrew, though a few small sections in Ezra and Daniel were written in Aramaic. (Same alphabet, different vocabulary.) It was assembled over more than a thousand years by over thirty human authors. Some books

identify their authors, while others are anonymous.

The Jewish Bible used at least since the days of Jesus is known as the *Tanakh*. It has the same contents as the Protestant Old Testament, but divided differently. Our Old Testament is divided into 39 books, but the Tanakh combines some of the historical books so that it has 35. The arrangement of the books is also different. Chapter and verse divisions were added many centuries later.

- The first part of the Tanakh is the *Torah*, also known as the Pentateuch. It includes Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.
- The *Nevi'im* (Prophets) include Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel (combined into a single book), 1 and 2 Kings (also combined), Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.
- The *Ketuvim* (Writings) include Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra and Nehemiah (combined), and 1 and 2 Chronicles (also combined).

No one person or group decided which books belonged to the canon of Scripture. Down through the years they were accepted by consensus. Some of the criteria used were:

- (1) Any new writings had to be in agreement with earlier scriptures such as the Torah.
- (2) They had to be written by a recognized prophet or author of earlier Scripture.
- (3) They had to be written in Hebrew.
- (4) They had to be written in the nation of Judah or Israel.
- (5) They would be eliminated if they contained a single error.

By the time of Jesus the contents of the Hebrew Bible were settled except for the Book of Esther, which was finally accepted as inspired about 70 A.D. After the destruction of Jerusalem in that year, Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai obtained permission from Rome to reassemble the Jewish Sanhedrin to settle once and for all which books should be included in the Hebrew canon. This “Council of Jamnia” settled the dispute about Esther, but neither added nor removed any books. They merely reaffirmed what the Jewish people had accepted for centuries.

Though Jesus disagreed with the Scribes and Pharisees about the meaning of the Scriptures, He never argued about the books they accepted as sacred. He and the New Testament authors quoted from many of these books. Early Christian leaders such as Melito (ca. 170 A.D.) accepted the list from Jamnia as authoritative.

In addition to the books confirmed by the Council of Jamnia, the Roman Catholic Old Testament contains several parts known by Protestants as the *Apocrypha* (Greek for “hidden”) and by Catholics as *Deuterocanonical* (the “Second Canon”). These are Tobit, Judith, I and II Maccabees, Wisdom, Sirach, and Baruch as well as extra chapters in Esther and Daniel. The Greek Orthodox Old Testament also includes I and II Esdras and the Prayer of Manasseh. All of these apocryphal books were known in Jesus’ day but had been rejected by the Jews. Not once did Jesus or any New Testament writer quote any of them. They only began to be accepted as inspired writings after Augustine proclaimed them as such (ca. 380). Jerome, translator of the Latin Vulgate translation used by the Catholic Church, opposed Augustine and at first refused even to translate them into Latin. They were brought into the Vulgate after his death, but were not finally accepted as canonical by Catholicism until the Council of Trent in 1546. Protestants recognize that the books of Maccabees contain useful historical information, but agree with the early Church in rejecting the Apocrypha as scripture.

C. HEBREW MANUSCRIPTS.

Unfortunately, we do not have any of the original texts of the Hebrew Bible from the centuries before Christ. Until recently the Massoretic Text (named for a group of scribes known as the Massorettes) was the oldest known manuscript, dating to about 980 A.D. However, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls shows the amazing accuracy of the Jewish copyists. These scrolls, found in caves at Qumran near the Dead Sea, include every book

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of the Old Testament except Esther. They are about a thousand years older than the Massoretic Text, yet the differences consist of nothing more than slips of the pen and spelling variations. ⁹

How could the Jewish scribes be so accurate? They dedicated their lives to the task of copying and were willing to die at the hand of foreign armies rather than allow anything to happen to the sacred text. They had very strict regulations that even prescribed what color ink to use and what to wear while copying. Among their precautions to insure accuracy:

- They were not allowed to write a single letter from memory.
- They counted not only the verses but even the number of letters in the original and the copy.
- They counted the number of occurrences of each letter.
- They counted the middle verses and letters of major sections of the text, and of the whole Old Testament.
- They had rules for how many letters wide and how many lines high each column could be.
- They had regulations for the exact amount of space between letters and between sections of the text. ¹⁰

A single mistake was sufficient to invalidate the whole manuscript. They usually destroyed flawed copies, but because of the scarcity of written material they sometimes allowed them to be used to teach students to read. This may explain some of the spelling variations between the Massoretic Text and the Dead Sea Scrolls. We have no way to know if the latter were perfect copies or were rejected because of spelling.

As a result of all their precautions, the Jewish scribes were so confident of the accuracy of a copy that they saw no need to keep originals that had deteriorated due to age. Thus, the scarcity of extremely old manuscripts need not lessen our confidence in the Old Testament. Even though there are a very small number of variant readings, none involves any question of doctrine.

The Jewish people, including Jesus, trusted the accuracy of the copyists completely.

- When Satan personally appeared to Jesus to tempt Him (Luke 4), He responded simply by quoting the Old Testament.
- In other places He quoted the Creation story (Mt. 19:4).
- He referred to the Flood as a real historical event (Mt. 24:37-39).
- He referred to the Torah (the first five books of the Old Testament) as the writings of Moses (Jn. 5:46,47 and Lk. 20:37-38).
- He referred to Daniel as a true prophet (Mt. 24:15).
- In Matthew 22:32 He set forth the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead based on the tense of a verb! (I AM, rather than I WAS, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.)

The New Testament authors directly quoted the Old Testament over 320 times and alluded to it hundreds of times more. Peter was so confident that he said that the Old Testament authors “spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Pet. 1:21).

In Galatians 3:16 we see how crucial the accuracy of the Old Testament is to the Christian faith. In this passage Paul shows that all the benefits we have “in Christ” are available only because in the book of Genesis God had made promises to Abraham’s *seed* (singular) and not *seeds* (plural). Because Jesus is the seed (singular), we can only come to God through Him. If the promises had been made to seeds (plural), we would not need Jesus! If He really is the Son of God, God would have taken care to see that His words were transmitted accurately.

Even though we do not have the number of ancient originals that we have of the New Testament, we have a great many manuscripts of the Old Testament copied at different places and times, and in many languages. One example is the Yemenite Torah, handed

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down by a group of Jews in Yemen separated from their brethren more than a thousand years earlier. In over a millennium of copying and recopying, a total of nine letters changed out of 304,805 in the Massoretic Torah. ¹¹

D. THE GREEK SEPTUAGINT.

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Probably the most important non-Hebrew Old Testament manuscript is the Septuagint, the Greek version translated around 250 B.C. after Alexander the Great conquered North Africa, West Asia, and Europe and made Greek the official language of his realm.

The origin of the Septuagint is shrouded in legend. Aristobulus says that the translation of the Law was completed in Alexandria under the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus. However, it is unclear if he is referring only to the Torah, or the whole Old Testament.

One version of the origin of the Septuagint says that the translation was accomplished by seventy scholars. Since the Latin number for seventy is LXX, this abbreviation is often used for the Septuagint. Another version by a writer supposedly named Aristeas says that seventy-two interpreters, six from each tribe of Israel, were placed on an island for seventy-two days and produced the translation by mutual agreement. Variations of this story say that each of the interpreters, working independently in his own cell, produced a version identical to all the others. Others say they worked in pairs, each with an *emanuensis* (a stenographer) and produced identical versions.

Regardless how it came to be, the Septuagint was compiled several centuries before Christ. Early Christians often quoted it, but they also quoted second century Greek translations from Hebrew by Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion. Sometimes they did not exactly quote any of the previous versions but instead paraphrased or translated from the Hebrew themselves. When it came to the book of Daniel, they used Theodotion's version rather than the Septuagint. ¹²

In the early 200's, Origen dealt with discrepancies between the Hebrew and Greek texts in his work *Hexapla*. As we shall see, some of the discrepancies can be a source of uncertainty. However, the agreement between the Hebrew Massoretic Text and the copies in various languages is remarkable. As with the New Testament, even the variant readings are trivial.

E. NUMERIC DISCREPANCIES.

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The discrepancies between Hebrew texts and those in other languages are few and far between. The small number of variant readings in the Old Testament almost always have to do with numerical values. (Even then, only a tiny percentage of the numbers are affected.) Many of the uncertainties are found in the genealogy of Genesis chapter 5, in which the ages at which some of the men became fathers differ by exactly a hundred years between the Massoretic Text and the Septuagint.

Letters in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek have a numerical value: aleph and alpha have a value of one, beyth and beta two, and so on. Thus, words had a numerical value which could be obtained by adding up the values of the letters. However, the earliest manuscripts in ancient Hebrew did not contain vowels. Vowel points were added later to assist in pronunciation. Depending which vowel points a copyist chose, the numerical value of the text would change.

By about 500 B.C. the ancient Hebrew had fallen out of common use. Aramaic had become so widespread that it was deemed necessary to translate the Scriptures into that language. (Same alphabet, different vocabulary.) Translators going from the ancient Hebrew into Aramaic, Greek, and more modern Hebrew had to decide which vowels belonged in the original version. Since the translators worked at different times and places, there was no way for them to consult with each other. They seem to have disagreed about the proper vowels in a few passages. Any scribes who came along later would simply copy what the translators of their version had decided was correct.

Regardless of the fact that a few variations exist, not a single one affects any doctrines

of either the Jewish or Christian faith. The Genesis genealogies in the Septuagint add up to a few hundred years more than the Massoretic Text. So what? Even if we were to add thousands rather than hundreds of years to the Genesis 5 genealogy, we still conclude that the age of mankind is to be measured in thousands of years, not millions, and that a real man named Adam brought sin and death into the world.

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Jesus is the final authority for Christians. In case of a disagreement between the Hebrew Massoretic Text used in His day as compared to any other language, we should remember what He said:

“For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” (Matt 5:18)

A jot was the smallest letter in the Hebrew language (*yodh*), and a tittle (Greek *kerasia*) was a tiny pen stroke used to distinguish one Hebrew letter from another. These terms have nothing to do with any language except Hebrew. This author believes that Jesus was guaranteeing the preservation of the Hebrew text. In case of a disagreement, we shall consider the Hebrew text as authoritative.

Even including the small number of numerical variants, there is only a tiny amount of variation between manuscripts. Almost nothing else besides numbers – names, places, historical events, prophecies, etc. – seems to have been affected. We can use the manuscripts scholars consider the best or those they deem the worst, and we will still reach the same conclusions about what God wanted us to know.

All in all, the manuscript evidence and the care with which Jewish scribes copied the Old Testament Scriptures show us that the Bible we have today is a reliable record of what was originally written thousands of years ago. The Torah was preserved with special care. You may not believe the Bible, but you have to admit that the narrative has not changed in any significant way from the way Moses wrote it.

CHAPTER 4

Does the Bible Contain Errors and Contradictions?

It is easy for critics to say that the Bible contains errors and contradictions, but so far impossible for them to prove it. For instance, Muslims claim that the Bible contains over 100,000 errors and contradictions. However, Dr. Manise Ab Al Nour has answered every one of their objections in his massive Arabic book *Oham Mashboha la Al Kitah Al Mokadas*. (Personal communication, Dr. Adel Ramses.) Many books in the English language such as *Halley's Bible Handbook*¹³, John W. Haley's *Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible*¹⁴, and Gleason Archer's *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*¹⁵ also show that there is an answer to every objection.

Following are answers to many common objections or difficulties with the Bible, starting with the Creation account and continuing through the Old and New Testaments in more or less chronological order.

1. ARE THERE TWO CONTRADICTORY CREATION ACCOUNTS IN GENESIS?

Some liberal theologians follow the "JEPD Hypothesis" which says that Genesis is not the work of Moses but that instead it was compiled from several sources centuries after his death. This would mean that every reference to the "law of Moses" or the "book of the Law" in the books of Joshua, Judges, Kings, or Chronicles referred to something that did not yet exist. Thus, these books would be largely fictional.

Those who want to learn the fallacies of the JEPD hypothesis can consult Archer's *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*. We will here consider only one of the arguments used in support of this position: the claim that Genesis contains two contradictory creation accounts.

- Chapter One of Genesis gives us a broad overview of the creation week, with "God" (Hebrew *Elohim*) being the Creator. It tells us what He did on which day: Day 1, light; Day 2, separation of the waters above from the waters below; Day 3, dry land and vegetation; Day 4, lights placed in the heavens; Day 5, sea creatures and birds; Day 6, land animals and finally humans.
- Chapter Two focuses on the creation of man, with "the LORD God" (Hebrew *Yahweh Elohim*) performing the work. This narrative says (v. 5-9) that there were not yet shrubs or plants "of the field" until the LORD God formed man and planted a garden in which to place him. It tells us (v. 18-22) that

"out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man." (KJV)

The second account seems to imply that man was created before plants and animals – a contradiction of the sequence of events in Chapter One. However, the apparent contradiction is easily resolved with a little bit of study. God created plants on Day 3. He did not have to create any new kinds after He made Adam on Day 6. He simply planted previously existing types in a garden. Until that time there had been no plants or herbs "of the field" (Hebrew *sadeh* or *saday*). This expression has to do with cultivation. The plants existed, but they had not yet been grown in an agricultural setting.

There is also no contradiction between the order in which animals and humans were created. Chapter One gives us a strict sequence of events, but Chapter Two does not. A literal word-for-word reading of Genesis 2:18-19 is as follows:

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“And said Yahweh God, not it is good being of the man alone; I will make for him a helper corresponding to him. And formed Yahweh God from the ground every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens, and brought to the man to see what he would call it; and all which might call it the man, each soul [Hebrew nephesh - soul or life] living, that was its name.”¹⁶

Notice that the passage reads “*and* said... *and* formed... *and* brought,” not “*then* said... *then* formed... *then* brought.” Then would indicate a definite sequence of events, but *and* does not.

Suppose you built a motorcycle in June, an automobile in July, and a house in August and then described how you brought them all together. Though a hearer unfamiliar with the sequence of events might draw the wrong conclusions, you would not be incorrect in saying “I built a house and and I built an automobile and a motorcycle and I put them in the driveway.” Likewise, the Hebrew of Genesis 2:18-19 does not convey a clear time sequence. We must refer back to Chapter One for the order of events.

We should also realize that the Hebrew language does not make the kind of clear distinction between verb tenses that English does. For instance, in English we can use the past tense to say “God formed” and the pluperfect to say “God had formed.” In Hebrew, there is no distinct pluperfect. It has a perfect tense and a conversive imperfect, either of which can have the significance of our pluperfect if the context so indicates.¹⁵ Thus, it would be perfectly reasonable to translate verse 18 to say that God “had formed” every beast of the field and every bird of the air and brought them unto Adam. The apparent contradiction between Chapters One and Two of Genesis is no contradiction at all.

2. THE EARTH HUNG ON NOTHING.

Other cultures throughout the world believed that the earth was held up on the back of a huge turtle, elephant, etc., but the Bible stated that “He hangeth the earth upon nothing” (Job 26:7).

3. SHAPE OF THE EARTH.

Other cultures believed that the earth was flat; for centuries before everyone else caught on, the Bible said that it was round (Isaiah 40:22).

4. MOTION OF THE SUN.

Psalms 19:6 tells us that the sun’s “rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them” - in other words, the sun moves across the sky.

Since the phenomena of sunrise and sunset occur because the earth rotates and not because the sun moves around it, some claim that this is an error in the Bible. But notice that the Bible does not say that the sun moves around the earth, only that it moves across the sky. Astronomers have discovered that the entire solar system - including the sun - is in a lengthy orbit through the galaxy. The sun does move across the heavens. It just took the scientists a few thousand years to catch on.

The belief that the earth is the center of the universe is NOT found in the Bible. It was proposed by the pagan Greek philosopher Aristotle hundreds of years before Christ. The medieval Catholic Church was not following the Bible in condemning Galileo. It was following the word of a pagan.

5. ROTATION OF THE EARTH.

The oldest book of the Bible, Job, tells us in 38:14 that the earth “is turned as clay to the seal” - that is, it rotates. Everybody else thought that the earth stood still while the heavenly bodies rotated around it.

6. THE HYDROLOGIC CYCLE.

The Bible described wind patterns and the hydrologic cycle centuries before anyone else knew about them (Ecclesiastes 1:6-7, Amos 5:8).

7. PATHS IN THE SEA.

In the middle 1800's Bible-believing sailor Matthew F. Maury noticed that Ps. 8:8 mentioned “Paths of the Seas.” He searched for them and found that there really are predictable ocean currents. His work was instrumental in setting up the science of oceanography.

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8. WATER IN SPACE.

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#4-3

In recent years, space probes have detected the presence of water on the moon, on other planets, and in space. This should come as no surprise to Christians, since the Bible says, "Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens." (Ps. 148:4). Of course there is water out there. The Bible said so long before the scientists knew about it.

9. DOES IT MATTER WHETHER HUMANS CAME FROM ADAM OR APES?

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Evolution depends upon the survival of the fittest and therefore the death of the less fit. In order for some apelike ancestors to evolve into humans, then, there would have had to be a process of death and struggle over millions of years leading to the evolution of more and more fit creatures by the elimination of the weak. This process of struggle and death eventually led to man. Struggle and death caused man.

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The Bible, on the other hand, says that it was only after Adam sinned that death entered the world (Rom. 5:12). Man caused struggle and death.

The existence of Adam is more than a matter for philosophical discussion. The First Letter to the Corinthians shows us plainly that the existence of Adam is crucial to understanding who Jesus is and why He had to die.

"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive... And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." (1 Cor 15:21-22, 45)

If there was no first Adam, what do you need a Last Adam for? In that case, Jesus died because of something that never happened. What kind of savior would He be if He died because of a myth?

10. HOW COULD A GOOD GOD ALLOW SUFFERING IN THE WORLD?

Evolution says that suffering and death have been here since the first life evolved from chemicals billions of years ago. Suffering is a natural part of existence.

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The Bible, on the other hand, says that it was only after Adam sinned that suffering and death entered the world. They are the fault of humans, not God. He allowed us free will, and the choices we make cause suffering. However, the Bible also says that suffering and death will one day end when God makes new heavens and a new earth, in which there will be no more death and suffering.

11. DID GOD CREATE EVIL?

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#4-7

Critics of the Bible say that if there is a God, He could not be good because Isa. 45:7 says,

"I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things."

However, there are two different Hebrew words translated "evil." One of them, *ra'ah* (Strong's number 7451), means calamity. The other, "*rish'â*" (Strong's # 7564) means moral evil. Isaiah 45:7 uses the first word rather than the second. Yes, God sometimes causes calamity - but He does not create moral evil.

12. DO FOSSILS SHOW THAT HUMANS EVOLVED FROM APES?

The idea that humans evolved from apes is presented as fact in schools around the world. Evolutionists often say that there are "mountains" of fossil evidence supporting the idea. This is not true.

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Though many volumes have been written on the subject, it is not our purpose here to deal with the supposed evolution of anything but humans. Humans are classified as members of Order Primates, along with prosimians (lemurs, lorises, and tarsiers), monkeys, and apes. (Monkeys have tails, apes do not.)

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If someone claims we evolved as members of Order Primates, we should ask what this order is supposed to have evolved from. The answer is that no one knows. The only candidate for the ancestor of primates is the tree shrew known as *Tupaia*. It appears in the fossil record suddenly and fully formed with nothing leading up to it and nothing connecting it to any primate. It has

been proposed as an ancestor only because there is nothing else to offer in its place.

The “lowest” primates are prosimians, which include lemurs, lorises, and tarsiers. They too appear in the fossil record suddenly and fully formed with nothing leading up to them. From their first fossil appearance in types such as *Smilodectes* and *Notharctus* to the present, there is no evidence of evolution.

Monkeys also appear in the fossil record suddenly and fully formed. Many fossil monkeys are extinct, but some have remained unchanged until the present.

There are no known fossil transitions leading up to apes (gorillas, chimpanzees, orangutans, and gibbons). Each of them appears in the fossil record suddenly and fully formed and does not exhibit any evolution until extinction or until the present.

Many fossils have been proposed as transitions leading from some unknown type of ape to humans. These have names such as *Australopithecus*, *Dryopithecus*, *Ramapithecus*, and many others. However, every one of them whose name ends in “-pithecus” (Latin for “ape”) is now recognized as just that – an ape.

There are also a number of human fossils. *Homo erectus* seems to have been a human that looked a bit different from a typical European, but all the *H. erectus* fossils fall within the range of human measurements. They may simply have been an ethnic group that looked a bit different from what we are used to seeing among Europeans. Likewise, Neanderthals and Cro-Magnons are now recognized as true humans.

To summarize: Every fossil supposed to be a transition between apes and humans has been found to be either an ape or a human. There are no fossil ape-men.

13. HOW COULD A HUMAN BODY COME FROM THE DUST OF THE EARTH?

One specific aspect of creation that many object to is the statement that God formed man’s body from the dust of the earth. This is radically different from the evolutionary idea that humans came from apelike ancestors. It is also very different from the ideas of the ancient Greeks and Romans, who believed that every earthly object was made of a mixture of earth, air, fire, and water. (The heavenly bodies were believed to be made of a fifth essence, or *quintessence*.) We now know that the human body is made of carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, oxygen, sulfur, phosphorus, calcium, iron, molybdenum, manganese, and many other trace minerals. And what is the dust of the earth made of? Carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, oxygen, sulfur, phosphorus, calcium, iron, molybdenum, manganese, and many other trace minerals. Everything God needed to make a human body was present in the soil.

Plants are at the bottom of the food chain. They extract elements from the soil, then we take in those elements by eating the plants or the animals that ate the plants. In creating the first human body, God simply bypassed the plants.

14. WHY WOULD GOD START WITH A MALE AND NOT A FEMALE?

Males have both X and Y chromosomes, but women have two copies of X and none of Y. It would be theoretically possible to clone a female from a male by using two copies of his X chromosome, but it would not be possible to clone a male from a female because no Y chromosome would be available.

15. DO MEN HAVE ONE LESS RIB THAN WOMEN?

This is a common misconception, perhaps started by those who wanted to make fun of well-meaning yet ignorant Christians. No, men do not have one less rib than women.

God performed some sort of miraculous surgery and cloning operation on Adam, using material from one of his ribs to build up Eve. Suppose He had used a finger instead. Would Adam’s sons have been born lacking a finger while his daughters had all theirs? Of course not. Adam’s DNA was not affected by the surgery.

Why the rib? It’s the only known bone in humans that will grow back.

16. IS THERE SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE THAT ALL HUMANS CAME FROM ONE MAN?

Unlike females, males have both X and Y chromosomes. Since the Y chromosome is not found

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#4-10

Visual
#4-11

Visual
#4-12

in females, it is inherited only from the father. One segment which includes 729 base pairs was found to be identical in men from around the world – that is, no mutations or substitutions.¹⁷ Statistically, this is evidence that all living human males came from one original male, dubbed “Y-Chromosome Adam.”

17. HOW COULD A SNAKE TALK?

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#4-13

Unlike many fables and legends, the Bible does not routinely mention talking animals. It contains only two such accounts: the serpent in Eden, and Balaam’s donkey (Numbers 23:28-30), as well as one incident in which a herd of pigs became possessed by demons (Mk. 5:11-13). In each instance, it is clear that something extraordinary – a miracle – took place. In Eden, Lucifer somehow took possession of the body of a serpent (Hebrew *nachash*, a hissing thing) and used it to speak to Eve. We have no idea what process he used, but it was plainly a supernatural event. Likewise, the Bible tells us that God Himself enabled Balaam’s donkey to talk.

18. WHY WASN’T EVE SURPRISED WHEN A SNAKE TALKED TO HER?

Who says she wasn’t? Since she and Adam had no knowledge of evil, she would not have understood that something was wrong. She didn’t know what “wrong” was. So when an animal talked to her, she probably was surprised but saw no reason not to respond. She had no previous experience to warn her that something was amiss.

19. WHERE DID CAIN GET HIS WIFE?

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#4-14

One of the most common questions used to try to discredit Genesis is “*Where did Cain get his wife?*” After all, if Adam and Eve were the parents of all humans (Gen. 4:17), how could there have been any women for him to marry? The answer is that he got his wife the same place any man does: from the pool of available women. However, in his day the pool was much smaller. The Bible names only three of the sons of Adam and Eve, but it tells us that they had other sons and daughters (Gen. 4:4). Jewish tradition says they had over three dozen. Thus, Cain married either his sister or his niece. (Unfortunately for her, she didn’t have many men to choose from.)

Some might object that God does not allow brothers and sisters to marry. This is true, but the prohibition did not go into effect until the time of Moses, well over a thousand years later. Up until then, marriage between close relatives was allowed. Even Abraham, the great man of faith, married his half-sister Sarah. It is dangerous for close relatives to marry nowadays because a great number of harmful mutations have accumulated in the human gene pool down through the centuries. A child born to close relatives is much more likely to have some genetic defect than if its parents were not closely related. However, at the very beginning there were no mutations at all in the gene pool. Thus, it was safe for Cain and his sister or niece to have children together.

20. WHY DID GOD REJECT CAIN’S SACRIFICE OF CROPS?

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#4-15

Genesis 4: 3 - 5 tells us:

“And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect.”

Some commentators have said that only animal sacrifices were acceptable. However, the book of Leviticus later gives detailed instructions about offerings of crops, so they must have been acceptable.

This is not a contradiction. Abel brought the firstlings of his flock, trusting God enough to believe he would receive more later. Cain, on the other hand, brought his offering “in process of time” – that is, at the end of the harvest. He waited until he was sure he would have enough crops left over before he gave his offering. The problem was with Cain’s attitude, not with his sacrifice.

21. IF ANIMALS WERE NOT MEANT TO KILL EACH OTHER, WHY DO SNAKES HAVE POISON AND PREDATORS SHARP TEETH?

Genesis 1:30 says that animals were to eat only plants. Why, then, did God give snakes a killing mechanism? The answer becomes plain when we consider what the poison of snakes (and many

Visual
#4-16

other animals) really is: digestive enzymes. Enzymes either put together molecules or else break them apart. The effects of snake poison occur because the enzymes immediately begin to break apart the tissue into which they are injected. If a snake were to bite a piece of fruit and inject venom into it, the digestive process would start even before he swallowed it. Killing is only a secondary function of the venom.

Sharp Teeth.

Many animals have sharp teeth. When we see such creatures, we assume they are meat-eaters. This is not necessarily true. For example, the panda has sharp teeth but eats bamboo. If we remove its food supply, it will eat anything available, including meat. Likewise, the fruit bat has very sharp teeth but prefers to eat fruit whenever possible.

This may be what happened during and after the Flood. This event caused a great number of plants to become extinct. Many of the sharp-toothed animals that now eat meat may have eaten plants before the Flood, but had to change their diet when their previous food source became unavailable. We know that the animals on the Ark, at least, did not eat each other. Two of everything went on and at least two of everything came off. All of them, including the carnivores, must have been able to survive on plants at least until the food supply on the Ark was gone.

22. WERE ANIMALS EATING EACH OTHER FOR MILLIONS OF YEARS BEFORE HUMANS CAME ALONG?

Visual
#4-17

Evolutionists believe that single celled organisms began more than 3.5 billion years ago, that multicellular life began over 600 million years ago, that animals came out of the water onto land around 400 million years ago, and that humans evolved only within the last million years. At some point between the last two dates, land animals began to eat each other.

The Bible shows that life has not been here for millions of years. We should also note that:

- We could only be sure what animals ate if we either saw them eat or else analyzed their stomach contents.
- A great many fossil animals have anatomical structures that we believe indicate that they were suited to a vegetarian diet. Only a few dinosaurs are believed to have been carnivores.
- The Bible does not say that animals never ate each other, only that at the end of the creation week, they were to eat only plants (Gen. 1: 29 - 30). By the time of Noah's flood, though, "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence" (Gen 6:11).

Animals and humans only began to die after Adam sinned (Rom. 5:12 - 21 et al.). If they were dying before then, both the Old and New Testaments are wrong and we Christians are in trouble. Paul tells us (1 Cor. 15:21 - 22, 45) that the "last Adam," Jesus, came to bring righteousness and resurrection because the first Adam brought sin and death. But if animals were eating each other before Adam, then Adam did NOT bring death into the world; it was here millions of years before he arrived. What point, then, to the life and death of the Last Adam, Jesus? If anything that possessed the breath of life died before Adam, the Gospel is a cruel hoax. Jesus becomes either a lunatic or the worst deceiver the world has ever known. If the first Adam didn't bring sin and death, what do you need a Last Adam for?

23. COULD DINOSAURS OR OTHER LARGE REPTILES BE MENTIONED IN THE BIBLE?

Job is widely accepted as the oldest book of the Bible. Conservative scholars believe that the events it describes took place only a few hundred years after the Flood. It describes a creature unknown to science:

Visual
#4-18

"Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox. Lo now, his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly. **He moveth his tail like a cedar:** the sinews of his stones are wrapped together. His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron. He is the chief of the ways of God: he that made him can make his sword to approach unto him. Surely the mountains bring him forth food, where all the beasts of the field play. He lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of the reed, and fens. The shady trees cover him with their shadow; the willows of the brook

compass him about. Behold, he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not: **he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth.** He taketh it with his eyes: his nose pierceth through snares” (Job 40:15 - 24).

This was a semiaquatic animal of enormous size that had a tail like a cedar tree. Though some try to equate this with an elephant, no known living animal has a tail of this size. The only ones of which we are aware were some of the sauropod dinosaurs.

Visual
#4-19

In addition to this animal, the King James Version, translated four hundred years ago, mentions “unicorns.” The use of this word could be puzzling to the modern reader. However, at the time the Hebrew text was translated into the Septuagint, the translators used the Greek word “monocera.” This does not indicate a flying horse with wings and a horn. It simply means an animal with a single horn. It could have been a rhinoceros, or it could perhaps even have been a one-horned ceratopsian reptile such as a *monoclonius*.

24. HOW CAN WE BELIEVE IN A WORLDWIDE FLOOD WHEN SO MANY DENY IT?

Almost 2,000 years ago Peter warned us that in the last days scoffers would deny there was ever a worldwide Flood.

Visual
#4-20

“... knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For since he fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of creation. For this they **willfully forget:** that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world *that* then existed perished, being **flooded with water**” 2 Peter 3:3-6.

This is a perfect description of a geological statement of faith called *uniformitarianism*, which says that geologic processes happen at slow, gradual, uniform rates over millions or billions of years. Since global floods do not happen regularly, there could not have been one in the past.

Visual
#4-21

If you believe that we are in the last days, this widely held belief should come as no surprise to you. It can be traced back to the late 1600's, when Nicolas Steno announced his “Law of Superposition.” He said that (1) sedimentary layers form one at a time, and that (2) the ones on the bottom are the oldest. This “Law” is the basis of believing that the earth’s strata build up a tiny bit at a time and that the lowest are always the oldest. The problem is that it has been falsified.

- In nature, Mount St. Helens showed that hundreds of thousands of layers can build up in a matter of days.
- In the lab, Guy Berthault’s experiments at the Colorado School of Mines ¹⁸ showed that if there is a flowing current, the bottom layers may NOT be the oldest.

Steno’s “Law” only works when there is no current – certainly not the case in any kind of flood.

25. WHY NOT A LOCAL FLOOD?

Visual
#4-22

- Why build an ark? Noah and the animals could have just walked away.
- Every continent around the world has thick layers of sedimentary rock, not just the area of Mesopotamia.
- There are seashells on top of even the highest mountains in the Himalayas and the Andes.
- Cultures all around the world that had little or no contact with each other have legends of a great flood that covered the earth. Either the flood legends are all just a astonishing coincidence, or else there is some basis to them in fact.

26. IF GOD CREATED DINOSAURS DURING THE CREATION WEEK, WHY DIDN'T NOAH TAKE THEM ON THE ARK?

Visual
#4-23

- Even the largest dinosaurs hatched from eggs not much bigger than a football. It would have taken them many years to grow to enormous sizes.
- Even we humans with our limited intelligence would know that it would be unwise to take full grown dinosaurs on the Ark. God would have brought young ones.
- The bone structure of dinosaurs shows us that they were reptiles. Since almost all known

reptiles do better in warm climates than cold, we can logically conclude that post-flood dinosaurs would only have thrived in warm climates.

- Almost all dragon legends from around the world are from areas with warm climates.
- The country with the greatest number of dragon legends (China) is also the country with the greatest number of dinosaur fossils.
- As recently as the last ten years, there have been reports of dinosaur-like creatures in remote areas of Africa.
- There are also carvings and pictures around the world dating to within historic times – made by humans – showing animals that look very much like our conceptions of dinosaurs.

Unless a person's mind is made up in advance, he or she would have to admit that it is possible that a few dinosaurs may have made it through the Flood on the Ark and that their descendants have survived in remote areas.

27. HOW COULD ALL THE ANIMALS HAVE FIT ON THE ARK?

Noah did not choose which animals went on the ark. Instead, God led them on (Gen. 7:9).

- Only land-dwelling animals went on board.
- Since not many land animals are large, the average size of the animals on the Ark would probably be smaller than sheep.
- It would take only about 10,000 pairs of sheep-sized animals to account for every known type of animal on the earth.
- The Ark was the largest boat ever built until the 1800's. We do not know exactly how long a cubit was, but the lowest estimated value is about 18 inches. This would mean the Ark was at least 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high (about 150 by 25 by 15 meters). It also had three decks inside. Based on these dimensions, it had a carrying capacity equivalent to about 522 railroad boxcars.

A pair of every known type of air-breathing animal would only fill the Ark to about a third of its carrying capacity.

28. HOW COULD A HUMAN BODY (LOT'S WIFE) TURN INTO SALT?

Gen. 19:24 - 26 tells us,

“Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. But his [Lot's] wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.”

When we think of salt, we usually think of what we put on our food, sodium chloride. However, the Hebrew word here translated “salt” is *melah*. It does not mean table salt. Rather, it simply indicates “powder.” If a human body were to have all the water instantly removed, what would be left behind? A pile of powder.

29. DOES GENESIS 30 CONTAIN A MISTAKE IN BIOLOGY?

Gen. 29 - 30 tell us that Jacob's father-in-law Laban had cheated him many times, so Jacob resolved to get the best animals for himself.

“And Jacob took him rods of green poplar, and of the hazel and chesnut tree; and pilled white strakes in them, and made the white appear which was in the rods. And he set the rods which he had pilled before the flocks in the gutters in the watering troughs when the flocks came to drink, that they should conceive when they came to drink. And the flocks conceived before the rods, and brought forth cattle ringstraked, speckled, and spotted... And it came to pass, whensoever the stronger cattle did conceive, that Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the cattle in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods.” (Gen. 30: 37 - 41)

The physical features of animals are determined by DNA, not by what their parents see during mating. Jacob was unaware of this fact, so he acted in ignorance as he showed God which animals he wanted. However, God had already determined to bless him (Gen. 28) and did so despite Jacob's error. Jacob prospered not because of his mistaken understanding of breeding,

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#4-24

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#4-26

but because of miraculous intervention by God. This was no ordinary breeding event but an instance when God stepped in to overrule the laws of nature. (Gen. 26:12 records a similar situation, where Jacob's father Isaac had a plentiful crop despite the fact that there was a famine.)

30. HOW COULD JACOB'S YOUNGEST SON BENJAMIN HAVE TEN SONS BEFORE HE CAME TO EGYPT?

Visual
#4-27

Genesis 46:21 says that Benjamin, Jacob's youngest son, had ten sons when he entered Egypt with his father. How is this possible?

Joseph was born six years before his father brought the family back from Laban's country to Canaan. While the family was on the way to Bethel, Jacob met Esau (Gen. 33). Then some of Jacob's sons killed the males of Shechem after their sister was raped (Gen. 34). Then the family journeyed to Bethel, followed by the death of Rachel and then Isaac. Even if we allow two years for these events, Joseph was something less than ten years old when Rachel died giving birth to Benjamin (Gen. 35:16 ff). Thus, Benjamin was probably not more than ten years younger than Joseph.

Joseph was thirty when he stood before Pharaoh (Gen. 41:46), so he was at least thirty-seven before the years of famine came. Two years of famine had elapsed before Joseph made himself known to his brothers (Gen. 45:6). Joseph was now around forty years old. Benjamin was probably around thirty years old at the time. This was plenty time for him to have had ten sons, especially since men at that time frequently had multiple wives and concubines.

31. WHY ARE THERE DIFFERENT GENEALOGIES OF BENJAMIN IN GENESIS AND NUMBERS?

Visual
#4-28

Gen. 46:21 lists ten sons of Benjamin who entered Egypt: Bela, Becher, Ashbel (a.k.a. Jediel), Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim, and Ard. Num. 26:38 is different because it deals with a census 400 years later, when the Israelites came OUT of Egypt.

Bela, Ashbel, Ahiram, Shupham (Muppim), and Hupham (Huppim) are named in the second list; missing are Ard, Naaman, Becher, Gera and Rosh. Where did they go?

Benjamin's oldest son Bela later had three sons with the same names as three of his brothers, Ard, Naaman, and Gera. Perhaps those three brothers died young so he named three of his sons after them. (Hasn't your family ever done this?) Becher and Rosh are not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible. They may have died without leaving any male descendants. If so, their families were absorbed by other parts of the tribe of Benjamin.

The different genealogies are not a contradiction. They merely show the structure of the tribe of Benjamin at different times.

32. HOW MANY PEOPLE WENT INTO EGYPT WITH JACOB?

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#4-29

Genesis 46:26 says that "All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls were threescore and six." The next verse says that "all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten." (Gen 46:27) However, Acts 7:14 says, "Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls."

So which is it, 66, 70, or 75? All of the above. The first number is the number of Jacob's descendants who entered Egypt with him. There were 66 not including Jacob, Joseph, or Joseph's two sons, who were already there. The second number, 70, includes those four. The third, 75, also included several daughters-in-law.

33. DOES THE BIBLE CONTRADICT ITSELF ABOUT HOW LONG THE ISRAELITES WERE IN EGYPT?

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#4-30

The number of years Israel was in Egypt or in slavery before the Exodus is often pointed out as a contradiction. Many people think that the time was either 400 or 430 years, because that's what they have been told. However, the time in Egypt was neither of those numbers.

In Genesis 15:13-14, God told Abraham,

"Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them **four hundred years**; And also that nation, whom

they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance... But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again..." (repeated in Acts 7:6-7 at the stoning of Stephen)

That is, for a total of 400 years the "seed" of Abraham would dwell in one or more foreign countries in which they did not own any land. For at least part of the time they would serve the nation where they lived and be afflicted by it. In the fourth generation, they would return "hither" – to the part of Canaan where the promise was given.

In Gal. 3:16 Paul points out that the word "seed" is singular, and makes a spiritual application to Christ. However, the fact that the word is singular implies that it would only take one of Abraham's descendants to start the clock on the prophecy. This happened when the first "seed" of Abraham, Joseph, entered Egypt when he was 17 years old. The rest of the family entered about 22 years later, but the clock was running. The 400 years ended in the fourth generation when Abraham's seed came back to the same place the promise was given – Beersheba in Canaan.

Visual
#4-31

There is no way the Israelites could have been enslaved in Egypt for the whole 400 years. Remember that the prophecy said that they would return "hither" (to Canaan) in the fourth generation. We can use the family of Levi to see how much time it could have been. Levi lived quite a few years before entering Egypt, but his son Kohath was born not too long before entering that country. He was the first generation. He lived a total of 133 years (Ex. 6:18). His son Amram (second generation) lived 137 years (Ex. 6:20). Amram's son Moses (third generation) was born 80 years before the Israelites departed in the Exodus. (Deut. 34:7). His sons Gershom and Eliezer were in the fourth generation, the one that entered Canaan. There were no skipped generations.

Visual
#4-32

Suppose Kohath was born just as he was entering Egypt and then had his son Amram in the last year of his life (age 133). If Amram then begot his son Moses in the last year of his life (age 137), this would have added 137 years. Moses then led the Israelites out of Egypt when he was 80 years old. This would add up to no more than $133 + 137 + 80 = 350$ years. If these three were born a number of years before their fathers died, the Israelites could have been in Egypt closer to 300 years.

The Israelites' slavery was even shorter. It did not begin until after Joseph and his entire generation died (Ex. 6:8). It ended at the Exodus, 40 years before they entered Canaan. As we saw previously, Jacob's family entered Egypt when Joseph was around 40 years old. Since he lived to 110 (Gen. 50:26), we can subtract at least 70 years from the 300 above. Thus, the time of slavery was something less than 240 years.

To summarize: The 400 years referred to the time from when the first of Abraham's great-grandsons, Joseph, became a stranger in Egypt until the Israelites entered the Promised Land 40 years after leaving Egypt.

The 430 year time periods mentioned in Exod. 12:40 is not the same as the one mentioned in Exod. 12:41, but the latter is the one referred to in Gal. 4:17. The two 430 year periods and the 400 year period overlapped but are not the same.

34. MOSES' DEPARTURE FROM EGYPT.

Visual
#4-33

Some refer to Exodus 2:14 a contradiction in the Bible. It says that Moses left Egypt because he was afraid, as opposed to Hebrews 11:27, which says that he did not fear the wrath of the king. What's the solution? He left twice. The first time was on his own, as he fled for his life; the second was under the direction of Almighty God after he had boldly told Pharaoh, "Let my people go."

35. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

Visual
#4-34

The Ten Commandments are listed twice in the Bible, in Exodus chapter 20 and Deuteronomy chapter 5. Some critics claim that because the two passages differ somewhat in their wording (most notably in the Fourth Commandment), they contradict each other. Those who make such a claim are showing not scholarship but laziness.

Exodus 20 records the Israelites' terror as God was speaking the Ten Commandments, at which time they asked Moses to be an intermediary between themselves and God. Moses then received and relayed a number of other instructions, which he afterward wrote down (Ex. 24:4). Next he went up Mount Sinai for forty days and received detailed instructions on how to construct the tabernacle and how to conduct worship. As he was about to return to the Israelites' camp God gave him two tables of stone on which the commandments were written (Ex. 31:18). When he saw the people worshipping the golden calf he broke the tablets in anger (Ex. 32:19). Later, God had him rewrite the Commandments on new tables (Ex. 34:27-28)). Forty years later (Deut. 5) he prepared the people for his impending death by reminding them of the commandments.

Exodus gives the exact words from the tables of stone, while in Deuteronomy Moses was reminding the Israelites of the Commandments four decades later. He was not reading verbatim from the tablets, but was using them as a text for preaching. Like any good preacher he explained and expounded as he thought necessary. The variation in wording is not a contradiction at all.

36. DOES THE BIBLE CONTRADICT ITSELF ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT?

Exod. 20:13 says, "Thou shalt not kill." Yet the Law of Moses requires the death penalty for certain offenses (e.g., Ex. 31:14). Is this a contradiction?

- The word translated "kill," *rasah*, indicates killing without just cause. Many translations render it as "murder."
- The English language has changed since the time the King James Version was translated. Now we say "you" for both singular and plural, but at the time, "thou" was used for singular and "you" for plural. The King James correctly renders the pronoun as "thou." Exodus 20:13 indicates that individuals are not authorized to take a life without just cause. It is not referring to the government executing criminals.

The Israelite government was a theocracy. Throughout the Old Testament the King, God, authorized the government or individuals to take a life in certain circumstances:

- In punishment for certain designated crimes, after the accused had a trial before the local elders.
- In defense of self or those for whom one was responsible.
- In time of war when defending one's nation.

Murder was never allowed, but killing sometimes was.

37. DOES THE BIBLE CONTRADICT ITSELF ABOUT THE SABBATH? (WHY DON'T CHRISTIANS WORSHIP ON SATURDAY?)

There is not a single mention of the Sabbath in Genesis. It is first seen in Exod. 16:23 - 29 when God established it for the Israelites. It was a new concept to them. It became mandatory only at the time of the Ten Commandments (Exod. 20:8). Neh. 9:13-14 and Ezek. 20:12 reiterate that it was at the giving of the Law that God first made known the commandment to keep the Sabbath. Those who try to establish their own righteousness by living under this part of the Law are obliged to keep the WHOLE Law – over 600 commandments (Gal. 3:10, Jas. 2:10 - 11).

Christians are not in bondage to observe any specific day of rest:

One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. (Rom. 14:5 - 6)

We who have trusted in Christ have already entered into our rest (Heb. 4:6-10).

38. DOES THE BIBLE CONFUSE BATS WITH BIRDS?

Verses 13 -19 of Leviticus chapter 11 forbid the Israelites to eat certain "fowls," including bats. Bats are certainly not birds. Is this an error?

Remember that the King James version was translated about 400 years ago, using the language of its day. However, the Hebrew word translated "fowls" actually has a broader meaning of "flying things." Even the most vocal critic of the Bible cannot deny that bats are indeed flying things.

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#4-35

Visual
#4-36

Visual
#4-37

39. DID MOSES MAKE A MISTAKE COUNTING THE NUMBER OF LEGS ON INSECTS?

Visual
#4-38

In Leviticus 11:20 - 33, the Israelites received instructions about certain creatures that were not to be eaten. There is no dispute about the kind of animals prohibited in verses 26 - 30. However, some critics say that verses 20 - 23 indicate that Moses thought insects had four legs rather than six.

“All fowls that creep, going upon all four, shall be an abomination unto you. Yet these may ye eat of every flying creeping thing that goeth upon all four, which have legs above their feet, to leap withal upon the earth; Even these of them ye may eat; the locust after his kind, and the bald locust after his kind, and the beetle after his kind, and the grasshopper after his kind. But all other flying creeping things, which have four feet, shall be an abomination unto you.” (Lev. 11:20-23 KJV)

The criticism reflects ignorance rather than critical analysis.

A few translations such as the King James render the subject in verse 20 as “fowls,” but others say “flying insects” or “winged insects.” Most of those who criticize this passage point out that birds – fowls – do not use their wings to walk and that insects have six legs rather than four. An examination of the Hebrew text ²⁰ clears up the apparent problem.

- First, as noted above, the word translated “fowls” in the King James is a broad term for flying things.
- Second, the word “all” is not part of the Hebrew expression translated “all four.” The word “all” was added by interpreters. The expression signifies creatures that walk on four limbs but does not exclude those that possess more.
- Third, the word “insects” used in some translations was inserted by the interpreters. A word for word translation of the Hebrew text ^{21,22} would read something like,

Visual
#4-39

“Every crawling flying [thing] going on four abomination it [is] to you. Only this you may eat of crawling flying [things] which go upon four, which [has] legs above its feet to leap with on the earth. These from them may you eat: the locust kind, the bald-locust kind, the long-horned-grasshopper kind, the short-horned-grasshopper kind. But every crawling flying [thing] which to it four feet, abomination it to you” (Lev. 11:20 - 23).

The Hebrew text prohibits eating creatures that have four limbs and use their wings for both flying and crawling. Do such four-limbed creatures exist? Of course! Besides bats (which use their wings to help move along the ground), such animals as flying squirrels and sugar gliders would fit the description. And if any flying reptiles (e.g., pterodactyls) survived to within human memory, they too would be prohibited as food.

To make sure there would be no confusion about insects, God dealt with them separately from non-insects. He explicitly allowed the eating of grasshoppers, locusts, and the like, that is, anything that had not only four legs used for walking but also two extra ones used for leaping. There is no mistake about the number of legs. Insects have six legs, but those that use two of them for leaping in addition to walking were specifically allowed as food.

40. DO RABBITS CHEW CUD?

Visual
#4-40

Leviticus 11:5 forbids the Israelites to eat hares (rabbits) and says that they chew the cud. Scoffers say that rabbits do NOT chew cud. The problem is that the skeptics are applying modern terminology to something that was written thousands of years ago. While the modern usage of “cud” is something that is taken into one of the stomachs of a cow, goat, etc., and brought back into the mouth for further chewing, the Bible gives no such clear definition. In fact, the only times the Hebrew word translated cud, *gera*, is used are in the context of listing animals unacceptable to eat.

In a way, a rabbit does something similar to chewing cud. Its feces may be in the form of soft or hard pellets. When it passes the soft pellets, it immediately eats them and digests them a second time. The net effect is that the animal chews its food twice -- rather like chewing cud. ²³

41. PARTING OF THE RED SEA.

Many believe the parting of the Red Sea (Exodus 14:21) is a myth. However, a 1992 computer simulation published in the *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society* ²⁴ showed that a steady northeasterly wind of about 40 mph over a period of about 10 hours could actually part the waters at the northern end of the Red Sea.

Since the Bible says that the waters stood in a heap on both sides, this is probably neither the method God used to part the Red Sea nor the place where the Israelites crossed. However, it shows that parting the Red Sea is physically possible and not just a myth.

Several groups through the years have reported detecting possible chariot wheels embedded within the coral deposits at the bottom of the Gulf of Aqaba, the northeast arm of the Red Sea. However, the areas under study belong to Arab nations, which are ruled by Muslims. They have a vested interest in NOT confirming the Bible, so it is difficult to verify these reports.

42. THE WALLS OF JERICHO.

The Bible tells us (Joshua 6) that the walls of Jericho fell down flat when Joshua led the Israelites against it. Normally, we would expect that a city wall would crumble rather than falling down flat. However, archaeologist Dr. John Garstang and his team excavated Jericho between 1929 and 1936. They testified that the ruins of the walls showed that they fell exactly the way the Bible said, flat and outward so invaders could easily run over them. ²⁵

43. JOSHUA'S LONG DAY.

For many, the single most difficult passage of the Bible to believe is the account in Joshua 10:12-13 where Joshua commanded the sun to stand still. Almost all skeptics believe this is a myth.

In 1950 Immanuel Velikovsky published a book entitled *Worlds in Collision* which provoked a great deal of controversy. Though he did not believe the Bible was divinely inspired, Velikovsky showed that many of the miraculous heavenly events recorded in the Old Testament were also described by other cultures around the world. This would be hard to explain unless there were some basis in fact. In Chapter 1 of his book he reported that many other civilizations had recorded one unusually long day or, for those on the other side of the world, an unusually long night. ²⁶ If this was a myth, it was one told around the world.

The only way the sun would seem to stand still in the sky would be if the earth stopped turning. How could there not have been massive tsunamis and other global disturbances if this happened? Note that in verse 12 Joshua prayed that the sun would stand still in the heavens, but v. 13 says that it "did not hasten to go down for about a whole day." Not hastening may imply that it was still moving, but at a slower speed. Perhaps the earth did not completely stop but instead slowed down enough to look as if the sun was standing still. (Either way, it was still a miracle.) If so, the slowing would not have caused the catastrophes that a complete stop would have.

44. HOW COULD RUTH, A MOABITE, BE INCLUDED IN THE NATION OF ISRAEL?

The Book of Ruth tells us the story of Ruth, a Moabite woman, who became one of the ancestors of King David and later of Jesus. However, according to Deut. 23:3,

"An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD for ever."

The only recorded exception was after a battle with the Midianites (Num. 31), when Moses allowed the Israelites to keep some young virgin Moabite girls alive. No similar events occurred in the hundreds of years after the initial conquest. Besides, Ruth was a widow, not a virgin.

The prohibition on Moabites joining Israel was issued around 1450 B.C. and continued through Ruth's life (during the time of the judges). The Book of Nehemiah shows that it was in effect for at least a thousand years, when Nehemiah (ca. 450 B.C.) beat some Israelite men and made them get rid of their Moabite wives (Neh. 13:23 - 30). Yet the Book of Ruth tells us that Ruth not only was numbered with the Israelites, but only three generations later her descendant David became the king and certainly entered into the congregation of Israel. Did God contradict

His own law in her case by allowing a Moabite to be joined to Israel?

The best way to answer this question is with a question. Who lived in the land of Moab? The answer is another question: When? Before Moses and Joshua led Israel into the Promised Land, Moab was occupied by ethnic Moabites. After the conquest of the east side of the Jordan, though, it was primarily occupied by Israelites from the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh (Num. 32, 34; Deut. 3, 29; Josh. 1, 4 et al.). Just as anyone who lives in Texas is called a Texan, the Israelites who lived in the land of Moab were known as Moabites.

The confusion about Ruth's nationality comes from an interpreter's addition. When she is quoted as telling her mother-in-law Naomi

"Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people *shall be* my people, and thy God my God" (Ruth 1:16),

note that the words "shall be" are in italics. That means that they were not in the Hebrew text. Naomi had just entreated Ruth to follow her sister-in-law's example and go back to her people and her gods. What Ruth actually said in response was "your people my people, and your God my God." She was not saying that she would later be joined to Israel and its God; instead, she already was an Israelite who had been living in the land of Moab. Thus she and her descendants had every right to be numbered in the congregation of Israel.

45. THE VALUE OF PI.

Many critics point out what they believe to be a mathematical error in 2 Chronicles 4:2.

"Also he made a molten sea of ten cubits from brim to brim, round in compass, and five cubits the height thereof; and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about."

Anyone who ever studied geometry knows that the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter is about 3.14, usually represented by the Greek letter pi. Critics say that if the diameter was 10 cubits, the circumference should have been 31.4. Therefore, the Bible must be wrong. All one has to do is read three verses further to see how ridiculous the skeptics' argument is. Verse 5 says that the thickness of the basin was a handbreadth. If we take a cubit to be about 18 inches, the given diameter would be about 180 inches. This leads to a circumference of about 565 inches, while it would require a diameter of about 172 inches to yield the given circumference of 540 inches (30 cubits). The difference in the two diameters is about eight inches, or one handbreadth on each side of the basin. The diameter given was the outside measurement; the circumference was the inner measurement. The difference was the thickness of the basin. It looks like God got it right after all.

46. HOW MANY STALLS OF HORSES DID SOLOMON HAVE?

1 Kgs. 4:26 says,

"Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen," whereas 2 Chr. 9:25 says, "Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen."

Which is correct -- four thousand, or forty thousand? Both! 1 Kings refers to stalls for horses only, while 2 Chronicles refers to stalls for both horses and chariots. A stall for horses and chariots would automatically be bigger than one just for horses, so it would be able to include a number of smaller stalls dedicated just to horses, like an office including many smaller offices.²⁷

47. EZEKIEL 4:9 BREAD.

In Ezekiel 4:9 we read that God commanded the prophet Ezekiel to eat nothing but a special kind of bread for three hundred ninety days. We might wonder how a man could obtain all his necessary nutrition from bread alone. However, many health food stores carry "Ezekiel 4:9 Bread," which follows the recipe exactly. It turns out that bread made of the ingredients specified in the Bible "is 84.3% as efficient as the highest recognized source of protein, containing all 8 of the essential amino acids! What's more, there are 18 amino acids present in this unusual bread." (From the wrapper of a loaf of Ezekiel 4:9 bread.) God knew about nutrition thousands of years before we did.

Visual
#4-43

Visual
#4-44

Visual
#4-45

48. IS THE CHARACTER OF GOD DIFFERENT IN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS?

Visual
#4-46

The Old Testament focuses mostly on law with a lesser emphasis on grace. Examples of grace: God's sparing the life of Cain after he killed Abel, and His forgiveness of David after his sin with Bathsheba. The New Testament presents mostly grace with less emphasis on law. Examples of law: the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5, and Paul's striking Elymas blind in Acts Chapter 13.

Despite the different emphases, there is no contradiction. From beginning to end the Bible portrays God as a God of justice toward those who oppose Him and mercy toward those who love Him. Because of His holy and just character, He demands that sin be judged and punished. (Often by death.) Because of His love He promised and sent a Savior, His Son, to satisfy the demands of justice by dying in payment for our sins. Those who reject the sacrifice of Jesus Christ are condemned by their own choice to spend eternity in a place of torment prepared for the devil and his angels.

49. THE DEITY OF CHRIST.

The Bible tells us that Jesus Christ was both God and man. This is incomprehensible to the human mind. Various religions try to deal with the difficulty in different ways.

- Islam denies that God has a Son at all. They do not understand that "son" does not indicate conception in a biological way. We could express the concept that Jesus is the Son of God in the sense that a son shares the nature of his father and has full authority as his representative.

Muslims believe Jesus was a great prophet, but has nothing to do with our salvation. Each person must try his or her best to please Allah by good works, but can never be sure that he or she has done enough.

There is no way to be sure of being forgiven in Islam. Everything is "as Allah wills."

- A number of religions that claim to be Christian deny that Jesus is the visible representation of Almighty God. Jehovah's Witnesses believe that He is Michael the Archangel, who was sent to earth by Jehovah. Mormons believe that He is a lesser God and is actually the brother of Lucifer.

What does the Bible say?

Visual
#4-47

- The Greek word translated "God" in the New Testament is θεος (theos). It is sometimes used to refer to an authority, as in John 10:34. However, whenever it is used with the definite article "the" (in Greek, ὁ Θεός, or THE God), it always refers to Almighty God.

In Matthew 1:23 we see that Jesus was to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14. Matthew adds the explanatory note that Emmanuel means "God with us." He does not merely use θεος, but specifically identifies Jesus as ὁ Θεός -- *the* God, the title used exclusively for Almighty God.

- In Acts 20:28, Paul instructs leaders "to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." He explicitly uses the definite article before "θεος," indicating that the blood Jesus shed was the blood of THE God.
- Jesus told us of His own origin. John 16:27-30 says three times that He "came from" the Father. The Greek word translated "came from" is *exelthon*, which means to "come out from." Jesus "came out from" the Father. He was begotten, not created.
- Jehovah's Witnesses make a distinction between Jesus, the "Mighty God," and Jehovah, the "Almighty God." Isaiah 9:6 identifies Jesus by the former title. But Jeremiah 32:18, using exactly the same Hebrew words, says that *Jehovah* is the "Mighty God." The identical title refers to both Jesus and Jehovah. They are one and the same.
- Isaiah 43:10, the verse from which the name "Jehovah's Witnesses" is derived, says "Ye [are] my witnesses, saith the LORD [Jehovah] , and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I [am] he: *before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.*"

The Watchtower's own version of the Bible translates John 1:1 as "and the Word was a God," acknowledging that Jesus is "a god." Since Isa. 43:10 says there is only one true God, it rules out the possibility that He is any other than *the* God.

- 2 Cor. 13:5 instructs those who profess to be Christians to
"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that *Jesus Christ is in you*, except ye be reprobates?"

Jehovah's Witnesses do not claim that Jesus Christ lives in them, so according to this verse they must be reprobates. In order to avoid this conclusion, their *New World Translation* deliberately adds words to alter the verse to say "Jesus Christ in union with you" rather than "Jesus Christ in you" as the Greek text reads. But note that the passage says Jesus Christ must personally be in us. Only God could be in more than one place at a time. If Jesus can dwell in billions of believers at the same time, He has to be God.

- In Revelation 1:8 and 21:6 Jehovah identifies Himself as the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending. In 22:12 He calls Himself Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first (Greek *protos*) and the last (*eschatos*). How many "firsts" can there be? Only one. How many "lasts"? Only one. Yet when Jesus identifies Himself in Rev. 1:18 as the First and the Last (*protos* and *eschatos*), Witnesses must say that there are two "firsts and lasts" - Jehovah and Jesus.
- Witnesses go through such twisted thought processes because they cannot understand how Jesus could be Jehovah. If He is, Jehovah had to send Jehovah to earth. However, Zechariah 2:8-11 says this is precisely what happened. Every time we see "LORD" in all capital letters in the King James version, it means that the Hebrew text uses the name Jehovah. If we reinsert the name Jehovah in place of "LORD" in this passage, the meaning is unmistakable.

"For **thus saith Jehovah** of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye. For, behold, I will shake mine hand upon them, and they shall be a spoil to their servants: and ye shall know that **Jehovah of hosts hath sent me**. Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, **saith Jehovah**. And many nations shall be joined to Jehovah in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that **Jehovah of hosts hath sent me** unto thee."

Who is the speaker? Jehovah. Who sent Him? Jehovah. Though our human understanding cannot grasp how such a thing could be, the conclusion is inescapable: Jehovah sent Jehovah. Jesus and Jehovah are one.

50. THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS.

The genealogy of Jesus is shown twice, in Chapter 1 of Matthew's gospel and in Luke 3:23-38. Critics delight in pointing out that the two are different. They conclude therefore that this is a blatant contradiction. This is silly. Early Christians, who often gave their lives because of their faith in the Scriptures, were well aware of the difference. It was understood from the beginning that Matthew gave the legal genealogy of Jesus through His foster father Joseph, while Luke recorded His descent through Mary. As Lk. 3:23 tells us, Jesus was *supposedly* the son of Joseph. The words "which was the son" throughout the rest of the passage are not present in Greek but were added by translators for the sake of clarity. Perhaps it would be clearer to leave them out and simply read the Greek word for word: "being the son, as was supposed, of Joseph, of Eli, of Matthat, of Levi, of Melchi," and so forth. Jesus was not biologically descended from Joseph -- the only name in the list "supposed" to be an ancestor -- but he was descended from Heli, Matthat, Levi, and the rest of Mary's forebears.

(Those from a Catholic background may have heard that Mary's parents were named Joachim and Anna. This is not in the Bible but is a tradition that comes from Justin Martyr, who was executed by Rome about 165 A.D. for his faith.)

The two Biblical genealogies correlate as follows:

- Luke lists the line of descent from Adam to Abraham. Matthew says nothing of this time period.
- Matthew lists fourteen individuals from Abraham to David; Luke includes one more. The omission on Matthew's part was probably deliberate. It is not an error. If you were descended from a king of England who lived three hundred years ago it would be in no way incorrect to say so without naming the other generations between that king and yourself.
- Luke identifies forty-one men in the line of descent between David and Jesus. Matthew only names twenty-six. While there were no doubt others in between, it is in no way erroneous to omit them. The names in the two lists differ because Matthew gives the line of Joseph coming down from David's son Solomon, while Luke gives Mary's ancestry through Nathan, one of David's other sons.

51. THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST.

Visual #4-49

Matthew 4:1-4 and Luke 4:1-4 both say Satan first tempted Jesus to turn stones into bread. Luke then says the devil took Him to a high mountain and then says He was taken to the Temple, whereas Matthew lists the two events in the opposite sequence.

There is no discrepancy. While the words Matthew used (*tote* and *palin*) seem to indicate a time sequence, Luke uses the simple conjunctions *kai* and *de* ("and"), which do not indicate a specific order. Similarly, one might say "I planted roses and lilies and carnations," but this does not necessarily indicate the order of planting. Luke simply tells us what happened without telling us the sequence.

52. WHEN DID JESUS CLEANSE THE TEMPLE?

Visual #4-50

Matthew 21:12 - 13 and Mark 11:15 - 17 record Jesus driving the merchants and money changers out of the Temple, about a week before the *end* of His life. John 2: 13 - 17 records Jesus driving the merchants and money changers out of the Temple near the *beginning* of His ministry, about three years earlier. So which is correct? Both. Jesus cleansed the temple near the beginning of His ministry, but the system of corruption set in again and He did it again near the end.

53. WAS THE SERMON GIVEN ON THE MOUNT, OR ON A PLAIN?

Visual #4-51

In Matthew 5 - 7, Jesus gives the "Sermon on the *Mount*." It contains many beloved passages including the Beatitudes and the "Lord's Prayer." In Luke 6, Jesus stands on a *plain* to give a sermon. Some parts are similar, but others are different.

There is no contradiction. Do you really think Jesus preached only one sermon in over three years of ministry? These are two separate sermons.

54. ONE OR TWO DEMONIACS?

Visual #4-52

One supposed contradiction in the Bible is the account of the man who was possessed by a legion of demons. In Matthew 8:28-34 we read that there were two men in the country of the Gadarenes; in Mark 5:1-20 and Luke 8:26-37 we read of one man in the country of the Gerasenes. Which of these stories is correct? Both of them.

Suppose you went to the White House and met the President of the United States and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Later you might tell some acquaintances about your encounter with the President, while you might tell others about meeting the Chief Justice. Which account is true? Both. Likewise, if there were two men, it is perfectly correct for Mark and Luke to focus on only one of them.

The area where this occurred was in the region of Gadara, near a village called by some Gerasa and by others Gergesa. It was correct to say that the incident took place in the country of the Gerasenes, Gadarenes, or Gergesenes. There is no contradiction at all.

55. DID JESUS HEAL ONE BLIND MAN OR TWO, GOING INTO OR COMING OUT OF JERICHO?

Matthew 20:29-34 records that Jesus healed two blind men as he was *leaving* Jericho. Mark 10:46-52 only mentions one blind man (Bartimaeus). Luke 18:35 - 43 mentions two blind men but says the incident happened as Jesus was *coming near* to Jericho. Which account is correct?

Visual
#4-53

- There were two men, but Mark focused on only one of them. This is not a mistake.
- There were two Jerichos! The Old Testament Jericho was a small village consisting mostly of ruins. About two miles away Herod had built a new Jericho. Matthew and Mark use the Old Testament boundary, while Luke uses the Herodian.

There is no contradiction between the three passages.

56. THE PURPOSE OF JESUS' DEATH.

Visual
#4-54

Jesus's main purpose in coming to earth was not to set up an organization, but to die for us. The Bible makes it clear that every single person is a sinner: "There is none righteous, no, not one..." (Romans 3:10). Because of our sin, we are not worthy to stand in God's presence (Habakkuk 1:13). The payment we deserve because of our sin is death (Rom. 3:23). There is nothing we can do to earn forgiveness (Eph. 2:8-9).

God did not leave us in this hopeless condition, though. He sent His sinless Son Jesus to pay the penalty for our sins by dying as a substitute for each of us sinners. If we turn from our own ways to Him and ask forgiveness, God credits us with the righteousness that rightly belongs to His Son Jesus.

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor 5:21)

Isaiah Chapter 53 explains exactly why Jesus died. It was not for His sins, but so that we might be forgiven of ours.

"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." (Isaiah 53:4-5)

57. WHEN DID JESUS EAT THE LAST SUPPER, AND WHEN DID HE DIE? ²⁸

Visual
#4-55

Some churches have a tradition that Jesus died at the exact time that the Passover lambs were being slain. However, in three of the Gospels we read that He had the Passover meal with His disciples. If He did, then the lambs must have already been slain before His death.

The Bible is not contradicting itself. The apparent conflict is not within Scripture itself, but with tradition. In Matthew 26, Mark 14, and Luke 22 we read that Jesus sent His disciples to prepare the Passover on the first day of Unleavened Bread. This was an eight day feast dating back to the Exodus. First, all the lambs were sacrificed the evening of the 14th day of the month Nisan, as specified in Exodus 12:6. They were then roasted and consumed at the evening meal. Afterward, the feast continued for seven more days during which the Jewish people could not eat anything with leaven in it.

In trying to equate the time of Jesus' death with the time the lambs were sacrificed, some say that the Last Supper must not have been a Passover meal but only a special meal twenty-four hours before everybody else observed the real Passover. However, Mark 14:12 and Luke 22:7 explicitly say that the disciples asked where they should prepare the Passover on the same day that the lambs were killed. Matthew's account agrees that He ate the Last Supper with the disciples on that same evening. Remember, though, that Jesus followed the Jewish calendar, not ours.

The Jewish day began at sunset, not midnight. Jn. 13:30 makes a point of saying "it was night" as they were finishing the Passover meal. This meant that from the Jewish perspective, the meal was eaten at the beginning of the day. Jesus was then crucified around daybreak, which was still the same day. So in the Jewish system of keeping time, the lambs were killed one day, then the Passover and the crucifixion took place the next day, though not at the exact same time.

The tradition that Jesus died at the same time as the Passover lambs arose because of a misunderstanding of several passages in John's gospel.

- John 19:31 says that the Jewish leaders asked that the bodies might be taken away because it was "the preparation" (Greek *paraskeue*) for the Sabbath. Many mistakenly think that this means there were some special preparations to be done for the Passover. It has nothing to do

with Passover. Just as our Saturday was known to the Jewish people as the Sabbath, Friday was known as Paraskeue. This occurred every week, not just at Passover. (See Mark 15:42.) All we can gather from the passage is that it was Friday afternoon.

- John 18:28 tells us that the Jewish leaders did not go into Pilate's judgment hall because they did not want to be defiled and thus unable to eat the Passover. Thus, many conclude that they had not yet eaten the Passover meal.

If this passage were referring to the Passover meal itself, there would not have been a concern with potential defilement. Leviticus 11 said that ritual uncleanness lasted only until the evening and could be removed by washing with water. Since the Passover supper occurred after sunset, anyone ritually unclean could simply have bathed before eating it.

The confusion arises because John uses the word "Passover" more loosely than Matthew, Mark, and Luke usually do. It could mean the specific day when the lambs were slain, but, as confirmed by Lk. 22:1, it could also refer to the whole eight-day feast of unleavened bread.

(As a modern equivalent, the term "Mardi Gras" is commonly used to refer to the entire carnival season in New Orleans, though Mardi Gras is actually a specific day. Visitors often say that they are going to celebrate Mardi Gras even though the day may be a week away.)

Any meal during the eight-day feast of unleavened bread could be referred to as "eating the Passover." The Jewish leaders, being fully aware that they could be cleansed before any nighttime meals, would have been concerned instead about the daytime meal on Friday. If they were defiled, there would have been no way to be cleansed in time for that meal.

While the tradition of Jesus dying at the time the Passover lambs were slain seems religiously satisfying, the Bible does not support it. The lambs had to be killed before He could have the Last Supper. They were killed on Nisan 14. Sunset marked the beginning of Nisan 15, when He had the Passover meal at the Last Supper. He died the next afternoon, a full day after the slaughter of the lambs.

58. DID JESUS RISE "AFTER THREE DAYS" OR "ON THE THIRD DAY"?

If Jesus was crucified on Friday (the day of preparation, Greek *paraskeue*) and rose on Sunday (the first day of the week), how could this be considered "three days and three nights"? Does this contradict his resurrection "on the third day"?

Only Mt. 27:63 and Mk. 8:31 say "after" the third day. The Greek word translated "after" is actually *μετα* (*meta*), which is translated almost everywhere else as "with." That is, Jesus would rise "with" the third day.

- The Jewish day went from sunset to sunset. Any part of this time was considered part of a "day and night."
- Since Jesus was crucified on Friday several hours before sunset, He died during part of the first "day and night" which had begun Thursday at sunset.
- He continued in the tomb from sunset Friday until sunset Saturday – the *second* "day and night."
- He continued in the tomb from sunset Saturday until daybreak Sunday – about twelve hours, but still part of a *third* "day and night." By Roman reckoning, this was clearly "on the third day."

The Hebrew method of describing the passage of time in the tomb is different from the Roman method. The apparent contradiction is a matter of different methods of reckoning time in the two cultures.

59. HOW DID JUDAS DIE?

Matthew 27: 3 - 10 says that Judas hanged himself. Acts 1: 16 - 20 says that he fell headlong and burst so that all his bowels gushed out. These two statements are easy to reconcile.

Judas could not have hanged himself after he was already dead. A likely scenario is:

- He hanged himself.

Visual
#4-57

- His body stayed suspended from the rope for several days.
- Meanwhile, decomposition set in so that his body was swollen.
- Finally, either the rope or the branch from which he hanged himself broke. At this time his swollen corpse fell and burst.

60. POST-RESURRECTION APPEARANCES OF JESUS - EARLY MORNING.

The sequence of events after the crucifixion can be confusing, since it is written from four points of view. Many questions arise: *Who went to the tomb and when did they go, when and where and to whom did Jesus appear*, and so on. If we piece together the details from all four gospels, we can answer all these questions.

Visual
#4-58

- Matthew, Mark, and John all say Mary Magdalene went to the tomb. Matthew and Mark also mention that at least one other woman was there. John's failure to mention another woman does not mean Mary was by herself.
- Matthew, Mark, and Luke all say that the angel(s) spoke to whatever women were there.
- All but Mark say that the women hurried to bring the news to the disciples. (Mark notes that they did not speak to anyone on the way.)
- Mary Magdalene is mentioned as being at the tomb at least twice. She seems to have become separated from the other women. Perhaps she sprinted ahead, reached Peter and John first, then ran back to the tomb with them.
- Mark says Mary was the first person to whom Jesus appeared (Jn. 20:11-18). This probably happened after Peter and John had left the tomb and gone back to the other disciples. She seems to have remained at the tomb. At first she did not recognize Jesus, perhaps because she was unable to see clearly through her tears. The sound of His voice left no doubt as to who He was.
- Shortly after, Jesus appeared to the other women also (Mt. 28:9). Either they had not yet reached the other disciples, or else they also returned to the tomb but took longer than Mary Magdalene. The women made a second trip to the disciples and told them that not only was the tomb empty, but also they had seen the Lord. The disciples did not believe them.

61. LATER POST-RESURRECTION APPEARANCES OF JESUS.

Visual
#4-59

- Mark and Luke report the two disciples encountering Jesus on the road to Emmaus that afternoon.
- When He disappeared, the two disciples ran back to Jerusalem (about seven miles). He waited for them to reach the rest of the disciples before making His appearance there. (*First appearance to the disciples.*)
- At the Monday night prayer meeting a week later, Jesus appeared and reassured Thomas. (*Second appearance to the disciples.*)
- The disciples went to Galilee as Jesus had instructed. While they were waiting they went fishing but were interrupted by His appearance. (*Third appearance to the disciples – Jn. 21:14.*)
- The disciples went up a mountain in Galilee (Mt. 28:16), probably where they received the Great Commission. This may be where 500 witnesses saw Him at once (1 Cor. 15:6).
- The disciples returned to Jerusalem where they saw Jesus for the last time, at His ascension from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:1-12).

Despite the confusion that comes from piecing together four accounts, there are no contradictions in the description of the events.

62. PAUL'S CONVERSION.

Visual
#4-60

In the King James version's account of the conversion of Paul the Apostle in Acts 9:7, we see that the men with him on the Damascus road heard a voice. In Acts 22:9, Paul says that they did not hear the voice. Which was it?

The problem goes away when we study Greek grammar. In the first instance Luke uses the phrase "*akouontes men tes phones*" (transliterated into the English alphabet), in which the object "voice" ("*phones*") is in the genitive case. This implies hearing without understanding. In Paul's

testimony in 22:9 he says, “*ten de phonen ouk ekousan,*” in which “voice” (“*phonen*”) is in the accusative case. This connotes hearing with understanding. Thus, Acts 9:7 tells us that the men heard the voice without understanding, while Acts 22:9 says that they did not hear the voice with understanding. The two mean the same thing.

63. HOW COULD PAUL NOT KNOW WHO THE HIGH PRIEST WAS?

Visual
#4-61

When Paul was being trained as a Pharisee as a young man (Acts 22:3), he knew the high priest well enough to represent him on a mission to Damascus to persecute Christians. Yet in Acts 23:5, Paul said he did not know who the high priest was. Was he wrong?

Paul had been sent to Damascus approximately 34 A.D. by person who was the high priest at the time. This was probably the same Caiaphas who had seen to it that Jesus was crucified.

The events of Acts 22 did not take place until about 25 years later. By then, Caiaphas was long gone and the high priest was a man named Ananias. There is no indication that Ananias was actually present in the crowd at Paul’s arrest. When he and the rest of the priests came to appear before the military commander the next day it was not a ceremonial occasion, so he would have been wearing the same clothing as the other priests were. Since Paul had probably never seen him before, he would not have known he was the high priest.

What about Paul’s statement in Acts 22:5 that “As also the high priest doth bear me witness”? He may have assumed that the present high priest could look up records of Caiaphas’s actions and thus bear witness to him.

64. PAUL’S SHIPWRECK.

Visual
#4-62

Acts 27:27 says that Paul’s ship was driven up and down in the Adriatic Sea (“Adria” in the King James Version). Acts 28:1 says that the passengers came to shore on Malta (“Melita” in the KJV). However, Malta is in the Aegean Sea rather than the Adriatic. Is this a mistake? No. The boundaries of the body of water in question have been redrawn so that we now consider it part of the Aegean. However, it was considered the Adriatic at the time Luke wrote Acts.

65. LOCATION OF THE ALTAR OF INCENSE.

Hebrews 9:3-4 describes the contents of the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle of Moses. The King James reads,

“And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant...”

The word translated “golden censer” is the Greek *thumaterion*, used only in this one passage. Since Exodus and Leviticus mentioned an altar of incense rather than a censer, many believe that the writer of Hebrews was referring to the altar of incense. However, another possible solution is mentioned in Lev. 16:12-13.

“And he [Aaron] shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the veil: And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not.” (KJV)

This is the only reference to a censer in the Tabernacle. Since we are not told where it was stored when not in use, it could have been kept behind the veil.

Even if the passage is referring to the altar rather than a censer, the apparent contradiction between Heb. 9 and Exodus 30:6 is due to uncertainty in translation rather than an error in the Greek or Hebrew Scriptures.

Exodus says that the altar was in front of the curtain, but Hebrews seems to say that it was behind it. However, the Greek word *meta*, translated “after” or “behind” in Heb. 9:4, is translated “with” about seventy-five percent of the time elsewhere in the New Testament. If we understand *meta* in this passage to have its usual meaning, it simply indicates that the altar of incense was with the curtain. It does not imply that it was behind it. This is perfectly compatible with Exodus.

These are just a few examples of so-called mistakes in the Bible that are not contradictions or errors at all. After looking for mistakes in the Bible for almost two thousand years, critics have not proved a single one yet. Every such objection to the Bible has an answer.

CONCLUSION

Visual
#C-1

Since each of us is going to die, it is important that we have a relationship with God by which our sins can be forgiven. We cannot come to Him in just any way we want, though; we can only know Him if He reveals Himself to us.

Out of all the religions in the world, there are only three books that specifically claim to be the revelation God has given to us. We have seen that the Bible is supported by overwhelming prophetic evidence confirming that it is beyond human capability, and that there is a tremendous amount of evidence supporting the reliability of the Biblical manuscripts. And, try as they might, no skeptic has ever been able to point out a single confirmed error in the Bible.

Believing that the Bible is the Word of God and that it has been accurately preserved is not enough, though. The devil knows the Bible came from God but it doesn't do him any good. Each of us must go beyond mere intellectual knowledge that it really is about God's book. We must surrender our lives to Jesus Christ. As the Bible says in Romans 10:9,

“... if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”

We have eyewitness testimony (1 Cor. 15:6) from over 500 people who saw Jesus after He rose from the dead and were willing to die rather than deny Him. Do you really believe He rose from the dead, is alive right now, and will never die again?

What does it mean to “confess” Him as Lord? The word confess implies that you are telling the truth when you say He is your Lord. If He is, it means that you have given Him absolute authority over your life. You must be willing to obey Him even if it costs your life.

It is my prayer that you have taken the step of making Jesus your Lord by giving Him your life, and that you truly believe that He is risen from the dead. If you have not, do so without delay!

I also hope this book has been useful in strengthening your faith in the absolute trustworthiness of the Word of God, the Bible.

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