

# INTRODUÇÃO A APOLOGETICS BÍBLICOS

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## *PREFÁCIO*

A Bíblia contém muitas doutrinas importantes para nos levar à salvação e à vida eterna: a pecaminosidade do homem, nossa incapacidade de salvar a nós mesmos, nossa necessidade de um Salvador, a necessidade de arrependimento e fé, a ressurreição de Jesus Cristo, e muitas outras.

Este livro não foi escrito para explicar qualquer uma dessas doutrinas. Em vez disso, foi escrito para responder às objeções daqueles que não se importam com a doutrina cristã porque não acreditam que a Bíblia é a Palavra de Deus. Alguns diriam que é apenas um livro antigo, cheio de fábulas judaicas, que está cheio de erros e contradições, ou que foi copiado, copiado, traduzido e traduzido tantas vezes que não podemos ter certeza de que temos o que temos foi originalmente escrito. Essa pessoa não se importaria com o que a Bíblia diz sobre nada.

Embora alguém possa passar anos aprendendo a defender a autoridade e a precisão da Bíblia, este livro é destinado a quem deseja uma rápida introdução ao assunto. Pretende-se como um curso autônomo de apologética da Bíblia, que deve levar a um estudo ao longo da vida da Palavra de Deus.

# INTRODUÇÃO A APOLOGETICS BÍBLICOS

## CAPÍTULO 1

### *O que significa saber das coisas?*

Visual  
#1-1

Existem muitas religiões no mundo. Por que nós cristãos acreditamos que nossa fé é a única correta e que todas as outras estão erradas?

Visual  
#1-2

Como cristãos, somos ordenados a “estejam sempre prontos para responder a qualquer pessoa que pedir que expliquem a esperança que vocês têm com mansidão e medo” (1 Pedro 3:15). Essa é a razão do campo de estudo conhecido como apologética da Bíblia. A palavra apologética vem da palavra grega *απολογία*, que significa “um discurso em defesa.” Esse termo vem das duas palavras *απο*, que significa “de” e *λογος*, frequentemente traduzidas como “palavra” ou “argumento lógico,” mas profundamente significa uma expressão de a essência de alguma coisa. A expressão “eu te dou minha palavra” transmite algo desse significado; isso implica que eu apóio uma declaração com tudo o que sou. Da mesma forma, quando a Bíblia chama Jesus de *λογος* de Deus, significa que Ele é a expressão de tudo o que Deus é.

Apologética tem a ver com a forma como sabemos que a Bíblia é verdadeira. Em um nível ainda mais profundo, como sabemos alguma coisa? À medida que passamos através deste curso, vamos lidar com as seguintes perguntas.

Visual  
#1-3

1. Como eu sei que realmente existo?
2. Como eu sei que o resto do universo realmente existe?
3. Como eu sei das coisas que eu penso que sei?
4. Como eu sei que existe um Deus?
5. Como sei se algum dos "livros sagrados" no mundo tem uma reivindicação válida de origem sobrenatural?
6. Como posso ter certeza de que a Bíblia é realmente a Palavra de Deus?
7. Como posso ter certeza de que a Bíblia foi preservada com precisão desde que foi originalmente escrita?
8. A Bíblia contém erros?

Este capítulo tentará responder às quatro primeiras perguntas. Os outros virão mais tarde.

### **1. COMO EU SEI QUE REALMENTE EXISTO?**

O estudo do que significa “conhecer” as coisas pertence ao ramo da filosofia chamado *epistemologia*. À luz de filmes como a trilogia “Matrix,” podemos nos perguntar com que certeza sabemos alguma coisa. Existe realmente um universo lá fora, ou é tudo apenas uma ilusão?

Visual  
#1-4

O notável filósofo francês Descartes lutou com essa questão centenas de anos atrás. Ele se perguntou se alguma coisa poderia estar absolutamente certa. Afinal, a maioria das pessoas reconhecem que seus sentidos nem sempre são totalmente confiáveis. E se você estiver sozinho no universo e tudo for apenas uma invenção de sua imaginação, composta para impedir você de ficar louco ou porque você já *está* louco? (Se esse pensamento já lhe ocorreu, você não está sozinho. É bastante comum que tenha um nome, *solipsismo*.)

Se você seguir a lógica de Descartes ao extremo, deverá concluir, como ele fez, que a única coisa com a qual você pode ter certeza absoluta é que existe. Como ele disse: “Eu penso, logo existo.” Para que uma pergunta seja feita, deve haver um questionador. Esse questionador é você. Você não poderia perguntar se existia, a menos que existisse para fazer a pergunta.

Além da certeza de sua própria existência, no entanto, tudo o mais que você acha que conhece é baseado em uma quantidade maior ou menor de fé.

### **2. COMO EU SEI QUE O RESTO DO UNIVERSO EXISTE?**

Visual  
#1-5

Desde que você existe, de onde você veio? Se você pensa que existiu para sempre, está louco e está perdendo seu tempo lendo este material. Você deve ter tido um começo.

Como você começou a existir? Ou (1) você se criou e esqueceu, ou (2) você veio de alguma

fonte externa a si mesmo. Se você optar por acreditar no primeiro, provavelmente não há nada que alguém possa dizer ou fazer para convencê-lo do contrário. No entanto, se lhe parecer mais razoável que você tenha um começo definido, naturalmente concluiria que alguém ou algo fora de si é responsável por sua existência. Assim, pelo menos uma coisa fora de si deve existir. Pode ser um processo impessoal, como a evolução, ou um ser pessoal (seu conceito de Deus). Como a Bíblia diz: “Sabei que o Senhor ele [é] Deus: [ele] nos fez, e não nós mesmos” (Sl. 100: 3)

E o resto do universo? Ao olhar ao seu redor todos os dias, percebe que há outras pessoas, animais, plantas, planetas e assim por diante. Essas outras entidades realmente existem? Seus sentidos estão fornecendo informações válidas?

Visual  
#1-6

Suponha que você não acredite em Deus, mas que é o resultado de algum processo natural aleatório como por exemplo a evolução. A evolução não é uma entidade consciente, por isso não pode deliberadamente optar por garantir que seus sentidos o enganem o tempo todo sobre tudo.

Ou se você der um passo de fé para acreditar que existe um Deus, você acredita - pela fé - que Ele quer que você seja totalmente enganado o tempo todo sobre tudo o que percebe? (Semelhante ao filme “Matrix”). A alternativa é acreditar - novamente, pela fé - que Deus o criou de tal maneira que, mesmo que seus sentidos não sejam totalmente confiáveis, eles são pelo menos um pouco confiáveis.

Se você acredita que surgiu por evolução aleatória ou pelas ações de Deus, seus sentidos devem ser pelo menos parcialmente confiáveis. O mundo é real e você não está sozinho!

## 2A. HINDUISM.

Visual  
#1-7

O hinduísmo apresenta uma visão intermediária entre a idéia de um deus pessoal e as forças impessoais. Embora não exista uma autoridade que estabeleça a doutrina que todos os hindus devem aceitar, muitos acreditam que o universo não é realmente real, mas sim um sonho na mente do grande deus Vishnu. Cada um de nós existe apenas como parte do sonho de Vishnu. Se ele acordar, o universo atual terminará e um novo começará na próxima vez que ele começar a sonhar.

Nesta visão, seus sentidos não são confiáveis, não porque Vishnu está deliberadamente enganando você, mas porque todo o universo é apenas um sonho. Embora você nunca possa provar aos devotos hindus que isso está errado, no seu dia a dia eles não agem como se a realidade fosse apenas uma ilusão. Eles reconhecem que, se um ônibus os atingir, eles realmente morrerão, então ainda olharão nos dois sentidos antes de atravessar uma estrada. Ou, mesmo que a religião deles diga que um objeto como uma panela de água fervente é uma ilusão, eles ainda tentarão recuar se você tentar derramar na cabeça deles.

Embora não seja o objetivo deste trabalho expor todas as falhas do hinduísmo, note-se que ele contém muitas contradições lógicas. Por exemplo, o hinduísmo diz que cada pessoa será reencarnada muitas vezes. Sua sorte em cada vida depende de seu *karma*, determinado por suas ações na vida anterior. Mas como cada pessoa pode ser responsabilizada pelo que aconteceu dentro do sonho de Vishnu? E como tudo faz parte de seu sonho, quem está acompanhando suas ações para determinar sua posição na próxima vida?

Se aceitarmos a possibilidade de sabermos algumas coisas com graus variados de certeza, quais seriam as mais importantes a saber? Como estamos todos destinados a morrer, seria importante descobrir o que acontece do outro lado da morte. A Bíblia nos conta detalhes sobre a vida após a morte que não podemos encontrar em nenhum outro lugar. Então, como podemos saber se a Bíblia está correta? Por falar nisso, como podemos saber alguma coisa?

## 3. COMO EU SEI DAS COISAS QUE PENSO QUE SEI?

Visual  
#1-8

As pessoas costumam dizer que sabem das coisas, mas provavelmente não pensaram exatamente como elas sabem. Existem pelo menos quatro maneiras válidas de saber as coisas.

## A. SENTIDOS.

Muitas das coisas que dizemos saber são aprendidas através dos nossos sentidos da visão, audição, tato, paladar e olfato. (Outros sentidos, como fome e equilíbrio, não são tão importantes para obter informações sobre o mundo fora do nosso corpo.) Por exemplo, qualquer pessoa com visão normal pode ver as cores da mesma maneira que outras pessoas com visão normal. Se você foi picado por uma abelha, sabe como é. Se você já sentiu o cheiro de um animal morto, sabe como ele cheira.

Embora nossos sentidos sejam provavelmente bastante confiáveis, eles não são perfeitos. Pode haver coisas além do alcance de nossos sentidos. Por exemplo, se você tiver acesso a algum tipo de projetor, poderá projetar luz branca em uma tela e segurar uma vela acesa entre a luz e a tela. Você pode se surpreender ao ver como as correntes de ar, que você normalmente não pode ver, afetam a luz na tela. Ou, se você tiver um controle remoto para um dispositivo eletrônico, não poderá ver nada ao pressionar um botão, mas se apontar para uma câmera eletrônica, verá flashes de luz imperceptíveis aos seus olhos.

## B. AUTORIDADE.

Muitas pessoas podem contar com confiança seu aniversário. Como eles sabem? Eles certamente não se lembram de nascer. Em vez disso, a mãe deles provavelmente lhes contou. Mas como eles sabem que ela realmente é a mãe deles? Porque ela disse isso a eles também.

Muitas das coisas que dizemos saber na vida são porque decidimos confiar em uma autoridade. Por exemplo, a maioria dos estudantes nunca tentará todas as experiências sobre as quais leram em um livro de ciências, mas acha que sabe das coisas porque o livro dizia isso. Da mesma forma, muitas crenças religiosas são baseadas na autoridade de um livro supostamente sagrado ou na cultura à nossa volta.

## C. LÓGICA.

Achamos que sabemos muitas coisas porque elas fazem sentido para nós. Por exemplo, quase todo mundo diria que sabe que tem um cérebro. Mas como eles sabem?

- Quase ninguém nunca viu ou sentiu seu próprio cérebro. Ou seja, eles não têm evidências de seus **sentidos**.
- Apenas um número relativamente pequeno de pessoas passou por uma cirurgia no cérebro ou um exame médico, como ressonância magnética ou raio-X, que seria realizado por uma **autoridade** como um médico. No entanto, o resto ainda acredita que eles têm um cérebro. Por quê? É porque a maioria das pessoas reconheceria que não poderia viver a menos que tivesse um cérebro. Eles estão usando **lógica**.

Existem dois tipos de lógica: **Indutiva**, na qual examinamos muitos fenômenos e tentamos encontrar um padrão, e **Dedutiva**, na qual começamos com certas suposições aceitas como verdadeiras.

### 1. *Lógica Indutiva.*

A lógica indutiva é a base da ciência. Um cientista honesto nunca alegaria que algo é absolutamente comprovado, apenas que toda vez que observamos algum processo, sempre funcionou da mesma maneira e, portanto, esperamos que isso ocorra no futuro. Por exemplo, por milhares de anos, as pessoas perceberam que tudo o que enviavam para cima finalmente voltava. Assim, o princípio “o que sobe deve descer” foi amplamente aceito. No entanto, a idéia foi falsificada na primeira vez em que disparamos um foguete que não voltou a cair, mas que continuava saindo para o espaço. Tínhamos esquecido a possibilidade de um objeto que viaja rápido o suficiente ser capaz de superar a força da gravidade.

A ciência é um processo de autocorreção. Porque depende da lógica indutiva, nunca saberemos se estamos absolutamente certos. Pelo menos podemos ter certeza de que estamos menos errados do que costumávamos estar.



## 2. *Lógica Dedutiva* .

Visual  
#1-11

A lógica dedutiva, por outro lado, é a base da matemática. Começa com certas afirmações aceitas como verdade absoluta e depois se baseia nessas afirmações para desenvolver um sistema de pensamento que também é aceito como verdade absoluta. Por exemplo, o antigo matemático Euclides apresentou um conjunto de 23 *postulados*, suposições que ele disse serem evidentes, mas não puderam provar. Uma vez que aceitamos esses postulados, o restante da geometria euclidiana segue logicamente.

Se alguma de nossas suposições não for verdadeira, podemos tirar conclusões falsas. Por exemplo, suponha que lhe digam: “Todos os cães latem. Snoopy é um cachorro.” Portanto, você é forçado a concluir que Snoopy late. No entanto, isso não é verdade. Se existe mesmo um cão no mundo que não late, então talvez Snoopy também não late. (Existe uma raça inteira de cães na África, Basenjis, que não late.)

Visual  
#1-12

A questão de saber se podemos ter um cérebro depende de lógica indutiva e dedutiva. Primeiro, houve milhares de pessoas que fizeram exames médicos, autópsias, cirurgias cerebrais e similares. Nunca foi encontrado nenhum sem cérebro. Assim, concluímos pela lógica indutiva que “todos os seres humanos devem ter cérebro.” Agora, aceitando essa afirmação como verdadeira, nós, como seres humanos, usamos a lógica dedutiva para concluir que “eu devo ter um cérebro.” Mas se alguma pessoa viva fosse encontrada quem não tinha cérebro, o resto de nós precisaria passar por algum tipo de exame médico para ter certeza de que nós próprios o possuímos.

O ponto é que precisamos ter cuidado com a lógica. Sua confiabilidade depende da confiabilidade das premissas subjacentes. Como veremos mais adiante, muitas das suposições usadas em visões de mundo ateístas ou evolutivas são claramente falsas, tornando essas visões de mundo não confiáveis.

Qualquer que seja o conhecimento que adquirimos através dos sentidos, autoridade e lógica, tem o potencial de ser verificado quanto à correção. Podemos reexaminar as coisas que percebemos através de nossos sentidos ou fazer com que outras pessoas verifiquem o que observamos; podemos investigar para ver se a autoridade é confiável; e podemos verificar nossa lógica para garantir que não haja premissas falsas.

Há outro tipo de conhecimento que não pode ser verificado, mas também pode estar correto.

### D. INTUIÇÃO.

Visual  
#1-13

Todo mundo tem certos sentimentos internos que aceita como verdadeiros. Por exemplo, você provavelmente ama sua mãe. Você não pode provar isso, mas você ainda a ama. Ou, você pode sentir que algo não está certo. Você pode não conseguir provar isso, mas ainda tem certeza de que está errado.

Esse tipo de conhecimento, **intuição**, não é obtido com os sentidos físicos. De alguma forma, você só sabe por dentro. Também incluiria coisas como revelação divina. Se você estivesse ao lado do profeta Jeremias e a Palavra do Senhor viesse a ele, você não ouviria nada.

Conhecimento intuitivo é uma coisa muito pessoal. Pode estar correto ou errado. A menos que você tenha alguma confirmação externa, provavelmente não é uma boa ideia basear as principais decisões da vida em sua intuição. Você certamente não deve basear suas decisões na intuição de outra pessoa.

### E. FALSO CONHECIMENTO.

Existem pelo menos duas outras maneiras pelas quais as pessoas dizem que sabem coisas, mas na verdade não sabem. Por exemplo, se um jovem é fortemente atraído por uma jovem, ele pode tentar convencer-se de que, se lhe der um buquê de flores, ele “sabe” que ela se apaixonará por ele. Isso é chamado de **pensamento positivo**. Ele quer que isso seja verdade e tenta se convencer disso, mas ele realmente não sabe.

Também é possível que alguém afirme que sabe alguma coisa quando nem sequer acredita nela, mas está tentando convencer outras pessoas a acreditar nela por um motivo oculto. Talvez eles tenham um carro velho do qual viram peças caindo, então escondem as peças e tentam vendê-las para outra pessoa fingindo que é um ótimo carro. Isso é chamado de **blefar** ou **mentir**. Infelizmente, blefar é muito comum. Devemos sempre verificar tudo o que não temos certeza, especialmente em questões espirituais. Como a Bíblia diz: “Amados, não creiais a todo o espírito, mas provai se os espíritos são de Deus, porque já muitos falsos profetas se têm levantado no mundo” (1 João 4: 1).

Visual  
#1-14

Resumindo: o conhecimento baseado em sentidos, autoridade ou lógica não é perfeito, mas pelo menos pode ser testado. Se passar no teste, pode ser confiável. O conhecimento baseado na intuição, por outro lado, não pode ser testado. Devemos sempre ser cautelosos antes de tomar decisões importantes da vida com base na intuição. E atente para o desejo ou blefe!

#### 4. COMO POSSO TER CERTEZA QUE EXISTE UM DEUS?

Ao longo da história humana, a taxa de mortalidade foi de 100%. Todos e cada um de nós vai morrer. O que acontece depois? Se você é ateu, espera simplesmente deixar de existir. Mas se existe um Deus, talvez haja algum tipo de vida após a morte.

Pouquíssimas pessoas podem afirmar ter observado Deus através de seus sentidos. A Bíblia afirma ser a autoridade que Ele nos enviou, mas vamos usar a lógica para ver se é razoável acreditar que Ele existe.

Visual  
#1-15

(A seguir, é apresentada uma expansão do princípio em Romanos 1: 19 - 20: “Porquanto o que de Deus se pode conhecer neles se manifesta, porque Deus lho manifestou. Porque as suas coisas invisíveis, desde a criação do mundo, tanto o seu eterno poder, como a sua divindade, se entendem, e claramente se vêem pelas coisas que estão criadas, para que eles fiquem inescusáveis.”)

##### A. CARACTERÍSTICAS DO DEUS DA BÍBLIA.

O Deus da Bíblia é um ser pessoal e inteligente, que revelou muitas coisas sobre si mesmo.

Visual  
#1-16

1. a. Os ateus zombam dos cristãos, perguntando como podemos acreditar em algo que não podemos ver. Eles estão corretos. Não podemos observar Deus diretamente, mas apenas podemos detectar Sua presença através do que Ele faz. Ele é **INVISÍVEL**.
2. b. Se Deus estabeleceu as leis da natureza, ele obviamente não está sujeito a essas leis. (Ele não seria puxado para a terra pela gravidade.) Ele está acima da natureza, ou **SOBRENATURAL**.
3. Ele existe desde antes do que chamamos de "tempo" começar. Ele é **ETERNO**.
4. Onde está Deus? Em toda parte. Sua influência se estende por todo o universo. Ele é **ONIPRESENTE**.
5. Se Deus trouxe matéria e energia à existência e depois criou leis para governar sua operação, então Ele é direta ou indiretamente responsável por tudo o que já aconteceu. Ele é todo-poderoso, ou **ONIPOTENTE**.
6. Quem fez Deus? Ninguém. Ele é **AUTO-EXISTENTE**.

##### B. CARACTERÍSTICAS DO DEUS EVOLUCIONISTA TEÍSTICO.

Parece que os cristãos que crêem na Bíblia estão com problemas. Afinal, precisamos apelar para algo invisível, eterno, sobrenatural, onipresente, onipotente e auto-existente, a fim de justificar nossa crença. Mas aqueles que acreditam em outro deus não estão em melhor situação. A grande maioria acredita que o universo é o resultado de algum tipo de processo evolutivo dirigido por Deus (*evolução teísta*). Uma vez que essa crença depende da existência de Deus, ela não tem vantagem científica sobre a criação. Parece que os ateus mantêm a única posição verdadeiramente científica.

### C. CARACTERÍSTICAS DA “CHANCES ALEATÓRIA” DO ATEU.

Por uma questão de argumento, vamos supor que os ateus estejam certos. Vamos descartar Deus. Se for esse o caso, como o universo chegou aqui? Chame de “Mãe Natureza,” acidente, flutuação quântica ou o que você quiser, mas o universo teria que ser o produto de uma coleção de forças, processos e eventos que operam por bilhões de anos sem nenhum objetivo específico. Vamos resumir toda a coleção chance aleatória, com o entendimento de que a chance aleatória não é uma coisa tangível por si só, mas é um termo usado para descrever toda a série de forças, processos e eventos. A seguir, estão algumas das características que a lógica exige que ela deva ter.

1. Não pode ser visto diretamente. Sua presença só pode ser detectada pelo que faz. É **INVISÍVEL**. (Você pode virar a mesa para seus amigos ateus e perguntar: “Você quer dizer que acredita em algo que não pode ver?”)
2. Se a chance aleatória estabeleceu as leis da natureza, obviamente não está sujeita a essas leis. Está acima da natureza, ou **SOBRENATURAL**.
3. Existe desde antes do início do que chamamos de “tempo.” É **ETERNO**.
4. Onde está a chance aleatória? Em toda parte. Sua influência se estende por todo o Universo. É **ONIPRESENTE**.
5. Se a chance aleatória criou a matéria e a energia e criou leis para governar sua operação, ela é direta ou indiretamente responsável por tudo o que já aconteceu. É todo-poderoso, ou **ONIPOTENTE**.
6. “Quem criou a chance aleatória?” Ninguém. É **AUTO-EXISTENTE**.

Nem a crença no Deus Bíblico, em algum outro deus ou no ateísmo tem vantagem científica sobre os outros neste ponto. Todos exigem que acreditemos em algo invisível, eterno, sobrenatural, onipresente, onipotente e auto-existente. Ou seja, **NÃO HÁ POSSIBILIDADE DE QUE DEUS NÃO EXISTE!** Você pode chamar seu Deus de Jeová, Javé, Alá ou Chance Aleatória, mas precisa acreditar em algum tipo de deus. Mesmo o ateu mais determinado não tem escolha senão admitir que ele também tem um deus - Chance Aleatória. Visto que a Bíblia nos diz que “Quem se aproximar de Deus deve crer que Ele existe ...” (Hb 11: 6), o maior serviço que você pode fazer a seus amigos ateus é confrontá-los com a percepção de que isso existe. É impossível NÃO acreditar em um deus de algum tipo. Ao confrontar amorosamente seus amigos ateus, você pode iniciá-los em uma missão que os levará ao Deus REAL.

### D. APOSTA DE PASCAL.

Qualquer que seja a escolha que fizermos, devemos dar um passo de fé. Suponha que optemos por acreditar no Deus da Bíblia e viver de acordo. Existem duas possibilidades: estamos certos ou errados. (Alguns de seus alunos bem conhecidos podem reconhecer o seguinte como “Aposta de Pascal.”)

1. Se estivermos certos, no final de nossas vidas terrenas, estamos indo para uma eternidade gloriosa no céu.
2. Se estivermos errados, viveremos uma vida de alegria e expectativa, chegaremos ao leito de morte com a esperança de encontrar nosso Salvador, perder a consciência com a morte e nunca sabermos que estávamos errados. Enquanto isso, teremos uma vida feliz e realizada - por isso não estamos em situação pior.

Suponha, em vez disso, que rejeitemos a possibilidade de que Deus exista. Novamente, podemos estar certos ou errados.

3. Se estivermos certos, viveremos uma vida cheia da constante certeza de que um dia morreremos. Podemos tentar fazer o bem enquanto estamos aqui na terra, mas com que propósito? Se Deus não existe, todas as estrelas um dia se extinguirão e toda a vida se extinguirá. Todas as nossas boas ações não contam para nada.

Visual  
#1-17

Visual  
#1-18

Visual  
#1-19

4. Se estivermos errados, iremos para o leito de morte esperando simplesmente perder a consciência; então, no momento da morte, tomaremos consciência da presença de um ser terrível - o Deus cuja existência negamos - a quem devemos dar conta de nossas vidas. A Bíblia diz que "... quem vem a Deus deve crer que é ..." (Hb 11: 6) - isto é, não haverá ateus no céu. Você estará indo para um inferno eterno.

Visual  
#1-20

Os ateus às vezes ridicularizam aqueles que acreditam em Deus, dizendo que acreditamos em "um homem invisível no céu" que fez tudo. Vamos dar um passo adiante. Antes de Jesus se tornar homem, Ele sempre foi uma **inteligência**. Pode-se dizer, portanto, que acreditamos em uma inteligência invisível no céu que é tão poderosa que Ele é responsável por todas as partes do universo em toda a sua complexidade, desde a maior escala (cosmologia) até a menor (subatômica).

Que alternativa o ateísmo oferece? Os ateus acreditam em uma **NÃO-inteligência** invisível no céu que é tão poderosa que é responsável por todas as partes do universo em toda a sua complexidade, desde a maior escala (cosmologia) até a menor (subatômica). E, no entanto, afirmam que são os únicos verdadeiros cientistas!

O passo de fé de um ateu o leva a um deus impessoal que não sabe que ele existe e não se importa com ele. Nosso passo de fé nos leva a um Deus pessoal que sabe quantos cabelos temos em nossas cabeças e nos ama tanto que Ele enviou Seu Filho para morrer por nossos pecados. Se os ateus estão certos, nada importa de qualquer maneira e nós, crentes, não estamos em pior situação do que eles. Se estamos certos, estamos indo para o céu, mas os ateus estão indo para um inferno eterno. Qual passo da fé é mais razoável?

Neste capítulo, vimos que:

1. Podemos estar absolutamente certos de que existimos.
2. Podemos exercitar um passo razoável de fé para acreditar que o resto do universo existe.
3. Podemos conhecer as coisas através dos nossos sentidos, através de autoridades confiáveis ou da lógica correta.
4. Podemos também saber através da intuição, embora isso não seja algo que possa ser testado.
5. Não precisamos apelar para sentidos ou autoridade, mas podemos usar a lógica para ter certeza de que existe um Deus.

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## CAPÍTULO 2

### *Como podemos saber se a Bíblia está além da capacidade humana?*

O objetivo da apologética da Bíblia é defender a verdade absoluta da Bíblia. No entanto, alguns zombadores dizem que não existe verdade absoluta. A melhor resposta a essa afirmação seria “Isso é absolutamente verdade?” A afirmação é auto-contraditória. Como é possível que exista algo como verdade absoluta, existe alguma maneira de descobrir isso? Já vimos que existem problemas com o conhecimento humano.

Visual #2-1

Visual #2-2

- Nossos sentidos não são 100% confiáveis.
- A lógica pode estar incorreta.
- Nossa intuição pode estar errada.

A única maneira de termos certeza absoluta sobre qualquer coisa seria se tivéssemos uma autoridade completamente confiável - um Deus infalível - para nos dizer.

Visual #2-3

A busca pela certeza é mais do que apenas um exercício intelectual. A taxa de mortalidade entre humanos é de 100%. A menos que Jesus volte e interrompa a história humana, todos e cada um deles morrerão. Para obter uma resposta confiável à pergunta sobre o que acontece depois que morremos, precisamos fazer uma série de perguntas.

Visual #2-4

- Primeiro, existe realmente um Deus? Caso contrário, provavelmente podemos esperar simplesmente deixar de existir.

Vimos no capítulo 1 que é impossível não acreditar em algum tipo de deus, seja um ser pessoal ou uma série de forças impessoais (chance aleatória).

- Se decidimos dar um passo de fé para acreditar em algum tipo de deus, que tipo de deus? Nosso deus é uma série de forças impessoais como os hindus acreditam? Nesse caso, nunca poderíamos ter certeza de nada. No entanto, se Deus é um ser inteligente, capaz de se comunicar conosco, existe a possibilidade de termos certeza do que acontecerá conosco, mas apenas se Ele nos disser.
- Se cremos em um Deus pessoal e inteligente, Ele nos falou sobre si mesmo? Existem livros no mundo que afirmam ser uma comunicação dEle? Caso contrário, ainda não teríamos certeza.

Visual #2-5

Na verdade, existem apenas três livros no mundo inteiro que afirmam ser a palavra revelada de Deus Todo-Poderoso: a Bíblia, o Alcorão e o Livro de Mórmon. Todos os outros “livros sagrados” do mundo reivindicam nada mais do que a sabedoria dos “mestres ascensos,” homens como Buda, Zoroastro, Nanak e outros que atingiram um plano espiritual superior ao resto de nós.

Visual #2-6

- Existe alguma maneira de testar esses livros para ver se eles estão além das capacidades humanas? Se não houvesse, ainda não tínhamos certeza. Felizmente, há uma maneira de testá-los.

Visual #2-7

Embora humanos ou “espíritos familiares” (demônios que estão intimamente familiarizados com os detalhes da vida de pessoas específicas) possam ocasionalmente adivinhar o que o futuro reserva, ninguém, exceto Deus, poderia prever isso com 100% de precisão.

Enquanto muitas religiões fazem previsões sobre um futuro dia de julgamento, nenhuma delas pode ser testada quanto à correção. No entanto, a Bíblia também faz muitas previsões sobre eventos que ainda estavam no futuro no momento em que foram preditos e depois aconteceram. Nenhum outro livro do mundo ousa fazer mais do que algumas previsões desse tipo.

Visual #2-8

- O Livro de Mórmon (que foi escrito por volta de 1830, mas alega ter sido escrito há quase 2.000 anos) apenas faz um, e está errado. Em Alma 7:10, diz que Jesus nasceria em Jerusalém, quando ele realmente nascera em Belém quase 2.000 anos antes.
- O Alcorão faz duas previsões testáveis. A Surata 30: 1 diz que os persas haviam derrotado os romanos (o nome que Maomé chamava de gregos bizantinos) em uma terra vizinha, mas que

em pouco tempo o outro lado venceria uma batalha. Não disse onde ou quando. Os dois lados estavam lutando há muitos anos. Um venceria uma batalha, o outro venceria, e assim por diante. A outra previsão foi na Surata 48:27, que diz que Maomé poderia voltar a Meca em paz. No entanto, não mencionou que ele já havia assinado um tratado.

- Compare isso com a Bíblia, que faz centenas de previsões que já aconteceram. Por mais que os céticos tentem, ninguém jamais conseguiu provar que uma de suas profecias fosse falsa.

O estudo da profecia é uma maneira poderosa de testar as alegações da Bíblia de origem divina com um certo grau de objetividade. Os cientistas usam rotineiramente estudos de probabilidade, como testes do qui-quadrado, para tentar determinar se um fenômeno é aleatório ou não, sem necessariamente saber o porquê. Podemos aplicar princípios semelhantes à profecia bíblica para ver se ela consiste em suposições aleatórias ou se é provavelmente não-aleatória.

Visual  
#2-9

Quando lidamos com números muito grandes, é conveniente usar notação científica. Isso envolve o número dez com um expoente, que indica o número de vezes que dez devem ser multiplicados por si só para obter o resultado desejado. Por exemplo, mil é  $10 \times 10 \times 10$ , ou  $10^3$ . Um milhão é  $10 \times 10 \times 10 \times 10 \times 10 \times 10$ , ou  $10^6$ .

Probabilidades (e improbabilidades) se multiplicam em vez de adicionar. Se vários eventos têm uma chance em dez de ocorrer, as chances de três ocorrerem não são uma em trinta, mas sim 1 em  $10 \times 1$  em  $10 \times 1$  em 10, ou uma em mil.

## 1. PROFECIAS SOBRE JESUS.

Considere apenas algumas das previsões para a vinda do Messias. Qual é a chance de qualquer pessoa nascer descendente de Abraão? Vamos assumir um em cada dez. (Na verdade, é muito menos.) Agora, qual é a chance de ele também ser israelita, pertencer à tribo de Judá e à família de Davi, mas não ser descendente de Joaqui (Jr 22:30), e nascer em Belém, depois se muda para o Egito, cresce em Nazaré, morre por crucificação em Jerusalém depois de ser traída por um amigo por trinta moedas de prata, mas nenhum dos ossos dele está quebrado, etc.? Jesus cumpriu pelo menos sessenta e uma dessas profecias.

Em 1944, o Dr. Peter Stoner calculou a chance de qualquer pessoa cumprir apenas oito das sessenta e uma profecias. <sup>1</sup> Ele usou estimativas muito conservadoras da probabilidade de cumprir cada profecia, da seguinte maneira:

- Nascido em Belém - 1 em 280.000 pessoas.
- Alguém alegou ser o seu precursor - 1 em 1.000.
- Entrou em Jerusalém “montando um potro, o potro de um jumento” - 1 em 100.
- Traído por um amigo, mãos feridas - 1 em 1.000.
- Traído por 30 peças de prata - 1 em 1.000.
- As 30 moedas de prata lançadas na casa do Senhor e compravam o campo de um oleiro - 1 em 100.000.
- Em julgamento por sua vida, mas não oferece defesa - 1 em 1.000.
- Morreu por crucificação - 1 em 10.000.

Mesmo com essas estimativas extraordinariamente conservadoras, Stoner ainda calculava que a chance de um homem cumprir todos os oito era de cerca de um em  $10^{28}$  (um “1” seguido de 28 zeros). Como alguns acreditam que até  $10^{11}$  pessoas podem ter vivido na Terra desde o início, qual é a chance de pelo menos uma delas cumprir aleatoriamente todas as oito profecias? Seria um em  $10^{28}$  dividido por um em  $10^{11}$ , ou cerca de um em  $10^{17}$  (um em cem quatrilhões).

Qual a probabilidade disso? Suponha que você tenha coberto a nação inteira da França com 60 cm de profundidade com dólares de prata. Pegue um desses dólares e coloque um "X" nele. Agora, venda os olhos de alguém, solte-o na França e dê a ele uma chance de encontrar a moeda marcada. Sua chance de sucesso é quase a mesma que a probabilidade de alguém acidentalmente cumprir apenas oito das profecias messiânicas.

Visual  
#2-10

Stoner calculou a chance de cumprir quarenta e oito das profecias em cerca de uma em  $10^{157}$ . Para visualizar esse número, precisamos usar elétrons em vez de dólares em prata. Imagine uma bola sólida de elétrons com 6 bilhões de anos-luz de diâmetro - uma parte significativa do tamanho estimado do universo. Stoner calcula que seriam necessárias  $6 \times 10^{28}$  bolas para conter  $10^{157}$  elétrons. Portanto, nessas muitas esferas de elétrons do tamanho de um universo, você tem uma chance de escolher o elétron correto. A probabilidade é inimaginavelmente pequena.

Os matemáticos geralmente consideram impossível qualquer evento com uma probabilidade inferior a um em  $10^{50}$ . No entanto, a Bíblia previu não apenas esses oito eventos, mas muitos outros, todos com perfeita precisão. Por exemplo:

Visual #2-11

- Gênesis 49:10 diz: “O cetro não se apartará de Judá, nem um legislador entre seus pés, até que Siló venha ...”

Isso sempre foi entendido pelos judeus como uma profecia messiânica. Quando Roma removida retirou o direito à pena de morte em cerca de 11 dC, o rabino Rachmon escreveu no Talmude de Jerusalém: “Ai de nós, pois o cetro partiu de Judá e o Messias não veio.” Mas Jesus veio - Ele era adolescente!

Visual #2-12

- O Messias seria “cortado,” depois Jerusalém e o Templo seriam destruídos. Jesus foi crucificado por volta de 30 d.C. Cerca de 40 anos depois, Tito destruiu a cidade e o santuário.
- Viria enquanto o templo ainda estivesse de pé, após o que seria destruído - Mal. 3: 1, Dan. 9:26

Visual #2-13

- Presentes seriam trazidos pelos reis após Seu nascimento - Sl. 72:10, Isa. 60: 6.
- Ele nasceria na “Torre do rebanho” em Belém - Mic. 4: 8.
- Assassinato de crianças em Seu nascimento - Jer. 31:15
- Inveja do templo - Sl. 69: 9
- O ministério começa na Galiléia - Isa. 9: 1
- Realizaria milagres - Isa. 35: 5-6 et al.
- Ensinaria em parábolas - Sl. 78: 2
- Sofrimentos (por exemplo, feridas) descritos em detalhes - Isa. 53:5
- Cuspido - Isa. 56.
- Mãos e pés perfurados - Ps. 22:16
- Vestuário dividido - Ps. 22:18
- Dado fel e vinagre - Ps. 69:21
- Nenhum osso quebrado - Ps. 34:20
- Executado com criminosos - Isa. 53:12
- Corpo perfurado - Zech. 12:10
- Escuridão na sua morte - Amós 8: 9
- Enterrado no túmulo de um homem rico - Isa. 53:9
- Ressuscitaria dentre os mortos - Sl. 16:10. (Muitas pessoas nunca fizeram isso).

Embora cada uma delas (exceto ressuscitar dentre os mortos) possa acontecer com várias pessoas, as chances de que todas elas aconteçam acidentalmente com qualquer indivíduo são incompreensíveis. A explicação mais razoável seria que eles pretendiam ser sobre ele e somente ele.

## 2. PROFECIAS DE OUTROS INDIVÍDUOS.

Visual #2-14

Algumas profecias da Bíblia se relacionam com indivíduos específicos além do Messias.

Visual #2-15

- É um. 44 e 45 chamavam o rei Ciro da Pérsia pelo nome centenas de anos antes de ele nascer.
- Da mesma forma, o rei Josias da nação de Judá foi identificado pelo nome várias centenas de anos antes de seu nascimento (1 Reis 13:1-2).
- O local e o modo da morte da rainha Jezabel foram preditos cerca de 14 anos antes de acontecer (1 Reis 21:23, 2 Reis 9: 30-36).



### 3. PROFECIAS SOBRE CIDADES E NAÇÕES ESTRANGEIRAS.

As nações e cidades estrangeiras eram frequentemente objeto de profecias bíblicas.

#### a. TIRO.

Tiro já foi um grande centro comercial no extremo leste do Mediterrâneo. Tinha uma parte da ilha e uma parte do continente. Em aproximadamente 590 a.C., Ezequiel 26:1-21) disse que:

- Muitas nações viriam contra.
- Os habitantes seriam mortos.
- Nabucodonosor construiria um monte de cerco contra ele. Primeiro, Nabucodonosor e seus exércitos destruíram a cidade continental. O resto dos habitantes se mudou para a parte da ilha no mar, onde ele não podia alcançá-los.
- Suas paredes, casas, pedras, madeira e solo seriam depositados na água.
- Seria raspado como o topo de uma rocha.

A ilha foi posteriormente atacada pela Pérsia, Egito, Chipre, Síria, Grécia, Roma e muitos outros. A cidade ainda não estava completamente destruída, até que Alexandre, o Grande, usou os escombros da cidade continental para construir um caminho de 800 metros para a ilha no mar. Ele mandou seus soldados rasparem as pedras para obter material suficiente.

- Seria um local para os pescadores espalharem suas redes.
- Nunca seria reconstruído.

Depois que a cidade da ilha foi destruída, tornou-se um lugar onde os pescadores espalharam suas redes. Nunca foi reconstruído. (A cidade moderna de Tiro está em um local diferente do original).

#### b. BABILÔNIA.

O capítulo 13 de Isaías (escrito por volta de 730 a.C.) e o capítulo 51 de Jeremias (um pouco antes de 586 aC) predisseram que a grande cidade de Babilônia seria conquistada pelos medos. Na época, Babilônia era o maior império do mundo, e Medéia era um reino relativamente obscuro, começando a ganhar influência.

Os medos conquistaram Babilônia em 538 a.C., cerca de 200 anos após a profecia de Isaías e 50 anos após a profecia de Jeremias.

#### c. EGITO.

Isaías 20: 3-5 - (escrito em 730 a.C.) predisse que o Egito e a Etiópia seriam conquistados pela Assíria. Isso foi cumprido cerca de 60 anos depois, ca. 670 a.C. Ezequiel 29:13 - 15 (ca. 588 a.C.) disse que o Egito teria permissão de retornar à sua terra depois de 40 anos, mas nunca mais dominaria outras nações. Isso foi cumprido por volta de 548 a.C.

### 4. PROFECIAS SOBRE A CIDADE DE JERUSALÉM.

A cidade de Jerusalém e o templo foram objeto de profecias específicas.

Em Lucas 21, Jesus disse que não haveria uma pedra sobre outra no templo. Isso foi literalmente cumprido no ano 70 d.C., quando os romanos finalmente o capturaram após uma longa batalha. No decorrer do ataque, o mobiliário interior pegou fogo e ardeu tão quente que todos os objetos de metal usados nos rituais judaicos, como os utensílios de ouro, derreteram. Quando o general romano Tito percebeu que o ouro derretido caíra nas fendas entre as pedras, ele ordenou que cada duas pedras fossem separadas e o ouro raspado.

No mesmo capítulo, Jesus também falou do futuro cerco e destruição de Jerusalém. Isso se tornou realidade no momento do ataque de Titus. Ele também estabeleceu um prazo para a ocupação de Jerusalém pelos gentios. Com certeza, Israel finalmente recuperou o título de Jerusalém na Guerra dos Seis Dias. Isso aconteceu apenas recentemente, em 1967. Deus não termina com profecias cumpridas.

Visual  
#2-16

Visual  
#2-17

Visual  
#2-18

## 5. PROFECIAS SOBRE A NAÇÃO DE ISRAEL.

Visual  
#2-19

Também havia profecias detalhadas sobre a nação de Israel. Após a morte de Salomão, seu reino se dividiu em Judá e Israel. Cerca de 200 anos depois, Israel foi capturado pela Assíria e deixou de ser uma nação. Judá ainda mantinha sua identidade, mas não havia nação como Israel. No entanto, profecias sobre Israel continuaram a chegar. Como não havia Israel, por mais de 2.000 anos, muitos comentaristas tomaram as profecias como meramente simbólicas.

Depois que a nação de Israel deixou de existir, Isa. 66: 8 - 9 predisse que Sião (outro nome para Israel) nasceria em um dia. Mais tarde, Ezek. 17:11 disse que Deus daria ao seu povo a terra de Israel e Ezeque. 37 disse que Judá e Israel não seriam mais duas nações distintas, mas juntas formariam a nação de Israel. Essas profecias foram cumpridas em 1948, quando as Nações Unidas restabeleceram a nação de Israel em UM DIA.

## 6. PROFECIAS DE DANIEL CAPÍTULO 11.

Visual  
#2-20

Embora existam muitos exemplos de profecias cumpridas em toda a Bíblia, Daniel, capítulo 11, é particularmente surpreendente por causa do número de detalhes que fornece sobre a história futura da pátria judaica. Nesta passagem, um anjo revela a Daniel o que acontecerá no Oriente Médio pelos próximos cem anos. Sem mencionar nomes, ele descreve a conquista da área por Alexandre, o Grande, e a divisão do reino de Alexandre em quatro partes após sua morte. O anjo então descreve detalhadamente a interação entre a dinastia ptolomaica no Egito (mesmo a Cleópatra que ficou famosa pelo cinema) e os selêucidas na Síria, com centenas de anos de antecedência. A profecia é tão precisa e detalhada que muitos céticos se recusam a acreditar que foi escrita de antemão e afirmam que ela deve ter sido elaborada após o fato. Eles precisam ignorar o testemunho da história por causa de sua hostilidade em relação à Bíblia.

Visual  
#2-21

A precisão de 100% da Bíblia nas profecias cumpridas mostra que está além das habilidades dos seres humanos. Uma pessoa razoável teria que concluir que é obra de um ser sobrenatural. É de fato a palavra de Deus.

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## CHAPTER 3

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

Visual #3-1 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?

#### 1. THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Visual #3-2 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.

The apostle Paul is credited with writing about half of the 27 New Testament books. (Hebrews is anonymous, but has traditionally been considered his work.) Others named as authors include Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, Jude, and James.

Most scholars believe that the New Testament began to be written around 50 AD, less than two decades after the resurrection of Jesus. 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 then. His Gospel, his three epistles, and Revelation were completed before his death around 100 A.D.

Until the New Testament books were written, the early Christian church could rely on many eyewitnesses who were still alive. Once the books were written, they were copied and sent to the various local churches. (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.”) Though any one local church would be unlikely to possess more than one or two of the books, they were all available within the church as a whole.

Visual #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.

Visual #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. Those codices are still available. Thus, what we have is probably at worst a third generation copy. (Original = first generation; copy = second generation; codex = third generation.)

#### A. OBJECTIVE TEST OF MANUSCRIPT RELIABILITY.

Visual #3-5

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.

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 other ancient documents regarded as authoritative.

Visual #3-6

Author	Date Written	Earliest Copy	Time Lapse	# of Copies
Herodotus	488-428 B.C.	900 A.D.	1300 yrs.	8
Thucydides	460-400 B.C.	900 A.D.	1300 yrs.	8
Tacitus	100 A.D.	1100	1000 yrs.	20
Caesar's <i>Gallic</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.	20

Visual #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.

Visual #3-8

Let's compare this to the New Testament. The 643 surviving manuscripts of the *Iliad* sound impressive until we learn that *over 24,000* ancient manuscripts of the books of the New Testament still exist. (Note that these are not complete copies of the New Testament, but of individual books or fragments of books.) 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.

Visual #3-9

By the early 300's, scholars had begun to assemble individual scrolls into bound books called codices. The oldest nearly complete codices, Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, date from about 300 years after the completion of the New Testament.

Fragments of many individual New Testament books date 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.

Visual #3-10

The Christians were not quiet! Besides the New Testament manuscripts themselves, first and second century Christian leaders left *over a million quotes* from the manuscripts in their letters to each other. Even if we did not have a single ancient manuscript, we could reconstruct all but eleven verses of the 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.

Visual #3-11

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.) Nevertheless, some skeptics claim that there are up to 200,000 variant readings of the New Testament. The number is misleading. For instance, if a single word is spelled differently in two thousand manuscripts (probably all copied from one ancient source), it is counted as two thousand variants. The number of discrepancies is actually only one. <sup>2</sup>

Despite the overall reliability of the New Testament, your Bible probably contains marginal notes saying that "other manuscripts say..." and showing a variant reading. If

the originals lasted so long, why are there any discrepancies at all between New Testament manuscripts?

The discrepancies are usually trivial, often simple spelling variations. 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.

One possible explanation for the variant readings of *humeis* and *hemeis* 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.

Though there are a number of variations in spelling or word order (e.g., Jesus Christ vs. Christ Jesus), not a single one of them makes any difference in the meaning of the passage. 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 without harm are found elsewhere in the New Testament. You shouldn’t deliberately drink poison anyway. (“Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.” Matt 4:7)

- **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, these names are found throughout the New Testament.

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?

## **B. TEXTUAL CRITICISM.**

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” 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 about a million quotes from the New Testament indicates that the church as a whole had access to the entire book. By the third or fourth century, the individual scrolls or papyri had been compiled into bound books called *codices*. The oldest known nearly complete Greek manuscript, the Codex Sinaiticus, 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.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup>

Another important almost complete manuscript is the Codex Vaticanus, dated to the

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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. <sup>5</sup> Yet another is the Codex Alexandrinus, a Byzantine text 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, the basis of the Received Text of the King James Bible.

As time passed, more and more manuscripts were discovered in ancient monasteries, caves, and even bazaars and garbage dumps. 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. Nowadays, the latest results of textual criticism are found in the Nestle-Aland and United Bible Society (together abbreviated NU in many Bible footnotes) text. Even if one rejects the latest compilations, though, remember that there is never any question of doctrine in any of the variant readings of the New Testament.

## **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:

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. <sup>6</sup>

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

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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.

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. <sup>7</sup>

## **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 in 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. 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 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.<sup>8</sup>

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.<sup>9</sup>

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

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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 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. <sup>10</sup>

#### **D. THE GREEK SEPTUAGINT.**

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. <sup>11</sup>

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.**

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

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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.

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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 Nouir 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*<sup>12</sup>, John W. Haley's *Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible*<sup>13</sup>, and Gleason Archer's *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*<sup>14</sup>

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:

“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.”<sup>15</sup>

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

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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.<sup>15</sup> 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.

## 8. **WATER IN SPACE.**

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. **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.

Visual  
#4-3

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.

Visual  
#4-4

#### **10. 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.

#### **11. 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.

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#4-5

#### **12. 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 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.<sup>17</sup> Statistically, this is evidence that all living human males came from one original male, dubbed “Y-Chromosome Adam.”

#### **13. HOW COULD A SNAKE TALK?**

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.

Visual  
#4-6

#### **14. 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.

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#4-7

#### **15. WHERE DID CAIN GET HIS WIFE?**

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.

Visual  
#4-8

#### **16. WHY DID GOD REJECT CAIN'S SACRIFICE OF CROPS?**

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.

#### **17. 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 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.

#### **18. WERE ANIMALS EATING EACH OTHER FOR MILLIONS OF YEARS BEFORE HUMANS CAME ALONG?**

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

Visual  
#4-9

Visual  
#4-10

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?

Visual  
#4-11

## 19. 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:

"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.

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*.

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#4-12

## 20. 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.

"... 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



Visual #4-13

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.

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 <sup>18</sup> 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.

## 21. WHY NOT A LOCAL FLOOD?

- 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.

Visual #4-14

Visual #4-15

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

- 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.

## 23. 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

Visual #4-16

Visual #4-17

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.

#### **24. 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.

#### **25. 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, 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.)

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

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.

#### **27. WHY ARE THERE DIFFERENT GENEALOGIES OF BENJAMIN IN GENESIS AND NUMBERS?**

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

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#4-20

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?

Visual  
#4-21

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.

## 28. HOW MANY PEOPLE WENT INTO EGYPT WITH JACOB?

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.

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#4-22

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

The number of years Israel was in Egypt 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.

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#4-23

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.

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 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.

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#4-24

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.

### 30. MOSES' DEPARTURE FROM EGYPT.

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."

### 31. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

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.

### 32. 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

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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.

### **33. 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 (Ex. 20:8). Neh. 9:13-14 reiterates 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).

### **34. 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.

### **35. DID MOSES MAKE A MISTAKE COUNTING THE NUMBER OF LEGS ON INSECTS?**

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<sup>19</sup> 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

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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 <sup>20,21</sup> would read something like,  
“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, author’s translation).

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.

### **36. DO RABBITS CHEW CUD?**

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. <sup>22</sup>

### **37. 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* <sup>23</sup> 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.

### **38. 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. <sup>24</sup>

### **39. JOSHUA’S LONG DAY.**

For many, the single most difficult passage of the Bible to believe is the account in Joshua

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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.<sup>25</sup> 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.

#### 40. 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.

#### 41. THE VALUE OF PI.

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

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#4-36

“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.

#### **42. 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.<sup>26</sup>

#### **43. 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.

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#### **44. IS THE CHARACTER OF GOD DIFFERENT IN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS?**

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.

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#### **45. 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.

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(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.

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#### **46. THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST.**

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.

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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.

#### **47. WHEN DID JESUS CLEANSE THE TEMPLE?**

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.

#### **48. WAS THE SERMON GIVEN ON THE MOUNT, OR ON A PLAIN?**

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.

#### **49. ONE OR TWO DEMONIACS?**

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.

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## 50. 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?

- 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.

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There is no contradiction between the three passages.

## 51. WHEN DID JESUS EAT THE LAST SUPPER, AND WHEN DID HE DIE? <sup>27</sup>

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.

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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.

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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 Paraskue. 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

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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.

## 52. 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”?

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.

## 53. 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.
- 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.

## 54. 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.

- 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.

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#### 55. LATER POST-RESURRECTION APPEARANCES OF JESUS.

- 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).

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

#### 56. PAUL'S CONVERSION.

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?

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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.

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 haven't proved a single one yet. Every such objection to the Bible has an answer.

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## ***CONCLUSION***

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Since each of us is going to die, it is important that we have a relationship with God. 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.

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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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