

CHAPTER FOUR

Alleged Contradictions and Errors in the Bible

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

I. ALLEGED CONTRADICTIONS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT .

A. 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 at least four 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 Dr. Gleason Archer's *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* (Zondervan, 1982). We will here consider only one of the arguments used in support of this position: the claim that Genesis contains two contradictory creation accounts.

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- 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. 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." (*The Interlinear Bible*, Jay P. Green, Sr., general editor and translator, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, Mass., 2nd ed., 1986)

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

Suppose you built a motorcycle in June, an automobile in July, and a house in August and then described how you brought them all together. Though a hearer unfamiliar with the sequence of events might draw the wrong conclusions, you would not be incorrect in saying "I built a house and I saw that it was not good that the driveway was empty. 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 (Archer, 1982, 61-62). 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.

B. HOW COULD A SNAKE TALK?

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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 but did not talk (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.

C. 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.

D. WHERE DID CAIN GET HIS WIFE?

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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.)

It is true that God does not allow brothers and sisters to marry, but this 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.

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

Genesis 4: 3 - 5 tells us:

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“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 gives detailed instructions about offerings of crops.

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.

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

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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 his food supply, he 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 two of everything came off. All of them, including the carnivores, must have been able to subsist on plants at least until the food supply on the Ark was gone.

G. HOW COULD JACOB’S YOUNGEST SON BENJAMIN HAVE HAD TEN SONS BEFORE HE CAME TO EGYPT?

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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. 35:16ff). 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.

H. WHY ARE THERE DIFFERENT GENEALOGIES OF BENJAMIN'S FAMILY IN GENESIS AND NUMBERS?

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

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

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

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

I. HOW MANY PEOPLE WENT INTO EGYPT WITH JACOB?

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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 plus Jacob plus Joseph and his two sons, who were already there. The second number, 70, includes those four. The third, 75, also included several daughters-in-law.

J. DOES THE BIBLE CONTRADICT ITSELF ABOUT HOW LONG THE ISRAELITES WERE IN EGYPT? (See Appendix D for more details.)

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)

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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 to the place where the promise was given, the land of Canaan.

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.

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There is no way the Israelites could have been 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.

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.

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The Israelites' slavery did not begin until after Joseph and his entire generation died (Ex. 1:6-8). 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.

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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. We will deal with them in Appendix D.

K. MOSES' DEPARTURE FROM EGYPT.

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Some are so eager to find a contradiction in the Bible that they refer to Exodus 2:14, which 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."

L. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

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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 no contradiction at all.

M. DOES THE BIBLE CONTRADICT ITSELF ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT?

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

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

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

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

Murder was never allowed, but killing sometimes was.

N. 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 and 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).

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

The Book of Ruth tells us the story of Ruth, a woman from the land of Moab, 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) 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

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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, even though some ethnic Moabites still lived there, 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.

P. 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. (www.kjvtoday.com)

II. ALLEGED CONTRADICTIONS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

A. 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 who sometimes responds harshly toward those who oppose Him. (If you think He does not show judgment in the New Testament, read the Book of Revelation.)
- On the other hand, He shows mercy toward those who love Him. Because of His holy and just character, He demands that sin be judged and punished, often by death, but 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

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the devil and his angels.

B. THE DEITY OF CHRIST.

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

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

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

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

- A number of religions that claim to be Christian deny that Jesus is the visible representation of Almighty God. Jehovah’s Witnesses believe that He is Michael the Archangel, who was sent to earth by Jehovah. (This is an ancient heresy known as *Arianism*, condemned by the early Church.) Mormons believe that He is a lesser God and is actually the brother of Lucifer.

What does the Bible say?

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

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

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

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

- 2 Cor. 13:5 instructs those who profess to be Christians to
“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that *Jesus Christ is in you*, except ye be reprobates?”
Jehovah’s Witnesses do not claim that Jesus Christ lives in them. Thus, according to this verse they must be reprobates. In order to avoid this conclusion, their *New World Translation* deliberately adds words to alter the verse to say “Jesus Christ in union with you” rather than “Jesus Christ in you” as the Greek text reads. But note that the passage

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says Jesus Christ must personally be in us. Only God could be in more than one place at a time. If Jesus can dwell in billions of believers at the same time, He has to be God.

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

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

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

C. THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS.

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#4-22

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. Both Joseph and Mary were descendants of David. 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. On Mary’s side, he was biologically descended from Heli, Matthat, Levi, and the others in David’s biological lineage.

(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.

Jeremiah 22 tells us that Jehoiachin/ Jeconiah was eliminated from the Messiah's biological ancestry. Nevertheless, he was included in the legal kingly lineage.

D. THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST.

Visual
#4-23

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

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

E. WHEN DID JESUS CLEANSE THE TEMPLE?

Visual
#4-24

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.

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

Visual
#4-25

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.

G. ONE OR TWO DEMONIACS?

Visual
#4-26

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.

Suppose you went to Washington, D.C., 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.

H. DID JESUS HEAL ONE BLIND MAN OR TWO? WAS HE GOING INTO OR COMING OUT OF JERICHO?

Visual
#4-27

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. It is not at all incorrect for Mark to focus on only one of them.
- There were two Jerichos! The Old Testament Jericho was a small village consisting mostly of ruins. About two miles away Herod had built a new Jericho. Matthew and

Mark use the Old Testament boundary, while Luke uses the Herodian.

There is no contradiction between the three passages.

I. THE PURPOSE OF JESUS' DEATH.

Visual
#4-28

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

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

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

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

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

J. WHEN DID JESUS EAT THE LAST SUPPER, AND WHEN DID HE DIE? (Andrews, 1862)

Visual
#4-29

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

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

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

The Jewish day began at sunset, not midnight. Jn. 13:30 makes a point of saying "it was night" as they were finishing the Passover meal. This meant that from the Jewish perspective, the meal was eaten at the beginning of the day. Jesus was then crucified around day-break, 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 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 counterpart, 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.

Visual
#4-30

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.

K. 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 idioms rather than fact.

L. HOW DID JUDAS DIE?

Visual
#4-31

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:

- 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.

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

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

Visual
#4-32

- 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.

N. LATER POST-RESURRECTION APPEARANCES OF JESUS.

Visual
#4-33

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

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

O. PAUL'S CONVERSION.

Visual
#4-34

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

The problem disappears with a little study of 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.

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

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

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

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

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

Q. PAUL'S SHIPWRECK.

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

R. LOCATION OF THE ALTAR OF INCENSE. (The Book of Hebrews)

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

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

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

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

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

Even if the passage is referring to the altar rather than a censer, the apparent contradiction between Heb. 9 and Exodus 30:6 is due to uncertainty in translation rather than an error in the Greek or Hebrew Scriptures. Exodus says that the altar was in front of the curtain, but Hebrews seems to say that it was behind it. However, the Greek word *meta*, translated "after" or "behind" in Heb. 9:4, is translated "with" about seventy-five percent of the time elsewhere in the New Testament. If we understand *meta* in this passage to have its usual meaning, it simply indicates that the altar of incense was with the curtain. It does not

Visual
#4-35

Visual
#4-36

imply that it was behind it. This is perfectly compatible with Exodus. These are just a few examples of so-called “contradictions” that are not contradictions 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.

II. EXTERNAL EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THE BIBLE.

Visual
#4-37

Miracles: The Bible does not attempt to persuade us that miracles are possible. It simply presents them as fact. While there is no way to confirm that a small scale miracle (e.g., an ax-head floating, a donkey talking, Jesus walking on water) took place, the Bible also makes a great many statements, including larger-scale miracles which can be tested for reasonableness (e.g., could the Israelites cross the Red Sea?). Not a single one has ever been shown to be definitively false. Some of these statements are unique to the Bible and contradict the beliefs of other religions.

A. CREATION.

Only God could have told us with certainty what happened “in the beginning.” If the Bible’s account of creation is accurate, it would be good evidence that the rest of it is also. Most of this book will therefore be dedicated to examining the scientific evidence for creation.

B. THE NATURE OF MATTER.

Scientists believe that all visible (baryonic) matter is made of particles such as protons, neutrons, and electrons. But just what are these particles made of? At the lowest quantum mechanical level, they seem to ultimately be waves, which cannot be directly seen, but only detected by what they do. As Heb. 11:3 says,

“...that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.”

The Bible introduced the invisible nature of matter thousands of years before scientists caught on to the wave/particle duality of matter and energy.

C. 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).

D. 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).

E. 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 delight to point this out as 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 Milky Way 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.

F. 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.

Visual
#4-38

G. 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).

H. PATHS IN THE SEA.

In the middle 1800s Bible-believing sailor Matthew F. Maury charted the “Paths of the Seas” mentioned in Ps. 8:8.

I. IS THE SKY STRONG?

Though the book of Genesis deals with the beginning of the universe, tradition tells us that the Book of Job was written first. Critics love to point out an alleged mistake in Job 37:18 dealing with creation, which says,

“Hast thou with him spread out the sky, which is strong, and as a molten looking glass?”

After all, only a superstitious idiot (Chicken Little, perhaps?) would think that the sky is hard! Therefore, critics say, the Bible contains an obvious mistake.

There are several problems with the critics’ position.

(1) First, the speaker was Elihu, not God. Anyone can record the mistakes of others without being mistaken himself.

(2) If there is any sense in which a statement could be true, critics cannot dogmatically say it has to be false. So could it be true in any sense?

- The sky is “strong” enough to burn up almost anything falling from space before it can reach the earth’s surface.
- The Hebrew word “chazak,” translated “strong,” is used in other places (1 Kgs. 18:2, Ezek. 26:17) to convey the sense of “great in extent.” No one could argue against the sky being great in extent.
- One of the characteristics of a molten looking glass is that it is thin. Compared to the size of the earth, the atmosphere is extremely thin. In at least this one sense, the sky IS like a molten looking glass.

J. 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 scientists knew about it.

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

Many do not understand how God could have formed the first man’s body from the dust of the earth. This was radically different from the ideas of the ancient Greeks and Romans, who believed that every earthly object was made of a mixture of earth, air, fire, and water. (The heavenly bodies were believed to be made of a fifth essence, or quintessence.) We now know that the human body is made of carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, oxygen, sulfur, phosphorus, calcium, iron, molybdenum, manganese, and many other trace minerals. And what is the dust of the earth made of? Carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, oxygen, sulfur, phosphorus, calcium, iron, molybdenum, manganese, and many other trace minerals. Everything God needed to make a human body was present in the soil.

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

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

Males have both X and Y chromosomes, but women have only X. It would be theoretically possible to clone a female from a male by using two copies of the X chromosome, but it would not be possible to clone a male from a female because no Y chromosome would be available.

Visual
#4-39

Visual
#4-40

Visual
#4-41

Visual
#4-42

M. DO MEN HAVE ONE LESS RIB THAN WOMEN?

This is a surprisingly 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.

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

Visual
#4-43

There is good evidence that all human males came from a single male (Batton, 1995). 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 (more on base pairs in Chapter 10) was found to be identical in men from around the world – that is, no mutations or substitutions (Dorit et al., 1995). Statistically, this is evidence that all living human males came from one original male, dubbed “y-Chromosome Adam.”

“Mitochondrial Eve” - discredited.

The January 1987 edition of Nature magazine included a story that indicated that all humans came from one woman, based on studies of mitochondrial DNA (previously mentioned in Chapter Two). While the conclusion agrees with the Bible, the study has been discredited. At the time, scientists thought that mitochondrial DNA was inherited only from one's mother. However, later studies found that the father contributes some of it (Morris and Lightowers, 2000). Therefore, this argument cannot be used as evidence that we all came from the same woman and should not be used by creationists.

O. LOCATION OF THE GARDEN OF EDEN.

Visual
#4-44

Genesis places the Garden of Eden near the intersection of the Tigris, Euphrates, Pishon, and Gihon rivers. The Tigris and Euphrates are easy enough to find, but what about the others? Smithsonian Magazine, anything but a Bible-oriented publication, appears to have solved the puzzle. In an article entitled “Has the Garden of Eden Been Located at Last?” (Smithsonian, August 1987, 127-135) we learn that satellite images from LANDSAT reveal a dry river bed now known as Wadi Rimah or Wadi al Batin winding through Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. This was apparently a flowing river at the time Genesis was written. Since it is located in what was known as the land of Havilah, it fits the description of the Pishon.

A fourth river, the Karun, comes together with the other three. Because it has been dammed, it is relatively insignificant nowadays. However, satellite photos show that in the past it contributed a great deal to the sediment at the head of the Persian Gulf. An apparent discrepancy arises, though, when we consider whether this is the Gihon. According to the King James Version this river “compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia” (Hebrew “Cush” or “Kush”), which is in Africa – far away from the other three rivers.

Visual
#4-45

The discrepancy seems to have resulted from an interpreter's error rather than a mistake in the inspired Hebrew text. The ancient Hebrews used only consonants on their sacred scrolls, leaving it up to whoever was reading to fill in the appropriate vowels. This was no problem in a society where many had memorized the Torah. However, centuries later there was much less certainty about which vowels were correct in proper names. By the time the Septuagint was translated (ca. 250 B.C.), copyists had added vowels to the Hebrew text to make it more understandable.

There was no guarantee that copyists would choose the right vowels in names they had never heard pronounced. Recall from Chapter Two that this is why some Christians use the name “Jehovah” for God while others call Him “Yahweh.” His name was originally written in all Hebrew consonants (roughly equivalent to YHWH) but was considered too holy to

say out loud. Anyone reading aloud in the synagogue would say “Adonai” (Hebrew for “Lord”) instead of His proper name. Centuries later, interpreters adding vowels to the Hebrew text followed this custom and inserted the vowels from “Adonai” into God’s name, making it sound like “Yahowah” or “Jehovah.” Most modern scholars believe “Yahweh” uses the correct vowels instead.

This seems to be what happened in the case of the Gihon River. Whoever added the vowels, having heard of Noah’s grandson Cush, used the vowel qibbutz (sounds like the “u” in “full”) to make the text say that the river went through the land of Cush or Kush (Ethiopia). However, archaeologists later discovered that a people known as the “Kashshites” lived from about 1500 to 900 B.C. in the area of this fourth river. Since Genesis is believed to have been written about 1500 B.C., Moses would have known this area as the land of Kash, not Kush. A scribe much later probably caused the confusion when he used the wrong vowel. He should have used the vowel *pattach*, which sounds like the “a” in “man.” (See the Dictionary of the Hebrew Bible in Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance.)

It seems likely, then, that the Garden of Eden is buried under the north end of what is now the Persian Gulf. This is eminently reasonable. If a fabulously lush garden had existed and was later buried in a cataclysmic flood, we would expect that the decaying vegetation would form enormous quantities of oil. What do we find throughout the Persian Gulf region? Some of the world’s richest oil reserves. God knew what He was talking about after all.

Some Christians believe it is impossible to determine the location of Eden because the Flood would have totally erased the pre-Flood earth. However, we should remember that the description in Genesis was written after the Flood, referring to geographic features familiar to people of Moses’ day. It makes sense to believe that this was indeed where Eden was located.

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

Visual
#4-46

Evolutionists believe that life 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.

In later chapters we will deal with the question of whether life has really been here for millions of years. However, we should note several things:

- We could only be sure what animals ate if we either saw them eat or else analyzed their stomach contents.
- A great many fossil animals have anatomical structures that we believe indicate that they were suited to a vegetarian diet. Only a few dinosaurs are believed to have been carnivores.
- The Bible does not say that animals never ate each other, only that it was not before Adam’s sin. By the time of Noah’s flood,

“The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence” (Gen 6:11).

Genesis says that at the end of the creation week, animals and humans – things that possessed the “breath of life” – were to eat only plants (Gen. 1: 29 - 30).

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 big 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?

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

Visual
#4-47

- 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 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.

Visual
#4-48

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.

R. 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 it deals with events that took place only a few hundred years after the Flood. It describes a bizarre creature:

Visual
#4-49

“Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox. Lo now, his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly. He moveth his tail like a cedar : the sinews of his stones are wrapped together. His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron. He is the chief of the ways of God: he that made him can make his sword to approach unto him. Surely the mountains bring him forth food, where all the beasts of the field play. He lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of the reed, and fens. The shady trees cover him with their shadow; the willows of the brook compass him about. Behold, he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not: he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth. He taketh it with his eyes: his nose pierceth through snares” (Job 40:15 - 24).

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

Visual
#4-50

Also, 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.

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

Visual
#4-51

Noah did not choose which animals went on the ark. Instead, they went in by themselves, somehow impelled by God (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 1800s. 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. It also had three decks inside. Based on these dimensions, it had a carrying capacity equivalent to about 522 railroad boxcars.

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

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

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

Visual
#4-52

“... 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 NKJV

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

Visual
#4-53

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 1600s, 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. (See Chapter 11.)
- In the lab, Guy Berthault’s experiments at the Colorado School of Mines (“Drama in the Rocks” parts 1 - 4, available on www.youtube.com) 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.

U. WHY NOT A LOCAL FLOOD?

Visual
#4-54

- 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.

V. HOW COULD A HUMAN BODY (LOT’S WIFE) TURN INTO SALT?

Gen. 19:24 - 26 tells us,

Visual
#4-55

“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 French fries, 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 be instantly desiccated (all the water removed), what would be left behind? A pile of powder!

W. 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.

Visual
#4-56

“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.

X. DOES THE BIBLE CONFUSE BATS WITH BIRDS?

Visual
#4-57

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.

Y. DID MOSES MISCOUNT THE NUMBER OF LEGS ON INSECTS?

Visual
#4-58

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 (Bible Explorer 4, www.bible-explorer.com) clears up the apparent problem.

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

Visual
#4-59

word for word translation of the Hebrew text (based on Green's *Interlinear Bible* and the WordSearch *Bible Explorer* computer program) 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 miscount of 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.

Z. DO RABBITS CHEW THE CUD? (See <http://www.apologeticspress.org/articles/240182>.)

Visual
#4-60

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.

AA. PARTING OF THE RED SEA.

Visual
#4-61

Many believe the parting of the Red Sea (Exodus 14:21) is a myth. However, a 1992 computer simulation has shown 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 (Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society, quoted in the New Orleans Times-Picayune, Saturday, March 14, 1992, Page A-9).

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.

AB. 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.

(Halley's Bible Handbook, pp. 159-161.)

AC. JOSHUA'S LONG DAY.

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

In 1950 Immanuel Velikovsky published a book entitled *Worlds in Collision* (Doubleday & Co., Garden City, NY, 1950) which raised a storm 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. 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.

AD. THE VALUE OF PI.

Visual
#4-62

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

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

Anyone who ever studied geometry knows that the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter is about 3.14, usually represented by the Greek letter pi. Critics say that if the diameter was 10 cubits, the circumference should have been 31.4. Therefore, the Bible must be wrong.

All one has to do is read three verses further to see how ridiculous the skeptics' argument is. Verse 5 says that the thickness of the basin was a handbreadth. If we take a cubit to be about 18 inches, the given diameter would be about 180 inches. This leads to a circumference of about 565 inches, while it would require a diameter of about 172 inches to yield the given circumference of 540 inches (30 cubits). The difference in the two diameters is about eight inches, or one handbreadth on each side of the basin. The diameter given was the *outside* measurement; the circumference was the *inner* measurement. The difference was the thickness of the basin. The inner circumference would work out to about 30.02 cubits. Close enough to 30 for you?

AE. EZEKIEL 4:9 BREAD.

Visual
#4-63

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.

III. "ICING ON THE CAKE:" EQUIDISTANT LETTER SEQUENCES IN THE HEBREW TEXT.

If the previous information does not persuade you that the Bible is beyond human capabilities, perhaps nothing will. If you do accept it as the Word of God, though, following is an interesting indication that His fingerprints are all over it.

The following is taken from Grant Jeffrey's I , chapters 10 and 11. He gives many more examples than these. It would be well worth your while to read his book.

Visual
#4-64

Suppose you took one of Shakespeare's plays and selected every third, forty-ninth, or hundredth letter (or any other interval) to see if the results spelled anything. Though you might find some recognizable words, you would be amazed if they made a statement that fit the context of the passage. Yet this is precisely what we find within the Hebrew text of the Old Testament.

In the early 1900s Rabbi Michael Weissmandl found a reference in the writings of a fourteenth century rabbi named Bachayah to a hidden letter pattern in the Torah. For decades Weissmandl searched the Hebrew text to verify the earlier report. He found many places where the first letter of a Biblically significant word such as "Torah" was followed by the subsequent letters at equal intervals. For instance, the Hebrew letter *tav* occurs at the end of the first word in Genesis. From then on, every fiftieth letter spells out the rest of the word Torah. From the first *tav* in Exodus, every fiftieth letter once again spells Torah. At the beginning of Numbers it is spelled out in reverse by every fiftieth letter. Starting at the fifth verse of Deuteronomy it is spelled out in reverse by every forty-ninth letter.

A group of Israeli scholars at Hebrew University (Witztum, Rosenberg, and Rips) were intrigued by his work. Aided by computers, they found that the phenomenon goes far deeper. Just a few examples:

- Within the description of the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:4-10) the Hebrew word for Eden occurs 16 times in only 379 letters, while twenty-five Hebrew names for trees are also hidden in the chapter.
- Encoded in the Torah are hundreds (at least) of names of people and places significant in Jewish history. The names of every one of the sixty-four individuals with the longest biographical entries in the Encyclopedia of Great Men in Israel occur in close proximity to the Hebrew month and day of either their birth or death.
- Deuteronomy 10:17-22 includes the encoded names Hitler, Berlin and Auschwitz; beginning with the letter resh in "Yisrael" in Deut. 33:21 and counting every twenty-second letter from left to right, it contains the Hebrew phrase "re'tzach alm," which translates to "a people cry murder, slaughter."

The group submitted their first paper, entitled Equidistant Letter Sequences in the Book of Genesis, to a refereed technical journal called the *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*. While the journal does not ordinarily publish papers of a religious nature, the methods followed rigorous statistical principles. Critics were unable to find anything wrong with the work. It was published in 1988 and has been reprinted in places such as the October 1995 Bible Review and on the Internet. The scholars submitted a follow-up article with the same title to *Statistical Science*, another peer-reviewed journal; though the staff did not believe in the inspiration of Genesis, the editor reluctantly published it in August of 1994 because of the rigorous accuracy of the methods and data.

These are but a few examples from Jeffrey's book, which in turn gives just a glimpse of the work of these Israeli scholars, which barely scratches the surface of the Torah. And while the discoveries should add to one's respect for the Bible, they have little to do with Christianity. A Messianic Jewish scholar named Yacov Rambsel has carried the work further, extensively studying the Old Testament passages that refer to the Messiah. His book *Yeshua* (Toronto: Frontier Research Publications, 1996, available in Christian bookstores) reveals Jesus' Hebrew name, Yeshua, encoded throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. Among the hundreds of instances

he discovered, this author finds two positively electrifying:

- Isaiah 53:10 describes the suffering of the Messiah for our sake. Beginning with the second letter yod in “he shall prolong,” Rambsel found that every twentieth letter spells out the phrase “Yeshua shmi” - in English, JESUS IS MY NAME!
- Leviticus 21:10-12 describes the qualifications of the high priest. Beginning with the first heh in verse 10 and counting every third letter, the Hebrew spells “hain dam Yeshua” - BEHOLD THE BLOOD OF YESHUA!

If this doesn't persuade you that Jesus is the Son of God and the Bible is His Word, what more would it take?

Some would try to carry this discovery to extremes to predict the future, find secret instructions, and so forth. However, all we can realistically conclude from the underlying patterns is that the Bible is beyond the ability of humans to compose. The letter sequences are not a license to treat the Bible as some book of magic spells.

We will spend a great deal more time looking at other scientifically verified Bible statements later when we focus on the Creation account. Even with the few details we've seen in this chapter, three things are obvious:

- Visual #4-65
1. The Bible we have today is almost identical to the way it was written thousands of years ago. No doctrines have changed.
 2. It is very much different from the “holy books” of all the world's other religions.
 3. It is beyond human capabilities. It is supernatural in origin.

Out of all the “holy books” in the world, the Bible is unique in at least five areas: preservation, consistency of doctrine, accuracy, fulfilled prophecy, and structure. Taken all together, the evidence we've seen strongly supports its claim to be the written Word of God.

CHAPTER 4 REVIEW

A. Internal Evidence.

Though skeptics have tried for thousands of years, they have never been able to prove a single contradiction or internal conflict. The Bible is completely consistent with itself from Genesis to Revelation.

B. External Evidence.

Every Biblical statement ever tested has been found to be compatible with known facts of science, history, and archaeology. We looked at a few examples, but there are thousands. No one has ever proved any inaccuracies in the Bible.

C. Equidistant Letter Sequences.

The hidden patterns in the Hebrew text are far beyond human ability to design. The most obvious explanation is that the Bible has to be supernaturally inspired.

CHAPTER REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. When did God first prohibit brothers and sisters from marrying? In the _____ of _____.
2. Where did Cain get his wife? Either a _____ or _____.
3. Biologically, snake poison begins the process of _____ the snake's food.
4. The Jehovah's Witness doctrine that Jesus is Michael the Archangel is an ancient heresy known as _____.
5. Of the two genealogies shown for Jesus in the Gospels, one is the ancestry of _____ and the other one is for _____.
6. Why isn't the Bible wrong when it says the sun moves across the heavens? Because it is in a lengthy orbit through the _____.
7. The dust of the earth would be good raw material to make a human body because it contains all the needed _____ found on the Periodic Table.
8. Do men have one less rib than women? _____
9. What book of the Bible mentions two animals that may be dinosaurs or similar extinct reptiles? _____
10. If the Flood was only local, Noah and the animals could have _____ away.
11. Those who claim that 2 Chron. 4:2 has the wrong value for the number pi are simply ignoring verse 5, which mentions the _____ of the basin. When this is taken into account, the circumference of the basin is correct to within two one hundredths of a cubit.