

THE BIBLE

ARE THE SCRIPTURES INSPIRED OF GOD?

Immanuel Kant, great German thinker, said:

“The existence of the Bible as a book for the people is the greatest benefit the human race ever experienced. Every attempt to belittle it or to do away with it entirely is a crime against humanity.”

Sir Walter Scott, a brilliant writer said:

“Within this powerful volume lies the mystery of mysteries. Happiest he of human race to whom God has given grace to read, to fear, to hope, to pray, to lift the latch and learn the way. But better had he never been born who reads to doubt or reads to scorn.”

Throughout the centuries men have tried desperately to destroy the Bible through persecution, inquisition, torture, and by burning volumes of the Bible. Yet, the Bible still circles the earth and blesses millions.

The specific question that we ask concerns the reliability of the Bible as a completely trustworthy guide for what we believe and what we practice in religion. Is the Bible Christianity’s “constitution” by which every doctrine or practice must be judged acceptable or unacceptable? **Is the Bible our Supreme Court?** You must decide in one of three ways:

1. You may say that the Bible is full of mistakes, is human in authorship, and consequently is not at all trustworthy in the ultimate sense.
2. You may think, as we do, that it is fully inspired, in part and in whole, and therefore is complete, inerrant, and infallible as our guide. Those of us who hold this view must believe that since God wrote the Bible, there is nothing in it that is untrue or that is unreliable.
3. You may seek some position in between the other two camps, holding that that it contains some truth and some error, that it is partially human and partially divine, and therefore that it is neither completely trustworthy nor completely untrustworthy, that its reliability as a basis for faith must be determined by either theological

scholarship or some intuitive or direct spiritual guidance!

Position number one explains the **skepticism of contemporary theology**, and position number three explains the **hodgepodge of modern denominationalism**.

At one time nearly all professed Christians in America believed in the inspiration of the Scriptures. Hardly any significant denomination would ordain as a minister one who even hesitated to affirm his confidence in the Bible as the inspired word of God.

Actually there have been three major conflicts in our country over the inspiration of the Scriptures. The first was in the 1880's and brought forth such works as B. B. Warfield's classic "*Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*." The second came in the 1930's when J. Gresham Machen was suspended at Princeton and became founder of Westminster Theological Seminary. The third big battle is being fought at the present time.

No religious group can long retain any of its former character once it rejects the inspiration and inerrancy of the Scriptures. Perhaps the most striking example is that of the Unitarians. The group broke away from the Congregational Church in the Northeast because of refusal to believe what the Bible teaches about the deity of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. As a result of rejecting the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible on this one point, the Unitarians abandoned all faith in other basic doctrines such as the virgin birth, the bodily resurrection of Jesus, and the atonement. Some of the signers of the *Humanist Manifesto* were Unitarian clergymen! This departure from the truth is being repeated in nearly all of the major denominations of our country.

In an impressive defense of the inerrancy of the Bible, Harold Lindsell, former editor of *Christianity Today*, wrote:

“It is not unfair to allege that among denominations like Episcopal, United Presbyterian, United Church of Christ, the Lutheran Church in America, and the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. there is not a single theological seminary that takes a stand in favor of biblical infallibility.”

As a consequence of rejecting the inspiration of the Bible, theological schools at Harvard, Yale, Union Seminary, University of Chicago, and Princeton have filled denominational pulpits with preachers who could care less about what the Bible teaches or about the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion. If the preachers of these liberal churches have no respect for the Bible, why should their memberships?

I.

THE BIBLE CLAIMS INSPIRATION

Even the casual reader has been impressed with the frequent use of such expressions as:

“Thus saith the Lord”
“The Lord hath spoken”
“The Lord testified, saying”

It is said that in the prophets alone these expressions occur 1,300 times; and elsewhere in the Old Testament, 2,500 such phrases, attributing the authorship to God, are found. The writers of the Bible claimed to speak as the Holy Spirit moved them along:

2 Pet. 1:20-21

“Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

They spoke of the Bible and its various parts as having been given through the guidance of the Almighty. Notice what Paul said in 2 Tim. 3:16-17:

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

It is crystal clear that Paul did not have in mind any “theory of partial inspiration.” What Paul wrote is quite different from the modernistic statement: “*The Bible contains the word of God.*” According to Paul, **the Bible IS the word of God; it is all given by the inspiration of God.**

When Moses was about to begin his work as the leader of Israel, God said to him:

Exod 4:12

“Now then go, and I, even I, will be with your mouth, and teach you what you are to say.”

At the end of his life, David bore this testimony:

2 Sam 23:2

“The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me; his word was on my tongue.”

And the Lord said to Jeremiah:

Jer 1:9

“Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, “Now, I have put my words in your mouth.”

When one comes to the New Testament, one quickly realizes that Jesus endorsed the Old Testament in its entirety. He said “***all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me***” (Luke 24:44). These three divisions:

**“Law of Moses”
“Prophets”
“Psalms”**

according to the Jewish usage, included all the Old Testament. Further, Jesus specifically endorsed those portions of the Old Testament that have most often been under attack by the enemies of the Bible and thereby put His stamp of approval upon them:

The story of Creation – Matt. 19:8

The account of the flood – Matt. 24:37

The story of Jonah and the great fish – Matt. 12:40

Jesus put Satan to flight during the temptations in the wilderness by using quotations from Deuteronomy, a book that has been often under the fire of modernists. It is not surprising, therefore, that the devil does not think well of Deuteronomy. Jesus also endorsed the New Testament before it was written. He promised the apostles that the Holy Spirit would enable them to know “**how**” and “**what**” to say (Matt. 10:19), and that he would guide them into “**all truth**” (John 16:13). On Pentecost the Spirit came on the apostles and they began to speak as He gave them utterance (Acts 2:4). Paul commended the Thessalonians for having received the word he preached, “**not as the word of men, but, as indeed it is, the word of God**” (I Thess. 2:13). Paul spoke not in “**words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth**” (I Cor. 2:13). And John, speaking of his writings, frequently urged his readers to “**hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches**” (Rev. 2:11). The apostles claimed the very guidance of the Spirit that Jesus promised.

II.

THE NATURE OF INSPIRATION

Our word “**inspiration**” literally means breathing in. It is derived from two Latin words, *in* and *spiro*, which mean to blow or breathe into. Strong says in the original the Greek word “*theopneustos*” is employed. It is composed of two words—*Theos*, God; and *pneustos*, breathed from *pneo*, to blow or breathe. *Pneuma* meaning spirit comes from the verb *pneo*. “*Pneustos*” then, might mean spirited, and then *theopneustos* would mean God-spirited, or God-breathed, or “filled with the breath of God, or the product of the divine breath (or Spirit, or given by God through the Spirit.) The word implies an influence from without, producing effects which are beyond natural powers.” *Inspiration* means that influence which God exercises through the Holy Spirit over the minds of Biblical writers to make them infallible in the receiving and recording of His will.

The *words*, as well as the *thoughts*, of the sacred writers were inspired. Jesus promised this very type of inspiration. He said that the Holy Spirit would teach the apostles “**how**” and “**what**” to speak (Matt. 10:19). The “**what**” means the thought, the “**how**” means the verbiage, the manner of expression. This is **verbal inspiration**. It would be interesting for a modernist to tell us how God could inspire the thoughts without at the same time inspiring the words. How can we carry on a conversation without words? How can we express thoughts without words or their equivalent? Jesus said: “**Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished**” (Matt. 5:18). Therefore, Jesus asserts the verbal inspiration and guarantees the verbal indestructibility of the text. Not even a “**jot**,” small letter, or “**tittle**,” part of the letter, shall pass until the law shall have been fulfilled. Paul said that he spoke “**not in words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but in words “which the Spirit teacheth**” (I Cor. 2:13). This is a positive claim of **verbal inspiration**. Paul also makes an argument based on the **singular** of a noun in Galatians 3:16: “**The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say ‘and to seeds,’ meaning many people, but**

‘and to your seed,’ meaning one person, who is Christ.” (NIV) If the very words in this case are not inspired, Paul’s argument is weak and untenable.

This inspiration was not purely mechanical. If the writers had been mere pens in the hands of God the style and vocabulary of the Bible would be uniform. But such is not the case. While the Holy Spirit moved the penmen of the Bible to write, they were free to speak through their own individual background, personality, vocabulary, and style. Inspiration did not involve the suspension or suppression of the human faculties, so neither did it interfere with the free exercise of the distinctive mental characteristics of the individual. If a Hebrew was inspired, he spoke Hebrew; if a Greek, he spoke Greek; if an educated man, he spoke as a man of culture; if uneducated, he spoke as such a man would speak. If his mind was logical, he reasoned, as Paul did; if emotional and contemplative, he wrote as John wrote.

Inspiration was therefore, both **plenary** and **verbal**. God breathed out all Scripture (plenary) and gave the very words (verbal) He wanted penned. When someone claims that the Bible **only contains the word of God** and that we are free to determine which words are and which words are not from God, we have a serious problem. **Who is going to determine this?** If one person has the right then everyone has the same right. John Montgomery made an astute statement when he said, *“Scripture is a seamless garment, and when one begins to unravel it at one place it is not long until the entire fabric gives way.”* It becomes the responsibility of each reader of the Bible to either accept it totally as the word of God, or reject it totally as the word of God.

III.

THE EVIDENCES OF INSPIRATION

EXTERNAL EVIDENCES

The evidences of the inspiration of the Bible fall into two classes—**external** and **internal**. First, we want to consider **external evidences** in light of **Archeology**. The discoveries of archaeology in recent decades have provided believers with some of their most compelling reasons or “external evidences” for accepting the historical trustworthiness of the Bible. The word “archaeology” means “a study of ancient things.” The aim of archaeology is to reconstruct the past, to provide the data that will enable scholars to write the histories of ancient civilizations. This is why archaeology has become a valuable tool in Biblical studies—because the Bible is a historical book. The Bible tells of events that really happened, it describes real people, real places, real cities, and real events. The Bible is unique in this respect. Other great religious books of mankind, such as the Koran of Islam and the Vedas of Hinduism, are philosophical and ethical; but they are not historical, while the Bible is.

WHY I NEED TO KNOW THIS

The Bible claims to be the word of God. I need to know if it makes sense to believe that it is. Blind faith is **not** a sufficient platform on which to place one’s eternal destiny. If I can reasonably justify accepting the Bible as the word of God, then I have a compass for life, giving me instruction in how to live on earth and assurance of life after death in heaven with God.

There are a number of ways in which archaeological discoveries can be of value in Biblical study:

1. Sometimes the light of archaeology is general and serves simply to illuminate the Biblical world and its various cultures. But the better we can understand the ancient world, its alien cultures and languages and ways of life, the better equipped we are to understand all Biblical events that are set within the framework of that ancient world.
2. Other discoveries of archaeology relate much more specifically to the Bible and give direct evidences for its truthfulness. And it is interesting to note that many of these specific evidences have come at the very points where the Bible was once brushed aside as legendary or mythical.
3. The most important discoveries of all are manuscripts, ancient copies of Biblical books and other manuscripts that relate to the Scriptures.

THE NUZI TABLETS

The Nuzi tablets are a good example of an archaeological discovery that gives us valuable insights into the culture of the patriarchal age, and at the same time, shows the accuracy of the book of Genesis in describing that culture. Nuzi is located southeast of Nineveh, and in excavations at this site beginning in 1925 thousands of clay tablets from the fifteenth century B.C. were discovered. The people of Nuzi are the same as the Horites in the Bible (Gen. 14:6; Gen. 36:21; 29). The laws that are revealed in the Nuzi tablets were widely accepted in the world of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and these laws show that many customs described in Genesis accurately reflect the culture of the period. For example, if a Nuzi couple was childless, it was customary for them to adopt a slave as their legal heir. He provided for them during their lifetime and inherited their estate at their death. However, if the couple later had a son, the adopted slave forfeited his place as the heir. This helps to explain the relationship between Abraham and Eliezer and the expectation before the birth of Isaac that Eliezer would become the possessor of Abraham's house (Gen. 15:2).

Many ancient cultures regarded childless marriages as tragic, and marriage contracts at Nuzi sometimes stipulated that if the wife failed to bear her husband an heir, she must supply her husband with a handmaid who would bear him children. This provision helps us to understand Sarah's giving Hagar (Gen. 16:3) to Abraham and Rachel's giving Bilhah (Gen. 30:3) to Jacob. These barren women were simply following the customary law of their age. The Nuzi tablets also provided that if a young man had no dowry to exchange for his bride, he could work for a number of years for his prospective father-in-law. Thus, Jacob worked seven years to provide a dowry for Rachel, awakened to find himself tricked into marriage with the wrong girl, and worked another seven years for Rachel (Gen. 29:18).

There is another Genesis story that seemed very obscure before the Nuzi tablets were discovered—Laban's concern for the loss of his teraphim (Gen. 31:30). When Jacob finally left Haran after twenty years with Laban, he took his wives and sons, a substantial part of Laban's flocks as well as the family gods which Rachel had stolen from her father. When Laban overtook Jacob, he seemed far more incensed at the loss of his teraphim than anything else and asked Jacob, "Why have you stolen my gods?" Why should Laban have been so concerned about the loss of his teraphim? According to the Nuzi tablets, whenever there was a dispute

about family property, the one who possessed the family gods was entitled to the family estate. Thus, it seemed to Laban that Jacob had done more than trick him out of his cattle, he had stolen the title of the family estate.

How do these Nuzi discoveries relate to trustworthiness of the Bible? During the latter part of the nineteenth century a rather extreme liberalism dominated Biblical and theological studies. When this liberalism had finished its reconstruction of the Old Testament, the great German scholar Julius Wellhausen and his disciples argued that there was very little reliable historical material in the Pentateuch. The patriarchal stories were considered legendary, and there was real doubt about whether Abraham had ever lived. Wellhausen called Abraham “a free creation of unconscious art.” Wellhausen wrote of the Genesis narratives, “From the patriarchal narratives it is impossible to obtain any historical information with regard to the patriarchs; we can only learn something about the time in which the stories about them were first told by the Israelite people.”

But today, as a result of the discoveries of Nuzi, we know that the patriarchal stories in Genesis reflect the culture of that age in a very accurate way and that the skepticism of the Wellhausen school was unwarranted. As a result of many discoveries, Nelson Glueck, the late archaeologist who was president of Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, has written of “the Bible’s almost incredibly accurate historical memory”—a statement of confidence in striking contrast with the skepticism of Wellhausen and the old liberals.

THE HITTITE CITY OF HATTUSAS

The discovery of the long-lost Hittite city of Hattusas in Turkey is especially interesting to students of the Bible, because the rediscovery of the Hittites provided specific confirmation of the Bible at a point where its accuracy had been questioned.

According to the Old Testament the Hittites were a prominent people and are mentioned forty times in passages from Genesis to Nehemiah. When the Lord promised Abraham that his seed would inherit Canaan, he listed the Hittites among the nationalities in the land (Gen. 15:20). When Sarah died and Abraham sought a burial place for her, he bargained with Ephron the Hittite for the Cave of Machpelah (Gen. 23:1-16). And centuries later, David fell into sin with Bathsheba who is identified as “the wife of Uriah the Hittite” (2 Sam. 11:3). Despite these numerous Old Testament references, there were some nineteenth century scholars who were skeptical of the Bible’s accuracy. There was no reference to the Hittites in non-Biblical sources. The Greek and Roman historians did not even mention them. It was easy for popular critics of the Bible like Robert Ingersoll to ridicule the Bible and brush aside the Hittites as “just another legend.”

Late in the nineteenth century a British scholar, A. H. Sayce, published *The Hittites: The Story of a Forgotten Empire* (1892). Sayce had found references in Egyptian hieroglyphic inscriptions to a people called the “Hatti,” and he theorized that these “Hatti” were the same as the Biblical Hittites. Sayce’s theory proved to be correct when in 1906 Hugo Winckler, a German archaeologist, discovered Hattusas, the capital of the Hittite empire, in central Turkey. Later excavations unearthed a vast library of clay tablets some going back to around 1700 B.C.

Sections of the city walls and gates of Hattusas have been unearthed. The gates were constructed with large stones tilted toward the top to form a vault. The gates were decorated with sculptures, which included Hittite warriors.

Since the discoveries at Hattusas, articles relating to the Hittites have been found in other lands. Egyptian sculpture has been found that pictures Hittite soldiers who were taken prisoners in a great battle between the Egyptians and Hittites at Kadesh on the Orontes River in 1286 B.C. The Hattusas library included a treaty of peace, negotiated about 1270 B.C. between Pharaoh Rameses II and the Hittite king Hattusil. This is the oldest peace treaty between nations ever discovered. And an interesting piece of Hittite sculpture, picturing a dog attacking a lion is now on display in the Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem. What makes this piece of art of special interest is where it was found—at Bethshan in Palestine. This discovery proves that the Hittites were in Palestine in the days of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, just as the Bible says.

BELSHAZZAR

Belshazzar, named in the book of Daniel as the last king of Babylon, was nowhere to be found in Babylonian records: all known Babylonian records listed Nabonidus as the last king. Then, archaeological records revealed the Nabonidus left Babylon for ten years and went to Arabia. In his absence, his son Belshazzar ruled as king during the time of Daniel. In this way, archaeology explained the apparent discrepancy between the biblical record and the previous Babylonian record (Paul Little, *Know Why You Believe*, p. 95).

SANBALLAT

Clifford Wilson, a retired archaeologist at the University of Sydney in Australia, tells of evidence of a man named Sanballat, found during the time of Alexander the Great. A man named Sanballat is also found in the book of Nehemiah, before Alexander the Great's time. Critics often cited this as proof of historical error in the Bible. But then it was discovered that there were three Sanballats, and that one of them lived during the time of Nehemiah. The Bible was right after all (*The Bible: Fable, Fraud or Fact*," Coral Ridge Video Ministry, Jan. 4, 1994).

BIBLICAL MANUSCRIPTS

It may be that the one area where archaeology has made its greatest contribution to Biblical studies is in the recovery of Biblical manuscripts. In the early part of 1947 an Arab was tending his goats in an area about fifteen miles south of Jericho and to the northwest of the Dead Sea when he came, by chance, upon a cave in a ravine known as *Qumram*, which proved to contain a veritable library of ancient Hebrew and Aramaic writings of the most significant nature. These remarkable manuscripts were leather rolls enclosed in cloth wrappings and stored in earthen jars. In rapid order, after this unique find became known to the world, other discoveries were made and the Qumran caves have yielded hundreds of documents which have excited Biblical scholars throughout the world, and which have been subjected to the most minute scrutiny.

The library evidently belonged to a Jewish sect, which occupied the region near the Dead Sea where the documents were found from slightly before 100 B.C. until about the fall of Jerusalem,

A.D. 70. It is conjectured that the members of the “Qumran community” were a strict, ascetic sect known as *Essenes*. Much of the literature dealt with the sect itself—its worship, its customs, and its teaching. But, there are other documents, or portions thereof, which are of tremendous value and interest to us today. Among these are brief quotations from various Old Testament books, portions of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy and Judges are quoted and three are fragments of commentaries on Micah, Nahum and Zephaniah.

Perhaps the most important find in this area, however, was the discovery of a scroll containing the text of Isaiah in Hebrew, and the first two chapters of the book of Habakkuk with a commentary thereon. The significance of this discovery to Christians will be at once apparent, when it is recalled that until this find, the oldest Old Testament manuscripts dated no further back than about the year 1,000 A.D. These scrolls enable us to know what the text was which our Lord and the apostles used! These texts are identical, in all important respects, to our Old Testament text today, thus establishing once more the fact that God preserves His word for all subsequent generations. Is it not reasonable to conclude that if God thus guaranteed the preservation of the text of the Old Testament, much of which was designed to bring the Jews to Christ (Gal. 3:23-29), He has surely done so with that precious portion of His word—the New Testament—which alone contains the way of life and salvation? If, as we are told, His word “is settled in heaven” *forever*, may we not believe that it is equally permanent in character and structure here on earth? (Psa. 119:89.) We may indeed rejoice with Peter when he said, **“all flesh is as grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of the grass, the grass withereth and the flower falleth: but the word of the Lord endureth forever”** (I Pet. 1:24-25).

These are only a few examples of the literally hundreds of examples from archaeology that show the historical accuracy of the Bible. The late William F. Albright said, in 1968, that the **“result of archaeology is favorable to the biblical record”** (*Archaeological Discovery and the Scriptures*,” Christianity Today, June 21, 1968, p. 3).

After many years of involvement in archaeological work, the Jewish archaeologist Nelson Glueck stated that he has “spent many years in biblical archaeology, and, in company with his colleagues has made discoveries confirming in outline or in detail historical statements in Scripture” (Quoted in *Revelation and the Bible*, p. 397). Nelson Glueck also said, “It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted (contradicted) a biblical reference” (quoted in Josh McDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict* 11:65)

Albright and Glueck, outstanding names in archaeology, could hardly be classified as conservative or fundamental, and this makes their testimony even weightier.

WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN?

To be completely candid, we must assess what all this means. By itself, this does not mean that the Bible is the word of God. It does mean that the Bible has never been proven wrong on any point of history or geography. However, the historical-geographical test must be passed if we are to conclude that the Bible is the word of God. Mistakes in the record would cause us to doubt the Bible as the word of God. Since there are no mistakes in it, it passes the historical-geographical test and allows us, on that ground, to conclude that it could be the word of God. Whether or not we decide it is the word of God is ultimately a matter of faith, but we would not be able to come to that conclusion if we found the Bible riddled with error.

INTERNAL EVIDENCES

Space does not permit us to discuss in detail all internal evidences for the inspiration of the Bible. Internal proofs of the divine inspiration of the Bible include the following:

1. The Bible's profound and rational Doctrines:

- a) The Doctrine of God
- b) The Doctrine of Man
- c) The Doctrine of Salvation
- d) The Doctrine of Immortality

2. The Purity of its Ethics

In the Bible, righteousness is everywhere commanded and commended; sin is always condemned. Inner purity, not merely outward, ceremonial and conventional morality, is always inculcated (Psa. 1:6; Psa. 51:10; Matt. 5:8).

3. The Unity and Consistency of its Teaching

Written by about forty different authors, in different countries, separated by about 1,500 years, yet the Bible throughout teaches the same great doctrines regarding God, man, morality, salvation and immortality. The Old and New Testament are organically connected, the former leading up historically and logically to the latter. While there is, as there should be, progress in teaching and revelation, there is vital agreement. "The Old Testament is patent in the New, and New is latent in the Old," as one writer put it. Another says: "While there is no collision among the writers, neither is there any evidence of collusion."

4. Its Historical Character

The Bible professes to recite history from the narrative of Genesis 1, to the last chapter of the Acts and even throughout the New Testament. Never is its religious teaching wrested from the stream of human history. Christianity is a historical religion. It is not a flight of the imagination, nor a mosaic of myths, legends, folk-lore and human tradition.

5. The Soberness of its Teaching

In the Bible even the most momentous events are narrated in a calm, simple, dignified way that is inimitable and bears the marks of its own credibility. Note the narratives of the creation, the flood, the crucifixion, the resurrection and ascension of Christ. Observe the absence of fanaticism or of utopian and visionary theories and guesses.

6. Its relevancy to Human Needs.

- a) It satisfies man's longing for God
- b) It complements man's conscious weakness
- c) It gives positive assurance of truth
- d) It affords comfort in trial

- e) It promises the solution of all problems
- f) It meets the desire to be right with God
- g) It meets the desire for inner purity
- h) It cancels the fear of death
- i) It fits into man's complex psychology

(Taken from, *A System of Christian Evidences*, p 77-95)

FULFILLED PROPHECY TESTIFIES TO THE IDENTITY OF THE BIBLE AS THE WORD OF GOD

The Bible is the only book in the world that has specific prophecies clearly fulfilled hundreds of years after they were given. Fulfilled prophecy is one of the strongest evidences that the Bible is the divinely inspired word of God. Homer Hailey stated our proposition in the form of a syllogism:

1. Man cannot know the future; only God can foretell history or events.
2. The Bible foretold the destiny of nations and the coming of Christ.
3. Therefore the Bible is the word of God, not of man.

(Note: Only the second, or minor premise must be proved. The first is accepted.

Internal Evidences of Christianity, p. 26)

Prophecy is not a guess, a forecast, a calculation, a mere conjecture, a vague generalization, or an educated analysis of a forthcoming situation. With all of their scientific training the weathermen still frequently fail to give the weather correctly. The National Weather Service admits that about 60% accuracy is the best they can do.

Henry M. Morris examined 72 "prophecies" uttered by 10 prominent psychics in *The National Enquirer* (Jan. 3) for 1978. Some were obscure, but most were quite explicit "and dealt with people and events which would assure headline coverage if they eventually came to pass. Of these, it is remarkable that not one was fulfilled in 1978 as predicted!" (*Christian Heritage Courier*, Feb. 1979 as quoted in *Introduction to Christian Evidences* by Ferrell Jenkins p. 87.)

Biblical prophecy is not making a lot of predictions about the future and then having a few, or even most, of them come to pass. In Biblical prophecy everything that was predicted has come to pass. The criteria of **true prophecy** was set forth by H. W. Everest in his book *The Divine Demonstration* p. 260 as follows:

1. The event must be beyond the power of man to foresee. It is not a vision of hope or fear, nor the result of a mathematical calculation, nor the forecast of political or scientific sagacity, and not a fortunate conjecture.
2. It must be demonstrated that the prediction was written before the event.
3. The prediction must be applicable to the event.
4. The language of the prediction must be unambiguous and unmistakable.
5. The prediction must have a clear and demonstrable fulfillment.

Bernard Ramm says: "One real case of fulfilled prophecy would establish a supernatural act. But if our interpretations of the prophetic passages are correct, there are great numbers of them. One **unequivocal miracle**, one **indubitable fulfilled prophecy** would show the fallacy of

naturalism, for the causal web of the universe would be ruptured at that point through which the supernatural is intruded. Therefore, radical doubt must be certain it has silenced the testimony of all prophecies, whereas the Christian asserts that rather than resting the case of one prophecy, we have dozens at our beck and call” (*Protestant Christian Evidences*, p. 86 and quoted in Ferrell Jenkins, *Introduction to Christian Evidences*).

While there are examples of fulfilled prophecies regarding the nation of Israel and the nations around Israel, we will only consider a few of the fulfilled prophecies of the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Jesus fulfilled many Old Testament prophecies, some of them more obvious than others. For our purposes, we will focus on some of the more obvious ones. So that you can see them most clearly, I state the Old Testament prophecy briefly, and then its fulfillment in the New Testament. Please let the record speak for itself:

1. **Prophecy:** The Messiah would be born of a virgin. Isaiah 7:14 *“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.”* (NAS)
Fulfillment: Jesus was born of the virgin Mary. *“She was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. And Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took {her} as his wife, and kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.”* (NAS) Matt. 1:18-25
2. **Prophecy:** The Messiah would be born into the family of King David. Jer 23:5 *“Behold, {the} days are coming,” declares the LORD, “When I shall raise up for David a righteous Branch; and He will reign as king and act wisely and do justice and righteousness in the land.”* (NAS)
Fulfillment: In the genealogy in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus is listed as being in the lineage of David. *“Jesus.....the son of David.”* Luke 3:23-31
3. **Prophecy:** The Messiah would be born in the city of Bethlehem. Micah 5:2 *“But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, {too} little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity.”* (NAS)
Fulfillment: Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Luke 2:11 *“For today in the city of David (Bethlehem) there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”* (NAS)
4. **Prophecy:** A friend would betray the Messiah. Ps 41:9 *“Even my close friend, in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.”* (NAS)
Fulfillment: Judas Iscariot, one of His twelve disciples, betrayed Jesus. Matt 10:4 *“Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Him.”* (NAS)
5. **Prophecy:** The Messiah would be tortured and crucified. Isa 53:5 *“But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being {fell} upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed.”* (NAS)
Fulfillment: Jesus was beaten and then crucified. Matt 27:26 *“Then he released Barabbas for them; but after having Jesus scourged, he delivered Him to be crucified.”* (NAS)

6. **Prophecy:** Jesus would rise from the dead. Ps 16:10 *“For Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol; neither wilt Thou allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay.”* (NAS)
Fulfillment: Jesus rose from the dead. Matt 28:5-6 *“And the angel answered and said to the women, “Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying.”* (NAS)

We could continue with many more prophecies and fulfillments. I have selected only a few of the major ones to give an idea of Jesus’ remarkable life as it fulfilled one after another of the prophecies that told of the Messiah, in some cases, thousands of years before He was born. Again, in *Evidence that Demands a Verdict* (p. 167), we see that the chance that any man might have lived down to the present time and fulfilled just eight of the major prophecies that Jesus fulfilled are 1 in 10 to the 17th power. That is, one in 100,000,000,000,000,000.

The above prophecies deal only with Jesus Christ. But, many more prophecies in the Bible were fulfilled. These are not fortune-cookie prophecies like, “an attractive person will soon come into your life,” or “things will soon begin looking up for you.” No, these are specific and verifiable. The Bible makes it clear that fulfilled prophecy attests to the supernatural origin of the word of its prophets in Jer. 28:9: *“The prophet who prophesies of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then that prophet will be known as one whom the Lord has truly sent.”* If a prophet ever spoke anything that did not come true, he was not a true prophet (Deut. 18:20-22). *“But the prophet who shall speak a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he shall speak in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.’ 21 “And you may say in your heart, ‘How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?’ 22 “When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.”* NAS

TO SUM IT UP

A relentless warfare has for centuries been waged against the Bible. After all the storms of persecution that have been and are hurled against it by atheists, infidels, and higher critics, it lives. All the power that could be brought to bear to blot it from the earth has been tried, and yet it survives. It has stood the acid test of practical experience. It has never failed when fairly tried. We have seen it in the forum of public discussion, we have seen it at the bedside of the dying, we have seen it at the graves of the dead; yet we have never seen it weighed and found wanting.

“Yes, I’ll to my bosom press thee,
Precious Word, I’ll hide thee here,
Sure my heart will ever bless thee,
For thou sayest ‘Good cheer’.

Speak my heart and tell thy ponderings,
Tell how far thy roving led,
When this Book brought back thy wonderings,
Speaking life as from the dead.

Yes, sweet Bible, I will hide thee,
Hide thee richly in this heart;

Thou through all my life will guide me,
And in death we will not part!

Part in death! No, never, never!
Through death's vale I'll lean on thee;
Then in worlds above forever
Sweeter still thy truths shall be."

--Anonymous

Questions

1. How may we decide if the Bible is our Supreme Court?

2. What are the three major conflicts over the inspiration of the Scriptures?

3. What is a frequent expression used in the Scriptures to help us understand that the Bible is inspired?

4. List two New Testament passages that help us to understand the Bible is inspired.

5. What is a modernistic way of explaining the inspiration of the Bible?

6. How did Jesus endorse the Old Testament in its entirety?

7. What are some of the stories of the Old Testament Jesus endorsed and thereby teaches that they are not myths?

8. What does the word “inspiration” literally mean?

9. Explain how the Bible is inspired in thoughts as well as words.

10. Explain plenary and verbal inspiration.

11. What do we mean when we speak of external and internal inspiration?

12. Why is the Christian faith not blind faith?

13. Discuss the Nuzi Tablets.

14. Discuss the Hittite City of Hattusas.

15. How did archaeological records help support the Bible regarding a king of Babylon?

14. What was the name of the man who explained the matter of a man named Sanballat?

15. What is the one area where archaeology has made its greatest contribution to Biblical studies?

16. Discuss the Dead Sea Scrolls.

17. What does all this mean?

18. What do we mean when we speak of the Bible's rational and profound doctrines?

19. Give some of the internal evidence of the Bible's inspiration.

20. Discuss fulfilled prophecy.

21. Give some examples of fulfilled prophecy regarding Jesus.
