

Conclusive Proof that

EVERY TEACHING,
EVERY COMMAND,
EVERY PROMISE

in the Bible Is True



The SIGNATURE
of GOD



GRANT R. JEFFREY

BEST-SELLING AUTHOR OF *Shadow Government*

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The Bible is the greatest of all the books ever penned by men; to study it diligently is the most worthy of all possible pursuits; to clearly understand what the Lord is saying to us through its pages is truly the most noble and the highest of my goals. The application to my heart, mind, and spirit of the truths of the Word of God through the Holy Spirit's gift of understanding and my subsequent obedience to that revelation is my supreme purpose and duty.

—Author unknown. These words were found in an inscription in an old Bible in England.

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Introduction

The Battle for the Bible

The world has departed from the religious faith that governed the founding fathers of both the United States and Canada. Today it is almost impossible for the average citizen to recognize the gulf that exists between the beliefs of our current society and the beliefs of those who founded our nations. The colonists who came to North America were determined to escape religious oppression. They wanted to create a nation on this continent where men and women could worship God freely and without restriction. The founders of the United States determined to create an educational system based on Christianity and the Word of God. A close examination of the lives and the writings of the framers of the U.S. Constitution reveals that their intent was to create freedom for religious expression, not a freedom *from* religious expression.

Frederick Rudolph wrote in his book *The American College and University* that within a generation of their landing at Plymouth, the Puritan settlers laid the foundation of an educational system dedicated to training “a learned clergy and a lettered people.” These Christians created Harvard College in 1636 as an institution dedicated to upholding the truths of the Bible. In fact, during

the first century of Harvard University's existence, every one of its professors was a minister of the gospel.

The initial 1636 charter of Harvard College proclaimed the following essentials:

Every one shall consider the main end of his life and studies to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life. Seeing the Lord giveth wisdom, every one shall seriously by prayer in secret seek wisdom of Him. Every one shall so exercise himself in reading the Scriptures twice a day that they be ready to give an account of their proficiency therein, both in theoretical observations of languages and logic, and in practical and spiritual truths.... Every one shall consider the main end of his life and studies to know Jesus Christ which is eternal life.¹

It has been calculated that 87 percent of the first 119 colleges built in the United States were established by Christians to educate young people in their faith. This includes Harvard, Princeton, Yale, and Columbia. More than 25 percent of the 1855 graduating class of these universities became ministers. And although our society is increasingly agnostic, millions of people still seek the truth by studying God's Word. A Gallup survey reported that 14 percent of Americans belong to a Bible study group.²

The Attempt to Destroy the Bible

Throughout history there has been a relentless conflict between acceptance of God and an open rebellion against His authority and His rule of the affairs of humanity. This struggle can be correctly described as the ongoing war between the City of God and the City of Man. For two thousand years the battleground has revolved around the Bible. Satan hates the Word of God because it reveals the truth about Jesus Christ, our only hope of salvation, and the eternal destiny facing each one of us—either heaven or hell.

A close examination of the history of Christianity reveals that the greatest attacks that occurred during the first centuries following Christ came from pagans. However, during the last 150 years, the most effective enemies of the Cross arose from

within the Church—false Christians who profess to follow Christ but deny the authority of the Bible and Jesus' identity as the Son of God. It is easy to spot pagans who actively oppose God and the truth of the gospel. But it is more difficult to identify false Christians.

The Roman emperors attempted to destroy the new faith of Christianity. As an example, in AD 303, Emperor Diocletian issued a command to kill Christians and burn their sacred books. Stanley L. Greenslade, one of the editors of *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, recorded the history of this persecution:

An imperial letter was everywhere promulgated, ordering the razing of the churches to the ground and the destruction by fire of the Scriptures, and proclaiming that those who held high positions would lose all civil rights, while those in households, if they persisted in their profession of Christianity, would be deprived of their liberty.³

However, the dedication of Christians to the Scriptures in the first centuries following Christ motivated them to produce numerous manuscripts that were widely copied, distributed, and translated throughout the Roman Empire. Ignatius, the bishop of Antioch in AD 70, was responsible for several churches in Syria. In his writings he quoted extensively from the books that would become the New Testament. Clement, the bishop of Rome in AD 70 (mentioned by Paul in Philippians 4:3), also quoted extensively from these books only forty years after Christ's resurrection. The personal writings of early Church leaders helped spread the written Word of God.

According to Professor J. Harold Greenlee, the quotations from what would become the New Testament "are so extensive that the N. T. could virtually be reconstructed from them without the use of New Testament manuscripts."⁴ Historians have recovered nearly one hundred thousand manuscripts and letters that were composed by Christian writers in the first few centuries of this era. Their love and devotion to the Scriptures was so overwhelming that these letters contain an enormous number of direct quotations from the New Testament books. This was

the primary way that the truths of Scripture were transmitted throughout the Roman Empire, despite rampant persecution and the burning of the Scriptures by Roman authorities.

Even if the Roman government had succeeded in destroying every copy of the Scriptures throughout the vast empire, the written Word of God would still have been available in the many copies made by early Christians, including the one hundred thousand letters that have been recovered, containing an astonishing 98 percent of the New Testament text. The copies made by early Christians verify the integrity of the New Testament text as it exists today.

Despite the efforts of pagan emperors to burn every copy of the Scriptures during the first three centuries after Christ, Christianity became the official state religion of the Roman Empire following the conversion of Emperor Constantine in AD 325. Centuries later, however, the medieval Church fell into apostasy and compromised with the kings and aristocracy of Europe. After many centuries, laws were issued that made possession of the Bible illegal for all but the clergy. After 1199, during the centuries of the Inquisition in Europe, appalling punishments were carried out, including burning at the stake, against anyone found to possess a copy of the Scriptures. During the Dark Ages, even priests were usually unable to read the Latin manuscripts of the Bible for themselves. As a result of their ignorance of the Bible, both priests and laypeople were unable to compare the false doctrines of the medieval Church with the doctrines of the Word of God. Few Christians today realize that in Italy it was illegal to possess a Bible until 1870, due to the hatred of apostate church officials for the truth of the Scriptures.

John Lea reported in his book *The Greatest Book in the World* that a French king once proposed to his court that they should launch a new wave of persecution against the Christians within his realm. However, a wise counselor and general replied to the king's proposal with these words: "Sire, the Church of God is an anvil that has worn out many hammers."⁵

Enemies of the Bible have attacked the Scriptures without respite for almost two thousand years. However, the Bible still

stands unshaken as the most widely read and published book in history, while the philosophies of the enemies of Scripture are buried with their spokesmen. The survival of the Scriptures against the attacks of Satan provides irrefutable evidence that the Bible is inspired by God.

The Truth of Scripture Leads to the Reformation

Finally, after almost one thousand years of virtual spiritual darkness, in 1520 the Protestant Reformation instigated by Martin Luther opened the floodgates of biblical truth to the European population. The Bible was translated and printed in contemporary languages such as German, French, and English. The new spiritual freedom surpassed anything ever seen in history.

One spiritual rallying cry of the Protestant Reformation was *sola scriptura*, meaning “solely Scripture.” In opposition to the medieval Roman Church’s position that church councils, traditions, and papal decrees could supersede the teaching of Scripture, the Reformers insisted that every doctrine must be drawn from the clear teaching of the Bible. This reliance on the actual words of the Word of God placed the Reformation on the strongest possible spiritual foundation. The stronghold of Scripture motivated the Reformers to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ everywhere, leading to the greatest influx of souls into the Kingdom of God in the history of the Church.

In past centuries, most people in the West accepted the truth of God’s existence and His creation of the universe, but a growing number in the modern world deny the existence of God. Those who accept evolution as the authoritative explanation for how human life was formed have rejected the concept of a divine Creator. In addition, large numbers of people reject the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures in the false belief that the Bible has been proven to be full of errors and contradictions. The unrelenting attacks by agnostic scholars and the news media against the authority of the Bible is unprecedented in Western history.

Attacks on the accuracy and reliability of Scripture and the resurrection of Jesus Christ have come not only from academics outside the Church but also from pastors and theologians who

have lost their faith in the authority of God's Word. Professor E. B. Pusey, in his brilliant defense of the authenticity of the book of Daniel, wrote about the continual attacks on the inspiration of Scripture:

The faith can receive no real injury except from its defenders. Against its assailants, those who wish to be safe, God protects. If the faith shall be (God forbid!) destroyed in England, it will not be by open assailants, but by those who think that they defend it, while they have themselves lost it. So it was in Germany. Rationalism was the product, not of the attacks on the Gospel but of its weak defenders. Each generation, in its controversies with unbelief, conceded more of the faith, until at last it was difficult to see what difference there was between assailants and defenders. Theology was one great graveyard; and men were disputing over a corpse, as if it had life. The salt had "lost its savour." The life was fled.⁶

The Loss of Faith by Mainline Protestant Leaders

Few things are as pathetic and spiritually ineffective as a preacher or seminary professor who has lost faith in the authority and inspiration of Scripture yet continues to teach about the Bible. Sociologist Jeffrey Hadden completed a survey of the beliefs of ten thousand Protestant ministers and found that an alarming percentage lacked faith in the inspiration of the Bible.

Here are the answers to a few of the survey questions:

1. *Was Jesus born of a virgin?*

More than 50 percent of the ministers failed to reply "totally agree."

2. *Was Jesus the Son of God?*

More than 80 percent did not "totally agree" with this assertion.

3. *Is the Bible the inspired Word of God?*

Again, more than 80 percent did not "totally agree" to the inspiration of Scripture.

A majority of the pastors surveyed qualified their answers, ranging from partial agreement to complete disagreement. However, just one hundred years ago, the vast majority of clergy would have answered "totally agree" to all the questions.⁷ When

pastors and teachers lose their faith in the Word of God, they would be more honest if they left the Christian ministry rather than lead a generation of churchgoers to an eternity without Christ. It is difficult for many believers to discern between true Christians and false Christians. That is why these false teachers are so dangerous.

The widespread agnosticism and atheism in government, mass media, universities, and even theological schools has resulted in the moral collapse of our society. Philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) described the inevitable effects of the growing agnosticism and the gradual abandonment of the authority of Scripture. Hobbes predicted the terrible results that would follow the widespread loss of faith in Christ in the United States: “No arts, no letters, no society, and which is worst of all, continual fear and danger of violent death, and the life of man solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short.”⁸ Tragically, his prediction was accurate.

Within 325 years, America had abandoned the Bible as the moral anchor of society and education. It should surprise no one that, after decades of teaching children that there is no absolute right and wrong, we face an appalling breakdown in public morality and widespread corporate and government corruption, as well as growing fear of violent crime. President Andrew Jackson strongly believed in the central position of Scripture to the life of this nation. As he lay on his deathbed, he pointed to a Bible and said to his companion, “That Book, Sir, is the rock on which our Republic rests.”⁹

The Authenticity of the Old Testament

Dr. Robert Dick Wilson was professor of Semitic philology at Princeton Seminary for many decades. He was an expert in forty-five languages and dialects, and he was considered the greatest expert on the Hebrew Old Testament. Wilson contributed numerous scholarly works confirming the accuracy of the Old Testament. His brilliant criticism of errors and weaknesses in the positions of the higher critical school were so powerful they were never answered. Liberal critics simply ignored his devastating arguments against their dismissal of the Bible’s accuracy, rather than attempt to mount a credible rebuttal.

Wilson summarizes the situation as follows:

We claim that the assaults upon the integrity and trustworthiness of the Old Testament along the line of language have utterly failed. The critics have not succeeded in a single line of attack in showing that the diction and style of any part of the Old Testament are not in harmony with the ideas and aims of writers who lived at, or near, the time when the events occurred that are recorded in the various documents.... We boldly challenge these Goliaths of ex-cathedra theories to come down into the field of ordinary concordances, dictionaries, and literature, and fight a fight to the finish on the level ground of the facts and the evidence.¹⁰

Over the years a series of authorities, including Robert Dick Wilson, James Orr, Oswald Allis, and Edward J. Young, refuted the anti-Bible claims of the higher critics.

Old Testament Statements Regarding Its Divine Inspiration

The Scriptures themselves repeatedly declare that the Bible is inspired by God. Moses closed his ministry with this command to the children of Israel, affirming the Scripture's divine inspiration: "Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law" (Deuteronomy 32:46). The book of Proverbs also states, "Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar" (30:5-6).

Jesus Confirmed the Authority of the Old Testament

One of the most important evidences that establishes the accuracy and divine inspiration of the Old Testament Scriptures is that both Jesus Christ and the apostles confirmed the authority and inspiration of these writings. Jesus declared that "the scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). In another passage He stated, "And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail" (Luke 16:17). In addition, the Lord confirmed that Moses was the writer of the first five books of the Law (see Luke 24:27; John 5:46-47). Christ also stated that Isa-

iah was the author of the book of Isaiah (see Matthew 13:14–15, citing Isaiah 6:9–10).

One of Jesus' most significant statements was His declaration that Daniel wrote the book of Daniel (see Matthew 24:15), contradicting critics who claim that the book of Daniel was written by someone pretending to prophesy in 165 BC. Jesus also spoke of Adam, Eve, and their son Abel as real personalities (see Matthew 19:4–5; 23:35). In Luke 17:26–28, Jesus referred to both Noah and Lot. According to John 8:56–58, the Lord confirmed the Bible's narrative about Abraham. Perhaps most important, Jesus confirmed the accuracy of the Genesis account about the creation of the world (see Mark 10:6–9) and the worldwide flood (see Matthew 24:37–39).

Christ affirmed His belief in the Old Testament miracles when He talked about God's supernatural judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah (see Luke 17:29), including the death of Lot's wife (see Luke 17:32). In other passages Jesus described the feeding of manna to the Israelites during the Exodus (see John 6:32) and the miraculous healing after the serpents' bites (see John 3:14).

The Gospels record Christ's confirmation of the miraculous events in the life of Elijah and Elisha (see Luke 4:25–27) and the miraculous swallowing of Jonah by a great fish (see Matthew 12:39–40). Jesus settled all doubts in His declaration: "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matthew 5:18).

Jesus Christ demonstrated and affirmed the power of Scripture when He rebuked Satan by quoting Deuteronomy 8:3: "Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live" (quoted in Matthew 4:4; see also Luke 4:4). In His discussion with the Pharisees, Jesus won His argument based on the presence of a single word in the Scriptures. The Lord asked the Jewish scholars, "If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" (Matthew 22:45).

In light of these confirmations by Jesus the Messiah of historical events and miraculous occurrences in the Old Testament, it is astonishing that some Christians would dare deny the truthfulness of these biblical events. Those who accept Jesus Christ as God should find it quite easy to accept His divine verdict that

the Old Testament is absolutely truthful and inspired directly by God. If I accept Jesus as my God and Savior, then I will accept His confirmation that I can trust in the authority of the Old Testament. For Christians, this should stand as the highest and most trustworthy evidence of the Bible's accuracy, authority, and divine inspiration.

Statements from the Apostles

The apostles affirmed the verbal inspiration of the Bible. Paul described the Scriptures as the "oracles of God" (see Romans 3:2; also note Hebrews 5:12). Also, in Galatians 3:16, Paul said, "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." Notice that Paul based his argument on the presence of a *single word* in Scripture and noted the fact that the word was the singular *seed* and not the plural *seeds*. Paul's doctrine regarding the divine inspiration of Scripture is absolutely clear: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

The Early Date of the Writing of the New Testament

It is now acknowledged, even by many liberal scholars, that the New Testament Gospels and Epistles were written and widely circulated at a very early date—within fifty years of the events they describe. This fact is of overwhelming importance in verifying the historical accuracy of these sacred documents. Thousands of people who personally witnessed the events of Jesus Christ's life, teaching, death, and resurrection were still alive when the disciples composed and distributed the documents that became the books of the New Testament. These carefully copied manuscripts were read in hundreds of Christian assemblies by millions of Gentile and Jewish believers, from the northern shores of Britain to the deserts of Syria and North Africa.

In addition to Christian testimony about the enormous number of new believers, even the enemies of Christ, such as the Roman historians Tacitus and Pliny, acknowledged that there were

vast multitudes of Christians throughout the Roman Empire.¹¹ If the New Testament documents had contained factual errors regarding the events of Christ's life, His teaching, or the miracles He performed, there would have been an enormous split within the early Church. Those who witnessed the actual historical events described in the Scriptures would have contested any inaccurate records if they had existed.

A Greek Manuscript of the New Testament

Although Christians were subjected to the most brutal and terrifying forms of torture and martyrdom, there is no record that any Christian ever declared that the gospel accounts of Jesus Christ were in error. If they had denied the reality of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, Roman judges would have set them free. Obviously, if any believer had known that the biblical documents were false or in error, he or she would have made that known rather than suffer the violence of torture and death.

And if any believers had made such allegations against the Bible's reliability, it is certain that the Roman authorities would have widely published such denials of the truth of the gospel accounts. Biblical statements about Christ's death and resurrection, if called into question by His followers, would have been broadcast widely throughout the empire. However, despite the fact that a large number of official Roman records and a much larger number of Christian writings have survived until today, we cannot find evidence of a single eyewitness to the events described in the Gospels who ever denied their truthfulness. This fact is of outstanding importance in assessing the reliability and truthfulness of the gospel records. Those who were eyewitnesses to the events portrayed in the Gospels went to their death rather than deny the accuracy of the biblical accounts.

The early Church had many enemies, and during the second and third centuries, some pagans and Gnostics infiltrated the Church. In response to the warnings of our Lord and the apostle Paul about false teachers and "teachers, having itching ears" (2 Timothy 4:3), church leaders were vigilant in detecting and rejecting any spurious writings that counterfeited the genuine New Testament writings. As just one example, two important

early church writers, Tertullian and Jerome, tell us that a presbyter from Asia (modern-day Turkey) published a counterfeit epistle that he claimed Paul had written. Church leaders instantly held an ecclesiastical trial to examine this claim. They subsequently convicted the counterfeiter and repudiated his spurious forgery. Their rejection of this forgery was widely published to other churches throughout the empire, so that no believers would be led astray by the counterfeit.

Considering the vigilance of the leaders of the early Church, it is not plausible that they would have blindly accepted the New Testament record of Christ's miracles and His resurrection unless they possessed overwhelming proof of its truthfulness. When you consider that millions of Christian converts willingly suffered torture and died as martyrs rather than deny their Lord, it stands to reason that they were convinced of the truth of Scripture. They believed with all their minds, souls, and spirits that the four Gospels spoke the truth about Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

The Universal Distribution of the New Testament

Scholars acknowledge that the New Testament was widely copied and translated into many languages during the first few decades following the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Numerous ancient manuscripts of the New Testament have survived to this day in a number of different languages. These manuscripts confirm that, even when comparing biblical texts translated into a variety of languages, there were no differences in the text regarding doctrine or factual matters. The libraries of Europe and North America contain many ancient copies and translations of the Greek New Testament, including the Syriac, Egyptian, Arabic, Ethiopian, Armenian, Persian, Gothic, Slavonic, and Latin translations.

The widespread copying and translation of the Scriptures made it impossible for anyone to corrupt the legitimate text of the New Testament by introducing a false doctrine or an invented story of a miracle. Any alteration would have been instantly detected and denounced throughout the hundreds of churches. Once the original Greek manuscript was translated into other languages between AD 60–70, it would have been impossible for

anyone, even a corrupt church official, to impose a counterfeit text on the Christians of that era.

These documents were treasured by the churches and read in their Sunday worship services. The profound love of the ancient saints for the New Testament assures us that they were vigilant in their defense and preservation of the integrity of the Scriptures. Their vigilance assures us that the Bible we have today is faithful to the original inspired text.

The Survival of the Bible

The famous French writer Voltaire, a skeptic, often expressed his contempt for the Bible and Christianity. He had an intense hatred of the Word of God, probably because it reminded him that he would someday stand before the Great White Throne to be judged by almighty God. More than two centuries ago, Voltaire wrote a prediction about the future of the Bible: "I will go through the forest of the Scriptures and girdle all the trees, so that in one hundred years Christianity will be but a vanishing memory."¹² Despite Voltaire's prediction, there are more Christians alive today than at any other time in human history. Every day, more than 115,000 people accept Christ as their personal Savior. Despite Voltaire's confident prediction about the death of Christianity, his library, in which he wrote his false prediction, was acquired years later by the British and Foreign Bible Society. The library of this famous skeptic was soon filled from floor to ceiling with thousands of copies of the Bible he hated but could not destroy.

Despite the opposition of Satan and his followers to the Scriptures, the Bible remains the most widely read, published, and influential book in history. Its truth has changed the lives and destiny of untold billions. The Scriptures have profoundly influenced the course of history for nations and empires. When an ambassador of an African prince was introduced to Queen Victoria, he asked her the question his monarch had requested he present to her: "What is the secret of your country's power and success throughout the world?" Queen Victoria picked up a Bible and answered, "Tell your prince that this book is the secret of England's greatness."

Notes

1. Taken from the Harvard College Rules and Precepts, the school's original 1636 charter. See "How Christians Started the Ivy League," *Forerunner*, April 2008, www.forerunner.com/forerunner/X0101_Christians_Started_I.html (accessed October 22, 2009).
2. Alec Gallup and Wendy W. Simmons, "Six in Ten Americans Read Bible at Least Occasionally: Percentage of Frequent Readers Has Decreased over the Last Decade," Gallup, October 20, 2000, www.gallup.com/poll/2416/six-ten-americans-read-bible-least-occasionally.aspx (accessed February 2, 2010).
3. Stanley L. Greenslade and others, eds., *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963).
4. J. Harold Greenlee, *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964).
5. John Lea, *The Greatest Book in the World* (Philadelphia: J. W. Lea, 1929).
6. E. B. Pusey, *The Prophet Daniel* (Plymouth, England: Devonport Society, 1864), xxv–xxvi.
7. The results of Jeffrey Hadden's research were reported in *Christ for the Nations*, May 1982, <http://giftsforhim.speedyweb.com/templepublishing/Chapter%20one.htm> (site now discontinued).
8. Found at www.rjgeib.com/thoughts/nature/hobbes-bio.html (site now discontinued).
9. Andrew Jackson, quoted in Paul Lee Tan, ed., *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations* (Hong Kong: Bible Communications, 1991), 192.
10. Robert Dick Wilson, *A Scientific Investigation of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody, 1959), 130.
11. See, for example, Tacitus *Annals* 15.44.
12. Voltaire, quoted in David John Donnan, ed., *Treasury of the Christian World* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1953).

1

Historical Documents Verify the Accuracy of the Old Testament

Although the Bible is attacked relentlessly, it still stands as the most accurate and authoritative book ever written. Evidence from historical inscriptions and manuscripts discovered in the last century proves that the Bible is divinely inspired. Although we will never be able to verify every one of the thousands of historical personalities, events, and places recorded in the Bible, the evidence that is detailed in this chapter will assure you of the credibility of the greatest book ever written.

My library contains hundreds of books that record the accounts of historians from the ancient world, including Herodotus, the so-called Father of History. But despite this accolade, another historian labeled Herodotus “the Father of Lies” in recognition of the factual inaccuracy of his fanciful accounts of the past. Any examination of these secular histories reveals gross

errors involving dates, locations, the people who were involved in major events, and the sequence and duration of these events. To say that ancient secular historians were casual in their approach to accuracy is an understatement. An example of this surfaces in Herodotus's own history, where he wrote, "My business is to record what people say. But I am by no means bound to believe it—and that may be taken to apply to this book as a whole."¹

Historical references in the Bible stand in stark contrast to this tradition. The biblical writers are extremely careful and accurate in their recording of historical facts. We know this because, again and again, historical references in the Bible are confirmed by independent sources. Archaeological discoveries during the last century, for example, reveal ancient references to forty-one kings of Israel and the surrounding nations who are identified in the Old Testament. In fact, the entire body of ancient literature, as well as the historical records, document the accuracy of Scripture to a far greater extent than they verify the reliability of secular documents from the same eras.

In the last 150 years, many biblical critics upheld the so-called Documentary Hypothesis, which denied that Moses wrote the book of Genesis and the rest of the Torah. The critics claimed that the different names for God that appear in Genesis (including Elohim, Jehovah, and Adonai) indicate the work of five different authors. The critics argued that an editor later compiled the work of the five authors into one book, approximately six hundred years before the time of Christ.

This theory is absurd when you consider the history of the Jewish people. Remember that in a court of law a judge and jury place great weight on evidence that is acknowledged to be factual by both sides. When the prosecution and defense both acknowledge the same facts, it's clear that neither side has an ulterior motive for asserting the accuracy of the issue. Under these circumstances, it is extremely likely that the matter in question is true.

If you are familiar with Jewish tradition and culture, you know the importance of widespread agreement on the same matter. The Jewish people are known for their willingness to debate at great length any issue involving their religion and history. In

light of this, would the Jews willingly adopt the complicated religious regulations of Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles unless their forefathers had begun celebrating these feasts to commemorate the miraculous events of the Exodus? Such national festivals were passed down from generation to generation through the ages. How could this happen if the miraculous deliverance from Egypt had never occurred?

Moses, the great lawgiver of Israel, reminded the Hebrews in the Sinai wilderness that they had witnessed God's supernatural acts in freeing them from slavery.

And know ye this day: for I speak not with your children which have not known, and which have not seen the chastisement of the LORD your God, his greatness, his mighty hand, and his stretched out arm, and his miracles, and his acts, which he did in the midst of Egypt unto Pharaoh the king of Egypt, and unto all his land; and what he did unto the army of Egypt, unto their horses, and to their chariots; how he made the water of the Red sea to overflow them as they pursued after you, and how the LORD hath destroyed them unto this day; and what he did unto you in the wilderness, until ye came into this place;...but your eyes have seen all the great acts of the LORD which he did. (Deuteronomy 11:2-5, 7)

If an anonymous "editor" had compiled the writings of various authors into the five books of the Torah one thousand years after they were written, how could that individual have convinced the Jewish people to accept these books as the work of Moses? At that time the Jews were scattered from Iran to Spain. How could the editor have suddenly talked them into observing the festivals of Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles? If the Jews had not already been observing these festivals, they surely would not have accepted the word of the editor. Such a person would have had no credibility whatsoever.

At the very least, if such an editor had appeared with a cobbled-together Torah, the rabbis and Jewish sages would have conducted long debates to oppose the introduction of a book that no one had seen before. However, there is no record that such

debates ever occurred. The biblical critics' theory of an unknown editor creating the Torah is absurd.

Evidence from the Samaritan Pentateuch

The Samaritans were a group of colonists imported into what is today the West Bank of Israel. Around 700 BC the Assyrians brought in these immigrants to repopulate the area after they took the Israelites of the ten northern tribes in chains back to Assyria (modern-day Iraq and Iran). One of the oldest manuscripts in the world is the Samaritan Pentateuch, an ancient copy of the first five books of the Law, which contains virtually every word found in the Hebrew text of the Torah. From the moment the Samaritan colonists moved into the center of Israel, they found themselves in opposition to the Jews who returned from the Babylonian captivity, which continued into the time of Christ's ministry. Although the Samaritans accepted the five books of the Torah as genuine, their own version was jealously guarded and preserved for thousands of years. Why would the Samaritans, who hated the Jews, accept the historical accuracy and authority of the Torah if they knew the five books were not authoritative and true? The fact that the Samaritans agree with the Jews in accepting the genuineness of the five books of Moses further verifies that we have in today's version of the Torah the original, unaltered writings of Moses.

Critics have also suggested that Moses could not have written his account in the fifteenth century before Christ because, they claim, writing had not yet been invented. However, the discovery of numerous ancient written inscriptions, including the famous black stele containing the laws of Hammurabi written before 2000 BC, prove that writing was widespread for many centuries *before* the time of Moses.

The Greek historian Herodotus discussed the Exodus from Egypt in his book *Polymnia*: "This people [the Israelites], by their own account, inhabited the coasts of the Red Sea, but migrated thence to the maritime parts of Syria, all which district, as far as Egypt, is denominated Palestine."² It is interesting to note that Strabo, a pagan historian and geographer born in 64 BC, also confirmed the history of the Jews and their escape from Egypt. He wrote, "Among many things believed respecting the temple

and inhabitants of Jerusalem, the report most credited is that the Egyptians were the ancestors of the present Jews. An Egyptian priest named Moses, who possessed a portion of the country called lower Egypt, being dissatisfied with the institutions there, left it and came to Judea with a large body of people who worshipped the Divinity.”³

Food and Water in Sinai

Critics of the reliability of Scripture have suggested that a desert area as barren as the Sinai could never have supported the huge flocks of sheep of the Israelites, as recorded in the book of Exodus. However, research conducted in the nineteenth century disputes such an assumption. In 1860, F. W. Holland explored most of the Sinai Peninsula. Despite the area’s current desolate and dry condition, Holland found that some areas would still support large flocks of sheep. And if the average temperature or annual level of rainfall were only slightly changed, the amount of available pasturage would have been much greater than today’s conditions would indicate.

In “Recent Explorations in the Peninsula of Sinai,” Holland wrote:

Large tracts of the northern portion of the plateau of the Tih, which are now desert, were evidently formerly under cultivation. The Gulf of Suez (probably by means of an artificial canal connecting it with the Bitter Lakes) once extended nearly fifty miles further north than it does at present, and the mountains of Palestine were well clothed with trees. Thus there formerly existed a rain-making area of considerable extent, which must have added largely to the dews and rains of Sinai. Probably, also, the peninsula itself was formerly much more thickly wooded. The amount of vegetation and herbage in the Peninsula, even at the present time, has been very much underrated; and a slight increase in the present rainfall would produce an enormous addition to the amount of pasturage. I have several times seen the whole face of the country, especially the wadies, marvelously changed in appearance by a single shower.⁴

And then there are the discoveries of references to biblical figures that have been found outside the biblical texts. Numerous biblical personalities (including Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Darius), who were repudiated by higher critics in past decades, have been reliably verified by recent historical and archaeological discoveries. In the past, critics of the Bible rejected the story of the defeat of the confederation of five kings from the east by the small army of Abraham (see Genesis 14). The critics claimed that there was no evidence to support this biblical account and therefore denied the story. However, archaeological research has uncovered ample evidence proving that the story is credible in all its particular details.

Dr. Nelson Glueck, considered by many to be the leading Palestinian archaeologist of the twentieth century, was president of Hebrew Union College. Reporting on the newly discovered evidence about this invasion, Glueck wrote the following in his book *Rivers in the Desert*:

Centuries earlier, another civilization of high achievement had flourished between the 21st and 19th centuries BC, till it was savagely liquidated by the Kings of the East. According to the Biblical statements, which have been borne out by the archaeological evidence, they gutted every city and village at the end of that period from Ashtaroth Karnaim, in southern Syria through all of Trans-Jordan and the Negev to Kadesh-Barnea in Sinai (Genesis 14:1–7).⁵

Glueck spent many years exploring the land of Israel in his search for archaeological records. As a result of his discoveries, he concluded that the Bible was totally reliable in every area for which he could examine the evidence.⁶

With each new archaeological discovery, we find exciting confirmations of the most remarkable statements from the Word of God. In this chapter we will look at a few of the most fascinating discoveries and their implications for the authority of the Bible.

Nebuchadnezzar's Inscription About the Tower of Babel

From the time of Adam and Eve, "the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech" (Genesis 11:1), prior to the dispersion of

the population following God's supernatural act of causing the confusion of languages at the Tower of Babel. God confounded the language of all people on earth so they could not understand the speech of their neighbors (see Genesis 11:9). He did this to force them to disperse throughout the earth.

The people had gathered in sinful pride and in defiance of God in an attempt to build a tower that would reach to the heavens. Moses recorded God's subsequent judgment and destruction of the tower and the city of Babylon. The remains of the Tower of Babel are vitrified (melted to form a kind of rough glass), which indicates that God used a huge amount of heat to destroy it.

Philologists—scientists who study the origin of languages—have concluded that it is probable that the thousands of dialects and languages throughout the planet can be traced back to an original shared language. Professor Alfredo Trombetti claims that he can prove the common origin of all languages. Max Mueller, one of the greatest Oriental language scholars in modern times, declared that all languages can be traced back to a single original language.⁷

The French government sent Professor Julius Oppert to report on the cuneiform inscriptions found in the ruins of Babylon. Oppert translated a long inscription by King Nebuchadnezzar in which the king referred to the tower in the Chaldean language as *Barzippa*, which means "tongue-tower." The Greeks used the word *Borsippa*, with the same meaning of tongue-tower, to describe the ruins of the Tower of Babel. Nebuchadnezzar's inscription identified the original tower of Borsippa with the Tower of Babel described by Moses in Genesis.

King Nebuchadnezzar later rebuilt the city of Babylon in great magnificence and then decided to rebuild the lowest platform of the Tower of Babel in honor of the Chaldean gods. During the millennium since God had destroyed it, the tower had been reduced to just its huge base (measuring 460 feet by 690 feet). Today the remaining ruins stand about 150 feet above the plain, with a circumference of 2,300 feet.

Nebuchadnezzar resurfaced the base of the tower with gold, silver, cedar, and fir atop a hard surface of baked clay bricks. These bricks were engraved with the seal of Nebuchadnezzar.

In an inscription found on the base of the ruins of the Tower of Babel, Nebuchadnezzar speaks in his own words from thousands of years ago to confirm one of the most interesting events of the ancient past.

King Nebuchadnezzar's Inscription

The tower, the eternal house, which I founded and built.

I have completed its magnificence with silver, gold, other metals, stone, enameled bricks, fir and pine.

The first which is the house of the earth's base, the most ancient monument of Babylon; I built and finished it.

I have highly exalted its head with bricks covered with copper.

We say for the other, that is, this edifice, the house of the seven lights of the earth, the most ancient monument of Borsippa.

A former king built it, [they reckon forty-two ages] *but he did not complete its head.*

Since a remote time, people had abandoned it, without order expressing their words.

Since that time the earthquake and the thunder had dispersed the sun-dried clay.

The bricks of the casing had been split, and the earth of the interior had been scattered in heaps. Merodach, the great god, excited my mind to repair this building.

I did not change the site nor did I take away the foundation.

In a fortunate month, in an auspicious day, I undertook to build porticoes around the crude brick masses, and the casing of burnt bricks.

I adapted the circuits, I put the inscription of my name in the Kitir of the portico.

I set my hand to finish it. And to exalt its head.

As it had been in ancient days, so I exalted its summit.⁸

Professor Oppert initially translated the king's inscription. Later, William Kennett Loftus translated the inscription and included it in his book *Travels and Researches in Chaldea and Sinai*. The ancient words confirm the accuracy of one of the most fascinating stories in the book of Genesis. The pagan king Nebuchadnezzar provided the details that "a former king built it, but he did not complete its [the tower's] head." Thus, Nebuchadnezzar confirmed the truthfulness of the Genesis account that God stopped the original builders from completing the top of the tower.

In the book of Genesis, we read the biblical description of this event:

And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing that will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth. (11:2-9)

Compare the biblical statement with the words engraved on the ancient inscription of King Nebuchadnezzar: "A former king built it, but he did not complete its head. Since a remote time,

people had abandoned it.” The words of Moses in Genesis 11:8 declare, “So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.” Even more startling is the phrase of the pagan king where he declared that the reason they could not complete the top of the tongue-tower was that the “people abandoned it, without order expressing their words.” This expression by Nebuchadnezzar confirms the remarkable historical event recorded in Genesis 11, when God “did there confound the language of all the earth” and “scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth” (verse 9).

Joseph and the Seven Years of Famine

An intriguing inscription confirms the Bible’s account of the “seven years of great plenty” followed by the “seven years of famine” when Joseph served Pharaoh in Egypt (see Genesis 41:29–30). This inscription was discovered during the nineteenth century in southern Saudi Arabia. The inscription was found on a marble tablet in a ruined fortress on the seashore of Hadhramaut in present-day Yemen. An examination of the writing suggests that it was written approximately eighteen hundred years before the birth of Christ, a time that corresponds with the biblical narrative about Jacob and his twelve sons. This inscription was first rendered in Arabic by Professor Hendrik Albert Schultens and was later translated into English by Rev. Charles Forster:

We dwelt at ease in this castle a long tract of time; nor had we a desire but for the region-lord of the vineyard.

Hundreds of camels returned to us each day at evening, their eye pleasant to behold in their resting-places.

And twice the number of our camels were our sheep, in comeliness like white does, and also the slow moving kine.

We dwelt in this castle seven years of good life—how difficult for memory its description!

Then came years barren and burnt up: when one evil year had passed away, then came another to succeed it.

And we became as though we had never seen a glimpse of good.

They died and neither foot nor hoof remained.

Thus fares it with him who renders not thanks to God:

His footsteps fail not to be blotted out from his dwelling.⁹

This ancient poem records the devastation of the years of famine and barrenness that followed the seven years of plenty. The language of the poem implies that the famine also lasted seven years. This account from ancient Arabia provides independent evidence confirming the accuracy of the biblical account of the seven years of plenty in the Middle East followed by seven years of famine that occurred during the rule of Joseph as prime minister of Egypt.

Moses recorded the history of the Egyptian famine and the wise preparations that Joseph made to gather surplus grain during the seven years of plenty to provide food during the coming years of famine.

And he [Joseph] gathered up all the food of the seven years, which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field, which was round about every city, laid he up in the same. (Genesis 41:48)

Again, Moses recorded:

And the seven years of plenteousness, that was in the land of Egypt, were ended. And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said: and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.... And the famine was over all the face of the earth: and Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt. And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn; because that the famine was so sore in all lands. (Genesis 41:53–54, 56–57)

Explorers during the last century discovered a number of other interesting inscriptions in the Middle East that confirm

facts recorded in the Scriptures. Ebn Hesham, an Arab from Yemen, showed the English explorer Mr. Cruttenden the tomb of a wealthy Yemenite woman who died during the time of the Egyptian famine recorded in Genesis 41. This tomb was discovered around 1850 after being exposed by a flood that uncovered the grave site.¹⁰ The tomb contained the body of a noblewoman who was covered in jewels. Seven collars of pearls surrounded her neck; her hands and feet were covered with seven bracelets, armlets, rings, and ankle rings displaying costly jewels. In addition, her tomb contained a coffer filled with treasure.

However, the greatest treasure of all was an engraved stone tablet bearing the woman's final inscription, which appears to confirm the biblical account of Joseph's careful management of food reserves during the seven years of famine in Egypt. The original engraving was photographed and appeared in Professor Carsten Niebuhr's *Voyage en Arabie* (plate 59). The Yemenite inscription reads as follows:

In thy name O God, the God of Hamyar, I Tajah, the daughter of Dzu Shefar, *sent my steward to Joseph,*

And he delaying to return to me, I sent my hand maid

With a measure of silver, to bring me back a measure of flour:

And not being able to procure it, I sent her with a measure of gold:

And not being able to procure it, I sent her with a measure of pearls:

And not being able to procure it, I commanded them to be ground:

And finding no profit in them, I am shut up here.

Whosoever may hear of it, let him commiserate me;

And should any woman adorn herself with an ornament

From my ornaments, may she die with no other than my death.¹¹

This inscription reveals a Yemenite Arab noblewoman's complaint that she could not purchase Egypt's grain with her gold. The tragic history of famines often recorded the bartering of the most valuable jewels and precious metals in trade for the smallest amount of food available.

Ancient Histories Confirm the Exodus

And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children. And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle. (Exodus 12:37–38)

Few Christians are aware that numerous historical records and ancient inscriptions confirm the miracles involved in God's deliverance of the Jews from slavery in Egypt. The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus reported that two Egyptian priest-scholars, Manetho and Cheremon, named Joseph and Moses as leaders of the Jews in their history of Egypt.¹² Josephus recorded that the Egyptians remembered a tradition of a mass exodus from their nation by the Jews, whom they hated because they believed the Israelites were unclean. Manetho wrote that the Jews "went out of that country afterward, and settled in that country which is now called Judea, and there built Jerusalem and its temple."¹³

Manetho and Cheremon also stated that the Jews rejected Egyptian customs, including the worship of Egyptian gods. Manetho declared that Osarsiph "Moses" became the lawgiver and leader of the Jewish slaves, and that he "made this law for them, that they should neither worship the Egyptian gods, nor should they abstain from any one of those sacred animals which they have in the high esteem, but kill and destroy them all... [He] had made such laws as these, and many more such as were mainly opposite to the customs of the Egyptians."¹⁴

Most important, the pagan historians acknowledged that the Jews killed the animals that the Egyptians held as sacred, indicating the Israelites' practice of sacrificing lambs on that

first Passover. The historians also confirmed that the Israelites immigrated into the area of "southern Syria," which was the Egyptian name for ancient Palestine. Perhaps the most important confirmation is found in the statement by Manetho that the sudden Exodus from Egypt occurred in the reign of "Amenophis, son of Rameses, and father of Sethos, who reigned toward the close of the 18th dynasty."¹⁵ This reference places the Exodus between 1500 and 1400 BC, which confirms the chronological data found in the Old Testament that suggests the Exodus occurred approximately in 1491 BC.

Several years ago, after much searching, I was able to locate a complete set of volumes containing the forty books in the library of Diodorus Siculus, a Greek historian from Agrigium in Sicily. He lived from 80 BC until approximately twenty years before the birth of Jesus. Diodorus traveled extensively throughout the Middle East acquiring a vast knowledge of ancient events. He compiled records from various peoples, which in many instances contain fascinating historical details that would otherwise have been lost forever.

In his book, Diodorus reported:

In ancient times there happened a great plague in Egypt, and many ascribed the cause of it to God, who was offended with them because there were many strangers in the land, by whom foreign rites and ceremonies were employed in their worship of the deity. The Egyptians concluded; therefore, that unless all strangers were driven out of the country, they should never be freed from their miseries. Upon this, as some writers tell us, the most eminent and enterprising of those foreigners who were in Egypt, and obliged to leave the country...who retired into the province now called Judea, which was not far from Egypt, and in those times uninhabited. These emigrants were led by Moses, who was superior to all in wisdom and prowess. He gave them laws, and ordained that they should have no images of the gods, because there was only one deity, the heaven, which surrounds all things, and is Lord of the whole.¹⁶

The historical records and inscriptions described in this chapter don't begin to scratch the surface of the many outside sources that confirm the accuracy of the Old Testament accounts. However, these discoveries provide ample evidence that we can trust the Old Testament writers as accurate historians, even when they describe miraculous developments. When we read the biblical accounts of such events as the destruction of the Tower of Babel, the seven-year famine in Egypt, and God's deliverance of the Jews from bondage in Egypt, we can trust that these things really happened just as they were recorded.

Notes

1. Herodotus, quoted in Alma E. Guinness, ed., *Mysteries of the Bible* (New York: Reader's Digest Association, 1988).
2. Herodotus, *Polymnia* sec. C.89.
3. Strabo, *Geography* lib. 16.c2.
4. F. W. Holland, "Recent Explorations in the Peninsula of Sinai," *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society* 13 (1868–69).
5. Nelson Glueck, *Rivers in the Desert: A History of the Negev* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1959), 11.
6. Glueck, *Rivers in the Desert*, 31.
7. See Joseph Free, *Archeology and Bible History* (Wheaton, IL: Scripture Press, 1969).
8. King Nebuchadnezzar's inscription is reproduced in William Kennett Loftus, *Travels and Researches in Chaldea and Sinai* (London: James Nisbet, 1857), 29. Italics added for emphasis.
9. The inscription found on a marble tablet in a ruined fortress on the seashore of Hadhramaut is reproduced in Charles Forster, *Sinai Photographed* (London: Richard Bentley, 1862). Italics added for emphasis. See also William Harris Rule and J. Corbet Anderson, *Biblical Monuments*, 4 vols. (Croydon: Wertimer, Lea and Co., 1871–73).
10. See Rule and Anderson, *Biblical Monuments*, 1:9.
11. The inscription by an ancient Yemenite noblewoman is reproduced in Rule and Anderson, *Biblical Monuments*, 9. Italics added for emphasis.
12. Flavius Josephus, *Josephus Against Apion*, trans. William Whiston (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1960), 1.26–27, 32.
13. Josephus, *Josephus Against Apion*, 1.26.
14. Josephus, *Josephus Against Apion*, 1.26.
15. Josephus, *Josephus Against Apion*, 1.26.
16. Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, Books 1–2.34, trans. Charles H. Oldfather, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).