

POWER

"... the gospel ... is the power of God unto salvation ..." (Romans 1:16)

WHY I BELIEVE THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD (PART 2) *by Wade L. Webster*

As Christians, we must be ready always to give a defense of what we believe (1 Pet. 3:15). Perhaps, with the exception of the deity of Christ, there is no doctrine more firmly believed by us as Christians than the inspiration of God's word. We believe and are sure that the Bible is the word of God (John 6:66-69).

Sadly, we are living in an age of skepticism. Many around us no longer believe as we do that the Bible is from God. Therefore, it is important for us to be able to give them clear reasons for what we believe (Isa. 1:18). In this second and final installment of this study, we will examine four more reasons for our faith in the Bible as the word of God.

Because Of

Its Scientific Foreknowledge

The Bible is not a science book. However, it does contain scientific information. When it touches upon scientific matters, it is always correct. It does not record the superstitions or misconceptions that prevailed in the time when various books were written. Amazingly, the Bible even contains many scientific facts that had not been discovered at the time that Bible books were written. Please consider a few examples of this type of information:

Oceanography

The psalmist spoke of "the paths of the sea" (Psa. 8:8) long before these paths were discovered. The paths were discovered by a man named Matthew Fontaine Maury (1806-1873). Maury was once confined to his bed during a prolonged sickness. During this time, his son read to him from the eighth psalm. Upon hearing the psalmist speak of the paths of the sea, Maury determined to find them when his health improved. He followed through with his desire and was rewarded for his effort. He took God at His word and was not disappointed. His

book of physical oceanography is still considered a fundamental text on the subject.¹ How did the psalmist know about these paths long before Matthew Fontaine Maury did? For sure, the psalmist had never seen them. He had no means by which to investigate them. Yet, he was right about them. Who told him? Obviously, it was the One who made the seas.

Job spoke of the springs of the sea (Job 38:16) and of the recesses of the deep (Job 38:16; cf. 2 Sam. 22:16). Both of these scientific statements have since been confirmed. Freshwater springs are found off the coasts of Greece, Italy, Israel, Syria, and Australia. How did Job know that they were there? Furthermore, how did he know that deep recesses were there? Yet, he did. These recesses were not discovered for thousands of years after he lived. The Challenger Expedition (1873-1876) discovered a recess 5 ½ miles deep.² Job certainly could not have explored these depths. Someone had to tell him about about them. Who was that someone? It couldn't have been another man. They were as limited as he was. It had to be someone greater than him. It had to be God.

Solomon wrote, "All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full; unto the place whither the rivers go, thither they go again" (Eccl. 1:7). This passage records the hydrologic cycle. Did you know that the Mississippi River dumps approximately 6 million gallons of water per second into the Gulf of Mexico? Yet, the Gulf never overflows. Why not? It doesn't overflow because of the hydrologic cycle. The water returns to the clouds where it can fall again. Other Bible passages also speak of this water cycle (Amos 9:6; Eccl. 11:3). More than 2,000 years prior to the discovery of the water cycle, inspired writers were talking

about it.³ How can you explain this separate and apart from an all-powerful and all-knowing God?

God instructed Noah to build an ark that was 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high (Gen. 6:15). The ratio for the ark was 30 to 5 to 3 (length to breadth to height). It seems that this is the perfect ratio to use in building a ship capable of withstanding stormy seas and carrying large amounts of cargo. In 1844, Isambard K. Brunel employed this ratio in building a ship that he named the Great Britain. The ratio was again used by shipbuilders during World War II to build a boat nicknamed the "ugly duckling."⁴ How did Noah know the perfect ratio to use in building the ark? He knew it because God told him.

Medicine

God guided Moses to tell the Israelites that "the life of the flesh is in the blood" (Lev. 17:11-14). Of course, this wasn't known in Moses' day. In fact, it wasn't even known in George Washington's day. History records that he died from blood-letting. Today, we know that Moses was right. Red blood cells carry oxygen to the body.⁵ How did Moses know that "the life of the flesh" was "in the blood?" He knew it because God told him.

The Old Testament commanded the circumcision of boy babies on the eighth day (Gen. 17:12). We now know why. Today, we know that Vitamin K is responsible for prompting the production of prothrombin by the liver. It is between the 5th and the 7th days of the baby boy's life that prothrombin begins to be produced. We now know that prothrombin is the highest that it will ever be in the life of the infant on the 8th day. There is no better day for circumcision.⁶ How did Moses know that this was the very best day to

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circumcise a baby boy? Did he just make a lucky guess? I am convinced that the Great Physician revealed it to him. Perhaps, Moses never knew the significance of this day. However, God did.

Ancient writers thought that only the male possessed the seed of life. The female was seen only as an incubator. Democritus, an ancient Greek writer, even suggested that warm mud could essentially perform the role of the female. Moses knew better. He knew that the female also possessed the seed of life (Gen. 3:15). Today, of course, we know that it takes the 23 chromosomes contained in the female ovum or seed, plus the 23 chromosomes contained in the male sperm or seed to produce a normal human.⁷ How did Moses know the contribution that the female made? Did he just guess right?

Countless other evidences could be taken from the fields of physics, astronomy, and biology. However, these are sufficient to establish that the only way to account for these statements is that an all-seeing, all-knowing, all-powerful God was revealing these details to the writers of Scripture.

Because Of Its Historical Accuracy

Some individuals argue that it is not important for the Bible to get all historical details right. However, it is. If the Bible cannot be trusted in matters of history, what confidence do we have that it can be trusted in matters of theology (John 3:12)? If the writers made mistakes in recording earthly matters, how can we be sure that they didn't make the same in recording heavenly matters?

Although many have doubted the historical accuracy of the Scriptures, no clear archaeological discovery has ever proven a Biblical reference to be untrue. It should be noted that this is not true of other religious books like the book of Mormon.

Amazingly, the Biblical writers did not shy away from mentioning people, places, or other details. For example, in the book of Acts, Luke mentions 32 countries, 54 cities, and 9 Mediterranean islands. He also mentions 95 people,

with 62 of them not being named elsewhere in the New Testament. The mention of all of these people and places caught Sir William Ramsey's attention. Ramsey, a skeptical scholar, set out in the late 1800's to disprove the historical accuracy of the book of Acts. After many years of uncovering evidence which proved, rather than disproved, the Bible, Ramsey reluctantly concluded that the book of Acts was historically correct.⁸ In commenting on these kinds of details, J. W. McGarvey noted, "A fictitious narrative, located in a country with which the author is not personally familiar, must either avoid local allusions or be found frequently in conflict with the peculiarities of place and of manners and customs. By this conflict the fictitious character of the narrative is exposed."⁹ McGarvey went on to detail numerous times when the Bible proved to be accurate in such details. He noted that "in not a single instance of this kind have any of the Bible writers been found at fault."¹⁰ How does one account for such accuracy? It must be accounted for on the basis that they were inspired of God.

Although the Old Testament mentions the Hittites over 40 times, their existence was doubted for many years by critics. Some went so far as to assert that the writers of the Bible made them up. However, archaeologist Hugh Winckler uncovered 10,000 clay tablets in ancient Boghazkoy, in modern day Turkey. The tablets confirmed the existence of the Hittites. The Bible was right after all.¹¹

Virtually everyone agrees that the Romans used crucifixion to put men to death. However, there is some discussion as to how men were fastened to the cross. Some assert that men were merely tied to the cross, rather than being nailed. However, the Bible records that Jesus was nailed to the cross. Thomas wanted to see "the print of the nails" (John 20:25; cf. 20:27; Lk. 24:39-40). Archaeology has again proven the Bible to be true. In 1968 a burial site was discovered that contained the bodies of approximately 35 Jewish men. It is believed that these men were crucified during an uprising in A.D. 70. Among the remains were those of a young man

named Jehohanan. He was approximately 24-28 years of age. A spike seven inches in length was still protruding from the remains of two heel bones. Like our Lord, he had been nailed to a cross by the Romans.

Because Of Its Preservation

No book in human history has been attacked as much as the Bible. It has been banned and burned. It has been chained and cut. Yet, it is still here. True to its claims, it has not been destroyed (Isa. 40:8; 1 Pet. 1:23, 25; Mt. 24:35). How do we account for its survival separate and apart from God's providential preservation? Its survival is clear evidence that it is from God.

Jesus promised that not one jot or tittle would pass from the law until all was fulfilled (Mt. 5:18). The term jot refers to the Hebrew yod. The yod was the eighth letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It is a very small letter. The tittle refers to a small grammatical marking similar to an apostrophe. Jesus was declaring that the smallest parts of the law would not pass away. Paul shared the Lord's confidence in the Word. He had such confidence in the Scriptures that he based a whole argument on whether a word was singular or plural (Gal. 3:16).

Critics often argue that the Bible has been lost through years of copying. Since we don't have the original autographs, it is argued that all that we have are few copies of copies. First, it should be noted that a copy is as good as an original if it has been accurately preserved. Interestingly, the autographs of other ancient writings, like those of Plato and Aristotle, are also not in existence. Secondly, it should be noted that we do not just have a few copies. There are over 5,700 Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. This number does not include 25,000 translations; nor, for that matter, numerous quotations from the church fathers. Virtually the entire New Testament could be reproduced from the writings of the church fathers alone. Finally, it should be noted that some of the manuscripts that we have are very close to the time of the original

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Deuteronomy 5:32

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writings. For example, the John Ryland's papyri manuscript is probably only separated from the original by 35 years or so (A.D. 117-138). Other copies of ancient works like those of Caesar, Demosthenes, Plato, Herodotus, Cattalos, and Homer are separated by a thousand years or more from the originals.¹²

Wayne Jackson notes that inspiration was not lost in copying as long as the copies were accurately made from the original documents. From his earliest years, Timothy had known the "holy scriptures" (2 Tim. 3:15). The "holy scriptures" that Timothy had were only copies. They were not the originals. However, they were still able to make him wise unto salvation.¹³ Of course, they can do the same for us today.

Because Of Its Acceptance By Jesus Christ

Jesus and His disciples used the expression "It is written" more than 90 times. The expression means, "It stands written."¹⁴ Jesus and the disciples accepted the Bible as the word of God. As you know, Jesus used it to drive away the devil (Mt. 4:4, 7, 10) and to answer His enemies (Mt. 21:13; Mk. 7:6). He put his stamp of approval upon the creation (Mt. 19:4-6), the flood (Mt. 24:38-39), Jonah (Mt. 12:39-41), and many other events.

If we accept Jesus as the Son of God, then we must accept the Bible as the Word of God. After all, He did. If He was wrong about that, then how can we trust Him in anything else? To reject His word is to reject Him (John 12:48). His word can no more be separated from Him than His church.

Conclusion

I am so thankful to have been assigned this topic. The study has benefited me tremendously. I hope that it will do the same for those that read it. My only regret is that I cannot include all of the evidence that is available. I have but scratched the surface. However, I believe that I have given sufficient evidence to convince the honest investigator.

- 1 Thompson, Bert. "Science In The Bible." **Essays in Apologetics**. Vol. I. Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press, 1984, p. 50.
- 2 Ibid., p. 51
- 3 Ibid., p. 51-52.
- 4 Butt, p. 41.
- 5 Thompson, **Essays in Apologetics**, Vol. 1, p. 52.
- 6 Ibid., p. 52-53.
- 7 Ibid., p. 53.
- 8 Jackson, p. 15.
- 9 Ibid., p. 15.
- 10 Ibid., p. 15.
- 11 MacArthur, John. **Why Believe The Bible?** Ventura, CA: Regal, 2007, p. 27.
- 12 Kennedy, D. James. **Skeptics Answered**. Sisters, Oregon: Multnomah Publishers, 1997, p. 25-27.
- 13 Jackson, Wayne. "Some Important Points About Bible Inspiration." **Essays In Apologetics**. Volume II. Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press, 1986, p. 237.
- 14 Lutzer, Erwin W. **Seven Reasons Why You Can Trust The Bible**. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1998, p. 123.