

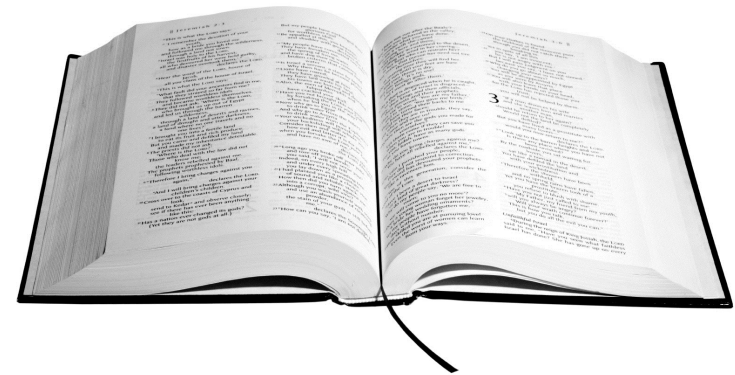
The Anvil

Last eve I passed beside a blacksmith's door,
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
Then looking, I saw upon the floor,
Old hammers, worn with beating years of time
"How many anvils have you had," said I,
"To wear and batter all these hammers so?"
"Just one," said he, and then with twinkling eye;
"The anvil wears the hammers out, ye know."
And so, thought I, the anvil of God's Word,
For ages skeptic blows have beat upon;
Yet though the noise of falling blows was heard
The anvil is unharmed...the hammers gone.

John Clifford (1836-1923)

Note: Audio of this class can be found at the Sound Teaching website, together with this workbook and other materials used in the class. To find these materials, go to the Sound Teaching site, and click on the "Online Bible Study" heading, the class is titled, "Apologetics"

<http://soundteaching.org>



Apologetics

Booklet 1

Introduction

&

Bible Inspiration

Material prepared by Stan Cox

Wednesday Night Class Material
West Side church of Christ
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<http://soundteaching.org>

turn. Yet, the Bible writers were as different as the Hollywood actress and the Oklahoma farmer. Some were fishermen, some were farmers, some were military leaders, and some were kings. Some wrote in the Hebrew language, while others wrote in Aramaic or Greek. Some of the Bible writers penned letters while traveling, and others while in prison. Yet when we look at the Bible, it shows amazing unity—unity that can be explained only by the fact that Bible writers were guided by the Holy Spirit.

Truly then, as the apostle Paul wrote nearly 2,000 years ago, “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 complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

<http://www.apologeticspress.org/APContent.aspx?category=13&article=891&topic=99>

Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss how a scientist, poet, cowboy and athlete might bring different perspectives and views to a common topic (say, the Environment).
2. Can the uniformity of the scripture, in doctrine and content, be ascribed to anything other than divine inspiration?
3. **Note:** We acknowledge that there are claims of discrepancies and contradictions in the writings of the Bible. These will be addressed in a later lesson.

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Note: Unless otherwise noted, the supplementary materials are taken from the Apologetics Press website, with permission.

The class is designed to increase the faith of students by establishing the validity of the Holy Scriptures, and refuting the typical arguments raised by skeptics that seek to invalidate the Christian faith. Topics that will be covered include:

- The Inspiration of the Bible
- The origin and state of the modern Bible
- Textual Criticism
- Historical and Geographical legitimacy of Scripture
- Prophecy
- Creation Evidences (VS Evolution)
- Days of Creation
- Dinosaurs
- The Flood
- Theistic Evolution
- The Existence of God
- The Deity of Christ
- The Virgin Birth & the Resurrection
- Christianity contrasted with other Religions
- Alleged Biblical Discrepancies

The material will be prepared as we go, consisting of a number of booklets, each containing outlines and supplemental materials that cover similar topics. As such, the exact makeup, duration and order of the study is unknown as of this writing.

This booklet contains an introduction to the study of apologetics, a study of topics surrounding the Bible and its claims of inspiration, and supplemental materials (articles gleaned primarily from the Apologetics Press website). Discussion questions will be found at the end of each article, and will be discussed as needed during the class periods. Students are encouraged to read the material before the class is presented, so that they will be familiar with the concepts contained within.

area in the past does not nullify the many correct examples of scientific foreknowledge that do exist; and (2) if we are to err, let us err on the side of caution; there are too many good examples of scientific foreknowledge in the Bible for us to employ weak or spurious arguments in our defense of God's Word.

<http://www.apologeticspress.org/APContent.aspx?category=13&article=1132&topic=102>

Discussion Questions:

1. How important is it for us to have integrity as we argue the validity of the Holy Scriptures?
2. What are some specious arguments that have been used by Christians in a effort to defend the Bible?
3. How can we go about verifying the legitimacy of arguments regarding scientific prescience before using them?
4. Can the arguments of skeptics also be marred by prejudice or wrong assumptions?

The Bible's Amazing Unity

Eric Lyons

Imagine asking an actress from Hollywood, a farmer from Oklahoma, and a restaurant manager from Alabama to write an essay about the causes of the Civil War. Even though they would all write at the same time about a war that occurred less than 200 years ago, numerous differences would be obvious. The Hollywood actress might say the war was a result of slavery. The restaurant manager may assert the war was about states' rights. And the farmer from Oklahoma might claim that the war was because of stubbornness on both sides—the North and South. The point is, these three individuals likely would have many different things to say about the war.

When we compare ordinary human authors to the writers of the Bible, we realize that the Bible truly is an amazing book written by men who were inspired by God. Considering it was written by approximately 40 different writers over a period of about 1,600 years (1500 B.C. to A.D. 100) and contains no contradictions in its original form, one has to admit that the Bible is no ordinary book. From Genesis through Revelation the theme is Jesus Christ—His coming, His presence, and His re-

Scientific Foreknowledge and the Bible (Excerpt)

Bert Thompson

...The matter of prescientific knowledge in the Bible has been characterized by extremes at both ends of the spectrum. Some have argued irrationally for scientific anticipation practically everywhere in the Bible. One writer suggested that the Bible anticipated: automobiles (Joel 2:3-4); airplanes (Isaiah 31:56); submarines (Revelation 9:1-11); radio (Ecclesiastes 10:20); and television (Revelation 11:3-12) [Beirnes, 1951, pp. 31-32]. On the other hand, there are those who contend that there are virtually no examples of real scientific foreknowledge in the sacred writings (Ramm, 1954; England, 1983, pp. 144-145). Bernard Ramm even has gone so far as to state that “the Spirit of God did not convey the inner constitution of things to the authors of the Bible, but...the infallibly inspired theological truth is conveyed in the cultural terms of the cultural period of the writer” (p. 86). Interestingly, Dr. Ramm was unable to explain how a “theological truth” could be conveyed through a scientifically erroneous cultural medium! The question must be asked: Does God use error to convey spiritual truth?

Obviously, the truth of the matter lies somewhere between these two extremes. The careful student of God’s Word never will want to portray, either purposely or inadvertently, passages in the Bible as saying more (or less) than those passages were intended to say. If there is good evidence for scientific foreknowledge in the Bible, let us present that evidence at face value. If, on the other hand, we must “reinterpret” passages, or impose on them a strained interpretation that forces them to disgorge prescientific knowledge, then let us reexamine our interpretation so that such is not necessary...

...The honest Christian wants to defend the Scriptures with every legitimate weapon in the apologetic arsenal. However, we do the cause of Christ a disservice when we employ arguments that are extremely weak at best, and patently wrong at worst. When a mistake has been made, it should be admitted, corrected, and avoided in the future. It also should provide a valuable teaching tool on how to better examine the Scriptures in light of the context of each passage under consideration. Yes, the Scriptures do contain good examples of scientific foreknowledge. And yes, there have been some “misapplications” or abuses of certain passages. Let us remember two things as we strive to defend the Bible: (1) because a mistake may have been made in this

Introduction to Apologetics

Apologetics — 1: systematic argumentative discourse in defense (as of a doctrine). 2: a branch of theology devoted to the defense of the divine origin and authority of Christianity (Merriam-Webster)

- **We are people of faith (*Hebrews 11:1*)**
 - Note: That faith is reasoned, based on evidence
 - It is NOT irrational (*Psalms 19; Acts 17:29-31*)
 - The skeptic is foolish and presumptuous (*Psalms 14; Job 38-41; Romans 1:18-32*)
- **We must give a defense for our faith (*1 Peter 3:15*)**
 - That is what this material is designed to assist
 - Defend the faith! (*Jude 3*)
- **Paul used the term in (*Acts 22:1; 1 Corinthians 9:3*)**
 - His argument in *Romans 1:20* is an example of apologetic writing
 - His sermon in *Acts 17:22-31* is an “apology” as well
- **The Objective Nature of the Christian Faith**
 - It is a historical, factual faith (*ex: Luke 2:1-5; 3:1-2*)
 - It is an objective faith (*Christ as object, 1 Cor. 15:1-4*).
Note: Consequence of denying the faith, (*John 8:24*)
 - It is based on truth! (*Acts 2:22-24; 26:24-26*)

Conclusion: Faith, by its nature bridges the gap between evidence and certainty. (*Faith is demanded of the skeptic as well. The theories of the origin of the universe, man, ethics and culture are very dependent upon the acceptance of certain assumptions and hypothesis.*) Through this study, we hope to:

- Provide reasonable proof as to the truthfulness of the Christian faith (God’s existence, Christ’s deity and the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures), thereby strengthening faith.
- Equip the Christian to withstand and refute the arguments made by the skeptic.
- Provide help to answer honest questions about our faith.

What Is Apologetics?

by Kyle Butt, M.A.

You walk up to the man on the street and tell him that Jesus Christ loves him and died so he could receive forgiveness of his sins. You explain that everyone should obey Jesus because He is the Son of God. The man wants to know how you know this information. You inform him that the Bible, the inspired Word of God, declares it to be true. He wants to know two things: (1) How can you prove that there is a God?; and (2) How can you prove that the Bible is His Word? He is not being belligerent or cantankerous; he simply wants some good evidence that would warrant the total overhaul of his life you are asking him to make.

It is now your responsibility to present solid, rational arguments that prove the things you have affirmed. You must defend the propositions you have presented. You are appointed for the **defense** of the Gospel (Philippians 1:17, NKJV).

The term “apologetics” derives from the Greek word *apologia*, which means “to defend” or “to make a defense.” Thus, apologetics is a discipline dedicated to the defense of something. There can be as many different types of apologetics as there are beliefs in the world: atheistic apologetics, Hindu apologetics, Buddhist apologetics, Christian apologetics, *ad infinitum*. However, generally when the discipline is discussed, most people associate it with **Christian** apologetics. Therefore, for the remainder of this discussion, when I use the term apologetics, I will be referring specifically to Christian apologetics.

What is apologetics? Christian philosopher Dick Sztanyo has suggested: “Apologetics is the proclamation and defense of the gospel of Christ regardless of whenever, wherever, and by whomever it is challenged.” The apostle Peter used apologetics when he appealed to the empty tomb on Pentecost. Paul used apologetics when he quoted the stoic poets to draw attention to God’s existence as he addressed the Athenians. Christ used apologetics when He appealed to a Roman coin to prove that Jews should pay taxes. We can see, then, that the word apologetics carries no hint of “apologizing”—in the sense of being sorry or ashamed. On the contrary, the word houses the exact opposite idea of intelligent vindication by vigorous argument. In fact, Paul stated in 2 Corinthians 10:4-5: “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, **casting down**

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Discussion Questions:

1. Explain how scientific accuracy is an evidence of divine inspiration.
2. Explain how historical and geographical accuracy is an evidence of divine inspiration.
3. Explain how internal harmony and consistency is an evidence of divine inspiration.
4. How does the book of Mormon hold up regarding the above standards?
5. How can stylistic differences be explained in light of the Bible’s claim of Holy Spirit inspiration?

ALLEGED SLIPS

Over a span of many centuries, hostile critics of the Bible have charged the sacred writers with “nodding.” Time after time, however, when the true facts have come to light, the Scriptures have been vindicated. Reflect upon a few examples of such.

The Genesis record declares that while he was in Egypt, Pharaoh presented Abraham with some camels (Genesis 12:16). Liberal writers disputed this. T.K. Cheyne wrote: “The assertion that the ancient Egyptians knew of the camel is unfounded” (1899, 1:634). Professor Kenneth Kitchen has shown, however, that “the extant evidence clearly indicates that the domestic camel was known [in Egypt] by 3,000 B.C.”—long before Abraham’s time (1980, 1:228).

On several occasions in the book of Genesis it is recorded that Abraham and Isaac had associations with the Philistines (cf. Genesis 21; 26). Liberal scholars consider these references to be anachronistic (details from a later age inappropriately inserted into the patriarchal account). H.T. Frank characterized the allusions as “an historical inaccuracy” (1964, p. 323). It has been shown, however, that “Philistine” was a rather generic term and that there is no valid reason to doubt that these groups were in Canaan before the arrival of the main body in the early twelfth century B.C. (Unger, 1954, p. 91; Archer, 1964, p. 266; Harrison, 1963, p. 32). Harrison noted that the archaeological evidence “suggests that it is a mistake to regard the mention of the Philistines in the patriarchal narratives as an anachronism” (1983, p. 362).

Elsewhere, I have catalogued no less than twenty major “slips” with which the biblical writers have been charged (Jackson, 1982). Each has evaporated with the passing of time and the exhumation of evidence.

Yes, even the noble Homer may nod; those guided by the Spirit of God, however, never did. You can trust the Bible!

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arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.” Apologetics vigorously defends the truth by refuting arguments that exalt themselves above God’s Word.

What tools, then, can apologetics use to “cast down” faulty arguments? Its toolbox is as endlessly deep as it is long. Any discipline—from astronomy to zoology—can be called upon to come to the aid of apologetics. Just as Peter used the physical evidence of the empty tomb, just as Paul used contemporary literature, and just as Jesus used an inscription on a coin, modern apologists can use archaeology, literature, science, morality, technology, and countless other facets of human life to defend Christianity. A small child can watch ants hard at work and testify to the wisdom of the book of Proverbs. An astrophysicist can contemplate the Second Law of Thermodynamics and maintain that the world will not last forever. An archaeologist can find an ancient inscription about a people known as the Hittites and assert that the Bible has accurate information about this ancient group of people. A professor of literature can read poetry from ages past and ascertain that mankind always has desired to worship a Creator Who is infinitely higher than humanity. From the heights of the mountains to the depths of the oceans, facts surface that provide an ample array of ammunition that can be fired from the cannon of apologetics.

However, the machinery of apologetics can operate only on the fuel of reason, for without reason apologetics has no sure foundation. The *Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary* defines reason as “the power of comprehending, inferring, or thinking, especially in orderly, rational ways.” Paul contrasted reason with insanity in Acts 26:24-25: “Now as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, ‘Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!’ But he said, ‘I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason.’” God and His spokesmen always have spoken rational, reasonable truths. God employed reason to convince Isaiah’s listeners of their sin: “ ‘Come now, and let us reason together,’ says the Lord, ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow’ ” (Isaiah 1:18). When Samuel spoke to the Israelites at the coronation of Saul, he said: “Now therefore, stand still, that I may reason with you before the Lord concerning all the righteous acts of the Lord which He did to you and your fathers” (1 Samuel 12:7). From the dawn of time, God presented man with the facts, and then allowed man to use reason to reach cor-

rect conclusions. Thus, Romans 1:20 states: “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being **understood** by the things that are made....” Reason provides for the removal of all contradictory and fallacious arguments, leaving only those facts that are consistent and correct.

The Christian religion, at its core, is based upon historically verifiable facts. The Bible is not a sourcebook of wise proverbs that somehow stand upon their own merit. Without an establishment of the facts concerning the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the Word of God as we know it—even with all of its sound wisdom and practical guidance—is nothing more than a devotional book full of helpful platitudes that deserves to be placed on the shelf next to the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series. By using historical facts that are consistent and correct, apologetics makes its defense by appealing to man’s capacity to reason. God never has desired that His human creatures blindly accept unreasonable propositions postulated by perverse persons. He does not want us to be “children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive (Ephesians 4:14). On the contrary, He demands that we “test all things; hold fast what is good” (2 Thessalonians 5:21). In the end, however, apologetics can soften only the hearts of those who agree to be honest with themselves and to deal honestly and reasonably with the available evidence. There is much truth in the old adage: “A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still.”

<http://www.apologeticspress.org/APContent.aspx?category=139&article=826>

Discussion Questions:

1. What tools do you feel you need to be further equipped with, to help in your defense of truth?
2. Why do you think the secular world considers Christians to be unreasonable and superstitious?
3. Is it logical or reasonable to deny the inspiration of scripture, and the claims it contains, and still consider the Bible to be valuable or helpful?
4. Is a pursuit of verifiable truth reasonable? Attainable? Relevant to our needs and time?

lips was a good hygienic policy” (1978, p. 255). Concerning Moses’ procedures for quarantining, Dr. William Vis has written:

To show how far Moses was ahead of modern society we need only to remind ourselves that the word quarantine originated in the fourteenth century when the Italian ports of Venice and Genoa first refused admission to immigrants who might be harboring plague and required them to stay on board for forty days, hence the word quarantine. Even in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries leprosy spread over southern Europe until the principles of Moses were re-enacted successfully (1950, p. 244).

(3) When the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* first was published, it had so many mistakes relative to American geography and topography that the publishers of the *New American Cyclopedia* issued a special pamphlet correcting the numerous blunders of its British rival. J.W. McGarvey once noted that when Tacitus wrote his celebrated work, *Germany*, which dealt with the geography, manners, customs, and tribes of Germany, it contained so many errors that many were inclined to doubt that this well-known Roman historian could have produced such a flawed volume (1956, 3:26-27). The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* stated concerning Tacitus’ work that “the geography is its weak point” (1958, 21:736).

The biblical writings contain literally hundreds of references to geography and topography relating to those lands that the prophets and apostles traversed. For example, we are quite casual in our topographical allusions. One is said to travel from Atlanta up to Chicago, whereas Chicago is almost 500 feet lower than Atlanta. Usually we speak of going “up” north and “down” south. With the biblical writers, elevation references always are precise. One travels from Jerusalem (in the south) “down” to Antioch, some 150 miles to the north (Acts 15:1-2). Not once is there a geographical or topographical blunder in the sacred volume, in spite of the fact that the ancients did not possess the sophisticated instruments that we have today.

Here is another amazing fact. In the book of Acts, the historian Luke mentions thirty-two countries, fifty-four cities, and nine of the Mediterranean islands (Metzger, 1965, p. 171). There is not the slightest mistake in any of his references. Luke has been criticized over the centuries to be sure; his influence has increased, however, while his critics’ credibility has decreased!

ally flawless. The Mosaic narrative asserts that the Universe had a “beginning” (1:1), which is perfectly consistent with the Second Law of Thermodynamics. Contrast this with the *Enuma Elish*, the Babylonian creation tablets, which asserts the eternity of matter (see Pfeiffer, 1966, p. 226). The Genesis record affirms that creation activity was concluded by the end of the sixth day (2:1-3). Science says, as per the First Law of Thermodynamics, that nothing is being created today. No less than ten times Genesis 1 affirms that biological organisms replicate “after [their] kind.” In passing, we must note that modern pseudoscience (i.e., the theory of evolution) is dependent upon the notion that in the past organisms have reproduced after their **non**-kind! The biblical account, however, is perfectly in harmony with the known laws of genetics.

(2) The medical knowledge revealed in the Bible record truly is astounding. It is well known, for instance, that in the antique world, medicine was based upon myth and superstition. This was true both in Babylon and in Egypt. For example the *Papyrus Ebers* (from the sixteenth century B.C.), edited by Georg M. Ebers in 1874, offered some very strange remedies for various illnesses. Here is a prescription for folks who are losing their hair: “When it falls out, one remedy is to apply a mixture of six fats, namely those of the horse, the hippopotamus, the crocodile, the cat, the snake, and the ibex. To strengthen it, anoint with the tooth of a donkey crushed in honey” (as quoted in McMillen, 1963, p. 11). Even the Edwin Smith *Surgical Papyrus*, one of the more sophisticated examples of Egyptian medical “science,” contains a spell for “transforming an old man into a youth of twenty.”

In spite of the fact that Moses was reared in an Egyptian environment, and “was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians” (Acts 7:22), not one time did the great law-giver incorporate any of this magical mumbo-jumbo into the Scriptures. On the contrary, Moses was far ahead of his time in terms of medicine and sanitation. A careful study of Leviticus 13, with reference to certain skin diseases, reveals some rather modern techniques, e.g., diagnosis of certain symptoms, treatment to lessen spread (e.g., disinfection), and quarantine. No other law code in the whole of ancient history came anywhere near rivaling these health regulations. Consider, for instance, the fact that the “leper” was required to “cover his upper lip” (Leviticus 13:45). Dr. J.S. Morton has noted: “Since the leprosy bacilli are transmitted from nasal drippings and saliva, this practice of having lepers cover their upper

The Inspiration of the Bible

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Introduction

- **The Bible claims inspiration for itself** (*2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Hebrews 1:1-2; John 16:13; 2 Peter 3:14-16; 1 Peter 1:22-25*)
- **“Inspiration of God”** — (*theopneustos*) - divinely breathed (verbal and plenary)

Evidences

- **Historical and Factual Accuracy**
 - Since the Bible claims inspiration, and basis in fact, an examination of historical and geographical facts will serve to either corroborate or invalidate its claims. (*Some examples of such accuracy include:*)
 - *Hezekiah’s tunnel*, made in preparation for a siege by the Assyrians (2 Kings 20:20; 2 Chronicles 32:30). The tunnel still exists. An inscription found near the exit in 1880 describes its construction. Also, the Taylor Prism, discovered in 1830 in Nineveh, details Sennacherib’s siege of Jerusalem.
 - *Omri, King of Israel* (1 Kings 16:21-28), *his son Ahab and Moabite King Mesha* (2 Kings 3:4-6) are validated by the discovery of the Moabite Stone in 1868.
 - *Cyrus humanity toward the Jews* (Ezra 1:1-11), verified by the discovery of an inscription as part of the Cyrus cylinder, discovered in 1879.
 - *Pontius Pilate* as prelate of Judea (Matthew 27:11-14). Corroborated by Pilate inscription at Caesarea, 1961.
 - *Politarchs in Thessalonica* (Acts 17:5-6). Luke’s use of the term for the rulers unverified by history until the discovery

of an inscription on an arch from a gate leading into the city (Vadar Gate), dated between 30 B.C.—143 A.D. was found with the term, 1867.

- *Use of nails in Christ's crucifixion* (John 20:25). Verified by the discovery of a nail imbedded into the heel of a crucifixion victim from that period in an ossuary box, 1968.
- *Gallio, proconsul of Achaia* (Acts 18:12). Verified by letter written by Emperor Claudius to Gallio, identifying him as proconsul of Achaia, discovered in Delphi, 1905.
- **Note:** The Bible is well recognized for the geographical accuracy of its text. *"Here is another amazing fact. In the book of Acts, the historian Luke mentions thirty-two countries, fifty-four cities, and nine of the Mediterranean islands (Metzger, 1965, p. 171). There is not the slightest mistake in any of his references. Luke has been criticized over the centuries to be sure; his influence has increased, however, while his critics' credibility has decreased!"* (Wayne Jackson, AP).
- While a significant number of cities, individuals and events referenced in scripture remain unverified (and subsequently denied as plausible by skeptics) with each archaeological discovery, the text of the Bible is reinforced as accurate. As such, its claims of inspiration are strengthened.
- **Scientific Foreknowledge**
 - While the Bible is not a science textbook, there are a number of examples of scientific foreknowledge contained in its pages that give indication of its inspiration. *(A few examples:)*
 - *Circumcision on the 8th day* (Genesis 17:12). The 8th day has been verified as the day an infant is least likely to have excessive bleeding, due to increased levels of Vitamin K and prothrombin. In fact, under normal circumstances, the level of prothrombin in the blood is at its highest for a male on that single day.
 - *Dietary restrictions* (example, Pork — Leviticus 11:7-8). Un-

of God makes no such blunders. Again, according to the *Book of Mormon*, a man by the name of Nephi was using a "compass" to find his direction in the sixth century B.C. (1 Nephi 16:10; 2 Nephi 5:12). It is well known, of course, that the mariner's compass was not in use until at least a thousand years after the birth of Christ. This is a critical anachronism in Mormonism's "sacred" book. Joseph Smith Jr. also taught that there were people living on the Moon—six feet tall, dressed like Quakers, and with a life span of 1,000 years (Huntington, 1892, 3:263). Brigham Young, Smith's successor, when asked about this matter, concurred, suggesting that such beings lived on the Sun as well (Young, 13:271).

Mary Baker Eddy founded the "Christian Science" movement. She produced a book, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, which she claimed was co-authored by God. But Mrs. Eddy more than nodded when, in that volume, she wrote: "Man is not matter—made up of brains, blood, bones, and other material elements.... Man is spiritual and perfect; and because of this, he must be so understood in Christian Science.... Man is incapable of sin, sickness, and death" (1934, p. 475). In spite of her denial of human mortality, she died December 3, 1910.

I cannot conclude this section without acknowledging my own fallibility. When I penned my little book, *Biblical Studies in the Light of Archaeology* (1982), I stated that "**Henry** Winckler" of the German Orient Society discovered the ancient Hittite capital of Boghazkoy. That was a "slip." It was "**Hugo** Winckler," not "Henry." Henry Winkler was the "Fonz" of the old "Happy Days" television show! This merely demonstrated what many had suspected already—I am not inspired of God!

BIBLICAL ACCURACY

By way of glaring contrast, the holy writers of the biblical records never "nodded." Their works are characterized by a razor-sharp accuracy that defies explanation, save on the ground that they were controlled by the Spirit of God. Consider the following factors.

(1) The first two chapters of the Bible contain the divine record of the commencement of the Universe, including the Earth and its inhabitants. Though it was penned thirty-five centuries ago, there is not a syllable in this account that is at variance with any demonstrable fact of science. Any book on astronomy or Earth science, penned fifty years ago, already is obsolete. And yet Genesis, simple and sublime, is factu-

of Hezekiah, king of Judah. The poet slipped, though, because the rebel monarch Sennacherib was not destroyed when Jehovah's messenger smote that vast heathen camp. The king was several miles away at Lachish when the destruction occurred. He eventually returned to his home in the east and was slain by his own sons—in fulfillment, incidentally, of sacred prophecy (2 Kings 19:7; 36-37).

Adam Clarke was probably the most famous scholar produced by the Methodist Church. He spent forty years writing his famous *Commentary on the Holy Bible*. As meticulous as he was, Clarke occasionally erred. For example, in commenting on Genesis 1:16, he suggested that the Moon has streams and vegetation, and is inhabited by intelligent beings. Our modern space explorations have proved that speculation quite erroneous. Clarke also stated that Jewish historian Josephus never mentioned the Syrian soldier, Naaman. He was wrong, though, because Josephus asserted that the warrior who mortally wounded Ahab, by shooting an arrow randomly into the air, was Naaman (*Antiquities*, 8.15.5).

Alexander Cruden produced a widely used concordance of the English Bible, a task for which he was well qualified by virtue of many years of scripture study (even though, at times, he suffered from emotional illness). Yet in his volume, *Explanations of Scripture Terms*, concerning the whale Cruden wrote: "The [whale is the] greatest of the fishes that we know of " (1840, p. 366). He erred. Actually, the whale is a mammal, and not a fish at all.

The religion of Islam claims that the Qur'an is inspired of God. Clearly, however, it is not, for it is flawed by many examples of "nodding." For instance, the Qur'an suggests that the human fetus results from "sperm" [no mention of an egg] that changes into "a clot of congealed blood," which then becomes bones, later to be covered with flesh (*sura* 23:14). This hardly is an accurate description of fetal development.

The *Book of Mormon* is revered by millions of "Latter-Day Saints." It purports to be an infallible revelation from God given to Joseph Smith Jr. by an angel of the Lord. Whoever composed the narrative, however, "nodded" more than once (one almost is tempted to say he lapsed into a coma!). For instance, in Alma 7:10 it is said that Jesus Christ was born in **Jerusalem**. But, as every school child knows, the Lord was born in that "little town of Bethlehem" (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1). The Spirit

dercooked pork is known to be dangerous to humans, due to the presence of parasites. (Note: Archaeologists concede that no other civilizations as ancient as the Hebrews had such complex rules and regulations regarding diet and hygiene).

- *Quarantine of lepers* (Leviticus 13). The word quarantine originated in the 14th century, and its usefulness unknown in the middle ages. In fact in the 17th & 18th centuries, leprosy spread in southern Europe until Moses' restrictions began to be implemented.
- *Ocean trenches* (Genesis 7:11; Job 38:16; Psalm 135:6). It was not until 1873 that the first example of prodigiously deep trenches was uncovered, at 35,800 feet.
- *Touching dead bodies* (Leviticus 19:11-12). In 1873, an Austrian obstetrician reduced mortality rates in the maternity ward of his hospital (from 18% to 1% in three months) by requiring doctors to wash their hands in a chlorine solution between examinations. Before, they had been going directly from post-mortems to internal examinations, after only dipping their hands in dirty water, and wiping them on a common towel.
- **Note:** It is important not to abuse this area of proof. Verses that are figurative in nature, and arguments that are either speculative or downright silly have been used to the detriment of the faith. There is no need for this, as the evidence regarding the Bible's credibility is sufficient. (See article excerpt, *Scientific Foreknowledge and the Bible*).

• **Fulfilled Prophecy**

- The credibility of the prophet is based upon whether his prophecy comes true (*Deuteronomy 18:20-22; Isaiah 41:22*).

Consider the following quote (*In Defense of...the Bible's Inspiration*, by Bert Thompson)

In order for a prophecy to be valid, it must meet certain criteria. First, it must be a specific, detailed declaration, as

opposed to being nebulous, vague, or general in nature. Arthur Pierson wrote: “The particulars of the prophecy should be so many and minute that there shall be no possibility of accounting by shrewd guess-work for the accuracy of the fulfillment” (1913, pp. 75-76). Bernard Ramm has suggested: “The prophecy must be more than a good guess or a conjecture. It must possess sufficient precision as to be capable of verification by means of the fulfillment” (1971, p. 82). Second, there must be a sufficient amount of time between the prophetic statement and its fulfillment. Suggestions as to what “might” happen in the future do not qualify as prophetic pronouncements. Rather, the prophecy must precede the fulfillment in a significant fashion, and there must be no chance whatsoever of the prophet having the ability to influence the outcome.

Third, the prophecy must be stated in clear, understandable terms. Roger Dickson has noted: “Prophecies must be sufficiently clear in order for the observer to be able to link pronouncement with fulfillment. If a prophecy is not understandable enough so as to allow the observer to depict its fulfillment, then what good would the prophecy be?” (1997, p. 346). Fourth, the prophecy must not have historical overtones. In other words, true prophecy should not be based on past (or current) societal or economic conditions. Pierson amplified this point by stating that: “There should have been nothing in previous history which makes it possible to forecast a like event in the future” (1913, p. 75). Fifth, a clear, understandable, exact prophecy must have a clear, understandable, exact fulfillment. It is not enough to suggest that a certain event came true with a “high degree of probability.” The fulfillment must be unmistakable, and must match the prophecy in every detail.

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- Contrasted with psychics, mystics, astrologers and the false prophets of modern religion, the Bible prophets predictions

deer!

Aristotle, the famous Greek scholar of the fourth century B.C., was renowned for his knowledge. Yet he made some colossal speculative blunders. In his work titled *Parts of Animals*, he argued that within the human body, man’s soul is “lodged in some substance of a fiery character.” He contended that the brain “is a compound of earth and water.” He further suggested that sleep is caused by the blood flowing into the brain, thus making it heavy. This, he declared, “is the reason why drowsy persons hang the head” (Book II, Chapter 3).

Marcus Porcius Cato was a Roman statesman who died about the mid-second century B.C. His famous work, *De agri cultura* (“On Farming”), has survived. In one passage (71) he gave a remedy for treating an ailing ox. It consisted of forcing down the ox a raw hen egg, swallowed whole, followed the next day by a concoction of leek and wine. However, this treatment—in order to be efficacious—absolutely had to be administered from a wooden vessel while both the ox and the administrator were standing (cited by Sarton, 1959, p. 408). It is obvious that the method of administration would have nothing to do with the curative value of Cato’s concoction. Yet such is the nature of human superstition.

Flavius Josephus was a Jewish writer who authored several works regarding the Hebrew nation, its fortunes, and its fate. Though considered a respectable historian for his day, he frequently slipped. For instance he declared that during the siege of Jerusalem (A.D. 70), a heifer, being led to be sacrificed in the temple, gave birth to a lamb (*Wars*, 6.3). Josephus also spoke of a certain place in Egypt where fierce serpents “ascend out of the ground unseen, and also fly in the air” (*Antiquities*, 2.10.2).

Samuel Johnson was the author of the first bona fide English dictionary. He also produced a *Grammar of the English Tongue*. In that work, the celebrated writer stated that the letter “H seldom, perhaps never, begins any but the first syllable” of a word. Regrettably he had not noticed that “h” commenced the **second** syllable in “perhaps.” His humiliation must have been keen.

The famous poet, Lord Byron, wrote a magnificent composition that he titled, “The Destruction of Sennacherib.” In beautiful rhyme this literary masterpiece dramatically told of the devastating deaths of the 185,000 Assyrian soldiers who once threatened Jerusalem in the days

Supplementary Articles

with Discussion Questions

Homer Sometimes Nodded, but the Bible Writers Never Did!

Wayne Jackson

Horace (65-8 B.C.), a Latin lyric poet, wrote: “Sometimes even the noble Homer nods” (*Ars Poetica*, 1.359). Homer was the blind Greek poet of the eighth century B.C., so well known for his works, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. What Horace suggested was this: As accomplished as Homer was, he sometimes erred with reference to the facts of the incidents he mentioned.

More than a quarter of a century ago, the late B.C. Goodpasture, respected editor of the *Gospel Advocate* for some thirty-eight years, published an article in that journal titled “Homer Sometimes Nods” (1970). The thrust of this fascinating essay was to show that human authors, regardless of their genius and skill, are fallible. Thus, in spite of their consummate care, they will “nod” or “slip” on occasion. By way of contrast, the writers of the biblical record never “nodded.” Even though many of them were not professional scholars (cf. Acts 4:13), nonetheless they wrote with astounding precision. The only reasonable conclusion the honest student may draw is this: **their work was overseen by the Spirit of God.** [I acknowledge my indebtedness to the revered Goodpasture for the idea embodied in this article, and for a few of the examples that illustrate the concept developed.]

TO ERR IS HUMAN

A poet once quipped: “To err is human....” How very true. Humans err. God does not. And that is why the careful student can discern clearly the difference between a document that is a mere human composition, and one which was penned under the guidance of the infallible Creator of the Universe.

Herodotus was a Greek historian of the fifth century B.C. Cicero called him “the father of history.” He wrote nine books dealing with the Greek and Persian wars, together with a history of the customs and geography of those empires. In one of his writings, Herodotus claimed that the reason the oxen in Sythia grew no horns was because it was too cold there (4.29). Apparently, he never had heard of rein-

always came true! (*Some examples follow:*)

- Approximately 100 years before it happened, Jeremiah prophesied in great detail about the destruction of Babylon, from a siege by Cyrus in 539 B.C. (*cf. Jeremiah 50-51*)
- Ezekiel foretold the complete destruction of the city of Tyre in great detail. (*Ezekiel 26*). Secular history verifies not only the destruction, but the amazing accuracy regarding even the details of his prophecy.
- In 550 B.C., Daniel’s vision (*Daniel 8*) correctly predicted the rise of the Medo-Persian empire, the Macedonian Empire, together with Alexander the Great and the four rulers who followed, and finally the rise of Antiochus Epiphanes IV, intimating even the nature of his death. Again, secular history clearly reveals the accuracy of the vision.
- Other prophecies and their fulfillment are referenced internally in scripture. These are likewise indications of the inspired nature of the prophetic utterance, they include:
 - Approximately 300 messianic prophecies, fulfilled by Jesus Christ. These include references to: His tribe (*Genesis 49:10; Hebrews 7:14*), His royal lineage (*2 Samuel 7:12; Luke 1:32*), His place of birth (*Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1*), His virgin birth (*Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:22*), His Galilean ministry (*Isaiah 9:1-2*), His forerunner (*Isaiah 40:3; Matthew 3:1-3*), the time of His appearance (*Daniel 2:44; Luke 2:1*), details about His betrayal (*Isaiah 53:3; Psalm 41:9; Zechariah 11:12; John 13:18; Matthew 26:15*), His suffering and death (*Isaiah 50:6; 53:5; Psalm 22:16; Isaiah 53:12; Psalm 22:7-8; 22:18; Matthew 27:30; Luke 24:39; Matthew 27:38; Matthew 27:39,48*), His burial (*Isaiah 53:9; Matthew 27:57*), His resurrection (*Psalm 16:10; Acts 2:22ff.*), and His ascension (*Psalm 110:1-3; 45:6; Acts 1:9-10*).
 - Prophecies concerning the establishment of the Kingdom of Christ (*Daniel 2:44; Isaiah 2:1-4; Mark 9:1; Acts*

2:1-21)

- These are only a small sampling, but serve as a powerful witness to the inspiration of scripture (*Jeremiah 28:9*)
- **Uniformity in Purpose and Teaching**
 - The Bible was written over a period of 1600 years, a period of about 40 generations, by over 40 different authors with different backgrounds, occupations and education.
 - Moses was a political leader, educated in Egypt; Amos was a herdsman; Joshua was a military general; Nehemiah was a cupbearer to a king; Daniel was a prime minister; Solomon was a king.
 - Peter was a fisherman; Luke was a physician; Paul was a tentmaker and well educated Roman citizen.
 - Moses wrote in the wilderness; Jeremiah wrote in a dungeon; Daniel wrote in a palace; Luke wrote while traveling; Paul wrote while in prison; John wrote while exiled on Patmos.
 - David wrote in times of war, while his son Solomon wrote in times of peace. Some authors wrote while in the throes of woe and despair, others at the height of joy.
 - The Bible was written by men on three different continents (Asia, Africa, Europe), in three different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek).
 - The Bible deals with extremely controversial topics such as: The origins of the universe, God's nature, Sin, and the Redemption of man.
 - Despite all of this diversity in background there is a remarkable harmony found in the writings of the Bible. This harmony goes from the fall of man in Genesis, to the ultimate exaltation of man revealed at the end of the book of Revelation.
 - There is a scarlet thread of redemption that is woven throughout the entire Bible

- In contrast, try to get 5 people (even of the same background) to write on such topics, and see if there is the same uniformity and agreement!

- The point? The Bible has 1 author, the Holy Spirit (*2 Peter 1:20-21*)

Conclusion: The historical and geographical accuracy of the Bible, its foreknowledge of scientific principles despite not being a textbook, its accuracy in predicting the future, its uniformity in purpose and teaching—all point to inspiration.

- This remarkable record stands in stark contrast to the efforts of mere men (see article, *Homer Sometimes Nodded...*)
- There is a level of accuracy, prescience and uniformity that can only be explained by divine authorship.