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In Defense of...the Bible's Inspiration [Part II]

by Bert Thompson, Ph.D.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: Part I of this two-part series appeared in the [May](#) issue. Part II follows below and continues, without introductory comments, where the first article ended.]

The Factual Accuracy of the Bible

The Bible claims to be the inspired Word of God. Therefore, it should be accurate in whatever subject(s) it discusses, since God is not the Author of confusion and contradiction (1 Corinthians 14:33), but of truth (John 17:17). The factual accuracy of the Bible proves that it **is** accurate. Time and again the Bible's facts have withstood the test. Examples abound.

Numerous passages indicate that Moses wrote the Pentateuch (2 Chronicles 34:14; Ezra 6:18; Nehemiah 13:1; Exodus 17:14; John 5:46; Mark 12:26). Having been adopted by the royal family of Egypt, he would have had access to the finest schools, best tutors, and greatest libraries that country had to offer, thus securing for himself an impressive education (see Acts 7:22). Yet Bible critics suggested that Moses could not have written the Pentateuch because the art of writing was not developed until well after his death (c. 1451 B.C.). This criticism, however, has been blunted by a plethora of archaeological discoveries. In 1933, J.L. Starkey, who had studied under famed archaeologist W.M.F. Petrie, excavated the city of Lachish, which had figured prominently in Joshua's conquest of Canaan (Joshua 10). Among other things, he unearthed a pottery water pitcher "inscribed with a dedication in eleven archaic letters, the earliest 'Hebrew' inscription known" (Cheyne, 1899, 2:1055). Pfeiffer has noted: "The Old, or palaeo-Hebrew script is the form of writing which is similar to that used by the Phoenicians. A royal inscription of King Shaphatball of Gebal (Byblos) in this alphabet dates from about 1600 B.C." (1966, p. 33). In 1949, C.F.A. Schaeffer "found a table at Ras Shamra containing the thirty letters of the Ugaritic alphabet in their proper order. It was discovered that the sequence of the Ugaritic alphabet was the same as modern Hebrew, revealing that the Hebrew alphabet goes back at least 3,500 years" (Jackson, 1982, p. 32).

The Code of Hammurabi, (c. 2000-1700 B.C.) was discovered by a French archaeological expedition under the direction of Jacques de Morgan in 1901-1902 at the ancient site of Susa in what is now Iran. It was written on a piece of black diorite nearly eight feet high, and contained 282 sections. Free and Vos have stated:

The Code of Hammurabi was written several hundred years before the time of Moses (c. 1500-1400 B.C.).... This code, from the period 2000-1700 B.C., contains advanced laws similar to those in the Mosaic laws.... In view of this archaeological evidence, the destructive critic can no longer insist that the laws of Moses are too advanced for his time (1992, pp. 103, 55).

The Code of Hammurabi established beyond doubt that writing was known hundreds of years before Moses. In fact, the renowned Jewish historian, Josephus, confirmed that Moses authored the Pentateuch (*Against Apion*, 1,8), and various non-Christian writers (Hecataeus, Manetha, Lysimachus, Eupolemus, Tacitus, Juvenal, and Longinus, to name only a few), credited Moses as having authored the first five books of the English Bible (see Rawlinson, 1877, pp. 254ff.).

In days of yore, detractors accused Isaiah of having made a historical mistake when he wrote of Sargon as king of Assyria (Isaiah 20:1). For years, this remained the sole historical reference—secular or biblical—to Sargon having been linked with the Assyrian nation. Thus, critics assumed Isaiah had erred. But in 1843, Paul Emile Botta, the French consular agent at Mosul, working with Austen Layard, unearthed historical evidence that established Sargon as having been exactly what Isaiah said he was—king of the Assyrians. At Khorsabad, Botta discovered Sargon's

palace. Apparently, from what scholars have been able to piece together from archaeological and historical records, Sargon made his capital successively at Ashur, Calah, Nineveh, and finally at Khorsabad, where his palace was constructed in the closing years of his reign (c. 706 B.C.). The walls of the palace were adorned quite intricately with ornate text that described the events of his reign. Today, an artifact from the palace—a forty-ton stone bull (slab)—is on display at the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute ("weighty" evidence of Sargon's existence). Isaiah had been correct all along. And the critics had been wrong—all along.

One of the most famous archaeologists of the last century was Sir William Ramsay, who disputed the accuracy of events recorded by Luke in the book of Acts. Ramsay believed those events to be little more than second-century, fictitious accounts. Yet after years of literally digging through the evidence in Asia Minor, Ramsay concluded that Luke was an exemplary historian. In the decades since Ramsay, other scholars have suggested that Luke's historical background of the New Testament is among the best ever produced. As Wayne Jackson has noted:

In Acts, Luke mentions thirty-two countries, fifty-four cities, and nine Mediterranean islands. He also mentions ninety-five persons, sixty-two of which are not named elsewhere in the New Testament. And his references, where checkable, are always correct. This is truly remarkable, in view of the fact that the political/territorial situation of his day was in a state of almost constant change. Only inspiration can account for Luke's precision (1991b, 27[1]:2).

Other Bible critics have suggested that Luke misspoke when he designated Sergius Paulus as proconsul of Cyprus (Acts 13:7). Their claim was that Cyprus was governed by a *propraetor* (also known as a consular legate), not a proconsul. Upon further examination, such a charge can be seen to be utterly vacuous, as Thomas Eaves has documented.

As we turn to the writers of history for that period, Dio Cassius (*Roman History*) and Strabo (*The Geography of Strabo*), we learn that there were two periods of Cyprus' history: first, it was an imperial province governed by a *propraetor*, and later in 22 B.C., it was made a senatorial province governed by a proconsul. Therefore, the historians support Luke in his statement that Cyprus was ruled by a proconsul, for it was between 40-50 A.D. when Paul made his first missionary journey. If we accept secular history as being true we must also accept Biblical history for they are in agreement (1980, p. 234).

The science of archaeology seems to have outdone itself in verifying the Scriptures. Famed archaeologist William F. Albright wrote: "There can be no doubt that archaeology has confirmed the substantial historicity of the Old Testament tradition" (1953, p. 176). Nelson Glueck, himself a pillar within the archaeological community, said: "It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference. Scores of archaeological findings have been made which conform in clear outline or exact detail historical statements in the Bible" (1959, p. 31). Such statements, offered 30+ years ago, are as true today as the day they were made. Jerry Moffitt has observed:

Over thirty names (emperors, high priests, Roman governors, princes, etc.) are mentioned in the New Testament, and all but a handful have been verified. In every way the Bible accounts have been found accurate (though vigorously challenged). In no single case does the Bible let us down in geographical accuracy. Without one mistake, the Bible lists around forty-five countries. Each is accurately placed and named. About the same number of cities are named and no one mistake can be listed. Further, about thirty-six towns are mentioned, and most have been identified. Wherever accuracy can be checked, minute detail has been found correct—every time! (1993, p. 129).

The Hittites are mentioned over forty times in Scripture (Exodus 23:28; Joshua 1:4; et al.), and were so feared that on one occasion they caused the Syrians to flee from Israel (2 Kings 7:6). Yet critics suggested that Hittites were a figment of the Bible writers' imaginations, since no evidence of their existence had been located. But in the late 1800s, A.H. Sayce discovered inscriptions in Syria that he designated as Hittite. Then, in 1906, Hugh Winckler excavated Boghazkoy, Turkey and discovered that the Hittite capital had been located on that very site. His find was all the more powerful because of the more than 10,000 clay tablets contained in the ancient city's library,

containing the society's law system that eventually came to be known as the Hittite Code. Thus, Ira Price wrote of the Hittites:

The lack of extra-biblical testimony to their existence led some scholars about a half-century ago to deny their historicity. They scoffed at the idea of Israel allying herself with such an unhistorical people as the Hittites, as narrated in 2 Kings vii.6. But those utterances have vanished into thin air (1907, pp. 75-76).

In his classic text, *Lands of the Bible*, J.W. McGarvey remarked:

A fictitious narrative, located in a country with which the writer 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 (1881, p. 375).

McGarvey then documented numerous instances in which the facts of the Bible can be checked, and in which it always passes the test. Are compass references accurate? Is Antioch of Syria "down" from Jerusalem, even though it lies to the north of the holy city (Acts 15:1)? Is the way from Jerusalem to Gaza "south" of Samaria (Acts 8:26)? Is Egypt "down" from Canaan (Genesis 12:10)? McGarvey noted that "in not a single instance of this kind has any of the Bible writers been found at fault" (p. 378). Further, as Wayne Jackson has commented:

In 1790, William Paley, the celebrated Anglican scholar, authored his famous volume, *Horae Paulinae (Hours with Paul)*. In this remarkable book, Paley demonstrated an amazing array of "undesigned coincidences" between the book of Acts and the epistles of Paul, which argue for the credibility of the Christian revelation. "These coincidences," said Paley, "which are often incorporated or intertwined in references and allusions, in which no art can be discovered, and no contrivance traced, furnish numerous proofs of the truth of both these works, and consequently that of Christianity" (1839 edition, p. xvi). In 1847, J.J. Blunt of Cambridge University released a companion volume titled, *Undesigned Coincidences in the Writings of Both the Old Testament and New Testament*. Professor Blunt argued that both Testaments contain numerous examples of "consistency without contrivance" which support the Scriptures' claim of a unified origin from a supernatural source, namely God (1884, p. vii) (1991a, pp. 2-3).

A sampling from Paley's and Blunt's books provides startling evidence of the fact that the writers could not have "contrived" their stories. Often the writers were separated from one another by centuries, yet their stories dovetail with astounding accuracy, and provide additional proof of the Bible's inspiration.

When Joseph was seventeen years old, he was sold into Egyptian slavery by his brothers. While serving in the house of an Egyptian named Potiphar, Joseph found himself the object of affection of Potiphar's wife, whose advances he rejected. Her anger aroused, she fabricated a story that resulted in Joseph's being thrown into prison where the king's captives were "bound" (Genesis 39:20). In the context of this passage, the word "bound" is of critical importance, because hundreds of years after the fact the psalmist would state of Joseph: "His feet they hurt with fetters: He was laid in chains of iron" (Psalm 105:18). Contrivance—or consistency?

When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to release the Israelites from bondage, God rained down plagues on the Egyptian monarch and his people, including a plague of hail that destroyed the **flax** in the fields (Exodus 9:31). Eventually, the Israelites were released, traveled to the wilderness of Sinai, were found faithless in God's sight, and were forced to wander for four decades while everyone over the age of twenty perished (except for the houses of Joshua and Caleb—Numbers 14:29-30). Finally, however, the Hebrews were allowed to enter the promised land of Canaan. The arrival of the younger generation was exactly forty years after Moses had led them out of Egypt (Joshua 4:19), and thus shortly before the anniversary of that eighth plague which destroyed the flax. The book of Joshua mentions that their entrance into Canaan was near harvest time (3:15). Interestingly, when spies were sent to investigate the city of Jericho, the Bible notes that they were concealed by Rahab under drying stalks of **flax** upon the rooftop of her house (Joshua 2:6). Coincidence—or concordance?

In Exodus 1:11, the story is told of how the Israelites were forced to build the treasure cities of Pithom and Raamses for the Egyptian ruler. Exodus 5 records that, initially, the slaves made bricks containing straw, but later were forced to use stubble because Pharaoh ordered his taskmasters not to provide any more straw. Excavations at Pithom in 1883 by Naville, and in 1908 by Kyle, discovered that the lower layers of the structures were made of bricks filled with good, chopped straw. The middle layers had less straw with some stubble. The upper layers contained bricks that were made of pure clay, with no straw whatsoever (see Pfeiffer, 1966, p. 459). Contrivance—or correctness?

The Tell-el-Armarna Tablets (c. 1450 B.C.) record the custom of bowing down seven times when meeting a superior. Thus the statement in Genesis 33:3—"And he [Jacob] himself passed over before them, and bowed himself to the ground **seven times**, until he came near to his brother [Esau]"—is confirmed as an act of respect. Coincidence—or consistency?

In at least two places, the Old Testament speaks of the Horites (Genesis 14:6; 36:21). Until approximately 1925, no one ever had heard of the Horites. Once again, however, archaeology revealed the factual accuracy of the Bible. About 1925, archaeological discoveries helped explain the existence of this formerly unknown nation. Free and Vos have commented that "Horite" derives from the Egyptian *Hurru*, which is "...a general term the Egyptians applied to southern Transjordan...", and that "...the Hebrews adopted it from the Egyptians" (1992, p. 66). Thus, both Egyptian and Hebrew cultures were intertwined with the Horites. Contrivance—or concordance?

On one occasion during His earthly ministry, Jesus miraculously provided a meal for more than 5,000 people. Mark records that the Lord seated the people upon the "green grass" (6:39). Such a statement agrees completely with John's reference to the fact that this event occurred near the time of the Passover (6:44), which is in the spring—exactly the time in Palestine when the grass should be green. Coincidence—or correctness?

In Acts 20:28, Luke described Paul's Roman imprisonment, and quoted the apostle as proclaiming: "...because of the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain." During this incarceration, Paul penned four important letters (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon). In his epistle to the Ephesians, Paul alluded to his "chain" (6:20). In Philippians he referred to his "bonds" (1:7,13-14,17). Similarly, see the references to his "bonds" in Colossians 4:3 and Philemon 1:13. Coincidence—or consistency?

In his second letter to Timothy, Paul admonished the young man by stating that "...from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:15). The reference to the "sacred writings" is an allusion to the Old Testament. Since Timothy had known those writings from his earliest days, certainly it would be safe to suggest that his background was Jewish. As a matter of fact, the book of Acts states Timothy was "the son of a Jewess that believed, but his father was a Greek" (Acts 16:1). Of further interest is the fact that when Paul commended Timothy for his strong faith (2 Timothy 1:5), he alluded to the spirituality of both the young man's mother and grandmother, yet made no mention of Timothy's father. Coincidence—or concordance?

In their book, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, Geisler and Nix wrote: "Confirmation of the Bible's accuracy in factual matters lends credibility to its claims when speaking on other subjects" (1986, p. 195). Indeed it does! After previewing most of the above facts, and others of a similar nature, Wayne Jackson concluded:

The Bible critic is likely to trivialize these examples as they are isolated from one another. When, however, literally hundreds and hundreds of these incidental details are observed to perfectly mesh, one begins to suspect that what have been called "undesigned coincidences" (from the human vantage point) become very obvious cases of divinely designed harmony—tiny footprints that lead only to the conclusion that God was the guiding Force behind the composition of the Sacred Scriptures (1991a, 11:3).

The Prophecy of the Bible

One of the most impressive internal proofs of the Bible's inspiration is its prophetic utterances. Rex A. Turner Sr.

has suggested:

Predictive prophecy is the highest evidence of divine revelation. The one thing that mortal man cannot do is to know and report future events in the absence of a train of circumstances that naturally suggest certain possibilities... (1989, p. 12).

If the Bible is inspired of God, it should contain valid, predictive prophecy. In fact, the Bible's prophecy—completely foretold to the minutest detail, and painstakingly fulfilled with the greatest precision—has confounded its critics for generations. The Bible contains prophecies about individuals, lands, nations, and even the predicted Messiah.

Thomas H. Horne defined predictive prophecy as "a miracle of knowledge, a declaration or representation of something future, beyond the power of human sagacity to discern or to calculate" (1970, 1:272). The Bible confirms that definition:

But the prophet, that shall speak a word presumptuously in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die. And if thou say in thy heart, How shall we know the word which Jehovah hath not spoken? when a prophet speaketh in the name of Jehovah, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which Jehovah hath not spoken: the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously, thou shalt not be afraid of him (Deuteronomy 18:20-22).

The prophet Isaiah based the credibility of his message on prophecy. To the promoters of idolatry in his day, he issued the following challenge: "Let them bring forth, and declare unto us what shall happen: declare ye the former things, what they are, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or show us things to come" (Isaiah 41:22). His point was this: It is one thing to make the prediction; it is entirely another to see that prediction actually come true and be corroborated by subsequent history.

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.

Two questions, then, are in order: (1) does the Bible employ predictive prophecy; and (2) if it does, can the predictive prophecy be proven true? The answer to both questions is a resounding "yes!" Further, the Bible's prophecy fits the above standards perfectly—each and every time. Consider just a few brief examples.

Within the Sacred Volume, numerous prophecies are presented regarding the rise, decline, and eventual fall of kings, cities, and even nations. (1) The Bible foretells the destruction of the city of Tyre with miraculous precision. Ezekiel predicted that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, would destroy the city (Ezekiel 26:7-8). Many nations were

to come up against Tyre (26:3). The city would be leveled and scraped clean like a bare rock (26:4). The city's stones, timbers, and soil would be cast into the sea (26:12). The surrounding area would become a place for the spreading of fishermen's nets (26:5). And, finally, the city never would be rebuilt to its former glory (26:14).

History records that each of these predictions came true. Tyre, a coastal city from ancient times, had a somewhat unusual arrangement. In addition to the inland city, there was an island about three-fourth's of a mile offshore. Nebuchadnezzar besieged the mainland city in 586 B.C., but when he finally was able to inhabit the city in about 573 B.C., his victory was hollow. Unbeknownst to him, the inhabitants had vacated the city and moved to the island—a situation that remained virtually unchanged for the next 241 years. Then, in 332 B.C., Alexander the Great conquered the city—but not with ease. To get to the island, he literally had his army "scrape clean" the inland city of its debris, and he then used those materials (stones, timbers, and soil) to build a causeway to the island. But even though Alexander inflicted severe damage on the city, it still remained intact. In fact, it waxed and waned for the next 1,600 years until finally, in A.D. 1291, the Muslims thoroughly crushed Tyre.

The city never regained its once-famous position of wealth and power. The prophet Ezekiel looked 1,900 years into the future and predicted that Tyre would be a bald rock where fishermen gathered to open their nets. And that is exactly what history records as having happened (see Bromling, 1994, p. 96; Major, 1996, pp. 93-95).

(2) During a time in the history of Israel in which God's people had delved deeply into idolatry, the prophet Isaiah foretold that God would raise up the Assyrians, as His "rod of anger" in order to punish the disobedient Hebrews (Isaiah 10:5-6). But, Isaiah noted, after that had been accomplished, God would see to it that the Assyrians themselves were punished for their own wicked deeds (Isaiah 10:12,24-25).

Archaeology has revealed some impressive facts regarding this prophecy. Assyrian records discovered in recent years discuss the fact that in the reign of Hosea, king of Israel, Shalmanesar, ruler of Assyria, assaulted Samaria, the capital city of Israel. However, he died before completing the assault, which was taken up by his successor, Sargon, who captured the city (cf. 1 Kings 18:10). An Assyrian clay prism comments on the fact that 27,290 Israelite captives were taken in the conflict. Almost twenty-five years later, the Assyrian king Sennacherib once again invaded Palestine (2 Kings 18:13ff.). Archaeological records report that 46 Judean cities were captured, and that 200,150 Israelites were taken into captivity. Jerusalem, however, was not conquered—a fact that is noteworthy, since 2 Kings 19:32-34 predicted that Sennacherib would be unable to take the holy city.

The Taylor Cylinder, discovered at Nineveh in 1830, presents the history of the Assyrians' assault, and states that king Hezekiah of Judah was "shut up like a bird in a cage." But was Jerusalem itself spared? It was. And were the wicked Assyrians punished? They were. The account, provided in 2 Kings 19:35, indicates that in a single night, God annihilated 185,000 Assyrian soldiers who had encircled Jerusalem. In addition, the prophecy stated that Sennacherib would return to his home, and there fall by the sword (2 Kings 19:7). Some twenty years later, he was assassinated by his own sons, who smote him with the sword while he was worshiping pagan deities (Isaiah 37:37-38).

(3) The Old Testament contains more than three hundred messianic prophecies. As Hugo McCord has said, "Testimony about Jesus was the chief purpose of prophecy. To him all the prophets gave witness (Acts 10:43)" (1979, p. 332). The Prophesied One would be born of a woman (Genesis 3:15; Galatians 4:4), of the seed of Abraham (Genesis 22:18; Luke 3:34), of the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10; Hebrews 7:14), of the royal lineage of David (2 Samuel 7:12; Luke 1:32), in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1), to the virgin Mary (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:22), in order to bruise the head of Satan (Genesis 3:15; Galatians 4:4; Hebrews 2:12-14).

His Galilean ministry was foretold (Isaiah 9:1-2), and it was prophesied that a forerunner would announce His arrival (Isaiah 40:3; Matthew 3:1-3). He would appear during the days of the Roman reign (Daniel 2:44; Luke 2:1), while Judah still possessed her own king (Genesis 49:10; Matthew 2:22). He would be killed some 490 years after the command to restore Jerusalem at the end of the Babylonian captivity (457 B.C.), i.e., A.D. 30 (Daniel 9:24ff.). He was to be both human and divine; though born, He was eternal (Micah 5:2; John 1:1,14); though a man, He was Jehovah's "fellow" (Zechariah 13:7; John 10:30; Philippians 2:6). He was to be gentle and compassionate in His dealings with mankind (Isaiah 42:1-4; Matthew 12:15-21). He would submit perfectly to His heavenly Father

(Psalm 40:8; Isaiah 53:11; John 8:29; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:22).

The prophecy was that He would be rejected and know grief (Isaiah 53:3), and be betrayed by a friend (Psalm 41:9) for thirty pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12). He was (John 13:18; Matthew 26:15). He would be spit upon, and beaten (Isaiah 50:6; 53:5), and in death both His hands and His feet were to be pierced (Psalm 22:16). This is exactly what happened (Matthew 27:30; Luke 24:39). The Scriptures foretold that He would be numbered among criminals (Isaiah 53:12), which He was (Matthew 27:38). He would be mocked, not only with scornful words (Psalm 22:7-8), but with bitter wine (Psalm 22:18). So He was (Matthew 27:39,48). Although He would die and be placed in a rich man's tomb (Isaiah 53:9; Matthew 27:57), His bones would not be broken (Psalm 34:20; John 19:33), and His flesh would not see corruption, because He would be raised from the dead (Psalm 16:10; Acts 2:22ff.), and eventually ascend into heaven (Psalm 110:1-3; 45:6; Acts 1:9-10).

Time and again biblical prophecies are presented, and fulfilled, with exacting detail. Jeremiah wrote: "...when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known, that Jehovah hath truly sent him" (28:9).

The Scientific Foreknowledge of the Bible

Among the intriguing proofs of the Bible's inspiration is its unique scientific foreknowledge. From anthropology to zoology, the Bible presents astonishingly accurate scientific information that the writers, on their own, simply could not have known. Jean S. Morton has observed:

Many scientific facts, which prove the infallibility of Scripture, are tucked away in its pages. These proofs are given in nonscientific language; nevertheless, they substantiate the claims of authenticity of the Holy Scriptures.... In some cases, scientific concepts have been known through the ages, but these concepts are mentioned in a unique manner in Scripture. In other cases, scientific topics have been mentioned hundreds or even thousands of years before man discovered them (1978, p. 10).

Space limitations prohibit an in-depth examination of the Bible's scientific foreknowledge, but I would like to mention just one of the more prominent examples. For those who might desire additional information, I have dealt with this theme elsewhere in a much more extensive fashion (Thompson, 1981, 1:33-36; Thompson and Jackson, 1992, pp. 125-137).

In Genesis 17:12, God commanded Abraham to circumcise newborn males on the **eighth** day. But why day eight? In humans, blood clotting is dependent upon three factors: (a) platelets; (b) vitamin K; and (c) prothrombin. In 1935, professor H. Dam proposed the name "vitamin K" for the factor that helped prevent hemorrhaging in chicks. We now realize that vitamin K is responsible for the production (by the liver) of prothrombin. If vitamin K is deficient, there will be a prothrombin deficiency and hemorrhaging may occur.

Interestingly, it is only on the fifth to seventh days of a newborn's life that vitamin K (produced by the action of bacteria in the intestinal tract) is present in adequate quantities. Vitamin K—coupled with prothrombin—causes blood coagulation, which is important in any surgical procedure. A classic medical text, *Holt Pediatrics*, corroborates that a newborn infant has

...peculiar susceptibility to bleeding between the second and fifth days of life.... Hemorrhages at this time, though often inconsequential, are sometimes extensive; they may produce serious damage to internal organs, especially to the brain, and cause death from shock and exsanguination (1953, pp. 125-126).

Obviously, then, if vitamin K is not produced in sufficient quantities until days five through seven, it would be wise to postpone any surgery until sometime after that. But why did God specify day **eight**?

On the eighth day, the amount of prothrombin present actually **is elevated above 100 percent of normal**. In fact, day eight is the only day in the male's life in which this will be the case under normal conditions. If surgery is to be performed, day eight is the perfect day to do it. S.I. McMillen, the renowned medical doctor who authored

None of These Diseases, wrote concerning this information:

...as we congratulate medical science for this recent finding, we can almost hear the leaves of the Bible rustling. They would like to remind us that four thousand years ago, when God **initiated** circumcision with Abraham, He said "And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised...." Abraham did not pick the eighth day after many centuries of trial-and-error experiments. Neither he nor any of his company from the ancient city of Ur in the Chaldees had ever been circumcised. It was a day picked by the Creator of vitamin K (1963, p. 21, emp. in orig.).

The information employed by Abraham, and confirmed in writing by Moses, was accurate scientifically then, and remains so now. No culture possessed such scientific acumen, which was years ahead of its time. How, then, did Abraham and Moses come to know the best time for circumcision, unless, of course, this fact was revealed to them by God, and recorded in His Word through inspiration?

There are numerous instances of scientific foreknowledge within the Bible. The incredible accuracy of the Bible's science is yet another example of God's superintending guidance, and one that provides impressive proof of its inspiration.

CONCLUSION

Those who have set their face against God have railed against the Bible for generations. King Jehoiakim took his penknife, slashed the Old Testament Scriptures to pieces, and tossed them into a fire (Jeremiah 36:22-23). During the Middle Ages, attempts were made to keep the Bible from the man on the street. In fact, those caught translating or distributing the Scriptures often were subjected to imprisonment, torture, and even death. Centuries later, the French skeptic Voltaire boasted that "within fifty years, the Bible will no longer be discussed among educated people." His braggadocio notwithstanding, the Bible still is being discussed among educated people, while the name of Voltaire languishes in relative obscurity.

In the early 1900s, American infidel Robert Ingersol claimed regarding the Bible: "In fifteen years, I will have this book in the morgue." But, as history records, Ingersol ended up in the morgue, while the Bible lives on. Like the blacksmith's anvil—which wears out many hammers but itself remains unaffected—the Bible wears out the skeptics' innocuous charges, all the while remaining unscathed. John Clifford (1836-1923), a Baptist minister and social reformer, once wrote:

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.

Governments come and go. Nations rise and fall. People live and die. Jesus warned that "heaven and earth shall pass away" (Matthew 24:35), but went on to note that "my words shall not pass away." Isaiah wrote: "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand forever" (40:8). It is fitting that we end this study with the following statements from Kenny Barfield's book, *Why the Bible is Number 1*.

We have seen how the biblical materials are unique. They are no run-of-the-mill religious writings, but—quite the contrary—reveal a remarkable understanding of the universe. ...How did the biblical

writers manage to avoid the erroneous world views of their contemporaries? What made these men capable of producing painstakingly accurate scientific statements far in advance of their actual discovery? We want answers to those important questions....

One answer has been suggested by the biblical writers themselves. If their materials are so radically different from other sources, surely we must listen to their explanation. Rather than finding confusion or uncertainty in their ranks, we find calm unanimity.

They refused to be called geniuses and scorned personal glory. Even more significant, they denied having figured it out for themselves. In fact, there is reason to believe that they never really understood the far-reaching implications of the words they wrote.

Humbly, without a dissenting voice, these writers gave credit to a superior being. One of their favorite phrases was: "This is the Word of God." They sensed a far-greater intelligence behind this universe than that of any mortal. They stood in awe before that wisdom and power. They even wrote words on their papyri and scrolls that made little earthly sense. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." It was the only answer they ever gave.

It is the thesis of this study that one must simply look at the trademark, the signature of authorship.... Unless we can devise a more suitable explanation, it seems reasonable to believe that the seemingly incongruous wisdom was placed in the Bible by an intelligence far greater than that of man. That intelligence is God's alone (1988, pp. 182,184-185).

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