

10. Scriptures and the prophecies

How many of you have heard some unbelievers or Bible skeptics snort and argue about many different versions of the Bibles or corruptions among the ancient manuscripts of Scriptures? That was a part of the basic concepts of Dan Brown's infamous damnable book "Da Vinci Code". This accusation is actually nothing new.

Questioning the authenticity of God's Word goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden:

Genesis 3:1 Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" 2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; 3 but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'"

In v1, please note that satan was twisting God's Word and putting a doubt against God's love for them into the heart of Eve. Then, Eve responded to satan with her wrong answer. God didn't say to them not to touch the tree as I've mentioned before. Either she didn't understand what the Lord said, or she chose to be ignorant about it.

Did you hear what kind of word I just used? "She chose to be ignorant." The ignorance of the Bible is the biggest stepping stone of mankind to the road of destruction. Whether you are a believer of Jesus Christ or not, the majority of people choose not to learn the Word of God when they face it.

There are many excuses. Some say that they don't have time. Don't tell me you don't have time to study and learn His Word as a believer of Jesus Christ. You absolutely DO have time. 15-30 minutes a day is all it takes.

This morning and for the next few weeks we are going to have a rather intense study - learning how to study the Word of God; why the Bible is truly inspired by God; how did we get to have the Bible; the canonization of the Bible; the church history; and more. I hope and pray that y'all get equipped with the wisdom and knowledge of the Bible from these studies so that you would not be duped by satan like it happened to Eve.

A. GODLY HERITAGE

2 Timothy 3:14-15 But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, 15 and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

How many of you were born to dedicated Christian believer families? How blessed are you!

For my case, I was born in the family of mixed religions. My mama was a buddhist and my daddy was an intelligent agnostic medical doctor. Even though he graduated from a Christian medical school, he never once told me about Christ. It means that he was not a Christian. Several years ago, I had a chance to witness to my mama while I was visiting her in Seoul, South Korea. She prayed a sinner's prayer with me, but I really don't know how much she understood it. I am relying on the mercy of God for that one.

I was not born with a great Christian heritage like some of you or Timothy. But it doesn't matter now. We as Christian parents and parents-to-be, have a solemn duty

and privilege to pass down what we have learned and received from the Lord to our children. Tell them about Jesus from their young ages. You may use well prepared children's Bible story books or other materials that you can find from our Chapel Bookstore or 'Focus on the Family'.

Moms and Dads, listen to me carefully. Don't expect the church Children's Sunday school teachers to take care your children's spiritual condition. They get to have your children only 30 to 40 minutes a week. But you have them the majority of the time. You need to teach them with your life as an example and the Bible.

We are not saved by believing in the Bible, but by trusting the Christ who is revealed in the Bible. Satan knows the Bible but he is not saved. There are many college religion professors who know the Bible very well and can even quote them fluently, yet they are not saved. It is not the knowledge of the Bible that saves, but the faith in Jesus Christ does.

B. ALL SCRIPTURE IS GIVE BY INSPIRATION OF GOD

2 Timothy 3:16-17 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.

Did you get it? All scripture inside of this Bible is given by inspiration of God. There is absolutely no other book that claims it with the exception of the book of Mormon. We will talk more about it later.

God dictated the Scriptures to men and have preserved them for over 4000 years without an error in authorship. In other words, perfect God had His imperfect people to write perfect writings. In this imperfect world, we have one perfect Book - the Bible. I know, some of you are thinking, "He is a preacher, alright. He gets excited about the Bible, a big deal." It is a big deal, guys. Almighty God speaks through this very Book to you and me - absolutely reliable and without one single error.

The word 'Bible' comes from the Greek word "biblos," which means "book." The Bible is unarguably an incredible book. The Bible is the best selling, most quoted, most published, most circulated, most translated, most influential, most criticized and most persecuted book in the history of mankind.

As the truth seekers of God, all of us have an obligation to know if the Bible is truly the Word of God or not as it claims in these two verses we just read. Not only should we know whether the Bible is truly from God or not, but we also must understand how it proves itself truthfully in various ways.

People in the world live in phony realities. They are taught and told to believe in the evolution theory, Star Trek and Star Wars movies rather than Almighty God; Global Warming than the global warning from the Bible - speaking of Global Warming, after the last freezing winter, the liberals don't want to call it "Global Warming" anymore. So they have a new name - Climate Change. Change from what to what? People would rather believe in living high on the hog on credit cards and borrowed money. They'd rather believe in the Universal Salvation which means everybody gets saved and lives happily ever after, singing Kumbaya than believing the only way of salvation through Jesus Christ as the Bible says.

For the remainder of this service, we are going to learn two things about the Bible:

- 1) **The Bible is unique.**
- 2) **The Bible is the only Book that gives future prophecies in writing and we witness them in the human history like no other books.**

C. THE BIBLE IS UNIQUE

1) The Bible is unique in its continuity

It was written over 2000 years (from around 1900 B.C. till A.D. 96), over 60 generations, by more than 40 authors, on three different continents, in different circumstances and places, in different times, different cultures, in three languages - Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic, concerning scores of controversial subjects, but it speaks with one united voice.

2) The Bible is unique in its circulation

It is the most published and popular book ever written - far and away. Any thing else is a distant, distant, second.

3) The Bible is unique in its translation

It was the first book translated, and has been translated into more languages than any other book in existence.

4) The Bible is unique in its survival

It has survived the ravages of time, manual transcription, persecution and criticism.

5) The Bible is unique in its honesty

It deals with the sins and failures of its heroes in a manner quite unknown among ancient literature.

6) The Bible is unique in its influence

The Bible has had, by far, a greater influence on culture and literature than any other book in existence.

D. THE FULFILLED PROPHECIES

The fulfilled prophecies are something that sets the Bible apart from every other religious book. There are 26 other religious books that people of faith believe are divinely inspired - the Qur'an, the Book of Mormon, and others which I can not even dare to pronounce. Of these twenty-six books, none of them, not a single one, contains any specific, fulfilled prophecies!

The Bible, however, is filled with hundreds of specific, detailed prophecies that were written hundreds of years before their fulfillment. And the authors of the Bible did not just predict some vague things like Nostradamus or Jeanne Dixon - who, by the way, have proven to be wrong over and over again - they were very specific. Consider some of the more than 100 different and very specific prophecies made concerning the Messiah, who the Old Testament prophesied would come.

In your handout, you see the Messianic Prophecies in OT & NT. This is NOT a complete list. Just a handful of them. You can use this to witness to some of your Jewish friends who believe that Jesus is not the Messiah whom they are looking for.

1) Some Bible skeptics would say, "Maybe Christians inserted those so-called prophecies back into the Old Testament after Jesus lived."

Not so fast, homie. Just for the people like the skeptics I have an answer. There are hundreds of manuscript copies of the OT that predate the time of Christ's birth. Some go back to the third century, B.C. They verify that these prophecies concerning the Messiah were already written in the OT.

Two good examples are:

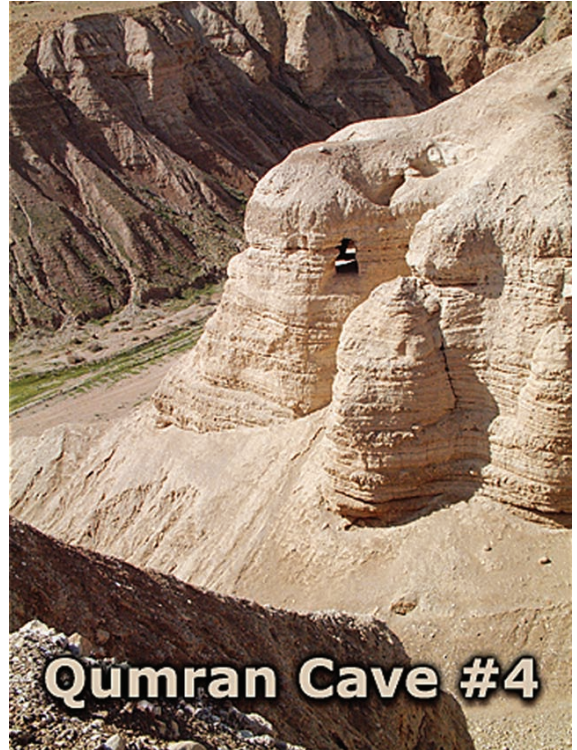
- Septuagint

A Greek version of the Hebrew Old Testament. It was written 285 B.C.



- The Dead Sea Scroll

In 1947 a shepherd boy tending his father's sheep in Qumran, north and to the west of the Dead Sea in Israel, made an amazing discovery while looking for a lost goat. There in Qumran, in a hillside cave that had lain untouched for nearly two thousand years, he discovered an ancient collection of hand written copies of the Old Testament. These scrolls had been hidden in caves by the Essenes, a Jewish sect living in Qumran, 2,000 years ago.



These scrolls and writings - now known as the Dead Sea Scrolls - represented every book of the Old Testament except the Book of Esther, and are considered one of the greatest discoveries in modern times.



A portion of the Dead Sea Scrolls from Qumran Caves

It's manuscript evidence like this Isaiah scroll that dates back to about 100 B.C. that proves, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that the Old Testament, and its many prophecies concerning the Messiah, was finished long before Jesus was even born.

2) But then the same skeptics would persistently resist the truth by challenging, "How do you know that the Dead Sea Scrolls date back to before Christ?"

I am so glad that they are willing to be corrected again.

Teams of scholars determined the scrolls age by examining:

- The pottery that housed the manuscripts.
- The weave and pattern of the manuscript cloths.
- The form of the characters.
- The coins found alongside the manuscripts.

3) The skeptics have to make one last challenge, "Maybe Jesus was not the Messiah, but just accidently or even deliberately set out to fulfill his own prophecies."

This is a walk-in-the-park question. As Jesus encountered the Pharisees and religious leaders with questions on questions, I have questions to ask those Bible skeptics:

- Do you know anyone who was able to plan to be born in any particular time, in a particular family and in a particular location? No, duh!
- Do you know anyone who had managed to get arrested, tortured and crucified on a cross according to the Bible prophecy? Of course, I am not talking about make-believe movies.
- Do you know anyone who was smart and capable enough to beat the odds of fulfilling the prophecies of Jesus? Please allow me to explain.



Peter Stoner, a mathematician, and Professor Emeritus of Science at Westmont College, in his book "Science Speaks" (Published by Moody Press 1963) calculated the odds of a single man fulfilling just eight of the prophecies that Jesus fulfilled as the mathematical improbability of 1 in ten to the seventeenth power. That is a HUGE number. That's a one with seventeen zeros after it - 100,000,000,000,000,000.

Let me tell you what kind of odd this is. You mark a red circle on a silver dollar and toss it into a tank that is the size of the state of Texas which is

filled with silver dollars up to 2 feet deep. Then you stir them thoroughly until that marked silver dollar is somewhere tucked away. You have one chance to stick your hand in the tank and bring up that marked silver dollar. That is the odd of 1 in a quadrillion.

By the way, please don't tell President Obama and the liberal Congress there is such a number "quadrillion". They might try to spend that much money just to prove that they can.

4) Then, finally the skeptics would say, "It sounds like the Bible is rigged by someone."

Bingo, you got it. It was rigged by God from the beginning.

These fulfilled prophecies in the Bible are amazing testimonies to the divine origin and trustworthiness of the Bible. No other religious writing is able to substantiate its claims to be divinely inspired with this kind of supernatural evidence.

E. APPLICATIONS

1) The Word of God contains the truth of God and true reports about sinful humans. If we disagree with the truth of God, it only proves that we are wrong again.

2) The biblical prophecies are in the Bible for us to have sanctified and holy life, not to meet our prophecy curiosity.