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Is The Bible Truly God's Word?

Has God spoken? Are the words of Scripture merely human in origin or are they in fact the very words of God Himself? When we communicate with one another we rely heavily on words. God also speaks to men through words – the words of the Bible. The Bible claims that its very words are inspired. It declares emphatically over 3,000 different times such words as, *"thus saith the Lord," "the Lord spake," "the Lord commanded" or "God said."* This is why in the Bible it is claimed that Scripture *"came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."*

Who wrote the Bible? Is it a letter from God? "Who wrote the Bible" is a question that is undoubtedly asked by many people around the world. Briefly, the Bible gives guidance in our journey through life to eternity, as well as leads us to a relationship with the God of the universe. It is a historical book that is backed by archaeology, and a prophetic book that has lived up to all of its claims. In light of all these facts, "who wrote the Bible," is a vital question that deserves serious investigation and a serious response. The Bible is God's letter to humanity collected in 66 books written by over 35 divinely inspired writers. These writers came from all walks of life and spans over a period of some 1,500 years. These claims may seem dramatic (or unrealistic to some), but a careful and honest study of the Biblical Scriptures would show them to be true.

"Who wrote the Bible" is a question that can be definitely answered by examining the biblical texts in light of the external evidences that support its claims. 2 Timothy 3:16, states that *"All Scripture is inspired by God....."* In 2 Peter 1:20-21, the apostle Peter reminds the reader to *"Know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, but men moved*

by the Holy Spirit from God." The Bible itself tells us that it is God who is the author of His book.

God does not leave us with just claims of His divine handiwork in the Bible, but also supports it with compelling evidence. The design of the Bible is in itself a miracle. Written over more than 1,500 years with vastly different writers, yet every book in the Bible is consistent in its message. These 66 books talk about history, prophecy, poetry, theology, etc. Despite their complexity, the differences in writing styles and vast time periods, the books of the Bible agree miraculously well in theme, facts and cross-referencing. No human beings could have planned such an intricate combination of books over a 1,500 year time span. Bible manuscripts have survived despite weather, persecution and time. Remember, there were no printing presses until 1455 A.D. Most ancient writings were written on weak materials like papyrus; have vanished altogether. Yet many copies of the Old Testament scriptures survived. For instance, the Dead Sea Scrolls contain all the books of the Old Testament, except Esther, and have been dated to before the time of Christ.

The Bible also vindicates its divine authorship through fulfilled prophecies. According to scholars some 2,000 prophecies have been fulfilled including some 300 on Christ Jesus alone in regards to His birth, life, death, burial, and resurrection. An honest study of biblical prophecy will compellingly show the divine authorship of the Bible. Further, archaeology confirms (or in some cases support) accounts in the biblical record.

"Who wrote the Bible" is indeed a question that everyone must ask. If indeed it is the Word of the living God, then no other book gives us more insight into our lives, our condition or more hope for our future; and a true path to a relationship with God. Search the Bible with openness and honesty and see for yourself what the Creator of the universe wants to tell you.

So far I have given you a very brief overview of Scriptural evidence to counter the arguments of Bible critics and to show that

belief in the Holy Scripture does not stem from wishful thinking; rather, belief logically flows from an honest examination of the evidence. I now want to go into more detail regarding the evidence and give you ten compelling reasons to believe in the Bible. And to answer the questions: "Has God spoken?" and "Is the Bible truly God's Word?"

But before I do I just want to say this: most criticism of the Bible comes from those who have never read the Bible or have just glanced at it or who have listened to someone else but have never studied it for themselves. If a person wants to be skeptical they should at least go about it honestly. Take the Bible and study several books of the New Testament; the book of John, the book of Luke and the book of Acts and ask God to reveal Himself to you as you read His Word. You might be surprised at the results; in fact, God challenges us to seek and search for Him with an honest and open heart and that He would reveal Himself to us through His Word and that is the greatest evidence of all.

Most people today, unfortunately, have not read any of the books of Scripture. In fact, few have even read the Bible itself! Thus, many people tend to go along with the popular delusion that the Bible is full of mistakes and no longer relevant to our modern world. But that is not true; the Bible is relevant to all ages.

And one more thing before I get started and that is, God did not come to this earth to start a religion. He did not create us to start a religious following. God has all the angels in heaven to look after and administer to all of His needs. The plain truth is: God doesn't need us. So why did He create us? What was His purpose for creating you and me? Scripture tells us clearly that God created man for His pleasure, for His fellowship; so that we can have an intimate relationship with Him (it's called love). Something that angels were not created for, but to administer to His needs. **It's all about a relationship and not religion.**

God deplores religion and those doing religious works. You just have to read chapter 23 of Matthew and see where Jesus

pronounces eight woes (warnings) on the proud religious leaders and religious establishment of His day, calling them hypocrites and closing off in verse 33, where He utters these thunderous words; "*Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?*"

You see, dear friends, it's not about religion at all. It's not about buildings, priests, rules, traditions or ceremonies. It's all about a love relationship with the God of the universe through His Son, Jesus Christ. There is really no "religion" to it, just true faith from our heart in Christ Jesus and what His death accomplished on Calvary's cross for us.

Do you want to know who really started religion? It was God's adversary, Satan, who started religion, going back to the Tower of Babel in Babylon. Don't be deceived! Religion is a waste of time; detrimental to your own eternal salvation and it keeps you away from having a real relationship with the author of the Bible and our Creator. The Bible is God's inspired Word speaking to us in this His Book: His manual for all humanity.

10 Reasons to Believe in the Bible:

1. The wonder of its formation. One of the first things about this Book that evokes our wonder is the very fact of its existence, for there was never any order given to any man to plan the Bible, nor was there ever any concerted plan on the part of the men who wrote the Bible. The way in which the Bible grew is one of the mysteries of our time. Little by little, century by century, it came out in fragments, written by various men, without any concerted arrangement. One man wrote a part in Arabia, another in Syria, a third in Palestine, another in Greece and Italy, and the first part was written hundreds of years before the man who wrote the last part was even born.

Here is a Book that took some 1,500 years to write, spanning sixty generations of this world's history. It enlarges our conceptions of God and gives us new ideas of His infinite patience as He watched

the strain, the haste, and restlessness of man across the feverish years, while slowly this great BOOK grew. Little by little it came forth before a needy world in its finished completeness.

There was no collusion or no pre-arrangement by men. It was not as if Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John met in committees, and after solemn conference and seeking for the leading of the spirit, Matthew undertook to write of Christ as the King, and Mark agreed to write of Him as a Servant, Luke undertakes to delineate Him as the Man, and John determined to crown it all by writing of Him as the Son of God. It was not as if Paul and James met and after talking and praying about it agreed that Paul should write of the doctrinal and James of the practical aspects of the Christian faith. There is no trace of such a thing. They simply wrote as they were moved by the Spirit of God to meet a present need, to teach some glorious truth, to express some earnest longing, and from the gathering of their writings came this miraculous unit that we call the New Testament.

2. The wonder of its unification. One reason that the Bible is different from other books is its unity. Although this book was composed by men, its unity reveals the hand of the Almighty. The Bible, though regarded as a book, is in fact a library of 66 unique volumes, written over a span of 1,500 years, written on three continents, in three languages, on totally different topics, and in extraordinarily different circumstances. These writers came from all walks of life; from kings to peasants, and they wrote under every conceivable condition. One wrote history, another biography, one wrote on theology, another poetry, another prophecy; others on philosophy, genealogy, ethnology, and narratives of wonderful journeys. The Bible covers hundreds of controversial subjects, yet it does not contradict itself but has the same theme. This unity is organized around one theme: God's redemption of humanity and all of creation through the Person and works of Christ Jesus (John 14:6). God revealing Himself in the flesh!

The strangest thing of all is that, although their subjects are so

diverse and difficult, and although it was impossible for the man who wrote the first pages to have the slightest knowledge what others would write 1,500 years later; yet this collection of writings is not only unified by men and one book, but so unified by God, the Author, that we can never think of it today as anything else but one Book. And one Book it is; the miracle of all literary unity.

Yet when we pick up this Book, we hold in our hands one unified volume with a logical beginning, a climatic ending, a story that comes full circle; an unfolding drama based around a central character, and a rational message that doesn't contradict itself with each part needing the others to be complete.

Lest anyone think this isn't something miraculous, I'd like to give you this challenge. Find 10 people from your local area having similar backgrounds that speak the same language and are from basically the same culture. Then separate them and ask them to write their own opinion on one controversial subject, such as the meaning of life.

When they have finished, compare the conclusions of these 10 writers. Do they agree with each other? Of course not! But the Bible did not consist of merely 10 authors but over 35. It was not written in one generation, but over a period of 1,500 years; not by authors with the same education, culture and language, but with vastly different education, many different cultures, from three continents in three different languages, and finally not just one subject but hundreds and yet the Bible is a unity. There is complete harmony, which cannot be explained by coincidence or collusion. The unity of the Bible is a strong argument in favor of its divine inspiration.

3. The wonder of its inspiration. The Bible says that its very words are inspired. It declares emphatically over 2,000 times such words as, "*Thus saith the Lord,*" "*the Lord spake,*" "*the Lord commanded*" or "*God said.*" Now, either God said the very words He claims to have said, or the Bible is not true. Either the authors, who claimed to be divinely inspired by God and wrote down the

very words of God, or this cannot be the good Book if its authors consistently lied about their source of information.

Even when all these different men wrote at different times, the message they wrote is always the same, without any contradiction. The reason is that God is the author, who used men to set down what He wanted to say. These human writers lived and died at different times, but the same God who lives forever told each man what to write. For that reason we are able to compare different parts of the Bible and find that they agree with, support, and clarify each other (1Cor 2:13). We can go to any part of the Bible and know it is consistently trustworthy.

The writers of the Bible say that God put the very words in their mouth. God told Moses, "*Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say (Exodus 4:12).*" King David said, "*The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in my tongue (2 Samuel 23:2).*" Jeremiah said, "*Then the Lord put forth His hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, behold, I have put my words in thy mouth (Jeremiah 1:9).*" Paul said, "*Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth (1 Corinthians 2:13).*"

When people speak of the Bible being inspired, they are referring to the fact that God divinely influenced the human authors of the Scriptures in such a way that what they wrote was the very Word of God. The process of inspiration extended to every word, refuting the idea of myth and error. Since God is behind the writings, and since He is perfect; the result must be infallible.

Sometimes it is easier to understand the concept of inspiration when it is compared with revelation. Revelation relates to the origin and actual giving of truth (1 Corinthians 2:10). Inspiration, on the other hand, relates to the receiving an actual recording of truth. Inspiration means that the Holy Spirit of God worked in a unique supernatural way so that the written words of the Scripture writers were also the words of God. The human authors of

Scripture wrote spontaneously using their own minds and experiences, yet their words were not merely the words of men but actually the words of God.

God superintended the human authors of the Bible so that while using their own writing styles and personalities, they still record exactly what God wanted to be said. The Bible was not dictated from God, but it was perfectly guided and entirely inspired by Him.

The Bible affirms its own divine authority when it tells us that, "*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16).*" The phrase "*inspiration of God*" here in the Greek is *theopneustos*, or literally, "*God-breathed.*" The entirety of Scripture, then, including the Old and New Testaments, is the product of the unique, direct, creative, and supervisory work of God's Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21). God's Holy Spirit using human writers, means that He utilized their vocabularies, writing styles, and personalities in the process; however, the attending influence of the Holy Spirit protected those men from making any doctrinal, historical, or even scientific errors. The result is that the Scripture as they appear in the original parchments are fully vested with God's own authority. God guided the writers of Scripture to produce exactly the message He wanted. When we read the Bible, we are hearing from God. Paul himself says this is precisely why the Bible is not called "*the word of man,*" but rather, "*the Word of God*" (1Thes. 2:13)."

In Scripture, God always tells us; "*let us reason.*" So let us explore another avenue. If the Bible was not inspired by God then whose invention would it be? What would be the purpose of these 35 writers in producing these 66 volumes of Scripture over a period of 1,500 years? What could they get out of it? Why would they do it? What would their motive be? You see it doesn't make any sense! The Bible must be the invention either of *good* men, *bad* men, or of *God*.

Therefore:

1. It could not be the inventions of *good* men, for they neither would or could make a book, and tell lies all the time they were writing it; saying, "*Thus saith the Lord,*" when it was their own invention.
2. It could not be the invention of *bad* men, for they would not make a book which commanded all duty, forbids all sin, and condemns their souls to hell for all eternity.
3. Therefore, I draw this conclusion; that the Bible must be given by *divine* inspiration. Case closed!

How else can you explain a prophecy of Isaiah who accurately detailed the crucifixion of Christ Jesus some 800 years earlier. But, what's really amazing is that at the time of Isaiah's writing, capital punishment was delivered by the stoning of the individual. The Roman's use of crucifixion was not invented until 600 years later, after the writings of Isaiah. There are many hundreds of examples like this in the Scriptures. How could these writers describe in detail future events hundreds and hundreds of years before they took place if it wasn't for the inspiration of God, who knows the future.

Its inspiration means the Bible truly is the Word of God, and makes the Bible unique among all other books. The Bible is not the book of the month, nor the book of the year. It is the Book of the ages. It is unlike any other book; for we read other books, but this Book reads us. It is the living, breathing, Word of God.

4. The wonder of the its authors. Humanly speaking, the Bible was written by over 35 men of diverse backgrounds over the course of 1,500 years. These writers were all different from each other, some rich, some poor, some young, some old and some educated and some not educated. Isaiah was a prophet, Ezra was a priest, Matthew was a tax-collector, Luke was a doctor, John was a fisherman, Paul was a tent maker and Moses was a shepherd. Despite being penned by different authors over 15 centuries, the Bible does not contradict itself. The authors all present different perspectives, but they all proclaim the same one true God, and the

same one way of salvation; Christ Jesus (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

It's important to know what the Bible says about itself. If the authors of Scripture had not claimed to speak for God it would be presumptuous for us to make that claim for them, but the Bible's authors did claim to be inspired by God.

No other book dares to address itself to the universal conscience. No other book speaks with such a binding claim, or presumes to command the obedience of all mankind. The book speaks to our inner conscience with the authority of God Himself, and breaks upon you as the Voice from Heaven.

The reliability of the Bible is confirmed by the testimony of its authors, who were eyewitnesses or close associates of eyewitnesses; to the recorded events, and by secular historians who confirm the many events, places, and customs chronicled in Scripture.

5. The wonder of its language. The book was not written in Athens, the seat of learning in Greece, nor in Alexandria in Egypt, but in Palestine, in Nazareth, in Galilee. Some of the writers were not distinguished for their scholarship. Some did not speak even their own language perfectly. Peter was betrayed by his Galilean dialect, and he and John were described in Acts 4:13 as, "... *unlearned and ignorant men...*" Many of the men who wrote the Bible were of that character. One was a farmhand, another, a shepherd, others were fishermen. They were men of no literary reputation, yet by the mysterious power of God, the Book has become the standard of language of the most literary nations of the world.

6. The wonder of its honesty. The Bible is painfully honest. It shows Jacob, the father of its "*chosen people*," to be a deceiver. It describes Moses, the lawgiver, as an insecure, reluctant leader; who, in his first attempt to come to the aid of his own people, killed a man, and then ran for his life to the desert. It portrays David not only as Israel's most loved king, general, and

spiritual leader, but as one who took another man's wife and then, to cover up his own sin, conspired to have her husband killed. At one point, the Scriptures accuse the people of God, the nation of Israel, as being so bad they made Sodom and Gomorrah look good by comparison (Ezekiel 16:46-52). The Bible presents human nature as hostile to God. It predicts a future full of trouble. It teaches that the road to heaven is narrow and the way to eternal destruction is wide.

Only God can be honest with us because only He knows the truth. Only God is willing to be honest with us as an expression of His love. Real love is not expressed by the words of people who try to make us feel good by means of vain flatteries, but leave us in our situation, because they have no real hope to offer. Real love is expressed by the truth because it is the only thing that can help us. The Bible's honest word-portrait of humankind is not appealing. However, the Bible contains the words of a real Friend. God knows we are walking on the edge of a cliff ready to fall into a place reserved for His adversary, Satan. He tells us exactly what we need to know to avoid this peril.

If I could just take a moment while we're on the subject of honesty, one final thought we must face when we consider whether the Bible can be trusted. In an American survey it said that a good majority of people believe that there is a God. But if God is really God, then He speaks with absolute authority and we must submit to His word. In other words, what we think about God's word, and how we react to it, reflects what we think about God Himself. We cannot separate God and His word. We do not have to believe the Bible, but we must deal with the consequences. If people do not believe in the God of the Bible then they're going to act like it; for the bitter fruit of their selfish lives will come to harvest, as the Bible says it will. This is the most frightening evidence of all.

The Bible also makes it clear that Christ Jesus is the final authority on all matters in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18; Jn. 5:27). Individuals will be judged on what they do with His words. As He said, *"He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has one*

who judges him; the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day (John 12:48)." I want to be perfectly honest with you and telling it like it is and what Scripture says. Yes, God is love, but He is also a God of justice and I want you to understand that. God means what He says and everyone who rejected His words will stand before the judgment bar of God.

7. The wonder of its historical and geological accuracy.

Down through the ages, many have doubted the historical and geographical accuracy of the Bible. Yet modern archaeologists have repeatedly unearthed evidence of the people, places, and cultures described in the Scriptures. Time after time, the descriptions in the biblical record have been shown to be more reliable than the speculations of scholars.

For example, recent archaeological finds have corroborated from ancient manuscripts the biblical details surrounding the trial that led to the fatal torment of Jesus Christ; including Pontius Pilate, who ordered Christ's crucifixion. As well as Caiaphas, the high priest who presided over the religious trials of Christ. Even unbelieving scholars agree that King David, King Solomon, the Philistines, and countless other persons mentioned in the Bible were real people, and that such cities as Ephesus, Philippi, and Thessalonica were real places.

The ancient Ebla Tablets, a collection of 17,000 tablets discovered since 1968 and written around 2,500 B.C. mention the ancient biblical cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Zoar found in Genesis 14. The Mari Tablets, some 25,000 tablets written around 1,900 B.C., mentions the names of Abraham, Jacob, Nahor, Dan, Levi, Benjamin and Ishmael, found in the book of Genesis. Also a Canaanite bronze calf was discovered a couple of years ago and reported in Time magazine, confirming the Bible's account that pagan nations worshiped calves. Repeatedly, comprehensive archaeological fieldwork and careful Bible interpretation confirmed the reliability of the Bible.

Evidence of divine inspiration is found in the fact that some of the

principles of modern science were recorded as facts of nature in the Bible long before scientists confirmed them experimentally. A good example of this is the roundness of the earth. In Job 26:7, we read a modern description of the earth as it spins in empty space. This was written in about 3,000 years B.C. This description is in sharp contrast to the fantastic imaginary notions which the rest of the world thought or believed at that time and up to around 1,400 A.D. Up to that time scientists believed that the earth was flat. Isaiah 40:22 points out that God sits upon "*the circle of the earth.*" There are many more other examples, dealing with the gravitational field, atmospheric circulation, importance of blood in life processes, hydrologic cycle, law of conservation of mass and energy, and many others.

Because the Bible details historical events, its truthfulness and accuracy are subject to verification like any other historical documentation. Through both archaeological evidences and other writings, historical accounts of the Bible have been proven time and time again to be accurate and true. In fact, all the archaeological and manuscript evidence supporting the Bible makes it the best documented book from the ancient world.

NEWS FLASH – Vancouver Sun, August 2, 2012. Just as I've completed doing 21 chapters and now am in the process of proofreading them, I see this article in the newspaper. It reads:

Canadian archaeologists have unearthed an extraordinary human sculpture at a globally significant 3,000-year-old dig site in Turkey that is linked to the Bible. The exquisitely preserved head and torso of a figure that would have stood four meters tall in the historical Neo-Hittite city of Kunulua – exemplifies a monumental sculpture tradition referenced in the Bible, including passages that describe the "graven images" in the "kingdoms of the idols" north of ancient Israel.

Researchers believe it may represent "the physical manifestation" of the Old Testament account of the fall of "Calno" and the destruction of its monuments. The destruction of Calno-Kunulua

was invoked by the prophet Isaiah as a warning to the Israelites that they should follow the will of God or face a similar fate. You can read about this in Isaiah 10: 9-11. Here you have another archaeological find confirming the reliability of the Bible and because it was so timely, I thought I'd include it in the book.

8. The wonder of its preservation and indestructibility.

Because of its importance and its claim to be the very Word of God, the Bible has suffered more vicious attacks and attempts to destroy it than any other book in history. Century after century men have tried to burn it, to bury it, and destroy it. Diocletian, the Roman Emperor, inaugurated in A.D. 303 a terrific onslaught upon the book. Bibles were destroyed, Christians were slain, and the Emperor posted that the very name of the Christians were blotted out. Yet after a few years, the Bible came forth just as Noah from the Ark to re-people earth, and in A.D. 325 Constantine enthroned the Bible as the infallible judge of truth in the great council of the church held in that year. Later the Church of Rome denied the Scriptures to the people and for a thousand or more years the Bible was practically an unknown Book. All Church of Rome services and ceremonies were held in Latin and church going people were totally ignorant of the Word of God. Martin Luther was a grown man when he said that he had never seen a Bible in his life.

Yes, from the earliest days of the Roman emperors like Diocletian, through communist dictators and on to modern-day atheists and agnostics, the Bible has withstood and outlasted all of its attackers and still is the most widely published book in the world today. Year after year it is still on the best-sellers list out selling all other books.

Equally amazing is the fact that the Bible has been virtually unaltered since the original writing, as is attested by scholars who have compared the earliest manuscripts with manuscripts written centuries later.

As an example: a Bedouin shepherd discovered one of the most important archaeological discoveries of our time. In a cave off the

northwest rim of the Dead Sea, a broken jar yielded documents that had been hidden for two millennia. The **Dead Sea Scrolls** produced manuscripts that predated previous oldest copies of the Bible by 1,000 years. One of the most important was a copy of Isaiah. It revealed a document that is essentially the very same as the book of Isaiah that appears in our own Bibles today; there are no significant differences. This discovery discredited the claims of those skeptics who believed that the original Bible had been lost to time and tampering.

The accuracy which has been preserved despite every attempt to corrupt, attack, or destroy it, is a clear testimony to the fact that the Bible is truly God's word and is supernaturally protected by Him. It should not surprise us that no matter how the Bible is attacked, it always comes out unchanged and unscathed. After all, Jesus said, *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away (Mark 13:31)."*

9. The wonder of its power to change lives. The men who wrote the New Testament and many hundreds of other believers (1 Cor. 15:6) knew the truth of their message because they had seen and spent time with Jesus Christ after He had risen from the dead and it had a tremendous impact on them. They went from hiding in fear, to be willing to die for the message God had revealed to them. Their lives and deaths testified to the fact that the Bible truly is God's word.

As I have just eluded to, the New Testament writers were cowards after the crucifixion and death of Christ Jesus. After Pentecost (Acts 2:4), when the Holy Spirit of God came down to indwell believers; they were transformed into warriors for Christ Jesus and the gospel message. They endured great persecution for what they saw and what they knew. They were eyewitnesses to Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection and held to their story even under great persecution.

If the events of the Bible were false, no writer in his right mind would endure such torture for a lie. Matthew was slain with a

sword in Ethiopia. Mark died by being dragged through the streets of Alexandria. Luke was hanged on an old olive tree. John was banished to a prison on the Island of Patmos. Jude was shot to death with arrows. Peter was crucified upside down. Paul was beheaded in Rome by Emperor Nero. While martyrdom is not unusual, the basis on which these people gave their lives is what's important. Many have died for what they believed to be the truth, but people do NOT die for what they know to be a LIE.

The Word of God has the ability to speak to all individuals, it is living and powerful. Men think of the Bible as a book that was inspired. But the wonder of the Bible is that it is inspired. It still comes sweeping into the hearts of men today, and the same breath of God that gave it life makes it living and spiritually energizing today. This is a most remarkable and unique feature of the Bible. I know it has changed my life and all the critics in the world could never persuade me that those words were a mere echo of some far-off relic.

The Word of God changes men's lives and alters their destinies. A single text transformed Martin Luther. Just look at Saul of Tarsus and how God transformed his life. Here was Saul a highly educated and devoted Jewish religious leader who went after the early Christians with zeal, hunting them down and persecuting them. He even went to Damascus to persecute the Christians there, but on the road to Damascus, Saul had an encounter with Jesus. Saul's life took a 180° turn. He no longer persecuted Christians but instead went and professed the gospel of Jesus. No longer called Saul, but renamed Paul by Christ Jesus, he became the most noted Christian, an apostle of Jesus, writing a good portion of the New Testament of the Bible.

Another example I use when I play gospel music for the seniors in various residencies around Vancouver, is the life of John Newton and how God amazingly transformed his life. Here we have a slave trader from England in the 18th century who bought and sold human flesh. He was probably as low a person as you possibly could find. On one of his transatlantic voyages from Africa he ran

into a violent storm at sea and fearing for his life and the life of his crew and cargo of human flesh, he prayed to the Lord for forgiveness and to spare his life from this violent storm.

The storm miraculously subsided and upon completion of his voyage and the delivery of the slaves to the Caribbean islands, he never went back to Africa but instead turned and sailed back to his home in England. He dedicated his life to the Lord and accepted Christ Jesus as his personal Savior. The Lord used this former slave trader to influence many others by his writing of one of the most compelling and best-known gospel tune of all time and my personal favorite "Amazing Grace." This gospel tune had a great impact on my life and is one of the influences that led me to Christ Jesus. The power of God is just amazing and how God uses other people to work in our lives. Now, if he can turn John Newton's life around, he can certainly turn your life and my life around.

The Holy Spirit, who is the author of the Book, makes it speak to our souls with such power as to give divine conviction. Men may arise to unsettle and destroy, but the Spirit of God comes to validate and confirm, with the certainty that is incommunicable by mere reason, and is impervious to the assaults of doubt.

Do not think that we ought to read this Book as we read any other book, and study and analyze it just as we do any textbook in literature or science. No! When you come to this Book, come to it with reverence. This is the living Word of the living God; supernatural in origin; divine in authorship; regenerative in power; infallible in authority; personal in application; inspired in totality. Read it with a plea for the Holy Spirit's help. "... *Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place where thou standest is on holy ground (Exodus 3:5).*" Other books are of the earth. This Book is from Heaven. There's life and there's energy in the Bible. We read other books while this book reads us. It's incredible! While all other books are written to inform us, the Bible was uniquely written to transform us through its divine message. I know personally the transforming power of the Word of God – it's changed my life.

10. The wonder of its fulfilled prophecies. Prophecy is foretelling what is going to happen and only God can foretell the future. A large percentage of the Bible is devoted to prophecy. You may wonder why more than a QUARTER of the Bible is prophecy. Quite simply, prophecy demonstrates the power of God to bring to pass what He decrees. Fulfilled prophecy is also irrefutable proof of the divine inspiration of the Bible. A good majority of biblical prophecy had already been fulfilled at the time of Christ's First Coming. The rest of it is still waiting for fulfillment at the time of Christ's Second Coming. Biblical prophecies are different from other prophecies in that all of them do come to pass, and they are fulfilled exactly as foretold. In fact, the Bible's own standard is that if a person is known to have given false prophecy, he should be put to death (Deuteronomy 13:5; 18:20).

Fulfilled prophecy is one of the most powerful proofs that the Bible truly is the Word of God. Since all of the prophecies that have been fulfilled in the first coming of Christ were fulfilled to the finest detail, we can be sure that the Bible itself is God's revelation to man, since no human writer could be 100% accurate. In 2 Peter 1:21 it says, *"For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."*

Dr. Hugh Ross (science-faith think tank), writes that there are approximately 2,500 prophecies in the Bible pertaining to cities, nations, empires, events and individuals that can be verified in the historical record. He says about 80% of which have already been fulfilled to the letter with no errors. This is particularly astounding when according to scholars there are no prophecies, not one, in the writings of Buddha, Confucius or the Koran. Why? Only a supernatural God would be capable of knowing and revealing the future with 100% accuracy, time after time, in hundreds and hundreds of instances. That's exactly what the Bible does and that's precisely why the Bible is trustworthy. There simply is no logical way to explain the fulfilled prophecies in the Bible other than by divine origin. If man wrote the Bible, then how can we account for the thousands of prophecies that have been fulfilled?

Man cannot predict the future; only God can.

According to biblical scholars there were over 300 specific Old Testament prophecies that were fulfilled concerning the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Every aspect of the life of Jesus was prophesied; the place of His birth, the nature of His birth, the quality of His ministry, the purpose of His life, and the agony of His death. The literal fulfillment of so many prophecies in the life of one individual transcends any mere coincidence and serves to validate that Jesus was who He said He was – the divine Son of God. So when Isaiah talked about "*a virgin*" someday being "*with child*" and calling this child's name "*Emanuel*" or God with us, it was no fluke (Isaiah 7:14). Eight hundred years later, in a feeding trough in Bethlehem, the incredible reached zenith proportions. For the first time in the history of the world, God's actual voice could be heard coming from tiny human vocal chords. Incredible, yet some of these prophecies concerning Jesus were made well over 2,000 years prior to His birth and the last one, being made, some 400 years before his birth.

For example, it was not only prophesied that Christ would be a descendent of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3), but that He would be from the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:10) and the house of David (Ps. 110:1); that He would be born in Bethlehem (Mic. 5:2), born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14), betrayed for 30 pieces of silver (Zech. 11:12f.), and also that His hands and feet would be pierced (Ps. 22:16). It is noteworthy that this last prediction was made long before crucifixion was invented as a form of capital punishment. Approximately a thousand years before it was made common by the Romans who crucified Jesus.

It was also prophesied that Christ would be crucified with transgressors (Isa. 53:9, 12); that none of His bones would be broken (Ex. 12:46; Ps. 34:20), that soldiers' would be gambling for His clothes (Psalm 22:18), that He would be buried among the rich (Isaiah 53:9), and that He would cry out from the cross, "*My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me (Ps.22:1)?*" Moreover: Christ's resurrection (Ps. 16:8-11), His ascension (Ps. 68:18), and

hundreds of other details were predicted in minute detail. These prophecies do not deal with vague generalities but they are specific and verifiable. Each is literally fulfilled down to the smallest detail in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ Himself appealed to prophecy as a proof of His identity. "*Search the Scriptures,*" He said. "*They.... testify of Me (John 5:39).*"

Peter Stoner (Science Speaks) says that if you just took eight of those prophecies, the odds of a person coincidentally fulfilling all eight of these would be 1 in 10 to the 17th power. Since we can't easily picture what that means, he gave us this illustration: Suppose you took the state of Texas and spread silver dollars two feet deep across the entire state, then marked just one of them and buried it somewhere in the state. Then, if you chose one person, blindfolded him, and told him to pick just one silver dollar, his chances of getting the marked one on his first try would be 1 in 10 to the 17th power!

The chances of only 13 of the 2,000 prophecies being fulfilled to the letter, according to Dr. Hugh Ross's calculations, is about one in 10 with 138 zeroes added. He concluded that it is more likely that the Second Law of Thermodynamics, one of the principal laws of nature, would suddenly reverse itself than that all 13 of the prophecies could accidentally come true. And that's just 13 out of the approximately 2,000 that have been fulfilled to the letter with no errors according to biblical scholars. This amounts to history being written before the fact. Totally amazing, but that's the power of God and His prophetic evidences for the Bible's trust-worthiness.

Just talking on the subject of biblical prophecy gets me very excited. It was the prophecies of the Bible that captivated and intrigued me and convinced me that the Bible is truly the Word of God. It was just so logical and it made complete sense to me that only God could foretell the future. I'm not talking about just a few instances but about hundreds upon hundreds of prophecies concerning people, places, future events, etc. The Bible that I'm looking at right now has over 1,900 pages and just imagine one

quarter of those pages are devoted to prophecy and future events. Who else but God could so boldly and accurately predict history in advance? To me, fulfilled prophecy is the BEST evidence that shows that the Bible is the inspired Word of God.

Going back many years to around 1955 to 1957, I remember my mother sending me to Sunday school, to the Alliance Church in Sturgis, Saskatchewan. This is where I was first introduced to Jesus. After I became a teenager and left Sunday school, I went through a period of time in which the Bible would call my "rebellious years." It wasn't until many years later, after I got married that I started thinking more about the questions of life. Such questions as: Where did I come from? Why am I here? Why was I born? What is my destination or where am I going? Is there a God? What is life all about? What was the true meaning and purpose of my life? What happens after death? What is the point of it all, etc.?

It wasn't until the late 1970's that I started becoming interested in the prophecies of Scripture. I have vivid memories of Diane and I driving down to the Oregon coast on our holidays in 1981. We rented a house on the beach near Seaside, Oregon. It was there that I remember reading through a prophetic book by Hal Lindsey called, "The Late Great Planet Earth." The book captivated me and I remember reading the book at every opportunity I had during our trip. Prior to this book, I had read bits and pieces on prophecy from various articles in magazines. Anyway, after the trip I started reading various books on prophecy and really got into God's word; comparing prophecies of the various books I read and confirming it with the Scripture.

It was a no-brainer and it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that only God could predict the future and the course of world history in advance and that the Bible is truly the Word of God. More than anything it was prophecy that got me interested in reading the Bible and delving into the Scriptures and many years later in the early 1990's after reading the various books of the Bible, I asked Christ Jesus to come into my heart and to be the

Lord of my life. What a glorious journey it's been.

What I find very intriguing and captivating today are the hundreds of unfulfilled prophecies concerning Christ Jesus and of His Second Coming. The very same prophets who so accurately portrayed the First Coming of Christ, also portrays clearly His Second Coming and the conditions of the end times. I get really excited when I get into this and one day after I finish doing this book I'd like to write about the prophecies that are being fulfilled today before our very eyes in a book I'd like to do on the "Signs of the Times." I'd like to show you where today's technology, television and instant communications, credit card use, modern day travel, atomic modern-day warfare, the end time apostate church, plus a lot more; all of which is happening before our very eyes today and was foretold many centuries ago by the prophets and Jesus. But now, before I get carried away, I want to return to some more amazing prophecies of the Old Testament.

1. Moses foretold centuries earlier (with additions from Jeremiah and Jesus Christ) that Israel would be conquered twice and carried into slavery, first by Babylon and then by Rome. These destructions of Jerusalem happened in 607 B.C. and A.D. 70. It was also predicted that the Jews would one day return to their homeland which happened in 1948 (Deut. 29; Isaiah 11:11-13; Jeremiah 25:11; Hosea 3:4-5; Luke 21:23-24).

2. Five hundred years prior to the events, Joshua predicted that Jericho would be rebuilt by one man; that the man's older son would die when the construction began and that his younger son would die when it was completed (Joshua 6:26). Prophecy was fulfilled in the family of the man named Hiel (1 Kings 16:33-34).

3. The prophet Ezekiel said that the large Babylonian city of Tyre would be scraped away so that only rock would remain (Ezekiel 26:4-5). About 60 years later, Alexander the Great tore down its walls and buildings and with the rubble built a causeway to a nearby island. The city was literally scraped away. Today fishermen dry their nets on the bare rock site of the old city, never

rebuilt, exactly as the Bible foretold in the book of Ezekiel (26:14).

4. In around 700 B.C., Isaiah's prophecy names Cyrus as the king who will allow the Israelites to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple. Now, at the time of this prophecy, there was no king named Cyrus and the Temple in Jerusalem was totally built and in full operation.

In 586 B.C., more than 100 years later, the Babylonian King "Nebuchadnezzar" sacked Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple. The Jews living in Jerusalem were either killed or taken captive to Babylon. In about 539 B.C., the Babylonian Empire was conquered by the Persians. Shortly thereafter, a Persian king named Cyrus issued a formal decree that the Jews could return to Jerusalem and rebuild their temple. This decree is confirmed by secular archaeology in the form of a stone cylinder that details many events of Cyrus' reign, including the decree to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem.

Remarkably, Isaiah predicted that a man named Cyrus, who would not be born for about 100 years; would give a decree to rebuild a city and a temple, which were still standing and fully active at the time! This prophecy is truly amazing.

5. In Daniel, chapter 2, we have a complete outline of world history. For over 25 centuries, history has followed this prophetic pattern. It's incredible, but Daniel outlines the course of world history from the time of King Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian rule (c.600 B.C.) to the time of the future Second Coming of Christ Jesus. Daniel prophesied the coming empires of Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome in their exact order and that each subsequent Empire would be larger than the previous Empire.

This prophecy spans 25 centuries and it's truly astonishing that so much of this prophecy has already been fulfilled in such incredible detail. This, my friend, is real evidence of God foretelling the future and then exercising His divine power to bring it to pass. Yes, only God Himself could have given Daniel this ability to

interpret King Nebuchadnezzar's dream because within the first 500 years following this prophetic vision, all four empires appeared on the stage of world history in the exact order as predicted by Daniel.

6. Chapter 11, of the book of Daniel, describes with incredible accuracy the fate of the Grecian Empire spelled out hundreds of years prior to the events described. How upon Alexander's death his empire would be divided into four portions, the conflicts between two of these divisions, Egypt and Syria, and the effects which these wars would have upon the nation of Israel which was situated between the two (v 1-11).

Because of the stunning foresight found in this prophecy, its critics claimed that it would have to be written after the events described but it was recorded that Alexander the Great received a copy of the book of Daniel upon his annexation of Jerusalem; years prior to his death.

7. A most compelling biblical prophecy is found in Daniel, chapter 9, verse 25. Written 500 years before the birth of Jesus Christ, it foretells the very day Christ would enter Jerusalem and reveal Himself as Israel's Messiah. The prophecy states: 69 weeks of years ($69 \times 7 = 483$ years) would pass from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem, until the coming of the Messiah (Christ). Thus, 483 years \times 360 days in a Jewish calendar year = 173,880 total days. According to records found and confirmed in Nehemiah 2:1, this decree was made on March 14, 445 B.C., by the Persian king Artaxerxes. Exactly 173,880 days later on April 6th. 32 A.D. Jesus Christ rode into Jerusalem upon a colt. What amazing accuracy! The Christian world celebrates this day as Palm Sunday.

8. In the very next verse of chapter 9 (v.26), Daniel predicts that the Messiah (Christ) would be "*cut off*" (killed) prior to Jerusalem being destroyed a second time which happened in 70 A.D., when the Romans destroyed the city. This happened exactly as Daniel predicted 500 years earlier.

Christ was crucified in 32 A.D., some 38 years before Jerusalem and the second temple was destroyed.

9. Now, let's look at a modern day miracle that was prophesied over 2,500 years ago by the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel (Ezk. 36:24; 37:21-22; Isa.11:11-12; Jer.23:5-8). They told us that the Jewish people would be driven out and SCATTERED around the world, which they were driven out of their homeland in 70-135 A.D., and then in the end times the prophets said that they would be REGATHERED back to their homeland. Here we see prophecy been fulfilled before our very eyes in the re-establishment of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948.

It is without parallel in the annals of human history that a nation carried into captivity for 70 years should return to resume its national life. Then, once again after nearly 600 years in their homeland, this same nation was once again forced out of Jerusalem and Judea and scattered worldwide for nearly 2,000 years. Yet, against all odds, the state of Israel was reborn and once again for the third time the Jewish people began returning to their ancient homeland from all parts of the globe, retaining their national identity and achieving statehood among the family of nations. Was this a result of their nation being so resourceful or was it because some DIVINE HAND was watching over His people?

God performed the greatest miracle of the last 1,900 years. God had given the Jewish people back their land. *"Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such a thing? Shall the earth he made to give birth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once (Isaiah 66:8)?"* Just as prophesized, on May 14, 1948, the State of Israel was born in one day, with its own land, flag, stamp, currency, army, and government, fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy of 2,600 years ago. This was a clear and definite fulfillment of Bible prophecy. It is an accomplished fact, and it is a miracle of God.

10. Equally certifiable is the reclamation of the Jewish homeland. The Bible prophesied that the land would become a desolation after the Jewish people were expelled from it. But the

Bible also prophesied that when the Jews returned to the land, it would once again become a land of milk and honey: *"The desolate land will be cultivated instead of being a desolation in the sight of everyone who passed by. And they will say, 'This desolate land has become like the garden of Eden; and the waste, desolate, and ruined cities are fortified and inhabited (Ezekiel 36:34-35)."*

When the Jews started returning to their homeland in the late 19th century, it was a total wasteland. Nearly all the trees had been cut down and the soil was badly eroded. The land resembled the desert. Most of the valleys had become malaria infested swamp lands. The Jewish pioneers began planting trees, reclaiming the soil, and draining the swamps. Today, Israel is the bread basket of the Middle East and the fruit basket for Europe. Just as prophesied 2,500 years ago, this desolate land has become like the Garden of Eden.

11. Another accomplished fact (miracle) is the revival of the Hebrew language from the dead. When the Jews were scattered from their homeland in the First and Second Centuries, they stopped speaking Hebrew. The Jews in Europe mixed Hebrew with German and created a new language called Yiddish. The Jews in the Mediterranean basin mixed Hebrew with Spanish and created a language called Latino. But the Bible prophesied that the Hebrew language would be revived in the end times (Zephaniah 3:9), and that is exactly what happened by the efforts of one man – Eliezer Ben Yehuda. Today the people of Israel speak biblical Hebrew. Here we have another remarkable prophecy that was written some 500 years before the Jews were scattered from their homeland and losing their language and that in the end times, some 2,500 years later, we see the revival of the Hebrew language from the dead just as it had been prophesied. Here we have history pre-written some 2,500 years before the fact. No one but God knows the future and can write history in advance.

12. Isaiah 52:13-53:12 is the most outstanding example of predictive prophecy about Christ written some 700 years before his birth. Its contingencies could not have been rigged in advance in an

attempt to produce fulfillment. They involve his life, his rejection in ministry, his death, his burial and his reactions to the unjust judicial proceedings.

I could go on and on as there are hundreds upon hundreds of prophecies that we can talk about and that one could write volumes on but I'm going to stop now as I think the point has been made. Only God knows the future; the beginning from the end, and that will give every honest skeptic irrefutable proof of the Bible's inspiration. There simply is no logical way to explain the fulfilled prophecies in the Bible other than by divine origin.

Prophecy sets God's word apart from all other literature. The world is full of the records of man looking back and recording what happened in the past. But only the Bible is full of the records of God writing the events of history before they take place. Prophecy is history pre-written.

The evidence is overwhelming when presented with the miracle of the Bible's structure, survival, integration (unity), historical and archaeological evidence, scientific insights, and over hundreds upon hundreds of fulfilled prophecies. There can only be one conclusion – **The Bible is truly the Word of God.**

Psalm 119: 89

"Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven."

God's word comes to us in the book we call the Bible and here, in the book, it tells us something about itself. It tells us three wonderful things about its own character.

First of all, "it's forever." It's eternal, it's not temporary. It doesn't change with fashions or the events of history or the attitudes and thoughts of man. It's forever – an eternal word.

Then again, "it's God's word." It's not man's word. It didn't start

with man. It came from God. It's the revelation of God Himself – His ways, His thoughts, His attitudes, His purposes, His laws. Men were the channels through which it came, but always God was the source.

The third thing it tells us is that "it's settled in heaven." Nothing that happens on earth can ever change the Word of God. It's not subject to the decrees of kings or emperors, nor to the opinions of politicians or to the violence of armies. It's out of reach of all those evil forces; it's settled forever in heaven.

What a comfort and what a blessing in the midst of all that's transient and temporary and impermanent and insecure; that we can lay hold on our own lives on God's word which is forever, which comes from Him, which is settled in heaven.