

THE BIBLE 02

THE BIBLE IS FULL OF MISTAKES

By Winkie Pratney

The Bible is full of mistakes...

The first mistake was when Eve doubted the Word of God

The second happened when her husband did, too

And mistake after mistake is still being made because people insist on doubting God's Word

The Bible is full of contradictions...

It contradicts pride and prejudice

It contradicts lust and lawlessness

It contradicts sin, yours and mine

The Bible is filled with failures...

Because it is the record of people who failed many times

There was Adam

There was Cain

There was Moses

There was David and many, many others

But it is also the record of God's never-failing love

God did not write the Bible...

For people who want to play games with words

For those who like to examine good without doing it

For the man who does not believe because he does not want to

Modern man has discarded the teachings of the Bible...

For the same reasons other men have discarded it throughout history...

Woeful ignorance as to its true message and content

Determined apathy in refusing to consider its claims
Parroted pseudo-scholarship posing as honest criticism
Secret conviction that this Book is right and men are wrong

It is clear that only an ignoramus or prejudiced person would believe it...

Teaches outmoded, irrational, unreasonable and archaic principles
Is filled with hopeless discrepancies and unacceptable statements
Could only be the undirected, irrelevant, uninspired and unaided work of mere men

The Bible is, after all, only just another religious book...

For thousands who do not dare be honest with themselves and God
For those who are afraid to accept God's challenge to an honest examination
For those unwilling to look, in case it tells them what they are really like inside

And you cannot understand or trust what the Bible says

Unless you are willing to consider the evidence and face up to the Author...
Make no "mistake" about it—the Bible is here to stay!

The Bible is a Book from God, about God

The Bible is a Book from God, about God—the story of His love for man. Its central figure is Jesus Christ, God robed in humanity; the record of His origin, birth, life, death, and resurrection. Its message is stranger than fiction—that the God who spun the worlds in space once visited earth to provide a way to heaven, and that man may share a new Kingdom in His very own family. The Bible is no ordinary Book—it is strangely different, because men who listened to the voice of God wrote it. The words they penned were more than human. They live like fire to each new generation, fresh as wind and pure as rain.

It is not a book of history although its records have been accurately substantiated by modern archaeology. It is not a book of poetry although it has been the inspiration of countless songs and poems throughout the centuries. It is not an

adventure story, although few novels have matched its sheer drama. It is not a book of ethics or morality, although civilization's finest and fairest laws have been forged from its principles. It is not a textbook, but it still astonishes scientists and scholars from fields as widely varying as genetics, geology and nuclear physics. The Bible is a unique record of man's problem, and God's answer—the Good News of salvation from sin through Jesus.

"What a man has produced, man can exhaust... we have outgrown every other book that belongs to the past, but instead of outgrowing the Bible we have not yet grown up to it. The Bible is not only up-to-date, but it is always ahead of date." (C. A. Benham) Centuries of study by the most able scholars have not begun to exhaust its riches. The most profound study has only revealed unfathomable depths of wisdom. Mark Twain said, "Its' not the things I don't understand in the Bible that bother me; its the things I do understand!" These accurate insights expose the real reason most people are afraid to study the Scriptures; they are afraid they may meet the Author, and they know that they are not ready to do so. For many people, objective evidence as to the authenticity of Scripture is almost useless. Their atheism or skepticism is merely a convenient excuse for moral cowardice and willful blindness. Such a rejection of the Word of God does not stem from lack of evidence, but from lack of honesty, integrity and moral purity. There is much evidence to examine that you may honestly believe—but do you want to?

Those "contradictions"...

Before you read any further, know this— knowledge = responsibility! Dare you read on?

...are largely myth. Few people who criticize Scripture actually know what it says. Even fewer have the necessary qualifications to pass any accurate, objective verdict on its message. Most have never really read it at all, and their assertions of "mistakes" or "contradictions," are largely hearsay. Any man or woman who will give an intelligent opinion or conclusion on the Bible should first spend enough time in personal, intensive research to see what it actually says. Simple, but honest, investigation will harmonize the majority of the apparent discrepancies of shallow reading.

The Bible does not attempt to defend its claim to Divine inspiration—it simply states it. The writers of Scripture continuously claim their message was not human opinion, but divine revelation. Genesis opens with the words, "And God said," nine times in the first chapter. The statement, "...saith the Lord," appears 23 times in the last Old Testament book, Malachi. "The Lord saith," appears 560 times in the first five books of the Bible alone. Isaiah claims at least 40 times that his message was from God, as do Ezekiel and Jeremiah, 60 and 100 times respectively. At least 3,800 times in Scripture, writers declared their message to be divine in origin.

The Lord Jesus quoted from at least 24 Old Testament books. He referred to Daniel 22 times, Isaiah 40 times, the Pentateuch 60 times, as well as the Psalms, never implying that the events or people recorded there were mere fables or

folklore. In Luke 24:24-27, Christ claimed Himself to be the subject of prophecy all through the Old Testament. Many times He stated that all things in Scripture must be fulfilled. (Matt. 13:4; Luke 21:22; John 13:18; 15:25; 17:12) He claimed His own words were inspired, (Mark, 13:31; Jn. 6:63; 8:4 2-47; 12:46-50), and that, "the Scripture cannot be broken." (John 10:35) His own claims to divine origin and the claims of the Bible stand or fall together. If He cannot be proved a liar or a lunatic, the Bible is God's Word.

The New Testament writers who walked and talked with Christ likewise claimed divine inspiration. Paul declared that his message came from God, in God's power, (I Cor. 2; Gal. 1:11-17), and Peter says Paul wrote by, "wisdom given to him." (2. Pet. 3:15-16) There are at least 600 Old Testament quotations and references in the New Testament, interlacing and interlocking the two Testaments as one united whole. The Bible's own account of its inspiration and preservation is: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God... no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation; for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:19-21)

The Bible is a Book written for careful, intelligent people. It will bear the closest examination by anyone. Honest scholarship by saint and skeptic alike has always resulted in overwhelming evidence of its authenticity. The Bible does not require blind faith, but it does ask complete honesty on the part of the critic. Thorough the study of its claims, origin, historical records, and fulfilled prophecy, as well as careful consideration of every challenge and charge of its critics, enough convincing evidence will be amassed for even the most cautious of scholars.

1. Its Survival

Why has the Bible survived century after century of determined persecution? No other ancient book has such a vast number of surviving copies; there are thousands of Old and New Testament manuscripts. Variations between these are minor and insignificant and great care must have been taken in copying them. It is said that Jewish scribes would use a new pen each time they came to the word "LORD" and at that point they carefully compared everything they had written so far, with the original. Men in every century have been killed for owning copies. Each era brings a renewed attempt to stamp it out, but history shows it has been impossible to destroy the Scriptures. Voltaire said, "In one hundred years, this book will be forgotten." Voltaire is forgotten. One hundred years exactly after his boast, his house was being used as the headquarters for the Geneva Bible Society. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth may pass away, but My Word will never pass away." (Matt. 24:35) God's Word is "quick" or living. (Heb. 4:12) It has stood the test of scholarship, centuries, and the trials of all enemies.

2. Its Structure

Take about 40 different writers, over a period of about 1,500. Use men from many walks of life—doctors, shepherds, kings, and fishermen. Pick them from

miles and generations apart. Give them little or no chance to communicate. Cut off most of them from the church organizations of their day. Ask them to write on religion, poetry, health, ethics, science, morality, and philosophy. Ask them to predict future events, write about the meaning of life, the mystery of existence, and man's final purpose. You be the editor! Collect, condense and cradle it in common language. Divide it into books, chapters and verses. Now, what have you got?

Literature hash! No man on earth could make unified sense out of such a mess of outdated ideas, wild speculations, and hopeless contradictions. But the Bible was written in just such a way. And any honest reader, who has carefully examined its message, has found it to be one amazing whole from Genesis to Revelation; united in theme, consistent in concept, logical in development, and agreed in doctrine. In real-life illustration, parable, and prophecy, recording historical people who lived and died, the Bible is the love-story of history—God seeking rebellious man.

3. Its Scientific Accuracy

The God of the Bible is the God who created the universe. True science and Scripture will always agree—they both have the same Author! Science has had centuries to examine the statements of fact in Scripture. Although the opinions of men about nature and the opinions of men about the Bible have sometimes clashed, no fault has been recorded in Scripture. The Bible does not tell fairy tales. Its statements are true, able to stand the closest examinations. It is a matter of historical record that science has never developed significantly anywhere, except where there was a Christian influence. The scientific method and motivation for inquiry is really a child of Scriptural concepts; that the universe is the orderly product of a Divine Mind, and that man can discover the secrets of His creation, since he is made in rational, finite miniature likeness of his maker. Science has primarily expanded where the Bible was most freely read. Galileo, Newton, Pascal, Copernicus, and many others knew the Bible and its Author.

Before Columbus sailed around the world, Scripture records the spherical nature of earth. (Is. 40:21-22) When "Science," as a baby, thought the world to be held up by, "three elephants on the back of a tortoise," the Bible factually established its free floating in space. (Job. 26:7) The moon is shown to be a reflector, unlike the radiating sun. (Job. 25:5; 31:6) Modern precision telescopes have charted a "runaway" star in space. Arcturus, drifting with all its planets in tow, travels silently through the universe at twenty-seven and a half miles a second. The Bible recorded its wanderings centuries before the telescope. The Bible record of creation is a master example of the harmony of geology, biology, and Scripture. 300 years ago, it was discovered that physical life was resident in the blood; the Bible recorded it 3,500 years ago. (Lev. 17:11) Meteorology, geology, aeronautical principles, are all hinted at in Scripture. (Ps. 135:5,7; Job 38:4; 28:5) Atomic energy and radiation effects are old-stuff with the God of the atom. (2 Pet. 3:1 0-12; Is. 4:1; 13:12; Joel 2:30—the word "pillars" is in Hebrew, "palm-trees")

Science can tabulate the "What," for us, analyze the "How," and probe for the "Why." But it cannot tell us the "where from" or the reason for which the universe exists. It cannot say who you are or why you are here. It can tell us what we are able to do, but not what we ought to do. Here, revelation in science is superseded by His revelation, Scripture. (Ps. 91:1; 8:3-6; 19:7-14) One shows His power; the other, His purpose.

4. Its Span of Time In Prophecy

There is one thing the Bible dares do that no other book in the world does. It accurately predicts the future. God arranges situations in history to bring about His glory in the lives of those who respond to His call. Working with the moral choices of men, He directs circumstances together into a pre-planned series of patterns laid down before the foundation of the world. The outline of many of these patterns is revealed in the Bible. There are about 3,856 verses directly or indirectly concerned with prophecy in Scripture—about one verse in six tells of future events! God's challenge to the world is, "Prove Me now - I am the LORD... I will speak; and the Word that I shall speak shall come to pass." (Jer. 28:9; Ezek. 12:25; 24:14; Lk. 21:22) Buddhists, Confucianists, and the followers of Mohammed have their sacred writings, but in them the element of prophecy is conspicuous by its absence. The destruction of Tyre, the invasion of Jerusalem, the fall of Babylon and Rome—each was accurately predicted and fulfilled to the smallest detail.

In the life of the Lord Jesus Himself there are over 300 fulfilled prophecies. The chances that these would all coincide by accident in one person are laughable. By the laws of chance, it is one in a number followed by 181 zeroes! To give you some idea of the size of this immense figure, think of a ball that is packed solidly with electrons, (two and a half million, billion, end to end make would a line about one inch long.) Now in your mind imagine this ball expanded to the size of the universe we know—some four billion light-years in diameter. (A light-year being the distance light travels in one year, at a rate of over 186,000 miles a second.) Multiply this by 500 quadrillion, then remove just one electron, and color it red. Put it back and stir for a hundred years. Then blindfold a man and send him in to pick it out first time. Impossible? This is the same chance that Christ lived and died according to Scripture by accident. The Bible specifically predicts events and happenings that are as modern as tomorrow's news release.

5. Its Social Influence

A book's true value is revealed by the effect it has on society. The Bible gives laws for human relationships that have never been excelled or equaled. Whenever the Scripture has been taught and lived, it has transformed nations. The Bible has produced consideration for others, tenderness and compassion for the old, sick, and needy. It has dignified womanhood and guided childhood. Whenever the Scripture is freely circulated in the language of a people, it releases astonishing power for good, elevating society, overthrowing superstition, and opening the door to progress in the sciences, arts, and humanities. The Bible

message has delivered thousands from the chains of fear, sickness, and sin. It is the most powerful book in the world for the renewal of man. Practically applied, it teaches and inspires industry, fairness, and justice; it stands for the welfare of the individual, the family, the community, and the state. It has created more benevolent enterprises than any other book in history. Study the record of history for yourself. See what happens to the nation that honors the Bible and its Author. See what happens to progress in countries that try to suppress, reject, or misinterpret its message. Wherever the Bible is loved and applied, the nation is exalted. Whenever men become forgetful of its Author and ignorant of its truths, fear, war, disease, and hatred stalks the streets. The Bible injunction is clear; "Happy is the nation whose God is the Lord"

6. Its Supreme Appeal

The Bible is a Book with a universal message for all. It is the only volume that a child and scholar may find equally delightful. Its simple, life-related principles work in any country transcending barriers of culture and race to bring peace, love, joy, and forgiveness. Only the Bible can make bad men good inside, transforming the rebel into the saint and servant of humanity. It appeals to all men.

7. Its Supernatural Salvation

The greatest proof of the Bible is the difference its message can make in your life. If you have not done so, will you ask God the Holy Spirit to reveal to your heart the truth of His power in its pages? (John 16:13; I Cor. 2:11-14). Pray honestly, "God, I don't know if this is your Word or not, but if it is and you can help me, please show yourself to me as I read." God will meet you in a living demonstration of His reality. (John 20:30-31) Don't make the mistake of doubting God's promises!