

This Remarkable Book Called...

The description of the holy Land, containing the places mentioned in the four Evangelists, with other places about the Sea coast, as herein may be seen the way and course of Christ and his Apostles, from Jerusalem to the Sea, and thence again to Jerusalem.



The places specified in the Mappe, with their situation by the observation of the owners according to the length and breadth.

Place	Latitude	Longitude
Jerusalem	32° 15' N	34° 50' E
Bethany	32° 15' N	35° 00' E
Jericho	32° 00' N	35° 15' E
Amman	31° 45' N	35° 30' E
Hebron	31° 30' N	35° 15' E
Beersheba	31° 15' N	34° 45' E
Gaza	31° 00' N	34° 30' E
Ascalon	30° 45' N	34° 15' E
Caesarea	30° 30' N	34° 00' E
Tyre	30° 15' N	33° 45' E
Sidon	30° 00' N	33° 30' E
Beirut	29° 45' N	33° 15' E
Haifa	29° 30' N	33° 00' E
Tripoli	29° 15' N	32° 45' E
Lebanon	29° 00' N	32° 30' E
Antioch	28° 45' N	32° 15' E
Hama	28° 30' N	32° 00' E
Latakia	28° 15' N	31° 45' E
Tarsus	28° 00' N	31° 30' E
Adana	27° 45' N	31° 15' E
Antalya	27° 30' N	31° 00' E
Side	27° 15' N	30° 45' E
Iskenderiye	27° 00' N	30° 30' E
Beja	26° 45' N	30° 15' E
Antakya	26° 30' N	30° 00' E
Harput	26° 15' N	29° 45' E
Van	26° 00' N	29° 30' E
Erzurum	25° 45' N	29° 15' E
Bitlis	25° 30' N	29° 00' E
Diyarbakir	25° 15' N	28° 45' E
Medina	25° 00' N	28° 30' E
Yemen	24° 45' N	28° 15' E
Aden	24° 30' N	28° 00' E
Perth	24° 15' N	27° 45' E
Colombo	24° 00' N	27° 30' E
Malacca	23° 45' N	27° 15' E
Singapore	23° 30' N	27° 00' E
Batavia	23° 15' N	26° 45' E
Amboyna	23° 00' N	26° 30' E
Surabaya	22° 45' N	26° 15' E
Manila	22° 30' N	26° 00' E
Cebu	22° 15' N	25° 45' E
Iloilo	22° 00' N	25° 30' E
Visaya	21° 45' N	25° 15' E
Madagascar	21° 30' N	25° 00' E
India	21° 15' N	24° 45' E
Siam	21° 00' N	24° 30' E
China	20° 45' N	24° 15' E
Japan	20° 30' N	24° 00' E
Philippine	20° 15' N	23° 45' E
Molucca	20° 00' N	23° 30' E
Sumatra	19° 45' N	23° 15' E
Borneo	19° 30' N	23° 00' E
Sulawesi	19° 15' N	22° 45' E
Java	19° 00' N	22° 30' E
Sumatra	18° 45' N	22° 15' E
Malaya	18° 30' N	22° 00' E
Indochina	18° 15' N	21° 45' E
Siam	18° 00' N	21° 30' E
China	17° 45' N	21° 15' E
Japan	17° 30' N	21° 00' E
Philippine	17° 15' N	20° 45' E
Molucca	17° 00' N	20° 30' E
Sumatra	16° 45' N	20° 15' E
Borneo	16° 30' N	20° 00' E
Sulawesi	16° 15' N	19° 45' E
Java	16° 00' N	19° 30' E
Sumatra	15° 45' N	19° 15' E
Malaya	15° 30' N	19° 00' E
Indochina	15° 15' N	18° 45' E
Siam	15° 00' N	18° 30' E
China	14° 45' N	18° 15' E
Japan	14° 30' N	18° 00' E
Philippine	14° 15' N	17° 45' E
Molucca	14° 00' N	17° 30' E
Sumatra	13° 45' N	17° 15' E
Borneo	13° 30' N	17° 00' E
Sulawesi	13° 15' N	16° 45' E
Java	13° 00' N	16° 30' E
Sumatra	12° 45' N	16° 15' E
Malaya	12° 30' N	16° 00' E
Indochina	12° 15' N	15° 45' E
Siam	12° 00' N	15° 30' E
China	11° 45' N	15° 15' E
Japan	11° 30' N	15° 00' E
Philippine	11° 15' N	14° 45' E
Molucca	11° 00' N	14° 30' E
Sumatra	10° 45' N	14° 15' E
Borneo	10° 30' N	14° 00' E
Sulawesi	10° 15' N	13° 45' E
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Sumatra	9° 45' N	13° 15' E
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Indochina	9° 15' N	12° 45' E
Siam	9° 00' N	12° 30' E
China	8° 45' N	12° 15' E
Japan	8° 30' N	12° 00' E
Philippine	8° 15' N	11° 45' E
Molucca	8° 00' N	11° 30' E
Sumatra	7° 45' N	11° 15' E
Borneo	7° 30' N	11° 00' E
Sulawesi	7° 15' N	10° 45' E
Java	7° 00' N	10° 30' E
Sumatra	6° 45' N	10° 15' E
Malaya	6° 30' N	10° 00' E
Indochina	6° 15' N	9° 45' E
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Philippine	5° 15' N	8° 45' E
Molucca	5° 00' N	8° 30' E
Sumatra	4° 45' N	8° 15' E
Borneo	4° 30' N	8° 00' E
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Siam	0° 00' N	0° 30' E
China	0° 45' N	0° 15' E
Japan	0°	

WHEN you open your Bible, you have in your hands a unique book. It is more than a historical record of ancient nations. It is more than a masterpiece of English literature to be admired. It claims to be the record of God's dealings with men. If this is the case, its contents are the inspired and infallible words of the living God. No other book in the whole world has these credentials!

The Bible was written over a period of 1,600 years, by individuals in different places, at different times, with different backgrounds; yet each individual book harmonises with the rest. Although its writing spread over many centuries and involved different people, it has one single, perfect saving message throughout. No other book in history can make the same claim, nor remain constant and consistent in content, upon careful scrutiny.

Is there any truth in its claims?

Can it be relied upon in today's modern world?

These questions, and many more, are answered in this booklet. We suggest that you examine its pages carefully. For, if it can be proved that this is "the Word of God," then it is vital that you learn further about it, and abide within its teachings.

HERALD OF THE COMING AGE

A Christadelphian Publication

**DECLARING THE TRUTH OF THE SCRIPTURES REVEALED FOR THE SALVATION OF THOSE WHO ARE PREPARED TO EXAMINE THE CLAIMS OF GOD'S WORD;
AND PRESENTING THE GLORIOUS MESSAGE OF THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST
AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF GOD'S ETERNAL KINGDOM ON EARTH.**

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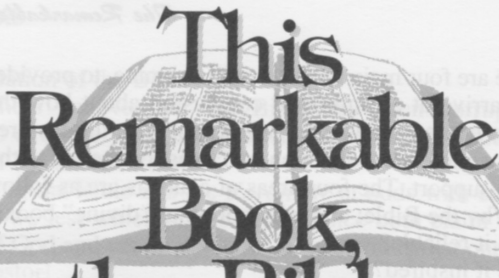
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NUMBER 4



This Remarkable Book, the Bible.

Tests which Prove the Bible to be Accurate and Reliable.

The Bible — True or False?

The Bible is a unique book. It has been called “the strangest publishing project of all time.” But it stands alone from all other volumes, for no other book can compare with these outstanding credentials:

- Forty independent writers were used in its compilation.
- These writers had twenty different occupations.
- They lived in ten different countries
- They wrote over a 1,500 year time span.
- The book uses three different languages.
- It has a cast of 2,930 characters in 1,551 places.
- It covers a huge number of different subjects.
- Its message is expressed in all literary forms (poetry, prose, etc.).

Apart from this impressive list of attributes, the most incredible thing about the Bible is its claim to be the WORD OF A LIVING GOD! It asserts to be the direct and infallible revelation from God to man concerning his salvation. We must decide whether to accept the Bible as true, or reject it as false — for our future depends upon the choice we make.

Your decision will dramatically affect your outlook on life.

Consider the amazing claims of this remarkable book.

There are four main areas we will examine, to provide a good basis to arrive at an informed conclusion about how the Bible should be treated — whether we accept it as the inspired Word of God, or merely a collection of fantastic legends without any scientific support. The four areas of analysis are as follows:

1. Why the Bible; and why not other “divine” books?
2. Is it reliable?
3. Is it inspired?
4. What does it offer?

Although there are many areas we could examine, we will limit our comments to these four points.

Why The Bible?

Why indeed! Why not the *Koran*, Islam’s holy book? Or the *Bhagavad Gita* of the Hindus? Or the writings of Confucius, or the *Book of Mormon*, or any of dozens of other “sacred” writings which occupy positions of prominence in religious systems around the world? Why not accept some of these other books instead of — or even together with — the Bible?

What makes us so sure that the Bible should be preferred above this list of competitors to the title of “the Word of God?”

Consider the claims of the *Koran* (in Islam: *Qur’an*, the “Word of God”). This book is described by its admirers as “a literary masterpiece of surpassing excellence,” and is unquestioningly accepted by Muslims to be the infallible Word of God as revealed to Mohammed by the angel Gabriel over 1,300 years ago. But the *Koran* claims to be in agreement with the Bible, and therefore puts itself in a difficult situation.

There are major differences between the two books. Certainly, there are some similarities, but there are also very great divergences — they are in dispute even in simple historical facts. They do not agree in the report of Noah’s Flood, or of Jesus as being the “only beloved Son of God, or in many of the prescribed punishments for certain crimes. And even in basic doctrines of belief, there is no harmony between the *Koran* and the Bible.

The followers of Islam claim that any discrepancies between the two books resulted from the Bible being distorted and changed. They say that the *Koran* agrees with the ORIGINAL Bible, and that differences evident today have resulted from

manipulation of the Bible texts.

Others believe that the Bible has been corrupted and changed over the years, and we will consider this issue in more detail in our next section.

Seeing the Bible and the *Koran* are at odds with each other, how do we test which one is right? Since both claim to be the Word of God and yet do not agree, it is obvious that one must be an impostor!

The Proof of Prophecy

There is one test that we can apply to both books: the test of prophecy — the foretelling of future events. A book claiming to be God's Word will contain His statements about His purpose, and predictions for the future. It will be a simple matter to ascertain whether such prophecies have been fulfilled or not. In fact, the Bible draws attention to this test, and invites us to examine it closely. It declares: "If thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him" (Deuteronomy 18:21-22).

Compare the "divine" books such as the *Bhagavad Gita* ("The Song of the Lord," the account of Krishna) and the *Koran*, to see how many prophecies they contain. You will discover there are hardly any. Certainly not such authoritative, precise declarations as are frequent throughout the Bible, for it is one thing to give a general prophecy — it is quite another to foretell a specific, remarkable occurrence that is to be fulfilled to the very letter. The Bible's prophecies have mostly been fulfilled, many of them are of a very definite character, providing details of the actual events; geographic locations; and persons, or nations involved, often before they came into existence!

There are some very notable examples of such prophecies in another free booklet which examines these in greater detail. Please, write to the address on the back cover of this issue for your copy of *The Amazing Witness of Fulfilling Bible Prophecy*. Meanwhile, consider one such statement, found in Luke 21:24 — "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the

times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” This was spoken by Jesus Christ 2,000 years ago, at a time when the Jewish nation rejoiced in their magnificent temple in Jerusalem, and saw it as evidence of the permanency of their kingdom. They did not believe it was possible for God to allow His temple and city to be overrun by the Gentiles! It was only some forty years later, in AD70, that Jerusalem was invaded by the Romans, and the city destroyed, exactly as Jesus had forecast.

Further, two thousand years of dispersion in Gentile lands were to pass by, during which time it was often attempted to destroy the Jews altogether, through bitter persecution, or holocausts. But in 1948 the Jewish State was formed, under great difficulty and against overwhelming odds, at the ratio of 600,000 Jews against one million Palestinian Arabs, and all surrounding Arab states (a “miracle” as many people declared!); finally, in 1967, after the Six Day War, the city of Jerusalem itself was freed from Gentile domination — exactly as the Bible had forecast! There are many other such amazing predictions within the covers of the Bible.

Is the Bible Reliable?

This is an age-old question. It is perhaps the most common reason which people advance for choosing to reject the Bible. It is generally believed that the original text **MUST** have been changed significantly since it was first written, and therefore, it is said, there is little point in paying great attention to a corrupted book.

Those who object to the Bible on this basis are not so much questioning its initial inspiration, as the reliability of the document we possess today. Therefore we need to discover whether the Bible we have in our hands today is the same as that written in the original languages. This is an important question, and it requires that we should be aware of the facts.

When testing any ancient document for its reliability, there are three basic and important tests which must be applied. These tests are:

1. The “Bibliographical” Test.
2. The Internal Evidence.
3. The External Evidence.

It is important to apply the same tests, equally and fairly, to all ancient documents, including the Bible. If this is done, it will be quickly seen how well the Bible compares. So as not to complicate this comparison, we limit our test to the New Testament of the Bible.

1. The Bibliographical Test

This is an examination of the textual transmission by which the documents reach us. Since we do not have the actual parchments nor papyri on which the original documents were written, we must test how reliable are the copies which we have. This is determined in two ways:

- (a). The NUMBER of manuscripts (mss) in existence.
- (b). The TIME INTERVAL between the original and existing copies.

Notice that there is certainly no shortage of New Testament manuscripts to examine. In fact, there are over 24,000 different, independent ancient copies of the New Testament in existence today. **Figure 1** catalogues these manuscripts, and it can be seen that there are over 5,000 Greek versions of the New Testament alone (the earliest copies of these books were in the Greek language). The great number of different countries from which these manuscripts come, is ample evidence to support the fact that the books which make up the New Testament, were the most frequently copied, and widely circulated books of antiquity.

How does this compare with other ancient literature? It is surprising to find that most of the other well-known and

Figure 1: SURVIVING NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS

GREEK		OTHER	
Uncials	267	Latin Vulgate	1,000+
Minuscules	2,764	Ethiopic	2,000+
Lectionaries	2,143	Slavic	4,101
Papyri	88	Armenian	2,587
Recent Finds	47	Syriac Pashetta	350
		Bohairic	100
		Arabic	75
		Old Latin	50

**A Total of over
24,000 Documents**

established books of ancient times have very few copies extant, as reference to **Figure 2** will show. In contrast, the works of recognised historians, such as Herodotus and Suetonius, have as few as eight independent copies in existence — certainly paltry when compared with the 24,000 copies of the New Testament! The second most frequently copied work of ancient times is Homer's *Iliad*, there being 643 copies in existence: about one fortieth the number of New Testaments available!

Figure 2: A COMPARISON OF ANCIENT DOCUMENTS

AUTHOR	No. of COPIES
Caesar	10
Tacitus	20
Pliny	7
Thucydides	8
Suetonius	8
Herodotus	8
Demosthenes	200
Sophocles	193
Aristotle	49
Homer (<i>Iliad</i>)	643
New Testament	Over 24,000

By this comparison the Bibliographical Test indicates the proportion of a document as an accurate copy of the original on which it is based. It is a simple equation: the more the independent copies agree with each other, the more likely it is that we have the text of the original document faithfully preserved. On the other hand, the fewer the number, the less certain we can be of this fact. Certainly, by any measure, the New Testament stands well above any other work in this aspect of the Bibliographical Test.

The age of these copies is also a very important consideration. The older the copy (i.e., the closer to the original manuscript), the less chance there is of errors having been introduced into the document. Additionally, a continuous line of copies from ancient to modern times helps to ensure that changes to the original document have not occurred.

Until fairly recent times, the oldest known copy of the New Testament was about the end of the second century AD. This meant that there was an interval of about 250 years between the original writing of the New Testament, and this copy. Such a time span encouraged the "higher critics" to say that the New Testament could not be trusted.

However, recent archaeological discoveries silenced these critics, and helped to confirm the accuracy of the New Testament manuscripts. Discoveries of early papyrus manuscripts, such as the *John Ryland Manuscript* (AD 130), the *Chester Beatty Papyri* (AD 155), and the *Bodmer Papyri II* (AD 200), bridged the gap between the time of Christ, and the existing manuscripts of a later date. Hence, the critics have been embarrassed!

Therefore, with the knowledge that there is only a thirty year time span between the oldest manuscript and the original work, how does this compare with other ancient documents held in high repute? **Figure 3** highlights two important points. Firstly, that the time span for the New Testament is significantly less than for any other ancient document; and that Homer's *Iliad* is the nearest rival (albeit, a poor second!) with a time span of 500 years.

We therefore conclude that if a person is sceptical of the New Testament text, he must also put all of classical antiquity into that category, and no other ancient document is as well attested bibliographically as the New Testament.

Now, despite this impressive evidence, the Bibliographical Test only determines that the text we now have is the same as that which was originally recorded. We must still determine as to whether that written record is credible. Is the record believable?

Figure 3: THE TIME BETWEEN THE DOCUMENT AND KNOWN COPIES

AUTHOR	WRITTEN	EARLIEST COPY	TIME SPAN
Caesar	100-44BC	900AD	1,000 YRS
Tacitus	100AD	1100AD	1,000 YRS
Pliny	61-113AD	850AD	750 YRS
Thucydides	460-400BC	900AD	1,300 YRS
Suetonius	75-160AD	950AD	800 YRS
Herodotus	480-425BC	1100AD	1,300 YRS
Demosthenes	383-322BC	1100AD	1,300 YRS
Sophocles	496-406BC	1100AD	1,400 YRS
Aristotle	384-322BC	1100AD	1,400 YRS
Homer (ILIAD)	900BC	400BC	500 YRS
New Testament	40-100AD	130AD	30 YRS

Were the writers telling the Truth? For this we must consider the internal evidence.

2. Internal Evidence

That which helps determine credibility of a document is the ability of its author to *tell the truth*. Can the times and events spoken of be checked as to whether they are factual or otherwise? If so, then the veracity of the document is enhanced.

The evidence that the Bible brings forward in its own defence is more significant than might first appear. Consider three important reasons in regard to the New Testament writers which confirm their truthfulness.

[1] *Proximity to the Events*. If the New Testament was put together some hundreds of years after the actual events recorded, as has been often suggested, then it would have been much harder for the writers to accurately record the detail. The New Testament accounts, however, were recorded by men who were either eyewitnesses themselves, or who related from the eyewitnesses their personal accounts of the actual incidents and teachings of Christ.

For example, the following testimonies from the Bible confirm this evidence: “[who]... from the *beginning were eyewitnesses* and ministers of the Word” (Luke 1:1-3). “We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, *but were eyewitnesses...*” (2Peter 1:16). “That which we have *heard*, which we have seen with *our eyes*, which we have looked upon, and *our hands* have handled...” (1John 1:1). “He that *saw it* bare record...” (John 19:35).

These writers claim to be eyewitnesses of the events they recorded. Even in a modern court of law, the evidence of eyewitnesses is given the highest priority when considering past events.

The accuracy of the record is enhanced when the writer pens his account about the time of its occurrence. Take, for example, the account in Luke 3:1 — “Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch

of Abilene...” What is said by Luke is recognised as historical fact, and is an example which certifies the accuracy of the witness, and of the record itself.

However, the historian must also deal with the eyewitness who has either deliberately or accidentally lied, even though he was near to, and familiar with, the event. How can this be checked? We shall now consider this question.

[2] ***Accuracy of the Report?*** It is beyond doubt that the New Testament accounts of Christ were circulated within the lifetimes of those who witnessed his ministry. It is also a fact that these people (some friendly; others hostile to the gospel) would either confirm or deny the accuracy of the accounts. The bitter opponents of Jesus and his disciples would have leapt at the opportunity to discredit the claims concerning his life, death and resurrection, had the writings being circulated proved untrue.

In contrast, the apostles, advocating their case for the gospel, actually appealed to their opponents to disprove their claims! Consider Acts 2:22 — “Men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.” Such invitations would not have been offered by the New Testament writers unless they were totally confident of the truth of their claims. In case of any departure from Truth, critics and opponents would have swamped this “new religion” with claims of falsehood even before it had gained a foothold. The fact that Christianity did spread and prosper, is a further indication that the claims of the New Testament writers were based on Truth.

[3] ***Perfect Harmony of Facts.*** The Bible writers are in absolute agreement with each other. Where they differ is in their angle of approach to their subject, and in their individual description of an event. This is to be naturally expected, and shows that the books were not manipulated to achieve a harmony where it did not exist.

The fact that each book in the Bible complements the others, adds further weight to the conclusion that this collection of books is like no other.

[4] ***Other Evidences.*** Many other features of “internal

evidence” of the Bible exist, including (a) the accuracy of Bible prophecy; (b) its consistent message throughout, and (c) the unequalled “numerical patterns” it contains. Space prevents us from featuring these aspects in this booklet.

3. Evidence of Credibility

We ask the reader to consider whether any further historical evidence confirms or denies the internal testimony of the documents themselves. Are there other sources, besides the books themselves, to substantiate their accuracy, reliability and authenticity? It has been well said that “conformity or agreement with other known historical or scientific facts is often the decisive test of evidence, whether of one or of more witnesses” (Louis Gottschalk, *Understanding History*).

The areas of study which bear upon this question include: (a) Archaeology, (b) Writings of ancient historians, and (c) Writings of early “church fathers.”

Digging in the Dirt

The archaeologist’s spade is invaluable when it comes to confirming the Bible record. It is impossible to outline all these discoveries in this short booklet, but we will take an example to highlight this test.

Sir William Ramsay is one of the finest archaeologists on record. His contribution in the area of Asia Minor is outstanding. Because of his initial training and study, he was led to believe that the New Testament (and, in particular, the book of Acts) could not be relied upon. Hence he paid little attention to it, until his work in Asia Minor compelled him to re-examine this document. Having found that the writings of Luke in *The Acts of the Apostles* were meticulously accurate in historical detail, Ramsay concluded that Acts was written by a contemporary writer of the first century, and that the document was extremely reliable in all areas of detail that could be tested. He admitted in his book, *The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament*, that “Luke is a historian of the first rank...This author should be placed along with the very greatest of historians.”

This is but one example of many such testimonies.

Other Ancient Writings

Additional evidence comes from the writings of the historians and “church fathers” of the times. These two groups of writers confirm our conviction that the Bible is a trustworthy document.

Historians such as Tacitus, Suetonius, Josephus, and Thales all make reference to Jesus and the beginnings of Christianity, as do the Government Officials such as Pliny the Younger and Trajan. The early “church fathers” also make numerous references to, and quotations from, pages of the New Testament — quotations which make it impossible to conclude anything other than that the New Testament was being circulated as an authoritative book by the end of the first century AD.

No matter which way we turn, there is strong evidence to show that the Bible can stand up to the critical tests which may be applied to it, and does so in a manner which far surpasses any other document. It is this sort of accumulative evidence which adds weight to a belief in the reliability and credibility of the Bible.

What Is Inspiration?

The question of the inspiration of the Bible is a different matter altogether. It is one thing for writings to be reliable; it is another to be credible; but it is quite a distinct matter for them to be “divinely inspired” (the words scripturally mean, “God-breathed,” being produced from Himself by His spirit-power). The Bible makes the claim to be the inspired, infallible Word of the living God. But is it? Can it be proven either way? This is a matter which must be clearly resolved in our minds, because the conclusion will fundamentally affect our lives one way or another.

Again, there are many ways that this question could be examined, but there are several very powerful courses in particular. One of these is ***Bible Prophecy*** — an amazing proof of the inspiration of the Bible.

The Bible itself claims to be the inspired Word of God: “No scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

The discovery of these documents has helped to silence the critics who said that the Old Testament must have changed considerably over the last 2,000 years. The events that led to the unearthing of these valuable writings are of great interest. In his book *How We Got Our Bible*, Ralph Earl writes: "The story of this discovery is one of the most fascinating tales of modern times. In February or March of 1947, a Bedouin shepherd boy named Muhammad was searching for a lost goat. He tossed a stone into a hole in a cliff on the west side of the Dead Sea, about eight miles south of Jericho. To his surprise he heard the sound of shattering pottery. Investigating, he discovered an amazing sight. On the floor of the cave were several large jars containing leather scrolls, wrapped in linen cloth. Because the jars were carefully sealed, the scrolls had been preserved in excellent condition for nearly 1,900 years. They had evidently been placed there in AD68."



Within caves at Qumran, such as this one, near the northwest shore of the Dead Sea, the Essenes secreted their manuscripts now known as the Dead Sea Scrolls. On a barren plateau near the caves, they built their community. Archaeologists dug the small trench in the foreground while searching for scroll fragments.



The Temple Scroll

Written on the thinnest animal skin that its discoverer, Yigael Yadin, had ever seen, this scroll never exceeds four thousandths of an inch in thickness. The still 27-foot-long scroll contained at least 66 columns of text. Here we see column 56, the first of our columns that Yadin called the "*Statutes of the King*," because they enumerate the rights and duties of the king of Israel. Echoing Deuteronomy 17:14-16, the text reads in part, "He [the king] must not multiply horses to himself, or cause the people to return to Egypt, for war... since I have said to you, you shall never return that way again." In Deuteronomy, the nearly identical verse reads, "Since the Lord has said to you..." It is suggested that the change from "the Lord" to "I" in this scroll was apparently made by the Jewish scribes to give a personal application to the Law. This scroll was found in Cave 11 at Qumran, and it is claimed that the **Temple Scroll** was part of the Torah (law) of the Essene community, the Jewish community that lived in the area of the caves at the time just prior to the first century.

The Value of the Scrolls

Before the discovery, the oldest complete Hebrew manuscripts possessed were from AD900 onwards. How can we be sure of their accurate transmission since the time of Jesus (approximately AD30)? The Dead Sea Scrolls have provided the answer. A complete scroll of

the book of Isaiah was discovered, as well as many other incomplete portions of the Old Testament. It is stated that the Isaiah copies of this Qumran community "proved to be word for word identical with our standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95% of the text. The five per cent of variation consisted chiefly of obvious slips of the pen and variations in spelling" (G. Archer, *A Survey of the Old Testament*). Additional important ancient copies found at Qumran include 25 copies of Deuteronomy, 18 of Isaiah and 27 of the Psalms, certainly a comprehensive verification of the O.T. Scriptures we possess.

We can therefore have total confidence that we are reading the same Old Testament that Jesus and his disciples possessed!



Putting Pieces Together.

Exercising surgical delicacy, a skilled member of the Israel Museum assembles a jigsaw puzzle of damaged fragments from the *Temple Scroll*. These fragments were part of a "wad," a decayed portion of the scroll that had become separated from the main scroll during its storage in a shoebox in the period before its recovery.

not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2Peter 1:20-21). There is nothing particularly remarkable in making that claim, for many other books do also. What is remarkable is that this book, alone, can prove its truth! Its prophecies speak for themselves, and testify to the fact that no human author could make such accurate and specific predictions of future events.

Much more could be said concerning other proofs of the inspiration of the Bible — such as its remarkably consistent message spanning over 1600 years, by so many individual writers — or the amazing pattern of numerics which defies human authorship, and entrances the student — or the incredible accuracy in detail in its recording of historical events, far better than any human historians have been able to achieve.

Although we only mention these in passing, without actual presentation of so vast a matter, due to restricted space, we would be happy to further elaborate upon them by correspondence. Such facts can certainly be proved and very amply demonstrate that in the Bible we have a book which is the most marvellous ever written.

The Conclusions To Face!

It is all very well to accept the evidence that the Bible is accurate, reliable and inspired — but where does this leave us?

God has taken the trouble to preserve His message for mankind. Surely it would be in our own personal interest to find out what is that message! The best way of doing this, is to read the book itself! This may sound simple enough, but most people who profess a belief in the Bible have only ever read little, if any, of it. How can we expect God to be pleased with us if we have never cared to find out for ourselves what He actually requires of us?

To understand what God wants is to place ourselves in a position where we may benefit from the outstanding promises which He makes to the true followers of Himself and His Son.

The Bible presents us with a great hope for the future. It speaks of the establishment of God's eternal kingdom on earth.

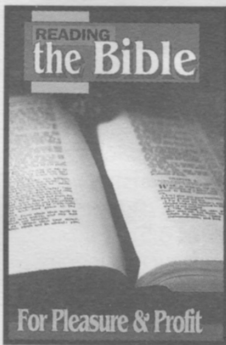
The Lord Jesus Christ will soon return to this earth to establish that kingdom, and to grant immortality and glory to those whom he finds "worthy." It was of this wonderful hope that the apostle Paul spoke, as he faced death in Rome: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2Timothy 4:8).

The day of which Paul speaks is imminent, and then those that "love the appearing of Jesus Christ" will have their trust in the Bible vindicated in immortality.

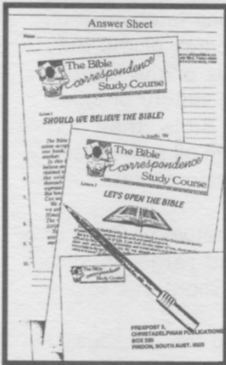
This is the real and substantial hope of the Bible, which is repeated within its pages many times over. It promises a world restored to a condition of peace, harmony and beauty, when God's Name will be honored from one end of the earth to the other. God Himself, declares in Numbers 14:21 — "As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord."

The conditions which God lays down by which an individual might participate in this future time of glory are clearly outlined in the Bible. Some effort is required to find these out, but it will be well worthwhile. It will give happiness and satisfaction today, and solve the problems of insecurity and fear that so many people face. It will provide contentment now, and a hope of a wonderful immortal existence upon a restored earth to come.

In this booklet, we have endeavored to show why you can have full confidence in the Bible, and to urge you to have the courage to allow it to change your life. We are happy to assist you in your search for a true understanding of the Bible's message. With a solid belief in the Bible as the Word of God, an excellent start will be made towards having a part in the grand future which has been promised to all those who loyally and faithfully respond to God's gracious invitation for salvation. This great hope can be yours.



THIS booklet will add to the information already contained in this issue. It presents the wonderful message of the Bible, designed for personal salvation, and shows the way in which the greatest good can be obtained from reading it. You will find the Bible to be a unique book of very exciting detail, once the key to its message is understood. Take the time to send for a free copy and read yourself rich in the greatest book in the world. Send the coupon below today.



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THE CHRISTADELPHIANS

...or, as the name means, the **Brethren of Christ** (**Hebrews 2:11**), are a body of people associated together by a belief in the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ (**Acts 8:12**); and by immersion into Christ (**Galatians 3:27**) for the remission of sins (**Acts 2:38**) and identification with his resurrection (**Romans 6:5**).

They do not profess to have received any new revelation, but hold that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are able to make a person wise unto salvation (**2 Timothy 3:15-17**). Believing in the divine authorship of the Bible, they think it only reasonable to reject any interpretation which fails to harmonise all the testimonies of the Holy Scriptures; and, finding that the creeds of the various existing religious groups are, in a great variety of ways, opposed to the direct teaching of the Bible, they feel compelled to stand apart, making appeal in all such matters to the statements of Scripture, and testing all teachings thereby.

They believe in the personal, visible return of Christ to the earth, to establish his power and reign as king throughout the world, and they seek to share this saving knowledge with others.

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