

Lesson 1: The Importance of Studying the Bible

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I. Introduction

As a Christian, the Bible is, or should be, the foundation, ultimate basis, guide, standard and code by which we live. It provides us with our points of reference, the truth, absolutes. It informs us regarding the character, nature and person of our God. It illuminates and answers the various questions of life. It is the lens through which we must view and interpret all of life.

As we look back over the past six centuries or so, we see the human worldview changing quite drastically. We have arrived in the 20th century at a place of postmodernism where, as Ravi Zacharias so succinctly put it, we end up *“saying that words mean nothing, absolutes mean nothing, morality means nothing and you are the definer of your own reality”*. The world today is for the most part trying to build life on the quick-sands of relativism and post-modernism. Or as G. K. Chesterton puts it, *“have their feet firmly planted in mid-air”*. It is critical for us as Christians to know and understand the times and prevailing mindsets, and for us to know and understand what we believe and why. We must have a coherent and clear answer, or we will be totally irrelevant.

We need to know the truth, the truth about life’s essence, life’s meaning and life’s destiny. We need to know the Source of truth, understand the truth, apply the truth, and share the truth.

It was Winston Churchill who said, *“The truth is the most valuable thing in the world. Indeed it is so valuable that it is often protected by a bodyguard of lies”*.

Before he died, the great physicist Andrei Dmitrievich Sakharov who had given to the Soviets the nuclear bomb, *“I’ve always thought that the most powerful weapon in the world was the bomb, and that’s why I gave it to my people. But I’ve come to the conclusion that the most powerful weapon in the world is not the bomb, the most powerful weapon in the world is the truth.”*

It has been said that in Africa the gospel is a mile wide and an inch deep. Just under three-quarters of South Africans claim to be Christians (73.52% according to 2001 Operation World). Why then are the rape and domestic violence statistics so high in our nation? Why then are the HIV statistics horrific? How then, do the political parties with the largest support base support abortion and several other unbiblical practices. Furthermore, politicians from Christian parties ‘floor crossed’ to join parties that promote abortion. During a previous election, the Christian Democratic Party had as their slogan: “Christians are the majority.” Well, so what? What difference does it make that the majority of the nation claim to be Christian if our thinking remains unbiblical, our lives remain unchristian, and no different from anyone else? The sad truth is that many are not even aware of their own biblical illiteracy. When we do not understand or apply His Word in all of life, when our “God” appears to be content to be contained within the four walls of a church one day a week, when we think He doesn’t notice or care the way we live for the other 6 days, our Christianity will be totally distasteful, religious, irrelevant to all of life, and rightly seen as such by unbelievers.

The problem with the Christianity we espouse for the most part, is that it seems to be satisfactory to pray the “sinner’s prayer”, attend church at least 2-3 times a month and give financially. All the more satisfactory if serving in church on Sunday is added to the mix. We have missed the point of the gospel. Jesus said

*“...go and make **disciples** of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”*

Matthew 28:19-20 NLT

Disciple:

mathē teuō

(math-ayt-yoo'-o)

From G3101; intransitively to *become a pupil*; transitively to *disciple*, that is, enrol as scholar: - be disciple, instruct, teach.

A disciple is someone who embraces the whole of and adheres to all of the teachings of another. He must assist in spreading and propagating these teachings. The first word for Christians was not actually "Christians" but "disciples." In other words, a Christian disciple must know, understand and embrace the complete Word of God. Throughout the New Testament, the term "disciple" is a dynamic concept. It implies multiplication.

Jesus said:

“Come to Me, all you of you who are tired (weary) and have heavy loads (overburdened; heavy-laden) and I will give you rest. Accept My teachings (take My yoke upon you) and learn from Me, because I am gentle and humble in spirit (heart) and you will find rest for your lives (souls). The burden that I ask you to accept (...because My yoke) is easy; and the load I give you to carry (and My burden)is light”

Matthew 11:28-30 Expanded Version

And Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy 8:3 when he says:

“It is written in the scriptures, “A person lives not on bread alone, but by everything God says (every word that comes out of God’s mouth).”

Matthew 4:4 Expanded version

*“Happy (blessed) are those who don’t listen to (walk in the counsel of the wicked),
Who don’t go where sinners go (stand in the path of sinners),
Who don’t do what evil people do (sit in the seat of mockers).
They love (delight in) the Lord’s teachings (laws; instructions),
And they think about (meditate on) those teachings day and night.
They are like a tree planted by a river (streams of water; full of life, strong, vibrant).
The tree produces fruit in season,
And its leaves don’t die (wither).
Everything they do will succeed (prosper)”.*

Ps 1:1-3 Expanded version

If the Bible provides us with our worldview. If the Bible provides us with our standard, our code, the truth, it must impact the world around us to communicate and transfer the value that it carries.

A worldview is simply a set of presuppositions held consciously, or unconsciously, about the makeup of the world and how it works. A worldview must answer the questions of life in a coherent manner, mainly the following four:

A. Ontology - the question of origin or meaning

Ontology is the study of the nature or essence of being, its relation to existence. It is the study of the most basic essence of what something is beyond which it cannot be known.

B. Epistemology – the question of knowledge

Epistemology is the study of knowing. It deals with the nature of knowledge, how do we know things, what do we know, why we know, is what we know true, and what are the limits of knowledge. It is true that we know things. You know you are reading this. But what is the nature of what you know? Does it properly reflect truth? Is knowledge primarily gained through our sense experiences (empiricism)? Is knowledge primarily gained through reason (rationalism)? There is a priori knowledge, or knowledge that is automatically known apart from experience, and posteriori knowledge, or knowledge that is gained from experience. Generally speaking, epistemology deals with the nature of knowledge and not the how-to of knowledge.

C. Axiology – the question of value and what is of ultimate value

This is the philosophical study of value and ethics.

D. Teleology – the question of destiny or where we going.

Teleology is the philosophical position that the universe and everything in it has a cause and a purpose. It is the study of final causes or results, having a definite purpose, goal, or design. In biblical teaching, our God has designed the world and everything in it. However, it has been affected by sin and is not in its original condition.

Any assumption we make about life is called a presupposition. As Christians, our presuppositions are the biblical answers to these questions. These presuppositions form the foundation for our worldview.

We need to think from **presuppositions** to **principles** to **policies**. We need to think Biblically or “Christianly” about every area of life.

A Framework of Biblical Thought:

- Jesus Christ is the King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev 17:14). God is sovereign.
- God has delegated authority over the planet to man through the Kingdom mandate (Gen 1:26-28) and Kingdom Commission (Matt 28:18-20). Therefore man is responsible for the planet.
- There is no sacred/secular, clergy/laity divide as Jesus is Lord over all, therefore all of life is holy.
- Every saint is a king and priest and therefore is an agent of the Kingdom, spreading salt and light in every sphere of society, bringing transformation to all of life (Rev 5:10).
- We believe in a victorious, Kingdom eschatology (Rev 11:15).

An example we can look at of the out workings of the current post-modern worldview is the poem by Steve Turner called Creed. This is a rather satirical and slightly humorous look at relativism and the conclusion of the world without God. Refer to Appendix 1.

II. Can We Trust The Bible?

Evidence to substantiate the Bible as being the true inspired Word of God can come from two general sources, namely external and internal. External evidences include corroboration and verification of biblical people, places, geography, cultures, events, etc. with historical facts that have or are being established through other means. Archaeological artifacts that corroborate biblical statements or circumstances are also a major external factor. Internal evidences are those that are found within the Bible that are part of the fabric of the Sacred text. These that bear testimony to the fact that the very existence of the Holy Scriptures cannot be explained in any other way except to acknowledge that they are the result of an overriding, superintending, guiding Mind.

A. External Evidences**1. The Factual Accuracy of the Bible**

If the Bible is the inspired Word of God, it should be accurate in everything it presents. If it is to be trusted, if God is the God of truth (John 17:17), then the Bible should reflect this. The accuracy should extend to historical, geographical, sociological, cultural, etc. facts that can be verified by archaeological or other valid methods.

Nelson Glueck, a pillar within the archaeological community, said: "It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference. Scores of archaeological findings have been made which conform in clear outline or exact detail historical statements in the Bible". Such statements, offered 30+ years ago, are as true today as the day they were made.

Jerry Moffitt has observed over thirty people in some form of authority like emperors, high priests, Roman governors, princes, that are mentioned in the New Testament. All but a few have been verified according to historical record. Geographically, where the Bible mentions countries, cities and towns, each is accurately placed and named. Wherever accuracy can be checked, every detail has been found correct, every time!

In their book, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, Geisler and Nix wrote, "Confirmation of the Bible's accuracy in factual matters lends credibility to its claims when speaking on other subjects".

The factual accuracy of the Bible proves that it is accurate. Time and again the Bible's facts have been tried and tested and found to be valid. Considering the undeniable consistency, harmony and unity in all of these writings, and the correct geographical, historical, and other facts, the Bible can only have been inspired by a Single source outside of man. This source is our God.

Refer to Appendix 2

B. Internal Evidence

The Bible is truly remarkable in nature. It was written over a period of about 1600 years. God instructed Moses to write the first books of the OT around 1500BC and Paul penned Revelation around AD100. On top of that, it was written by more than forty different men over this period, from very different walks and stations in life, in very different eras. These men were generally not contemporaries, worked independently of one another and the majority of them never even met another writer. They write in three different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek) and from at least two continents (Europ and Asia).

I love what Ravi Zacharias says'- "There are 27 books in the NT and 39 books in the OT, a diversity of authors. When all of that coalesces in a non-contradictory, congruent whole system of the single truth of the unfolding drama of redemption, God must be the source, using even the limitation of humans."

1. The Unity and Consistency of the Bible

Refer to Appendix 3.

2. The Inspiration of the Bible

Refer to Appendix 4

The Bible literally is filled with descriptions of the essence of its own inspiration. Paul boldly claimed, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16). The Greek word for "inspiration" in this case means "God-breathed". God breathed on the writers, primarily the Old Testament (OT) writers, and breathed out the Scriptures. Paul was affirming that

Scripture, primarily the Old Testament, is the product of the breath of God. The Bible is God's Word, not man's.

This inspiration applies to the original document that was initially by the writer. While Bible writers were inspired, the scribes, translators, and others who followed were not. This does not mean, as some have suggested, that we do not have God's Word in an accurate form today. The text of the Bible we possess can be trusted, and counted as reliable. The challenge which suggests that the copying process through the ages has destroyed the essence of inspiration is not true. The copying process through the centuries was so meticulous, and the number of manuscripts available for comparison is so large, that the minute variations which do occur are detected easily. Further, these variations are insignificant in nature, and do not affect points of doctrine.

Statements such as "God said..." "thus says the Lord," or these are "the words of the Lord..." These kinds of statements appear hundreds of times in both the Old and New Testaments. In fact, the Decalogue itself begins with the phrase, "And God spoke all these words" (Exodus 20:1). Thirty-three times in the book of Leviticus, we read the words, "the Lord spoke to Moses" (4:1; 5:14; etc.). In just Psalm 119 alone, the Scriptures are exalted as the Word of God some 175 times. In the New Testament, the apostle Paul claimed that his message was not received from man, but "came through the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:12). Similarly, as he wrote to the church at Thessalonica, he claimed that what he wrote was "the word of the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:15). Truly, the writers of both the Old and New Testaments placed great emphasis on the fact that their message was of divine origin—that they spoke, not by the will of man, but "by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21).

Refer to Appendix 5.

3. The Prophecies of the Bible

One of the most impressive and convincing proofs of the Bible's inspiration is its prophetic declarations and the fulfillment thereof. Predictive prophecy is the highest evidence of divine revelation. These prophecies cannot have been declared apart from God (mortal man cannot know and report future events in the absence of a train of circumstances that would lead to certain obvious outcomes). Furthermore, the fulfillment of these prophecies could not have been contrived either!

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

Refer to Appendix 6.

4. The Scientific Foreknowledge of the Bible

Among the intriguing proofs of the Bible's inspiration is its unique scientific foreknowledge. From anthropology to zoology, the Bible presents astonishingly accurate scientific information that the writers, on their own, simply could not have known. J.S. Morton has observed, "Many scientific facts, which prove the infallibility of Scripture, are tucked away in its pages. These proofs are given in nonscientific language; nevertheless, they substantiate the claims of authenticity of the Holy Scriptures. In some cases, scientific concepts have been known through the ages, but these concepts are mentioned in a unique manner in Scripture. In other cases, scientific topics have been mentioned hundreds or even thousands of years before man discovered them".

There are numerous instances of scientific foreknowledge within the Bible. The incredible accuracy of the Bible's science before man even understand the why behind how God was leading them is yet another example of God's superintending guidance, and one that provides impressive proof of its inspiration.

Please see Appendix 7.

III. How Does the Bible Meet the Needs of Man?

A. Man needs communication from God

Sin created a communication gap between God and man. The means that God chose to bridge this gap was the Word. Occultism is where man seeks to bridge the gap between himself and the spirit world. God has already done this in Christ.

B. Man needs revelation

Man can only know God through God revealing Himself to man. The Lord reveals Himself by His Word (1 Samuel 3:21). This is the only tangible infallible revelation given to man from God. It is the mind of God. Creation reveals God's power. The scriptures reveal God's person and character.

C. Man needs divine adjustment

"All Scripture is God-breathed, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfected, thoroughly furnished to every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17MKJV

The purpose is that man may be thoroughly perfected, or adjusted unto Divine righteousness. The end of all Bible study is that man may be conformed to the image and likeness of God in Christ

*“The instructions of the Lord are perfect, Reviving the soul.
The decrees of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple.
The commandments of the Lord are right, bringing joy to the heart.
The commandments of the Lord are clear, giving insight for living.
Reverence for the Lord is pure, lasting forever.
The words of the Lord are true; each one is fair.”*

Psalm 19:7-9 NLT

D. What Man Is Like Without the Word

1. A man in darkness without a lighted lamp (Ps 119:105)
2. A ship without a rudder (directionless; no ultimate purpose or meaning)
3. A person without a compass (lost, no sense of coherent moorings or absolutes)
4. A house without a foundation (unstable and unable to withstand storms)
5. A child without education (ignorant)
6. A man without a map (no sense of position)

These things are all a means to an end, not the end in themselves. All are meant to bring us to the desired destination, to Him (John 5:39-40). The Bible explains man's origin, the entrance of sin, the purpose of our existence, the meaning of life and eternal destinies. It has no equal.

The Bible is heaven's education and wisdom (1 Corinthians 1-2). It prepares man for earth and heaven, for time and eternity. The Bible is a means to an end, not the end in itself. We would do well to remember that it always points us to our God, whom we should worship.

IV. Conclusion

Throughout the ages, challenges have been made to the authority and authenticity of the Word. During the Middle Ages, attempts were made to keep the Bible from the man on the street. In fact, those caught translating or distributing the Scriptures often were subjected to imprisonment, torture, and even death. Centuries later, the French skeptic Voltaire boasted that “within fifty years, the Bible will no longer be discussed among educated people”. The Bible still is being discussed among educated people, while the name of Voltaire languishes in relative obscurity.

In the early 1900s, American by the name of Robert Ingersol claimed regarding the Bible: “In fifteen years, I will have this book in the morgue.” But, as history records, Ingersol ended up in the morgue, while the Bible lives on.

Jesus warned that “heaven and earth shall pass away but my words shall not pass away” (Matthew 24:35). Isaiah wrote: “The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God shall stand forever” (Isaiah 40:8).

Malcolm Muggeridge states it so beautifully:

“We look back upon history and what do we see? Empires rising and falling. Revolutions encounter revolutions. Wealth accumulated and wealth dispersed. Shakespeare has spoken of the rise and fall of great ones that ebb and flow with the moon. I look back upon my own fellow countrymen of England once upon a time dominating a quarter of the world. Most of them convinced in the words of what is still a popular song that “the God who made them mighty shall make them mightier yet”. I heard a crazed crack Austrian announce to the world the establishment of a German Reich that would last a thousand years. I’ve seen an Italian clown saying he was going to stop and restart the calendar with his own ascension to power. I’ve seen a murderous Georgian brigand in the Kremlin acclaimed by the intellectual elite of the world as a wiser than Solomon, more humane than Markus Aurelius, more enlightened than a shokur. I have seen America more wealthier and in terms of military weaponry more powerful than the rest of the world put together so that had the American people so desired they could have outdone a Caesar or an Alexander in the range and scale of their conquest. All in one life-time, all in one lifetime. All gone. Gone with the wind! England part of a tiny island off the coast of Europe threatened with dismemberment and even bankruptcy. Hitler and Mussolini dead, remembered only in infamy. Stalin is a forbidden name in the regime he helped found and dominate for some three decades. America is haunted by fears of running out of the precious fluids that keeps her motorways roaring and the smogs settling and the victory of the Don Quixotes of the media as they charge the windmills of Watergate. All in one life-time. All in one lifetime. All gone with the wind! Behind the debris of the fallings of our solemn supermen and imperial diplomatists lies the gigantic figure of one person, because of Whom, by Whom, in Whom and through Whom mankind kind may still survive,- the person of Jesus Christ!”

Acknowledgements

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<http://carm.org>

<http://thegospelcoalition.org>

Appendix 1

Creed

by Steve Turner

We believe in Marx Freud and Darwin
We believe everything is OK
as long as you don't hurt anyone,
to the best of your definition of hurt,
and to the best of your knowledge.

We believe in sex before, during, and after marriage.
We believe in the therapy of sin.
We believe that adultery is fun.
We believe that sodomy is OK.
We believe that taboos are taboo.

We believe that everything is getting better
despite evidence to the contrary.
The evidence must be investigated
And you can prove anything with evidence.

We believe there's something in
horoscopes, UFO's and bent spoons;
Jesus was a good man
just like Buddha, Mohammed, and ourselves.
He was a good moral teacher
although we think His good morals were bad.

We believe that all religions are basically the same--
at least the one that we read was.
They all believe in love and goodness.
They only differ on matters of
creation, sin, heaven, hell, God, and salvation.
We believe that after death comes the Nothing
Because when you ask the dead what happens they say nothing.
If death is not the end, if the dead have lied,
then it's compulsory heaven for all
excepting perhaps Hitler, Stalin, and Genghis Khan.

We believe in Masters and Johnson.
What's selected is average.
What's average is normal.
What's normal is good.

We believe in total disarmament.

We believe there are direct links between warfare and bloodshed.
Americans should beat their guns into tractors
and the Russians would be sure to follow.

We believe that man is essentially good.
It's only his behaviour that lets him down.
This is the fault of society.
Society is the fault of conditions.
Conditions are the fault of society.

We believe that each man must find the truth that is right for him.
Reality will adapt accordingly.
The universe will readjust.
History will alter.
We believe that there is no absolute truth
excepting the truth that there is no absolute truth.

We believe in the rejection of creeds,
and the flowering of individual thought.

"Chance" a post-script

If chance be the Father of all flesh,
disaster is his rainbow in the sky,
and when you hear

State of Emergency!
Sniper Kills Ten!
Troops on Rampage!
Whites go Looting!
Bomb Blasts School!

It is but the sound of man worshiping his maker.

Appendix 2

Excerpt from “In Defense of the Bible's Inspiration 2”

(www.apologeticspress.org)

Bert Thompson Ph.D.

The Factual Accuracy of the Bible

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

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

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

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

The Code of Hammurabi established beyond doubt that writing was known hundreds of years before Moses. In fact, the renowned Jewish historian, Josephus, confirmed that Moses authored the Pentateuch (*Against Apion*, 1,8), and various non-Christian writers (Hecataeus,

Manetha, Lysimachus, Eupolemus, Tacitus, Juvenal, and Longinus, to name only a few), credited Moses as having authored the first five books of the English Bible (see Rawlinson, 1877, pp. 254ff.).

In days of yore, detractors accused Isaiah of having made a historical mistake when he wrote of Sargon as king of Assyria (Isaiah 20:1). For years, this remained the sole historical reference—secular or biblical—to Sargon having been linked with the Assyrian nation. Thus, critics assumed Isaiah had erred. But in 1843, Paul Emile Botta, the French consular agent at Mosul, working with Austen Layard, unearthed historical evidence that established Sargon as having been exactly what Isaiah said he was—king of the Assyrians. At Khorsabad, Botta discovered Sargon’s palace. Apparently, from what scholars have been able to piece together from archaeological and historical records, Sargon made his capital successively at Ashur, Calah, Nineveh, and finally at Khorsabad, where his palace was constructed in the closing years of his reign (c. 706 B.C.). The walls of the palace were adorned quite intricately with ornate text that described the events of his reign. Today, an artifact from the palace—a forty-ton stone bull (slab)—is on display at the University of Chicago’s Oriental Institute (“weighty” evidence of Sargon’s existence). Isaiah had been correct all along. And the critics had been wrong—all along.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A fictitious narrative, located in a country with which the writer is not personally familiar, must either avoid local allusions or be found frequently in conflict with the peculiarities of place and of manners and customs. By this conflict the fictitious character of the narrative is exposed (1881, p. 375).

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

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

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

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

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

In Exodus 1:11, the story is told of how the Israelites were forced to build the treasure cities of Pithom and Raamses for the Egyptian ruler. Exodus 5 records that, initially, the slaves made bricks containing straw, but later were forced to use stubble because Pharaoh ordered his taskmasters not to provide any more straw. Excavations at Pithom in 1883 by Naville, and in 1908 by Kyle, discovered that the lower layers of the structures were made of bricks filled with good, chopped straw. The middle layers had less straw with some stubble.

The upper layers contained bricks that were made of pure clay, with no straw whatsoever (see Pfeiffer, 1966, p. 459). Contrivance—or correctness?

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Bible critic is likely to trivialize these examples as they are isolated from one another. When, however, literally hundreds and hundreds of these incidental details are observed to

perfectly mesh, one begins to suspect that what have been called “undesigned coincidences” (from the human vantage point) become very obvious cases of divinely designed harmony—tiny footprints that lead only to the conclusion that God was the guiding Force behind the composition of the Sacred Scriptures (1991a, 11:3).

Appendix 3

Excerpt from “In Defense of the Bible's Inspiration 1”

(www.apologeticspress.org)

Bert Thompson Ph.D.

The Unity of the Bible

The Bible exhibits a unity that—on purely human terms—is utterly inexplicable. In order to appreciate that unity, one first must come to terms with how The Book was put together. The Bible was written by more than forty different men from practically every walk of life. Nehemiah was a royal cupbearer. Peter was a fisherman. Luke was a physician. Matthew was a tax collector. Solomon was a king. Moses was a shepherd. Paul was a tentmaker. Furthermore, these men wrote from almost every conceivable human condition. David wrote from heights of joy on the rolling, grassy hills of Judea. Paul wrote from pits of despair caused by Roman incarceration. They wrote in three languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek), from at least two continents (Europe and Asia), over a period of time that spanned sixteen centuries (approximately 1500 B.C. to approximately A.D. 100). And they covered topics as diverse as eschatology, soteriology, theology, psychology, geography, history, medicine, and many others.

All this being true, one might expect that so diverse a group of men, writing on so varied a group of subjects, over such a lengthy span of time, would have produced a book that would be a tangled mishmash of subjects more often than not marred by inconsistencies, errors, and incongruities. Yet this hardly is the case. In fact, quite the opposite is true. The Bible exhibits such astounding harmony, such consistent flow, and such unparalleled unity that it defies any purely naturalistic explanation. It is as if the Bible were a magnificent symphony orchestrated by a single Conductor. The “musicians” each may have played a different instrument, in a different place, at a different time. But when the talented Maestro combined the individual efforts, the end-result was a striking masterpiece.

Consider this analogy. Suppose you assembled forty contemporary scholars with the highest academic training possible in a single field of study (e.g., forty academicians with terminal Ph.D. degrees in world history). Suppose, further, that you placed them in a room, and asked them to write a twenty-page paper on a single topic—the causes of World War II. What kind of consensus would be exhibited when all of their treatises were completed? Likely, the forty scholars would be unable to agree on all but a few points; their compositions would be recognized more for the **disagreements** they contained than for the agreements. The Bible writers, by contrast, generally were not contemporaries. They worked independently, and the majority never even met another biblical writer. Most were not highly trained, and what training they did have certainly was not in the same field of study. Nor were they allowed to write on a single topic in which they already had an interest. Yet they produced a book that is unified from beginning to end. The books of 1 and 2 Chronicles and 1 and 2 Kings corroborate one another in numerous historical events. Joshua 1 verifies Deuteronomy 34. Judges 1:1 verifies Joshua 24:27-33. Jeremiah 52:31-34 verifies 2 Kings 25:25,27-30. Ezra 1 verifies 2 Chronicles 36:22-23. Daniel refers to Jeremiah

(Daniel 9:2), and Ezekiel refers to Daniel (Ezekiel 28:3). And so on. This kind of unity, which is in evidence throughout the Sacred Volume, attests to the fact that there was a Superintending Intelligence behind it. So many writers, over so many years, covering so many themes, simply could not have been so harmonious by mere coincidence.

Each book of the Bible complements the others in a single unified **theme**. From Genesis to Revelation there is a marvelous unfolding of the general theme of man's fall from his holy estate, God's plan for his redemption (as carefully worked out across the centuries), the sinless life and atoning death of Jesus Christ, and the ultimate victory of the Christian system. In essence, the Bible is the story of one problem—sin—with one solution, Jesus Christ. In commenting on the Bible's remarkable unity of theme, Wayne Jackson has noted:

The redemptive thread that runs through the Scriptures is wonderfully illustrated by a comparison between Genesis and Revelation, the first and last books of the holy canon. In Genesis the origin of the heavens and Earth is revealed (1:1), while in Revelation the consummation of earthly affairs is effected, and the old order is replaced by a "new heaven and earth" (i.e., heaven itself), spiritual in nature.... Man, who was originally perfect, but who fell into sin (Genesis 3:6), is, by virtue of his obedience, granted the opportunity to become perfect again (Revelation 7:14; 22:14). All of this is made possible, of course, by the seed of woman (Genesis 3:15), the offspring of David (Revelation 22:16), who, as a consequence of his sacrifice (Genesis 4:4), became an enthroned Lamb (Revelation 21:4). Thus, the sorrow of Eden (Genesis 3:16) will be transformed into the joy of heaven (Revelation 21:4), and that tree of life, from which our early parents were separated (Genesis 3:22-24), will be our glad possession once more (Revelation 22:14) [1991, 11:1].

Each book of the Bible complements the others in a single, unified **plan**. In Genesis, there is the record of humanity's pristine origin and covenant relationship with God, followed by its tragic fall into a sinful state. But, a specific family line (the Hebrew nation) was selected to provide a remedy for this disaster (Genesis 12:1ff.; 22:18). Man needed to learn precisely what sin is, thus the books of Exodus through Deuteronomy document the giving of the law of God to Moses. Via a set of ordinances, sin would be defined and humanity would be illuminated regarding the price of rebellion against God (Romans 7:7,13; Galatians 3:19). The historical books of the Old Testament revealed mankind's inability to keep perfectly God's law system (Galatians 3:10), and therefore underscored the need for a Justifier—Someone to do for man what he could not do for himself. The prophets of the Old Testament heralded the arrival of that Savior (Luke 24:44); more than 300 prophecies focus on the promised Messiah.

After four silent centuries (the "inter-biblical era"), four Gospel writers described in great detail the arrival, and life's-work, of the Justifier—Jesus of Nazareth. The books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are carefully crafted accounts of the birth, life, death, and ultimate resurrection of the Son of God (John 20:30-31). Each emphasized different parts of Christ's ministry in order to relate the "good news" to Jews or Gentiles. Matthew directed his record primarily to the Jewish nation. Mark stressed the works of Jesus. Luke, being the only Gentile writer of a Bible book (except possibly the author of Job), wrote to Gentiles. John's primary purpose in writing was to produce faith.

The book of Acts was written to convey the means by which mankind was to appropriate God's saving grace. It is a historical record that instructs a person on how to become a

Christian. It also teaches about how the church of Christ was established in Jerusalem, and how that same church flourished throughout the Roman Empire of the first century. The various epistles that follow the book of Acts in the English Bible were directions to individuals and churches on how to obtain, and maintain, spiritual maturity. Finally, the book of Revelation predicted (in symbolic fashion) the ultimate triumph of good over evil—acknowledging that Christians would win, and Satan would lose. To the careful reader, the unity of both theme and plan in the Bible are apparent.

Appendix 4

The Nature of Bible Inspiration

(www.apologeticspress.org)

Dave Miller Ph.D.

What does it mean to say: “The Bible is inspired”? Answers to this question are legion. Some regard the Bible as “inspired” in the same way that great authors in history have risen above the average person in their literary pursuits, e.g., Homer, Shakespeare, Dickens, or Eliot. Others would say that the writers of the Bible were influenced by supernatural connections, but that their written records of those connections suffer from the same flaws that mere humans are prone to make. Many people fail to assess the Bible’s own claims regarding its inspiration. Before the Bible can be determined to be “inspired,” it is necessary to conceptualize the meaning and nature of that inspiration. The Bible literally is filled with descriptions of the essence of its own inspiration.

Paul boldly claimed, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Timothy 3:16). The Greek term underlying the word “inspiration” means “God-breathed” (Vincent, 1900, 4:317). Paul was affirming that Scripture, primarily the Old Testament, is the product of the breath of God. God actually breathed out the Scriptures. The Bible is **God’s** Word—not man’s—though He used man to produce them. Three verses later (4:2), Paul declared, “Therefore...preach the word...” Why? Because it is **God’s** Word. Just as surely as God’s breath brought the Universe into existence (Psalm 33:6), so the Bible is the result of God’s out-breathing.

Peter alluded to the momentous occasion of Christ’s transfiguration when God literally spoke from heaven directly to Peter, James, and John (2 Peter 1:19-21). God orally boomed forth His insistence that Jesus is His beloved Son, and human beings are commanded to hear Him (Matthew 17:5). Peter then declared, “We also have the prophetic word made more sure,...knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation.” Peter was saying that the Scriptures provided to us by the prophets are just as certain, and just as authoritative, as the voice of God that spoke on the mount of transfiguration.

Peter further explained that the prophetic word, meaning the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures, did not originate on its own, or in the minds of those who wrote them (the meaning of “private interpretation”). Scripture did not come from “the will of man.” Scripture was not the result of human research or human investigation into the nature of things. Scripture was not the product of its writers’ own thinking. Where, then, did Scripture come from? Peter claimed, “but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” The word “moved” in the original language is the usual word for being “carried” or “brought” (Arndt and Gingrich, 1957, pp. 862-863), hence, to be moved or under a moving influence (Perschbacher, 1990, p. 427). Peter was stating that the Holy Spirit, in essence, **picked up** the writers, the prophets, and brought them to the goal of **His** choosing. That means that the Scriptures, though written by means of human instrumentality, were so superintended by God that the resulting writings are truly God’s.

This same Peter, while awaiting the coming of the Spirit in Acts 2 on Pentecost, stood up among fellow disciples and declared, “Men and brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas,” and then he quoted from the Psalms (Acts 1:16ff.). Peter affirmed that the Holy Spirit governed what David wrote, and the results of David’s writing therefore are designated as “Scripture.”

This same Peter, in 1 Peter 1:10-12, explained: (1) that the inspired spokesmen of the Old Testament did not always understand all the information given by God through them; (2) it was the Spirit of Christ that was operating upon them; (3) this same inspired information was being presented in Peter’s day by the apostles; and (4) the same Holy Spirit was directing their utterances. It is very important to note that Peter was claiming that inspired men had **their own minds engaged** as they produced inspired material, but **the product was God’s**, since they did not always grasp all of the significance of their own productions.

This same Peter, in 2 Peter 3:15-16, referred to “our beloved brother Paul” as having “written to you.” He then noted: “as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which those who are untaught and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.” Peter made clear three salient points: (1) Paul wrote epistles; (2) those epistles are classified with “the other Scriptures,” which means that Paul’s letters are **Scripture** every bit as much as the Old Testament and other New Testament writings; and (3) these writings are divinely authoritative, since to twist them is to invite “destruction”—an obvious reference to **God’s** disfavor and the spiritual/eternal harm that results from disobeying **God’s** words—not man’s words. Cornelius well-understood this principle, for when Peter came to his house, he stated: “Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things **commanded you by God**” (Acts 10:33, emp. added).

While on Earth, Jesus demonstrated a high regard for Scripture, i.e., the Old Testament. On one occasion, He involved Himself in an interchange with some Jews who accused Him of blasphemy (John 10:33). He repelled the charge by quoting Psalm 82:6, referring to the passage as “law” (vs. 34). But how could Jesus refer to a psalm as “**law**,” since the Psalms were poetic wisdom literature and not a part of the Pentateuch? He referred to a psalm as “law” in the sense that the Psalms are part of Scripture. Jesus was thus ascribing **legal authority** to the entire corpus of Scripture. He did the same thing in John 15:25. Likewise, Paul quoted from the Psalms, Isaiah, and Genesis and referred to each as “the Law” (1 Corinthians 14:21; Romans 3:19; Galatians 4:21).

After Jesus quoted from a psalm and called it “law,” He added, “and the Scripture cannot be broken” (vs. 35). Notice that He was equating “law” with “Scripture”—using the terms as synonyms. When He declared that “law,” or “Scripture,” “cannot be broken,” He was making the point that it is impossible for Scripture to be annulled, for its authority to be denied, or its truth to be withstood. Jesus considered every part of Scripture, even its most casual phrases, to be the authoritative Word of God.

This attitude toward Scripture as an authoritative document is intimated by the customary formula: “It is written.” For example, when facing Satan, Jesus repelled his attacks all three times with a simple, “It is written,” which was sufficient to establish authoritative credibility

(Matthew 4:4,7,10)—so much so that Satan attempted to copy Jesus in this respect (Matthew 4:6). After His resurrection, Jesus equated the entire Old Testament (i.e., the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms) with “Scripture,” and again noted “it is written” (Luke 24:44-46). He insisted very emphatically that “all things” in the Scriptures concerning Himself “must be fulfilled.” Earlier in the chapter, He equated “Moses and all the prophets” with “the Scriptures” (vss. 25-27).

No wonder Jesus would rebuke His religious challengers with such phrases as, “Have you not read even this Scripture?” (Mark 12:10; cf. Matthew 21:42); or, “You do err, not knowing the Scriptures” (Matthew 22:29); or, “if you had known what this means...” (Matthew 12:7); or, “Go and learn what this means...” (Mark 9:13). The underlying thought in such pronouncements is that **God’s truth is found in Scripture**, and if you are ignorant of the Scriptures, you are susceptible to error. Jesus therefore was affirming that God is the Author of Scripture.

Even the words of Scripture that do not constitute direct quotes of deity are, in fact, the words of God. For example, Jesus assigned the words of Genesis 2:24 to God as the author (Matthew 19:4-6). Yet, in the original setting of Genesis 2:24, no indication is given that God was the speaker. Rather, the words are simply narratorial comment written down by the human author—Moses. By Jesus attributing the words to God, He was making clear that the whole of Scripture was authored by God. That means that even the words of Satan, or the words of evil people, are the words of God—in the sense that God has given us an accurate report of what those people said. Paul treated the matter in the same way (1 Corinthians 6:16).

Over and over again, the apostles and writers of the New Testament did the same thing that Jesus did, i.e., they referred to Scripture in such a way that it was clear they considered it to be the authoritative, inspired words of God (e.g., Acts 8:35; 17:2; 18:28; 26:22; Romans 12:19; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; 1 Peter 1:16; James 2:8). Perhaps Luke well summarized the prevailing mindset of the Bible writers: “...they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, to find out whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11). In other words, **what Scripture says, God says**.

Additional evidence of the Bible’s own view of itself is manifested in statements like, “For the Scripture says to Pharaoh” (Romans 9:17), or “And the Scripture...preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand” (Galatians 3:8). But Scripture did not speak to Pharaoh, and Scripture did not preach the Gospel to Abraham. Rather, God did! So the word of Scripture is the word of God! The inspired writers of the New Testament considered “God” and “Scripture” to be so closely linked that they could naturally speak of “Scripture” doing what Scripture records God as doing.

It works the other way as well. God is said to say certain things that are, in their original setting, merely words of Scripture. For example, Hebrews 3:7 reads, “Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says...,” Psalm 95:7 is then quoted. In Acts 4:25, God is said to have spoken, by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of David, the words of Psalm 2:1. In Acts 13:34-35, God is represented as having stated the words of Isaiah 55:3 and Psalm 16:10. Yet, in both of these

cases, the words attributed to God are not, in their original setting, specifically His words, but merely the words of Scripture itself. So the writers of the New Testament sometimes referred to the Scriptures as if they were God, and they sometimes referred to God as if He were Scripture. The Bible thus presents itself as the very words of God.

In Hebrews 1:5-13, the writer quoted seven Old Testament passages: Psalm 2:7; 2 Samuel 7:14; Deuteronomy 32:43; Psalm 104:4; Psalm 45:6-7; Psalm 102:25-27; and Psalm 110:1. The Hebrew writer attributed each of these passages to God as the speaker. Yet in their original setting in the Old Testament, sometimes God **is** the speaker, while sometimes He is **not** the speaker, and is, in fact, being spoken **to** or spoken **about**. Why would the writer of Hebrews indiscriminately assign all of these passages to God? Because they all have in common the fact that they are the words of Scripture, and, as such, are the words of God. The same is true with Romans 15:9-12 where Paul quoted from Psalm 18:49, Deuteronomy 32:43, Psalm 117:1, and Isaiah 11:10. The first one he introduced with the formula “as it is written;” the second one is introduced by “again he says;” the third with simply “again;” and the fourth is prefaced with “Isaiah says.” Yet, in the Old Testament setting, only in the Isaiah passage is specifically God talking—and Paul assigns those words to Isaiah. So “it is written,” “he says,” and “Isaiah says,” are all different ways of saying the same thing, i.e., “**God says**”! Sometimes the New Testament writers assigned Scripture to its human authors. Yet it is clear that when the writers said, “Moses said,” or “David said,” such was simply another way to say, “Scripture says,” which, again, was the same thing as saying “**God says**.”

Verbal Inspiration

Notice that the inspiration that the Bible claims for itself is “**verbal**” inspiration, i.e., God’s superintendence extends even to the **words** of the writer. Paul based his argument on a plural noun, and insisted that God intended the word to be understood in its singular sense (Galatians 3:16). As noted previously, Jesus based an argument on the precise verbal form of Scripture (John 10:34). He based His point on a particular **word** in Matthew 22:43, on a particular **tense** in Matthew 22:32, and even on the **letters** and their minute strokes in Matthew 5:17-18. In the latter passage, Jesus said that Exodus 3:6 was spoken to the Sadducees with whom He was conversing—even though the original context of Exodus 3:6 has God speaking to Moses! That proves that Jesus expects all people on Earth to understand that the Bible is written to every single accountable human being, and that Scripture is intended to be **authoritative** for human living.

Paul also affirmed verbal inspiration in 1 Corinthians 2. He claimed that his speech and his preaching were not “words of human wisdom” (vs. 4). Rather, his words were “in demonstration of the Spirit.” He claimed that he and his fellow apostles were speaking the wisdom of God (vs. 7). He claimed that the things which they had been speaking were revealed to them by God through the Holy Spirit (vs. 10). Then he affirmed very clearly: “These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches” (vs. 13). So inspiration involves the very **words**, and that makes it **verbal** inspiration.

New Testament Inspiration

Most of the passages examined thus far are New Testament references to the inspiration of the Old Testament. Liberal scholars have claimed that the New Testament does not make the claim of inspiration for itself. That claim is not true. As already noted, in 2 Peter 3:16, Peter classified Paul's epistles as "Scripture," and he affirmed that Paul's writings carry such divine authority that those who twist them will be destroyed. It also was noted that Peter linked the apostles with the Old Testament prophets (1 Peter 1:10-12). And, as just seen, Paul made a comparable claim in 1 Corinthians 2.

As one reads the New Testament, it is clear that the writers made the extension of Old Testament inspiration to their own writings. They did not for a moment consider themselves—the ministers of the new covenant (2 Corinthians 3:6)—to be less in possession of the Spirit of God than the ministers of the old covenant. Jesus, without question, declared the impending inspiration of the authors of the New Testament. In Matthew 10:17-20, and the parallels in Mark 13:11 and Luke 12:12, Jesus explained to the apostles that the Holy Spirit would direct their verbal activities in terms of both **how** and **what** they spoke. He reiterated the same thing in Luke 21:12-15, urging them not to worry how to defend themselves when hauled before the authorities, since He would provide them with "a mouth and wisdom" that their adversaries would not be able to withstand. So Jesus **pre-authenticated** the teaching of the apostles, and insured respect for their authority.

Jesus directed several promises to the apostles in John chapters 14, 15, and 16. Allusion to just one of these will suffice. Jesus promised the apostles: "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come" (John 16:12-13). Just prior to His ascension, Jesus promised to the apostles the impending baptism of the Holy Spirit, which would enable them to be Christ's witnesses throughout the world (Acts 1:5,8). This promise commenced its fulfillment in Acts 2 when the apostles were baptized with the Holy Spirit and empowered to preach the message God wanted preached.

Numerous passages indicate the fulfillment of these promises to the apostles to the extent that the words which they spoke were **God's** words (Acts 4:8,31; 5:32; 15:8,27-28; 16:6-8). As already noted, Paul claimed direct guidance of the Holy Spirit for the words that he spoke (1 Corinthians 2). He did the same thing in Galatians 1:12. In Ephesians 3:1-5, he claimed that his message was made known to him "by revelation" (vs. 3), along with the other apostles and prophets (vs. 5). Other passages reflect the same point (1 Timothy 4:1; Galatians 2:2; 2 Corinthians 12:7; 1 Thessalonians 2:13). A good summary of Paul's claims to inspiration is seen in his firm declaration: "If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 14:37). His inspiration extended to both his **oral** utterances as well as his **writings** (2 Thessalonians 2:15; 3:6,14; cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:2,15; Galatians 1:7-8). In 1 Timothy 5:8, Paul quoted Luke 10:7 and referred to it as "Scripture." So Luke's Gospel record was already available and classified with the inspired canon of Scripture.

Conclusion

The unbiased individual can easily see that the Bible claims for itself the status of “inspiration,” having been breathed out by God Himself. That inspiration entailed such superintendence by God that even the **words** came under His influence. Thus the Bible is “verbally inspired.” This conclusion does not imply that the writers merely took “dictation.” Rather, the Bible indicates that God adapted His inspiring activity to the individual temperament, vocabulary, educational level, and stylistic idiosyncrasies of each writer. The Bible is “infallible” in that it is incapable of deceiving or misleading, and is therefore completely trustworthy and reliable. “Plenary” inspiration means that inspiration extends to all of its parts. Thus the Bible is **fully** inspired.

The Bible is also “inerrant,” that is, it is free of error. God used human beings to write the Bible, and in so doing, allowed them to leave their mark upon it, but without making any of the mistakes that human writings are prone to make. God made certain that the words produced by the human writers were free from the errors and mistakes characteristic of uninspired writers. This influence even extended to matters of science, geography, and history. Proof for the inspiration of the Bible is a separate and necessary inquiry. However, it is important that a person understand what the Bible means when it claims for itself “inspiration.”

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Appendix 5

Excerpt from “In Defense of The Bible’s Inspiration 1”

(www.apologeticpress.org)

Bert Thompson Ph.D

There is an important difference between revelation and inspiration. Revelation represents the revealing of facts and truths by God to humans. Inspiration is the process by which God guided the writing down of those facts and truths. “Revelation is the body of truth which God desired men to possess; inspiration is the way in which He gave this body of truth to men”. The whole Bible is the result of inspiration, but not all inspired material was revelatory in nature. Paul could quote pagan poets in Acts 17:28 and Titus 1:12 because he already had access to this information, and did not need revelation to employ it. But God inspired him to record these sayings, and to record them accurately. Thus, whether the Bible writer used information already available to him, his own eyewitness accounts, or revelation from God, inspiration guaranteed that it was placed in print in the form in which God desired.

The second thing to note is the fact that a person wrote by inspiration does not mean that he was free from personal sin in his life. Israel’s King David penned several Old Testament psalms. The apostle Peter acknowledged that “the Holy Spirit spake before by the mouth of David” (Acts 1:16). Yet this was the same king who committed adultery with Bathsheba, and had her husband, Uriah the Hittite, slain to cover his own sin. Peter himself presented some extremely powerful sermons (e.g., Acts 2:14ff.), and penned two New Testament epistles. Yet he played the hypocrite when he separated himself from the Gentiles to seek favor with the Jews, and received a public rebuke from Paul for it (Galatians 2:11ff.). Thus, while inspiration preserved the integrity of the writer’s words as he was “moved by the Holy Spirit,” that process did not diminish his freedom of choice or compel him to live a sinful life.

Third, inspiration was not a twenty-four-hour-a-day process. A few months prior to His death, the Lord informed His disciples that He would shortly enter Jerusalem, where He would suffer and eventually die. Peter, however, rebuked the Lord and said: “Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall never be unto thee” (Matthew 16:22). Obviously, that impetuous utterance was not inspired. In Luke, the story is told of how a group of Samaritans refused aid and comfort to the Lord (9:51ff.). James and John bitterly suggested that the Lord enjoin a “heavenly barbecue” to consume these ill-tempered Samaritans. Their attempt at vengeance—for which they drew the Lord’s ire—hardly was inspired. The truth of the matter is that inspiration guided the writers in what they wrote and spoke from God as they were “borne along” by God’s Spirit—a process that was not active every minute of every day.

Fourth, inspiration extended to a variety of disparate subjects. Today, it is not uncommon to hear liberal theologians, and those sympathetic with them, suggest that the “spiritual” sections of Scripture are inspired, but that all other portions dealing with matters of history, science, geography, medicine, and the like are not. This concept, known as the doctrine of

“partial inspiration,” is false. Were it true, everyone who reads the text would have the personal responsibility of wading through the biblical documents to decide which matters are “spiritual” (thus, inspired) and which are not (thus, uninspired). On some occasions, therefore, God would have “breathed” truth, while on others He would have “breathed” error. But the question must be asked: If God cannot handle correctly trivial matters (such as geographical directions, or the name of an individual), why would anyone think that they could trust Him with something as critically important as the safety of their eternal soul and expect Him to handle it in a more appropriate fashion? The psalmist stated: “The **sum** of thy word is truth; And **every one** of thy righteous ordinances endureth for ever” (Psalm 119:160; emp. added). The concept of partial inspiration impugns the integrity of God, conflicts with the evidences for inspiration, and should be rejected.

Fifth, not only did the Bible writers view each others’ works as inspired, but no Bible writer ever criticized another. Today, it is not at all unusual for one religious writer to take issue with another, even when they share the same religious views, or are members of the same religious group. But the Bible writers do not fall into that category—even when one might expect them to do so. For example, as mentioned above, Paul rebuked Peter publicly for his dissimulation (Galatians 2:11ff.). Yet Peter never avenged himself by denigrating Paul’s writings. In fact, Peter wrote:

*“And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; wherein are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unsteadfast wrest, as they do also the **other scriptures**, unto their own destruction”.*

(2 Peter 3:15-16, emp. added).

Note especially that Peter referred to Paul’s writings as being classified by the same kind of inspiration as the “other scriptures.” Additionally, in defending the right of elders to receive remuneration from the church treasury for their work, Paul quoted both Deuteronomy 25:4 and Luke 10:7, classifying them both as “scripture” (1 Timothy 5:18). It is clear that the Bible writers considered each others’ works to be inspired—a view we today would do well to entertain.

Appendix 6

Excerpt from “In Defense of The Bible’s Inspiration 2” (www.apologeticpress.org) Bert Thompson Ph.D.

The Prophecy of the Bible

One of the most impressive internal proofs of the Bible’s inspiration is its prophetic utterances. Rex A. Turner Sr. has suggested: Predictive prophecy is the highest evidence of divine revelation. The one thing that mortal man cannot do is to know and report future events in the absence of a train of circumstances that naturally suggest certain possibilities. If the Bible is inspired of God, it should contain valid, predictive prophecy. In fact, the Bible’s prophecy—completely foretold to the minutest detail, and painstakingly fulfilled with the greatest precision—has confounded its critics for generations. The Bible contains prophecies about individuals, lands, nations, and even the predicted Messiah.

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

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

(Deuteronomy 18:20-22).

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

In order for a prophecy to be valid, it must meet certain criteria. First, it must be a specific, detailed declaration, as opposed to being nebulous, vague, or general in nature. Arthur Pierson wrote: “The particulars of the prophecy should be so many and minute that there shall be no possibility of accounting by shrewd guess-work for the accuracy of the fulfillment”. Bernard Ramm has suggested: “The prophecy must be more than a good guess or a conjecture. It must possess sufficient precision as to be capable of verification by means of the fulfillment”.

Second, there must be a sufficient amount of time between the prophetic statement and its fulfillment. Suggestions as to what “might” happen in the future do not qualify as prophetic

pronouncements. Rather, the prophecy must precede the fulfillment in a significant fashion, and there must be no chance whatsoever of the prophet having the ability to influence the outcome.

Third, the prophecy must be stated in clear, understandable terms. Roger Dickson has noted: “Prophecies must be sufficiently clear in order for the observer to be able to link pronouncement with fulfillment. If a prophecy is not understandable enough so as to allow the observer to depict its fulfillment, then what good would the prophecy be?”.

Fourth, the prophecy must not have historical overtones. In other words, true prophecy should not be based on past (or current) societal or economic conditions. Pierson amplified this point by stating that: “There should have been nothing in previous history which makes it possible to forecast a like event in the future”.

Fifth, a clear, understandable, exact prophecy must have a clear, understandable, exact fulfillment. It is not enough to suggest that a certain event came true with a “high degree of probability.” The fulfillment must be unmistakable, and must match the prophecy in every detail.

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

Within the Sacred Volume, numerous prophecies are presented regarding the rise, decline, and eventual fall of kings, cities, and even nations. (1) The Bible foretells the destruction of the city of Tyre with miraculous precision. Ezekiel predicted that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, would destroy the city (Ezekiel 26:7-8). Many nations were to come up against Tyre (26:3). The city would be leveled and scraped clean like a bare rock (26:4). The city’s stones, timbers, and soil would be cast into the sea (26:12). The surrounding area would become a place for the spreading of fishermen’s nets (26:5). And, finally, the city never would be rebuilt to its former glory (26:14).

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

The city never regained its once-famous position of wealth and power. The prophet Ezekiel looked 1,900 years into the future and predicted that Tyre would be a bald rock where fishermen gathered to open their nets. And that is exactly what history records as having happened.

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

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

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

(3) The Old Testament contains more than three hundred messianic prophecies. As Hugo McCord has said, "Testimony about Jesus was the chief purpose of prophecy. To him all the prophets gave witness (Acts 10:43)". The Prophesied One would be born of a woman (Genesis 3:15; Galatians 4:4), of the seed of Abraham (Genesis 22:18; Luke 3:34), of the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10; Hebrews 7:14), of the royal lineage of David (2 Samuel 7:12; Luke 1:32), in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1), to the virgin Mary (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:22), in order to bruise the head of Satan (Genesis 3:15; Galatians 4:4; Hebrews 2:12-14). His Galilean ministry was foretold (Isaiah 9:1-2), and it was prophesied that a forerunner would announce His arrival (Isaiah 40:3; Matthew 3:1-3). He would appear during the days of the Roman reign (Daniel 2:44; Luke 2:1), while Judah still possessed her own king (Genesis 49:10; Matthew 2:22). He would be killed some 490 years after the command to restore Jerusalem at the end of the Babylonian captivity (457 B.C.), i.e., A.D. 30 (Daniel 9:24ff.). He was to be both human and divine; though born, He was eternal (Micah 5:2; John 1:1,14); though a man, He was Jehovah's "fellow" (Zechariah 13:7; John 10:30; Philippians 2:6). He was to be gentle and compassionate in His dealings with mankind (Isaiah 42:1-4; Matthew

12:15-21). He would submit perfectly to His heavenly Father (Psalm 40:8; Isaiah 53:11; John 8:29; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:22).

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

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

Appendix 7

Scientific Foreknowledge and Medical Acumen of the Bible

(www.apologeticspress.org)

Kyle Butt, M.A.

While it is the case that the Bible does not present itself as a scientific or medical textbook, it is only reasonable that if God truly did inspire the books that compose the Bible, they would be completely accurate in every scientific or medical detail found among their pages. Furthermore, if the omniscient Ruler of the Universe actually did inspire these books, scientific and medical errors that fill the pages of other ancient, non-inspired texts should be entirely absent from the biblical record. Is the Bible infallible when it speaks about scientific fields of discipline, or does it contain the errors that one would expect to find in the writings of fallible men in ancient times?

That the first five books of the Old Testament are a product of Moses is a matter of historical record. Furthermore, the story of Moses' education among the Egyptian culture was well understood. In fact, even those Jews who did not convert to Christianity were so familiar with the historic fact that Moses was educated in "all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts 7:22), that Stephen's statement to that effect went completely undisputed. Moses had been trained under the most advanced Egyptian educational system of his day. With such training, it would have been only natural for Moses to include some of the Egyptian "wisdom" in his writings if he were composing the Pentateuch by using his own prowess and mental faculties.

A look into the medical practices from ancient Egypt and those found in the Pentateuch, however, reveals that Moses did not necessarily rely on "wisdom" of the Egyptians (which, in many cases, consisted of life-threatening malpractice). While some medical practices in the Pentateuch are similar to those found in ancient Egyptian documents, the Pentateuch exhibits a conspicuous absence of those harmful malpractices that plague the writings of the Egyptians. Moses penned the most advanced, flawless medical prescriptions that had ever been recorded. Furthermore, every statement that pertained to the health and medical well-being of the Israelite nation recorded by Moses could theoretically still be implemented and be completely in accord with every fact modern medicine has learned in regard to germ spreading, epidemic disease control, communal sanitation, and a host of other medical and scientific discoveries.

It is the case that the ancient Egyptians were renowned in the ancient world for their progress in the field of medicine. Dr. Massengill noted that "Egypt was the medical center of the ancient world" (1943, p. 13). During the days of in the Medo-Persian Empire, the ancient historian Herodotus recorded that it was king Darius' practice "to keep in attendance certain Egyptian doctors, who had a reputation for the highest eminence in their profession" (3.129). Thus, while the medical practices of the Bible could be equally compared to those of other ancient cultures and found to be flawlessly superior, comparing them to that of the

eminent Egyptian culture should suffice to manifest the Bible's supernatural superiority in the field.

It Will Cure You—If It Doesn't Kill You First

Among the ancient documents that detail much of the Egyptian medicinal knowledge, the Ebers Papyrus ranks as one of the foremost sources. This papyrus was discovered in 1872 by a German Egyptologist named Georg Ebers (the name from which the papyrus acquired its moniker) (*Ancient Egyptian...*, 1930, p. 1). It consists of a host of medical remedies purported to heal, enhance, and prevent. "Altogether 811 prescriptions are set forth in the Papyrus, and they take the form of salves, plasters, and poultices; snuffs, inhalations, and gargles; draughts, confections, and pills; fumigations, suppositories, and enemata" (p. 15). Among the hundreds of prescriptions, disgusting treatments that caused much more harm than good can be found. For instance, under a section titled "What to do to draw out splinters in the flesh," a remedy is prescribed consisting of worm blood, mole, and donkey dung" (p. 73). [Doctors S.I. McMillen and David Stern note that dung "is loaded with tetanus spores" and "a simple splinter often resulted in a gruesome death from lockjaw (2000, p. 10).] Remedies to help heal skin diseases included such prescriptions as: "A hog's tooth, cat's dung, dog's dung, aau-of-samu-oil, berries-of-the-xet-plant, pound and apply as poultice" (*Ancient Egyptian...*, 1930, p. 92). Various other ingredients for the plethora of remedies concocted included "dried excrement of a child" (p. 98), "hog dung" (p. 115), and "a farmer's urine" (p. 131). One recipe to prevent hair growth included lizard dung and the blood from a cow, donkey, pig, dog, and stag (p. 102). While it must be noted that some of the Egyptian medicine actually did include prescriptions and remedies that could be helpful, the harmful remedies and ingredients cast a sickening shadow of untrustworthiness over the entire Egyptian endeavor as viewed by the modern reader.

As medical doctor S.E. Massengill stated:

The early Egyptian physicians made considerable use of drugs. Their drugs were of the kind usually found in early civilizations; a few effective remedies lost in a mass of substances of purely superstitious origin. They used opium, squill, and other vegetable substances, but also excrement and urine. It is said that the urine of a faithful wife was with them effective in the treatment of sore eyes (1943, p. 15).

In addition, it seems that the Egyptians were among the first to present the idea of "good and laudable pus" (McMillen and Stern, 2000, p. 10). Due to the idea that infection was good and the pus that resulted from it was a welcomed effect, "well-meaning doctors killed millions by deliberately infecting their wounds" (p. 10). Needless to say, the modern-day reader would not want to be a patient in an ancient Egyptian clinic!

Prescriptions in the Pentateuch

The first five books of the Old Testament, admittedly, are not devoted entirely to the enumeration of medical prescriptions. They are not ancient medical textbooks. These books do, however, contain numerous regulations for sanitation, quarantine, and other medical procedures that were to govern the daily lives of the Israelite nation. Missing entirely from the pages of these writings are the harmful remedies and ingredients prescribed by other

ancient civilizations. In fact, the Pentateuch exhibits an understanding of germs and disease that much “modern” medicine did not grasp for 3,500 years after the books were written.

Blood: The Liquid of Life

Blood always has been a curious substance whose vast mysteries and capabilities have yet to be fully explored. Doctors in the twenty-first century transfuse it, draw it, separate it, package it, store it, ship it, and sell it. And, although modern-day scientists have not uncovered completely all of the wonders of blood, they have discovered that it is the key to life. Without this “liquid of life,” humans and animals would have no way to circulate the necessary oxygen and proteins that their bodies need in order to survive and reproduce. Hemoglobin found in the red blood cells carries oxygen to the brain, which in turn uses that oxygen to control the entire body. A brain without oxygen is like a car without gas or a computer without electricity. Blood makes all of the functions in the body possible.

In the past, ignorance of blood’s value caused some “learned” men to do tragic things. For instance, during the middle ages, and even until the nineteenth century, doctors believed that harmful “vapors” entered the blood and caused sickness. For this reason, leeches were applied to victims of fever and other illnesses in an attempt to draw out blood containing these vapors. Also, the veins and arteries located just above the elbow were opened, and the patient’s arms were bled to expunge the contaminated blood. George Washington, the first President of the United States, died because of such misplaced medical zeal. An eyewitness account of Washington’s death relates that he came down with a chill, and in an effort to cure him, those who attended him resorted to bleeding; “a vein was opened, but no relief afforded” (“The Death of George Washington,” 2001).

Thousands of years before the lethal practice of bloodletting was conceived, mankind had been informed by God that blood was indeed the key to life. In Leviticus 17:11, Moses wrote: “For the life of the flesh is in the blood.” Today, we understand completely the truthfulness of Moses’ statement that “the life of the flesh is in the blood.” But how did an ancient shepherd like Moses come to know such information? Just a lucky guess? How could Moses have known almost 3,500 years ago that life was in the blood, while it took the rest of the scientific and medical community thousands of years (and thousands of lives!) to grasp this truth? The Old Testament’s conspicuous failure to institute improper medical procedures as they related to blood speaks loudly of its medical accuracy.

Germs, Labor Fever, and Biblical Sanitation

In their book, *None of These Diseases*, physicians S.I. McMillen and David Stern discussed how many of the hygienic rules established by God for the children of Israel still are applicable today. To illustrate their point, they recounted the story of Ignaz Semmelweis.

In 1847, an obstetrician named Ignaz Semmelweis was the director of a hospital ward in Vienna, Austria. Many pregnant women checked into his ward, but 18% of them never checked out. One out of every six that received treatment in Semmelweis’ ward died of labor fever (Nuland, 2003, p. 31). Autopsies revealed pus under their skin, in their chest cavities, in their eye sockets, etc. Semmelweis was distraught over the mortality rate in his ward, and other hospital wards like it all over Europe. Nuland noted that Australia, the Americas, Britain, Ireland, and practically every other nation that had established a hospital suffered a similar mortality rate (2003, pp. 41-43). If a woman delivered a baby using a

midwife, then the death fell to only about 3%. Yet if she chose to use the most advanced medical knowledge and facilities of the day, her chance of dying skyrocketed immensely! Semmelweis tried everything to curb the carnage. He turned all the women on their sides in hopes that the death rate would drop, but with no results. He thought maybe the bell that the priest rang late in the evenings scared the women, so he made the priest enter silently, yet without any drop in death rates.

As he contemplated his dilemma, he watched young medical students perform their routine tasks. Each day the students would perform autopsies on the dead mothers. Then they would rinse their hands in a bowl of bloody water, wipe them off on a common, shared towel, and immediately begin internal examinations of the still-living women. Nuland commented concerning the practice: "Because there seemed no reason for them to wash their hands, except superficially, or change their clothing before coming to the First Division, they did neither" (2003, p. 100). As a twenty-first-century observer, one is appalled to think that such practices actually took place in institutes of what was at the time "modern technology." What doctor in his right mind would touch a dead person and then perform examinations on living patients—without first employing some sort of minimal hygienic practices intended to kill germs? But to Europeans in the middle-nineteenth-century, germs were virtually a foreign concept. They never had seen a germ, much less been able to predict its destructive potential. According to many of their most prevalent theories, disease was caused by "atmospheric conditions" or "cosmic telluric influences."

Semmelweis ordered everyone in his ward to wash his or her hands thoroughly in a chlorine solution after every examination. In three months, the death rate fell from 18% to 1%. Semmelweis had made an amazing discovery. On the inside cover-flap of the book about Semmelweis, written by medical doctor and historian Sherwin Nuland, the text reads: Ignác Semmelweis is remembered for the now-commonplace notion that doctors must wash their hands before examining patients. In mid-nineteenth-century Vienna, this was a subversive idea. With deaths from childbed fever exploding, Semmelweis discovered that doctors themselves were spreading the disease (2003, inside cover flap). Had Semmelweis made a groundbreaking discovery, or is it possible that he simply "rediscovered" what had been known in some circles for many years? Almost 3,300 years before Semmelweis lived, Moses had written: "He who touches the dead body of anyone shall be unclean seven days. He shall purify himself with the water on the third day and on the seventh day; then he will be clean. But if he does not purify himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he will not be clean." Germs were no new discovery in 1847; the biblical text recorded measures to check their spread as far back as approximately 1500 B.C.

The Water of Purification

Also germane to this discussion is the composition of the "water of purification" listed in Numbers 19. When Old Testament instructions are compared to the New Testament explanations for those actions, it becomes clear that some of the ancient injunctions were primarily symbolic in nature. For instance, when the Passover Lamb was eaten, none of its bones was to be broken. This symbolized the sacrifice of Christ, Whose side was pierced, yet even in death escaped the usual practice of having His legs broken (John 19:31-37).

With the presence of such symbolism in the Old Testament, it is important that we do not overlook the Old Testament instructions that were pragmatic in value and that testify to a Master Mind behind the writing of the Law. One such directive is found in Numbers 19, where the Israelites were instructed to prepare the “water of purification” that was to be used to wash any person who had touched a dead body.

At first glance, the water of purification sounds like a hodge-podge of superstitious potion-making that included the ashes of a red heifer, hyssop, cedar wood, and scarlet. But this formula was the farthest thing from a symbolic potion intended to “ward off evil spirits.” On the contrary, the recipe for the water of purification stands today as a wonderful example of the Bible’s brilliance, since the recipe is nothing less than a procedure to produce an antibacterial soap.

When we look at the ingredients individually, we begin to see the value of each. First, consider the ashes of a red heifer and cedar. As most school children know, the pioneers in this country could not go to the nearest supermarket and buy their favorite personal hygiene products. If they needed soap or shampoo, they made it themselves. Under such situations, they concocted various recipes for soap. One of the most oft’-produced types of soap was lye soap. Practically anyone today can easily obtain a recipe for lye soap via a quick search of the Internet (see “Soapmaking,” n.d.). The various lye-soap recipes reveal that, to obtain lye, water often is poured through ashes. The water retrieved from pouring it through the ashes contains a concentration of lye. Lye, in high concentrations, is very caustic and irritating to the skin. It is, in fact, one of the main ingredients in many modern chemical mixtures used to unclog drains. In more diluted concentrations, it can be used as an excellent exfoliant and cleansing agent. Many companies today still produce lye soaps. Amazingly, Moses instructed the Israelites to prepare a mixture that would have included lye mixed in a diluted solution.

Furthermore, consider that hyssop was also added to the “water of purification.” Hyssop contains the antiseptic thymol, the same ingredient that we find today in some brands of mouthwash (McMillen and Stern, 2000, p. 24). Hyssop oil continues to be a popular “healing oil,” and actually is quite expensive. In listing the benefits of hyssop, one Web site noted: “Once used for purifying temples and cleansing lepers, the leaves contain an antiseptic, antiviral oil. A mold that produces penicillin grows on the leaves. An infusion is taken as a sedative expectorant for flue, bronchitis, and phlegm” (see “Hyssop”).

Other ingredients in the “water of purification” also stand out as having beneficial properties. The oil from the cedar wood in the mixture most likely maintained numerous salutary properties. A Web site dealing with various essential oils noted: “Cedar wood has long been used for storage cabinets because of its ability to repel insects and prevent decay. In oil form, applied to humans, it is an antiseptic, astringent, expectorant (removes mucus from respiratory system), anti-fungal, sedative and insecticide” (“Spa Essential Oils,” 2005). Another site, more specifically dealing with the beneficial properties of cedar, explained:

Cedar leaves and twigs are in fact rich in vitamin C, and it was their effectiveness in preventing or treating scurvy that led to the tree’s being called arbor vitae or tree of life. In

addition, recent research has shown that extracts prepared from either *Thuja occidentalis* or *Thuja plicata* [types of oriental cedar—KB] do in fact have antiviral, anti-inflammatory, and antibacterial properties. A group of German researchers reported in 2002 that an extract prepared from cedar leaf, alcohol, and water inhibits the reproduction of influenza virus type A, while a team of researchers in Japan found that an extract of Western red cedar was effective in treating eczema (Frey, n.d).

It is interesting to note that this information about the beneficial properties of the ingredients such as cedar, hyssop, and lye in the water of purification is not coming from Bible-based sources. Most of it is simply coming from studies that have been done through cosmetic and therapeutic research.

Finally, the Israelites were instructed to toss into the mix “scarlet,” which most likely was scarlet wool (see Hebrews 9:19). Adding wool fibers to the concoction would have made the mixture the “ancient equivalent of Lava® soap” (McMillen and Stern, 2000, p. 25).

Thousands of years before any formal studies were done to see what type of cleaning methods were the most effective; millennia before American pioneers concocted their lye solutions; and ages before our most advanced medical students knew a thing about germ theory, Moses instructed the Israelites to concoct an amazingly effective recipe for soap, that, if used properly in medical facilities like hospitals in Vienna, would literally have saved thousands of lives.

Quarantine

Moses detailed measures to prevent the spread of germs from dead bodies to living humans long before such was understood and prescribed in modern medicine. But the Old Testament record added another extremely beneficial practice to the field of medicine in its detailed descriptions of maladies for which living individuals should be quarantined. The book of Leviticus lists a plethora of diseases and ways in which an Israelite would come in contact with germs. Those with such diseases as leprosy were instructed to “dwell alone” “outside the camp” (Leviticus 13:46). If and when a diseased individual did get close to those who were not diseased, he was instructed to “cover his mustache, and cry, ‘Unclean! Unclean!’” (13:45). It is of interest that the covering of one’s mustache would prevent spit and spray from the mouth of the individual to pass freely through the air, much like the covering of one’s mouth during a cough.

Concerning such quarantine practices, S.E. Massengill wrote in his book *A Sketch of Medicine and Pharmacy*:

In the prevention of disease, however, the ancient Hebrews made real progress. The teachings of Moses, as embodied in the Priestly Code of the Old Testament, contain two clear conceptions of modern sanitation—the importance of cleanliness and the possibility of controlling epidemic disease by isolation and quarantine (1943, p. 252).

In regard to the understanding of contagion implied in the quarantine rules in the Old Testament, McGrew noted in the *Encyclopedia of Medical History*: “The idea of contagion was foreign to the classic medical tradition and found no place in the voluminous Hippocratic writings. The Old Testament, however, is a rich source for contagionist

sentiment, especially in regard to leprosy and venereal disease” (1985, pp.77-78). Here again, the Old Testament exhibits amazingly accurate medical knowledge that surpasses any known human ingenuity available at the time of its writing.

Laws of Food Contamination

Food regulations enumerated in the first five books of the Old Testament have been scrutinized by credentialed professionals in the fields of dietary and pathological research. The regulations have proven to coincide with modern science’s understanding of various aspects of health and disease prevention.

In 1953, an extensive study, performed by David I. Macht and published in the *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* (a publication of the American Association of the History of Medicine and of The Johns Hopkins Institute of the History of Medicine), tested the toxicity of the meat of animals listed in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14. Macht’s technique was to place a certain seedling (*Lupinus albus*) in fresh muscle juices of the various animals noted as clean and unclean in the biblical text. This method was used at the time to study the blood of normal human patients as compared to the blood of cancerous patients (1953, p. 444). Macht noted that his results revealed “data which are of considerable interest not only to the medical investigator but also to the students of ancient Biblical literature” (p. 445).

Some of his results were indeed of interest. For instance, he would take a control group of seedlings that grew in normal solutions and compare that group to seedlings placed in the various meat juices. He would then record the percent of seeds that grew in the meat juices as compared to those that grew under normal circumstances. For example, when placing the seedlings in meat juices from the Ox, the seeds grew 91% as often as they would if placed in a regular growing solution. Seeds in sheep juices grew 94% as often as those in the control group in regular solution. Seedlings in meat juice from a calf—82%; from a goat—90%; and from a deer 90%. Since these animals chew the cud and have a divided hoof, they were listed as clean in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14:

Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying to them, “Speak to the children of Israel, saying, ‘These are the animals which you may eat among all the animals that are on the earth: Among the animals, whatever divides the hoof, having cloven hooves and chewing the cud—that you may eat’”

(Leviticus 11:1-3).

When several unclean animals were studied, however, they showed significantly higher levels of toxicity and much lower levels of seedling growth. Seedlings in meat juice from pigs grew only 54% as often as the control group under normal growing conditions; rabbit—49%; camel—41%; and horse—39%. These results for larger mammals suggested that the biblical division between clean and unclean could have been related to the toxicity of the juices of such animals.

Macht did similar research on birds, in which he found that extracts from biblical clean birds such as the pigeon and quail grew his seedlings 93% and 89%, while those from unclean

birds such as the Red-tail hawk (36%) and owl (62%) were much more toxic. As Moses said: “And these you shall regard as an abomination among the birds; they shall not be eaten, they are an abomination: the eagle, the vulture, the buzzard, the kite, and the falcon after its kind; every raven after its kind, the ostrich, the short-eared owl, the sea gull, and the hawk after its kind” (Leviticus 11:13-19). Other studies included several different kinds of fish. The biblical regulation for eating fish was that the Israelites could eat any fish that had fins and scales (Deuteronomy 14:9). Those water-living creatures that did not possess fins and scales were not to be eaten (14:10). In regard to his study on the toxicity of fish, Macht wrote:

Of special interest were experiments made with muscle juices and also blood solutions obtained from many species of fishes. Fifty-four species of fishes were so far studied in regard to toxicity of meat extracts. It was found that the muscle extracts of those fishes which possess scales and fins were practically non-toxic [Herring—100%; Pike—98%; Shad—100%—KB], while muscle extracts from fishes without scales and fins were highly toxic for the growth of *Lupinus albus* seedlings (pp. 446-448).

Macht’s study, even after more than five decades, continues to remain of great interest. His rigorous research led him to conclude:

The observations described above corroborate the impression repeatedly made on the author in investigations as a physician (M.D. Johns Hopkins, 1906), as an experimental biologist (Member of Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine), and as Doctor of Hebrew Literature (Yeshiva University, 1928) that all allusions of the Book of Books, to nature, natural phenomena, and natural history, whether in the form of factual statements or in the form of metaphors, similes, parables, allegories, or other tropes are correct either literally or figuratively.... Such being the extraordinary concordance between the data of the Scriptures and many of the modern and even most recent discoveries in both the biological and physico-chemical sciences, every serious student of the Bible will, I believe, endorse the assertion of Sir Isaac Newton, that “The Scriptures of God are the most sublime philosophy. I find more such marks of authenticity in the Bible than in profane history anywhere” (p. 449). Some, however, have questioned Macht’s results. Prior research done by Macht in 1936 and 1949 produced discordant results from his research in 1953. But there are several compelling reasons for accepting Macht’s 1953 research. First, it could be the case that Macht’s 1953 research simply was more refined and the procedure better understood. As one would expect in the scientific field, research generally tends to improve with time. Second, Macht was a high-profile doctor with copious credentials. His research in 1936 and 1949 had been published and was easily accessible. Yet even though his previous research was available, the Johns Hopkins Institute considered it acceptable to publish his 1953 research, which would suggest that the 1953 research included additional methods and/or information that would override the earlier research. Third, Macht’s procedure as described in the 1953 paper was fairly simple and easily reproducible. But those who question the work have failed to produce experimental data after 1953 that would negate Macht’s study. If his 1953 procedures were fraught with error, a few simple experiments could be done to prove that. No such experimental data refuting Macht has been produced.

For these reasons, the findings of Dr. Macht aid in the defense of the Bible’s inspiration and remarkably accurate medical procedures as far back as the time of Moses. But the validity of

Old Testament food consumption laws certainly does not rely solely on Macht's 1953 research. Additional confirmation of the beneficial, protective nature of Mosaic food consumption laws is readily available.

Fins and Scales

As was previously mentioned, the Mosaic criteria for eating water-living creatures was that the creatures have scales and fins (Leviticus 11:12). This injunction was extremely beneficial, since a multitude of problems surround many sea creatures that do not have scales and fins.

The Blowfish

The blowfish has fins but does not have scales. Thus, it would not have been edible under the Old Testament laws—fortunately for the Israelites. The blowfish can contain toxin in its ovaries, liver, and other organs that is highly potent and deadly. This toxin, called tetrodotoxin, is thought to be “1250 times more deadly than cyanide” and 160,000 times more potent than cocaine. A tiny amount of it can kill 30 grown adults (Dillon, 2005). As odd as it sounds, blowfish is served as a delicacy all over the world, especially in Japan and other far eastern countries. As a delicacy, it is called fugu, and is prepared by certified, licensed chefs. The toxins can be removed successfully, making the food edible, but the procedure often goes awry. Some who have researched fugu say that it is a food connoisseur's version of Russian roulette. Due to the extreme danger involved in eating fugu, it is illegal to serve it to the Emperor of Japan! The Mosaic instructions concerning edible fish would have helped the Israelites avoid the dangerous blowfish, as well as danger posed by eating other toxic sea creatures such as certain jelly fish, sea anemones, and octopi.

Shellfish

Although shellfish are edible today, there are inherent dangers in eating ill-prepared types such as oysters. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has produced a twelve-page tract warning people about the dangers of eating raw or partially cooked oysters (“Carlos' Tragic...,” 2003). In the tract, the FDA warns that some raw oysters contain the bacteria *Vibrio vulnificus*. In regard to this dangerous bacteria, the tract states:

Oysters are sometimes contaminated with the naturally occurring bacteria *Vibrio vulnificus*. Oysters contaminated with *Vibrio vulnificus* can't be detected by smell or sight; they look like other oysters. Eating raw oysters containing *Vibrio vulnificus* is very dangerous for those with pre-existing medical conditions such as liver disease, diabetes, hepatitis, cancer and HIV.... 50 percent of people who are infected with *Vibrio vulnificus* as a result of eating raw contaminated oysters die (2003).

Eating oysters if they are not cooked properly can be potentially fatal, says the FDA. Thus, the wisdom of the Mosaic prohibition is evident to an honest observer. In a time when proper handling and preparation procedures were difficult to achieve, the best course of action simply would have been to avoid the risk of eating potentially contaminated foods, especially since the contamination cannot be detected by smell or sight.

Reptiles and Salmonella

In Leviticus 11, Moses included reptiles in the list of unclean animals. Obviously, they are not cud-chewers that walk on cloven hooves, so they would not classify as clean, edible

animals according to Leviticus 11:3. But to make sure that the Israelites understood, Moses specifically mentioned reptiles such as the large lizard, gecko, monitor lizard, sand reptile, sand lizard, and chameleon (Leviticus 11:29-31). Immediately following this listing of reptiles, the text states: “Whoever touches them when they are dead shall be unclean until evening” (11:31).

Interestingly, reptiles have a much higher rate of carrying *Salmonella* bacteria than do most mammals, especially those listed as clean in the Old Law. The Center for Disease Control has repeatedly warned people about the possibility of being infected with *Salmonella* passed through reptiles. In summarizing the CDC’s 2003 report, Lianne McLeod noted that the CDC estimates over 70,000 cases of human *Salmonella* infection a year are related to the handling of reptiles and amphibians (2007). The CDC recommends that homes with children under five should not have reptiles as pets. Furthermore, while other animals such as cats and dogs can pass *Salmonella*, McLeod noted:

As high as 90% of reptiles are natural carriers of *Salmonella* bacteria, harboring strains specific to reptiles without any symptoms of disease in the reptile. While it is true that many pets can carry *Salmonella*, the problem with reptiles (and apparently amphibians) is that they carry *Salmonella* with such high frequency. It is prudent to assume that all reptiles and amphibians can be a potential source of *Salmonella* (2007, emp. added). In light of such evidence, the prudence of the Mosaic prohibition to eat or handle reptile carcasses is clearly evident.

Of further interest is the fact that reptilian *Salmonella* contamination can occur without even touching a reptile. If a person touches something that has touched a reptile the bacteria can spread. The ARAV (Association of Reptilian and Amphibian Veterinarians) made this statement: “*Salmonella* bacteria are easily spread from reptiles to humans. Humans may become infected when they place their hands on objects, including food items, that have been in contact with the stool of reptiles, in their mouths” (“*Salmonella* Bacteria...,” 2007).

When this statement by the ARAV is compared with the injunctions in Leviticus 11:32-47, the astounding accuracy of the Old Testament regulation is again confirmed.

“Anything on which any of them falls, when they are dead shall be unclean, whether it is any item of wood or clothing or skin or sack, whatever item it is, in which any work is done, it must be put in water. And it shall be unclean until evening; then it shall be clean. Any earthen vessel into which any of them falls you shall break; and whatever is in it shall be unclean: in such a vessel, any edible food upon which water falls becomes unclean, and any drink that may be drunk from it becomes unclean”.

(Leviticus 11:32-34).

After reading Leviticus 11:32-34, it seems as though a microbiologist was present with Moses to explain the perfect procedures to avoid spreading *Salmonella* and other bacteria from reptiles to humans. How could Moses have accurately laid down such precise

regulations that belie a superior understanding of bacteria? An honest reader must conclude that he had divine assistance.

Bats and Rabies

Moses specifically forbade the Israelites to eat bats (Leviticus 11:19). The wisdom of this instruction is demonstrated by the fact that bats often carry rabies. While it is true that many animals are susceptible to rabies, bats are especially so. The American College of Emergency Physicians documented that between 1992 and 2002, rabies passed from bats caused 24 of the 26 human deaths from rabies in the United States (“Human Rabies...,” 2002). In the *Science Daily* article describing this research, “Robert V. Gibbons, MD, MPH, of Walter Reed Army Institute of Research in Silver Spring, MD, reviewed the 24 cases of humans with bat rabies.” From his research, he advised “the public to seek emergency care for preventive treatment for rabies if direct contact with a bat occurs” (“Human Rabies...,” 2002). Moses’ instruction to avoid bats coincides perfectly with modern research. Once again, the super-human wisdom imparted through Moses by God cannot be denied by the conscientious student of the Old Testament. As the eminent archaeologist, W.F. Albright, in comparing the list of clean and unclean animals detailed in the Pentateuch, noted that in other ancient civilizations, “we find no classifications as logical as this in any of the elaborate cuneiform list of fauna or ritual taboos” (1968, p. 180).

Case in Point: Pork Consumption

One of the most well-known Old Testament food regulations is the prohibition of pork consumption (Leviticus 11:7). Under close scrutiny, this prohibition exemplifies the value of the biblical laws regarding clean and unclean animals. During the days of Moses, proper food preparation and cooking conditions did not always exist. In fact, the general knowledge of the need to separate certain uncooked foods, especially meats, during preparation from other foods was virtually non-existent. Certain meats, if contacted raw or under-cooked, have greater potential to carry parasites and other harmful bacteria that can infect the end consumer (in this case, humans).

Due to the fact that pigs are scavengers, and will eat practically anything, they often consume parasites and bacteria when they eat the carcasses of other dead animals. These parasites and bacteria can, and often do, take up residence in the pigs’ muscle tissue. Fully cooking the meat can kill these harmful organisms, but failure to cook the meat completely can cause numerous detrimental effects. R.K. Harrison listed several diseases or other health maladies that can occur due to the ingestion of improperly cooked pork. He noted that pigs often are the host of the tapeworm *Taenia solium*. Infection by this parasite can cause small tumors to arise throughout the body, including on the skin, eyes, and muscles. Furthermore, these tumors can affect the brain and cause epileptic convulsions. Additionally, humans can develop trichiniasis (*trichinosis*) infestation from eating undercooked, as well as tape worm known as *Echiococcus granulosus* from water polluted by pigs. Further, pigs can pass on the microorganisms that cause toxoplasmosis, a disease affecting the nervous system (Harrison, 1982, p. 644).

Due to a much more exhaustive body of knowledge concerning parasites and pathogens, modern readers are increasingly attune to the dangers of consuming raw or undercooked

pork. In fact, most pork bought in grocery stores contains nitrates and nitrites that have been injected into the meat to hinder the growth of harmful microorganisms. But Moses and the Israelites did not have access to such modern knowledge. How is it that the food regulations recorded by Moses over 3,000 years ago contain such an accurate understanding of disease control? Albright noted along these lines, “thanks to the dietary and hygienic regulations of Mosaic law...subsequent history has been marked by a tremendous advantage in this respect held by Jews over all other comparable ethnic and religious groups” (1968, p. 181).

Circumcision

In the book of Genesis, the text relates that God chose Abraham and his descendants to be a “special” people who were set apart from all other nations. The covenant that God made with Abraham included a physical “sign” that was to be implemented in all future generations of Abraham’s descendants. According to the text, God said:

He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant. He who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money must be circumcised, and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant (Genesis 17:12-14).

Thus, the covenant with Abraham and his offspring was to be indelibly marked in the flesh of every male child.

The inclusion of this medical, surgical practice provides another excellent example of the medical acumen of the biblical text. Two significant aspects of biblical circumcision need to be noted. First, from what modern medicine has been able to gather, circumcision can lessen the chances of getting certain diseases and infections. Pediatrician, Dorothy Greenbaum noted in regard to the health benefits of circumcision: “Medically, circumcision is healthful because it substantially reduces the incidence of urinary tract infection in boys, especially those under one year of age. Some studies cited in the pediatric policy statement report 10 to 20 times more urinary tract infection in uncircumcised compared with circumcised boys.” She further noted that sexually transmitted diseases are passed more readily among men who have not been circumcised (2006). In addition, circumcision virtually eliminates the chance of penile cancer. In an article titled “Benefits of Circumcision,” the text stated: “Neonatal circumcision virtually abolishes the risk [of penile cancer—KB]” and “penile cancer occurs almost entirely in uncircumcised men” (Morris, 2006). [NOTE: Morris’ work is of particular interest due to the fact that it has an evolutionary bias and was in no way written to buttress belief in the biblical record.]

Not only can a litany of health benefits be amassed to encourage the practice of infant circumcision, but the day on which the biblical record commands the practice to be implemented is of extreme importance as well. The encyclopedic work *Holt Pediatrics* remains today one of the most influential works ever written about child care, pediatric disease, and other health concerns as they relate to children. First written in 1896 by L. Emmet Holt, Jr. and going through several revisions until the year 1953, the nearly 1,500-

page work is a master compilation of the “modern” medicine of its day. One section, starting on page 125 of the twelfth edition, is titled “Hemorrhagic Disease of the Newborn.” The information included in the section details the occurrence of occasional spontaneous bleeding among newborns that can sometimes cause severe damage to major organs such as the brain, and even death. In the discussion pertaining to the reasons for such bleeding, the authors note that the excessive bleeding is primarily caused by a decreased level of prothrombin, which in turn is caused by insufficient levels of vitamin K. The text also notes that children’s susceptibility is “peculiar” (meaning “higher”) “between the second and fifth days of life” (1953, p. 126).

In chart form, *Holt Pediatrics* illustrates that the percent of available prothrombin in a newborn dips from about 90% of normal on its day of birth to about 35% on its third day of life outside the womb. After the third day, the available prothrombin begins to climb. By the eighth day of the child’s life, the available prothrombin level is approximately 110% of normal, about 20% higher than it was on the first day, and about 10% more than it will be during of the child’s life. Such data prove that the eighth day is the perfect day on which to perform a major surgery such as circumcision.

How did Moses know such detailed data about newborn hemorrhaging? Some have suggested that the early Hebrews carried out extensive observations on newborns to determine the perfect day for surgery. But such an idea has little merit. McMillen and Stern noted:

Modern medical textbooks sometimes suggest that the Hebrews conducted careful observations of bleeding tendencies. Yet what is the evidence? Severe bleeding occurs at most in only 1 out of 200 babies. Determining the safest day for circumcision would have required careful experiments, observing thousands of circumcisions. Could Abraham (a primitive, desert-dwelling nomad) have done that (2000, p. 84)

In fact, such amazing medical accuracy cannot be accounted for on the basis of human ingenuity in the ancient world. If circumcision was the only example of such accuracy, and the Hebrew writings were laced with incorrect, detrimental medical prescriptions, such an explanation might be plausible. But the fact that the entire Old Testament contains medical practices that would still be useful in third world countries, without a hint of error in regard to a single prescription; divine oversight remains the only reasonable answer.

Conclusion

In reality, entire books could be written on the Old Testament’s amazing medical accuracy. Medical doctors McMillen and Stern have done just that in their extremely interesting volume *None of These Diseases*. Many physicians who have compared Moses’ medical instructions to effective modern methods have come to realize the astonishing value and insight of the Old Testament text. As Dr. Macht once wrote: “Every word in the Hebrew Scriptures is well chosen and carries valuable knowledge and deep significance” (Macht, 1953, p. 450). Such is certainly the case in regard to the medical practices listed in its pages. Indeed, the accurate medical practices prescribed thousands of years before their significance was completely understood provide excellent evidence for the divine inspiration of the Bible.

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