

## ☞ Is the Bible really God's Word?

*The new minister was asked to teach a boys' class in the absence of the regular teacher. He decided to see what they knew, so he asked who knocked down the walls of Jericho. All the boys denied having done it, and the preacher was appalled by their ignorance. At the next deacons' meeting he told about the experience. "Not one of them knows who knocked down the walls of Jericho," he lamented. The group was silent until finally one seasoned veteran of disputes spoke up. "Preacher, this appears to be bothering you a lot. But I've known all those boys since they were born and they're good boys. If they said they didn't know, I believe them. Let's just take some money out of the repair and maintenance fund, fix the walls, and let it go at that."*

*A Gallup poll conducted some years ago revealed that 60 percent of Americans did not know what "the Holy Trinity" was. Sixty-six percent couldn't say who delivered the Sermon on the Mount, and 79 percent were unable to name a single Old Testament prophet. Some are almost as confused as the little boy who wrote on his test paper that "the epistles were the wives of the apostles, and that Sodom and Gomorrah were husband and wife."*

*Every Christian should own a read Bible.*

### ☞ How did we get the Bible?

#### **1. The Bible is inspired by God** (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21)

2 Timothy 3:16

All Scripture is God-breathed...

2 Peter 1:20-21

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. **21** For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

= the Holy Spirit's supernatural guidance of those who received special revelation from God as they wrote the books of the Bible. The end result of this inspiration is that the Bible conveys the truths which God wanted His people to know and to communicate to the world.

2. The Bible is made up of 66 books that were written over 1600 years (*from approximately 1500 BC to AD 100*) by more than 40 kings, prophets, leaders, and followers of Jesus.
3. The Old Testament was written mainly in Hebrew, with some Aramaic. The New Testament was written in Greek.
4. The books of the Bible were collected and arranged and recognized as inspired sacred authority by councils of rabbis and councils of church leaders based on careful guidelines.
5. Before the printing press was invented, the Bible was copied by hand. **The Bible**  **was copied very accurately**, in many cases by special scribes who developed intricate methods of counting words and letters to insure that no errors had been made.

Unlike the “telephone game...”

Each column of writing must have between 48 and 60 lines. The parchment must be lined at the sides. If three words were written beyond the margin lines, the entire copy was condemned.

No word or letter was to be written from memory. The scribe had to have an authentic copy with him and had to read aloud each word before writing it.

There were special rules for the formation of letters, the space between letters, the type of pen used and the color of the parchment.

The manuscript had to be checked within 30 days of its completion. A single mistake would condemn a whole page. If three mistakes were found in a page, the whole manuscript would be condemned.

Each word and letter was to be counted; if one letter was omitted or added, or one letter touched another, the manuscript was to be destroyed immediately.

6. There is much evidence that the Bible we have today is remarkably true to the original writings. Of the thousands of copies made by hand before AD 1500, more than 5300 Greek manuscripts from the New Testament alone still exist

☞ today. **The text of the Bible is better preserved than the writings of Caesar, Plato, or Aristotle.**

7. ☞ The discovery of **the Dead Sea Scrolls** (in the 1940's) **confirmed the astonishing reliability** of some of the copies of the Old Testament made over the years.

☞ **More reasons to trust the reliability of the Bible:**

- ❖ The Bible's unity: 66 books written in different literary styles, by 40 different authors with diverse backgrounds over 1600 years and yet contains **one central** ☞ **message**. (*God-willing, next week we'll begin looking at the overall message of the Bible*)

*--Norman Geisler... There's more evidence that the Bible is a reliable source than there is for any other book from the ancient world.*

- ❖ ☞ The Bible's **transforming power**

- ❖ ☞ **Archaeological evidence:** 1000's of archaeological finds in the Middle East support the Biblical record.
  - Every reference to an Assyrian King is correct
  - Records of the Hittites found in modern Turkey, previously thought to be an unknown and therefore, made-up nation

- ❖ ☞ **Prophecies fulfilled:** The Bible is the only book in the world that has precise, specific predictions that were made 100's of years in advance and that were literally fulfilled.
  - 191 predictions in the Old Testament regarding the coming of Christ
  - Daniel 9:24-26; when you do the math, this passage pinpoints when Jesus would enter human history

*--Norman Geisler... When it has been proven to be accurate over and over again in 100's of details, the burden of proof is on the critic, not on the Bible.*

*--Ronald Reagan... I never had any doubt about it being of divine origin... point out to me any similar collection of writings that has lasted for as many thousands of years and is still a best-seller, world-wide. It had to be of divine origin.*

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is living and active...

Isaiah 40:8

The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever.

*--Billy Graham... Its critics, who claimed it to be filled with forgery, fiction, and unfulfilled promises, are finding that the difficulties lie with themselves, and not the Bible. Greater and more careful scholarship has shown that apparent contradictions were caused by incorrect translations rather than divine inconsistencies. It was man and not the Bible that needed correcting. It is the blueprint of the Master Architect.*

### 👉 **How should we respond to the Bible?**

Matthew 4:4

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

*--Amy Carmichael... Never let good books take the place of the Bible. Drink from the Well, not from the streams that flow from the Well.*

*The Bible is meant to be bread for our daily use, not just cake for special occasions.*

*--DL Moody... Sin will keep you from this Book or this Book will keep you from sin.*

*--Christian Johnson... A Bible that's falling apart probably belongs to someone who isn't.*

Colossians 3:16

👉 **Let the word of Christ dwell in you** richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

*There's a story of a man who said he had received no inspiration from the Bible although he had "gone through it several times." "Let it go through you once," replied his friend, "then you will tell a different story!"*

James 1:22-25

☞ Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. **Do what it says.** 23 Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror 24 and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. 25 But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and *continues* to do this, *not forgetting* what he has heard, but *doing it*-he will be blessed in what he does.

*Knowing the Bible is of little benefit unless you practice it.*

Psalms 119:11

I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

Joshua 1:8

☞ Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; **meditate on it day and night**, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

*God's Word is like a highway sign. You don't have to pay any attention to it if you don't care what happens to you.*

*I would like a job as tutor, teacher and advisor to your family. I will never take a vacation. I will never be out of humor. I don't drink or smoke. I won't borrow your clothes or raid your refrigerator.*

*I will be up in the morning as early as anyone in the household and will stay up as late as anyone wishes.*

*I will help solve any problems your children might have. I will give you the satisfaction of knowing that no question your children ask will go unanswered. For that matter, I will answer any of your own questions on subjects that range from "How we got here?" to "Where are we headed?"*

*I will help settle bets and differences of opinion. I will give you information that will help you with your job, your family and all of your other interests.*

*In short, I will give you the knowledge that will insure the continued success of your family.*

*I am your Bible.*

*Do I get the job?*

☞ **Is the Bible really God's Word? YES! We should know it in the head, stow it in the heart, sow it in the world, and show it in the life.**