

## The Bible—Inspired by God or Not?

Recently a Gallup Poll showed that between 1984 and 2014, a period of 30 years, the percentage of people who believe that the Bible is an ancient book of fables, legends, history and moral precepts recorded by man, that is not inspired by God, rose from 12% to 21% of the American population.

Believing that the Bible is inspired by God and is not just a collection of human writings implies the belief in the existence of God. The Bible claims to be the word of God, that He has inspired his servants to write it.

The word of the LORD came to me, saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

"Ah, Sovereign LORD," I said, "I do not know how to speak; I am only a child."

But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a child.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the LORD.

Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "Now, I have put my

words in your mouth. (Jeremiah 1:4-9, NIV)

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17, NKJV)

If these claims are not true, then the Bible is a book of lies. How can we have confidence that the Creator of heaven and earth, in truth, inspired the writings of the Bible?

There are many critics of the Bible but many times the criticism is based on false information and a false understanding of what the Bible actually teaches, for example:

1 - When dates are given for Jesus return and then it doesn't happen, there is criticism that the prophecy is wrong--actually it's the interpretation not the prophecy that is wrong.

2 - People professing the name of Christ do not live up to the teaching of Christ. The problem is with the people, not the teaching of Christ.

3 - It is said that science has proved that there is no "immortal soul" so the Bible must be wrong. Actually, the interpretation of the Bible is wrong, the Bi-

ble never mentions an "immortal soul".

The atheistic scientists who are critics of the Bible claim that they are logical, rational, and objective and anyone who believes in God and the Bible are irrational, illogical, and cannot be objective. Actually, scientists are as human as anyone. They are not always, or even most of the time, completely and solely rational and objective.

The truth of the matter is they want to disbelieve God and are biased in that direction. Much of what scientists teach requires faith in human reasoning and observation, both of which can be very flawed. No one has seen the beginning of the earth. It takes as much or more faith to believe in evolution as it does to believe in the Creator yet evolution is taught as fact instead of theory. A recent article in Time Magazine made the case that science does not disprove the existence of God:

"The incredible fine-tuning of the universe presents the most powerful argument for the existence of an immanent creative entity we may well call God. Lacking convincing scientific evidence to the contrary, such a power may be necessary to force all the parameters we need for our existence—cosmological, physi-

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## **The Bible - Inspired by God or Not?**

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cal, chemical, biological and cognitive—to be what they are.” (“Why Science Does Not Disprove God” by Amir D. Aczel, Time Magazine, April 27, 2014)

Notice what the Bible says about those who deny the Creator’s existence:

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.

For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so

that men are without excuse. (Romans 1:18-20)

Notice that men suppress the truth--not find the truth--by their denial of God. Because they do not want God to exist, they cannot see the evidence in the creation of the Creator. Atheists, because of their bias against God, are not objective.

Jesus recognized that even signs and miracles would not convince the doubters:

"He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'" (Luke 16:31)

What evidence does God give us that he exists and that the Bible is inspired by Him? The Psalmist tells us that the very heavens declare that God exists:

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies

proclaim the work of his hands.

Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge.

There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. (Psalm 19:1-4, NIV)

God does not expect us to believe him without evidence. For example, the healings and other miracles that Jesus was empowered to do were evidence that he was sent by God. The apostles and up to 500 other people were witnesses of the resurrection of Christ. What other evidence does God give us to help us believe that he exists and that He inspired the Bible to be written and preserved? The articles that follow consider two important witnesses or evidence of both the existence of God and the truth of the Bible.

## **Evidence: The Sure Word of Prophecy**

The Bible is full of prophecy that foretells future events. The purpose of prophecy is to both warn us so that we are prepared for what is coming and also to give us evidence of God's power and might. It gives us evidence of the truth of God's inspired word.

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light

that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts. Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:19-21 KJV)

Only God, who knows the end from the beginning, is able to tell us, with truth, events yet to happen. Speaking through Isaiah the Prophet God tells us that he is the only God and that there is none like him:

Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me,

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## **Evidence: The Sure Word of Prophecy**

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Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure,' (Isaiah 46:9-10 NKJV)

The nation of Israel was given the test of a prophet. They would know that God had sent the prophet if what he said came to pass:

You may say to yourselves, "How can we know

when a message has not been spoken by the LORD ?" If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him. (Deuteronomy 18:21-22)

So let's put the Bible to the test. Is the Bible true? Has God inspired these words to be written? Does the test of the prophets prove to us that these prophecies are from God?

Let's look at some examples:

Jesus prophesied that Jerusalem and the Temple in Jerusalem would be destroyed:

Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. "Do you see all these things?" he asked. "I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down." (Matthew 24:1-2 NIV)

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What the Bible teaches us about God

July 17 - The subject of the vision

What the Bible teaches about man: his nature, his mortality and sin

July 24 - The vision shared with the patriarchs

The promises given to Abraham and Israel

July 31 - The vision kept alive in David and Solomon

The promises to David, the United Kingdom and the unsettled period of the Kings

August 7 - The vision all but extinguished - but not in God's eyes

Captivity - setting the stage for the advent

August 14 - The centerpiece of the vision is revealed

The life and teaching of the Messiah, his death and resurrection

August 21 - The centerpiece ascends to the throne of God to await the final fulfillment.

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August 28 - The vision is fulfilled upon the return of Christ and the establishment of his earthly kingdom

The earth is finally put to rights and God's glory surrounds it in the new heavens and new earth.

## **Evidence: The Sure Word of Prophecy**

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"When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. (Luke 21:20-24 NIV)

Jesus was crucified in approximately 30 AD. The gospels that recorded his prophecy were written someplace between 50 and 65 AD. In 68 AD the Roman army surrounded Jerusalem and laid siege to it for almost two years. Finally in 70 AD the Romans completely destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple. If you visit Jerusalem

now, 2,000 years later, you can see the stones of the Temple laying as rubble. The words that Jesus prophesied, inspired by God, were fulfilled in detail.

The Old Testament is full of prophecies concerning Jesus. The Septuagint (Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament) was completed 200 years before Jesus was born but is full of prophecies concerning him. Just one example is Psalm 22 which gives details concerning the crucifixion of Christ and was written a thousand years before the time of Jesus. Look at some of these details:

Psalm 22: v 7-8 compare to Matthew 27:39-43 Jesus is mocked and insulted

Psalm 22: v 16 compare to Matthew 27:35; John 19:23 Method of death is crucifixion

Psalm 22: v 17-18 compare to Matthew 27:35; John 19:23-24 His clothes are taken

These are just a few of the details. Read also Psalm 69 and Isaiah 53

Daniel lived between 600 and 534 BC. He prophesied con-

cerning the rise and fall of several empires, some before they even came into existence. The first prophecy in Daniel recorded in chapter 2 is the image given in the dream to the Babylonian emperor. The interpretation of the meaning of the dream is also given: Babylon was the head of gold, the Medo-Persian Empire was the chest and arms of silver, the Grecian Empire was the belly and thighs of bronze, and the legs of iron was Rome. More detail of these empires were given later in the prophecies of Daniel:

Fall of the Babylonian Empire - Daniel 5:25-31 (539 BC)

Rise and Fall of the Medo-Persian Empire - Daniel 8:20 (539-330 BC)

Rise and fall of the Grecian (Macedonian) Empire - Daniel 8:21 (330-63 BC)

Destruction of Jerusalem - Daniel 8:9-11 (70 AD)

We do have the sure word of prophecy to give us evidence of the veracity of God's message that he has given us through the prophets and are written in the scriptures.

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## Evidence: Israel is God's Witness that He is God

Starting with Genesis chapter 12, most of the Old Testament traces the history of one nation: the nation of Israel. Israel was the name given to Jacob by God when he extended the same promises to him that he had made to his grandfather, Abraham. The same promises of blessings and the inheritance of the land were given to Israel and his 12 sons, the fathers of the 12 tribes of Israel. It is the nation of Israel that God rescued from slavery in Egypt and led to the land promised to their forefathers. This nation was chosen by God to be a special nation, a holy nation:

***See, I have taught you decrees and laws as the LORD my God commanded me, so that you may follow them in the land you are entering to take possession of it.***

Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the LORD our God is near us whenever we pray to him? And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today? Deuteronomy 4:5-8 (NIV)

***For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession.*** Deuteronomy 7:5 (NIV)

***"You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he.*** Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me. I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from me there is no savior. I have revealed and saved and proclaimed — I, and not some foreign god among you. ***You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "that I am God.*** Isaiah 43:10-12 (NIV)

After Israel was rescued from slavery in Egypt and they were wondering in the wilderness on the way to the Promised Land, God promised them that he would bless them in the land if they worshipped and obeyed him. If they rebelled, then they would be removed from the land and scattered all over the earth.

However, if you do not obey the LORD your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and over-

take you...

Then the LORD will scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other. There you will worship other gods — gods of wood and stone, which neither you nor your fathers have known.

Among those nations you will find no repose, no resting place for the sole of your foot. There the LORD will give you an anxious mind, eyes weary with longing, and a despairing heart. You will live in constant suspense, filled with dread both night and day, never sure of your life. In the morning you will say, "If only it were evening!" and in the evening, "If only it were morning!" — because of the terror that will fill your hearts and the sights that your eyes will see. (Deuteronomy 28:15,64-68 NIV)

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their offspring were given eternal promises but the children of Israel were given a conditional promise. The promise of the land and the blessings were dependent on their faithfulness and the history of this nation shows us their failures of faith. There were many individuals who were faithful such as Joshua, Samuel, David, Daniel, and the prophets. Elijah was told that there were 7,000 who had not bowed the

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knee to the idol, Baal, but over the time period from Moses (1,500 B.C.) until the Babylonian captivity (586 B.C.), most of the people were faithless and idolatrous. Finally God punished them according to the prophecy given in Deuteronomy 28.

The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. But they mocked God's messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the LORD was aroused against his people and there was no remedy.

He brought up against them the king of the Babylonians, who killed their young men with the sword in the sanctuary, and spared neither young man nor young woman, old man or aged.

God handed all of them over to Nebuchadnezzar. They set fire to God's temple and broke down the wall of Jerusalem; they burned all the palaces and destroyed everything of value there.

***He carried into exile to Babylon the remnant, who escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and his***

***sons until the kingdom of Persia came to power.***

The land enjoyed its sabbath rests; all the time of its desolation it rested, until the seventy years were completed in fulfillment of the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah.

2 Chronicles 36:15-21 (NIV)

Although Judah and Jerusalem including the Temple were destroyed and the people taken into captivity, restoration was promised after 70 years. The temple was rebuilt and many captives returned to Judah and Jerusalem although many remained in "diaspora" that is they remained scattered and dispersed to the lands of their captors.

When Jesus came more than 500 years after this time, Israel did not accept their Messiah. Because of their unbelief and unrepentant hearts, they were again scattered from Judah and Jerusalem. In 70 A.D. the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the temple. From that time until less than 100 years ago, the Jews have not had a homeland. They have been scattered to every place on earth but there are promises and prophecies that some day they will return to their land and be a nation again:

"For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land (Ezekiel

36:24-29 (NIV)

'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land. I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. Ezekiel 37:18-28 (NIV)

There is no other nation in the history of mankind that has been given the law and covenants of God, who have received and preserved the writings inspired by God, but then, because of disobedience, were scattered to all places on earth just as the prophecies foretold. And there is no other nation that has been re-gathered to their ancient homeland as we see happening now.

After 2,000 years there is a nation of Israel, descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who are being re-gathered as one nation again in their homeland. This is a one-of-a-kind nation. But even more amazing—all of this was prophesied in the writings that they have carefully preserved over more than 2,000 years.

***Israel is God's witness that he is God. What was prophesied in the Bible concerning this nation is happening now. What God has told us is true.***

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## The Most Important Witness

The most important witness that God exists and that he is the author of the Bible is the changed lives of people who believe and serve the Almighty Creator. Just as the nation of Israel was to be a light, that is a model nation, to the rest of the world, the followers of Jesus who love and obey God just as Jesus does, are a light and a witness of God's existence, his truth, his love, and his purpose.

Examples of this change that the word of God brings to those who listen are numerous in the Bible. The disciples of Jesus became apostles when they were sent to bear witness of his resurrection. The group of people who fled when Jesus was led away to his crucifixion changed to people who were not afraid to face death and imprisonment for the sake of his name. Paul reminds the believers in Corinth that they were not the same people that they had been before they had believed the gospel message:

Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit

the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11 NIV)

Jesus tells us that men will know his disciples by the love they have one for another:

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:34-35 NIV)

One of the highest criticisms of atheists concerning religion is the negative impact of religion on mankind including wars and violence, etc. There is some truth in this charge. Jesus, himself, said that there would be strife, even in families, because of him. Those who do not know him and do not follow him would not tolerate those who do follow him.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. (Matthew 5:16 KJV)

Psalms 19 not only tells us that the heavens and skies declare the existence of God, but it also tells us that the word of God changes people who listen to it. The ultimate evidence that God has inspired the Bible, then, is the impact that it has on those who read it, listen to it, and take its words to heart:

The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul;  
The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;  
The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;  
The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;  
The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;  
The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.  
More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold;  
Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.  
Moreover by them Your servant is warned,  
And in keeping them there is great reward.  
(Psalm 19:7-11, NKJV)

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If you missed the recent Learn to Read the Bible Effectively Seminar

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there is still an opportunity to learn about these exciting and uplifting Bible teachings in our informal follow-up sessions

**July 10th thru August 28th**

*(See page 3 for details)*

## Daily Bible Readings for July, August and September

*Read the Entire Bible in One Year*

JULY			AUGUST			SEPTEMBER		
DAY	Old Test	NewTest/Psa	DAY	Old Test	NewTest/Psa	DAY	Old Test	NewTest/Psa
1	II Sam 15, 16	II Corinth 13	1	Isaiah 49, 50	John 1	1	II King 14, 15	Psalm 97
2	II Sam 17, 18	Psalm 74	2	Isaiah 51, 52	John 2	2	II King 16, 17	I Thess 1
3	II Sam 19, 20	Galatians 1	3	Isaiah 53, 54	John 3	3	II King 18, 19	i Thess 2
4	II Sam 21, 22	Galatians 2	4	Isaiah 55, 56	John 4	4	II King 20, 21	I Thess 3
5	II Sam 23, 24	Galatians 3	5	Isaiah 57, 58	Psalm 85	5	II King 22, 23	I Thess 4
6	Song Sol 1-3	Galatians 4	6	Isaiah 59, 60	Psalm 86	6	II King 24, 25	I Thess 5
7	Song Sal 4-6	Galatians 5	7	Isaiah 61, 62	John 5	7	Jonah 1-4	Psalm 98
8	Song Sol 7, 8	Galatians 6	8	Isaiah 63, 64	John 6	8	Micah 1-3	Psalm 99
9	Isaiah 1, 2	Psalm 75	9	Isaiah 65, 66	John 7	9	Micah 4, 5	Psalm 100, 101
10	Isaiah 3, 4	Psalm 76	10	I King 1, 2	Psalm 87, 88	10	Micah 6, 7	II Thess 1
11	Isaiah 5, 6	Ephesians 1	11	I King 3, 4	John 8	11	Nahum 1-3	II Thess 2
12	Isaiah 7, 8	Ephesians 2	12	I King 5, 6	John 9	12	I Chron 1, 2	II Thess 3
13	Isaiah 9, 10	Ephesians 3	13	I King 7, 8	Psalm 89	13	I Chron 3, 4	Psalm 102
14	Isaiah 11, 12	Ephesians 4	14	I King 9, 10	John 10	14	I Chron 5, 6	Psalm 103
15	Isaiah 13, 14	Ephesians 5	15	I King 11, 12	John 11	15	I Chron 7, 8	Psalm 104
16	Isaiah 15-17	Ephesians 6	16	I King 13, 14	John 12	16	I Chron 9, 10	I Timothy 1
17	Isaiah 18-20	Psalm 77	17	I King 15, 16	Psalm 90	17	I Chron 11, 12	I Timothy 2
18	Isaiah 21, 22	Psalm 78	18	I King 17, 18	John 13	18	I Chron 13, 14	I Timothy 3
19	Isaiah 23, 24	Psalm 79	19	I King 19, 20	John 14	19	i Chron 15, 16	I Timothy 4
20	Isaiah 25, 26	Philippians 1	20	I King 21, 22	Psalm 91	20	I Chron 17, 18	I Timothy 5
21	Isaiah 27, 28	Philippians 2	21	Joel 1, 2, 3	John 15	21	I Chron 19, 20	I Timothy 6
22	Isaiah 29, 30	Philippians 3	22	Amos 1-3	John 16	22	I Chron 21, 22	Psalm 105
23	Isaiah 31, 32	Philippians 4	23	Amos 4-6	John 17	23	I Chron 23, 24	Psalm 106
24	Isaiah 33, 34	Psalm 80	24	Amos 7-9	Psalm 92	24	I Chron 25, 26	Psalm 107
25	Isaiah 35, 36	Colossians 1	25	Obad, II King 1	John 18	25	I Chron 27, 28	II Timothy 1
26	Isaiah 37, 38	Colossians 2	26	II King 2, 3	John 19	26	I Chron 29 Hos I	II Timothy 2
27	Isaiah 39, 40	Colossians 3	27	II King 4, 5	Psalm 93, 94	27	Hosea 2-4	II Timothy 3
28	Isaiah 41, 42	Colossians 4	28	II King 6, 7	John 20	28	Hosea 5, 6	II Timothy 4
29	Isaiah 43, 44	Psalm 81	29	II King 8, 9	John 21	29	Hosea 7, 8	Psalm 108
30	Isaiah 45, 46	Psalm 82, 83	30	II King 10, 11	Psalm 95	30	Hosea 9, 10	Psalm 109
31	Isaiah 47, 48	Psalm 84	31	II King 12, 13	Psalm 96	31		