

Chapter 2 The Bible

There are different books that many separate religions use. There is the Bible that is considered by most Christians to be God's Word. The Old Testament is the Bible of the Jews. The Book of Mormon is the book that the Latter-day Saints use and believe to be inspired. Then there is the Apocrypha, which are the fourteen books of the Septuagaint that are included in the Vulgate of the Catholic Church. (Protestants consider these uncanonical). There is the Koran, which is the sacred text of Islam. And, there are writings that are considered very important to Eastern religions, and even writings that are considered to be "Bibles" to those who openly oppose the God of Heaven.

In this chapter we will go over all that pertains to the Bible. In the next chapters, we will cover the other books, such as the Book of Mormon, and the Koran, in the places each fit in history.

The Bible is a Book that is either the most important book in the entire world, or it is just one of many books that we have that are "good books". If, as I firmly believe, the God of Heaven is the true God, and this is His Book, then think of the importance of this Book. To get this into perspective, we need to look at what it means to God.

We can't put ourselves into God's thinking, as it is so vastly superior to ours, but let's put it in our own terms. Imagine having children that you aren't going to be able to raise yourself. Imagine that your children couldn't even call you on the phone. And yet, you could make sure that there was something written for them. Wouldn't it be vital for your children to have something written from you or about you? Wouldn't you make sure that, even if you didn't write everything yourself, these writings were just what you wanted your children to know?

Now, think about this: These children could be with you someday, but there are a few conditions and requirements. Also, imagine that there is someone who is your enemy, who is going to have some access to your children. He doesn't want them to be with you. Doesn't this make it even more important to have a written guide for life to show your children how to get to you and how to stay away from the enemy? Is there any possibility that you wouldn't make absolutely certain that they would have a way to know all you want them to know?

If there were a few conditions your children need to meet to be with you someday, there is no way you wouldn't make positively sure that your children have a way to know these conditions! Of course you would make it crystal clear! Think about it! God has some requirements of us; therefore He is going to make sure we know what they are! Satan is indeed out there, so God is going to let us know things about him so that we can better understand his tricks. And, God is

certainly going to make sure we know that we can rely on Him to show us how to overcome Satan.

Perhaps you have children or you remember your childhood. Parents are not going to punish their children if the children haven't known what was wrong. The parents are going to (hopefully) train their children to know right and wrong, what is dangerous, and what makes a good, loving and happy life. The God of Heaven would absolutely not do less than that!

Since He is anxious to have us with Him someday, He would not leave us without a way to know how to get there! Otherwise, it would be a little like having no compass, or maps, (ever) or road signs, and someone saying that we must drive from San Francisco to Chicago, and our eternal lives depend upon it. What are the chances that we would find Chicago? Not very good. God gave us the Bible as our map to Him. There is no chance at all that He would not have done this. If He is as real as I believe He is, there is NO chance that He would leave us without a Bible

Of course, you might say that there have been millions of people that have not known about the Scriptures as far back as the time of Moses. What about them? Doesn't God love them as much as anyone? It is a certainty that God loves each one of us the same. The fact that there have been so many without the Scriptures does not negate what was just stated! **14 Real Myths and False Realities**

There have certainly been people who have had very good hearts, but no knowledge all throughout history. God judges the heart, and Acts 17:30 tells us: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent."

For those who have heard of a Bible; for those who have searched, God has made a way possible to know His ways and His will. The Bible is there for the simplest person to gain truth, and for those who want to dig deeper into it. And we are living in a wonderful time where we have more literacy and availability of knowledge than at any other time.

The Bible gives us history; stories about people who have loved God, and those who haven't. It tells us how to live the best life possible, and what will happen in the future. It tells us about what happened when Jesus was here, and it contains love stories. It also tells us about Satan, and how God and sin cannot mix. It even has one part that God wrote Himself, which are the Ten Commandments. I believe that we need to put that in perspective to the importance it plays to God.

Let's now look at how the Bible was written, how it's been preserved, and the accuracy of it. To understand the accuracy of the Bible, we will start with prophecy, and archaeology, as these items can be proven out. Now, Satan knows the prophecies of the Bible, and has utilized these in his work. However, when we are looking for God's Word, we expect the prophecies to be 100% accurate, since God knows the end from the beginning. Most of the Biblical prophecies have been fulfilled; we are on this side of history of all but a few.

With all the historical and archaeological evidence we have, the fulfillment of many, many prophecies are known to us, and they have turned out EXACTLY as the Bible said they would. Every minor, and every major prophecy, has been 100%. Isaiah 14:24 says: "The Lord of Hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass, and as I have purposed, so shall it stand." In Amos 3:7, the Bible says: "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." When God tells us what will happen, we can count on it totally.

As an example of one of the lesser-known prophecies, take the city of Tyre, or Tyrus, as it was also called. Apparently, it was a great city, a major trading seaport. But, Ezekiel 26:3-5 says: "I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up. And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea; for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God: and it shall become a spoil to the nations."

The seaport of Tyre is totally gone. Imagine having a city, perhaps like Seattle, wiped from the map. This prophecy was given around 590 BC when Tyre was at its height. However, soon after this prophecy was made, Nebuchadnezzar gave orders for his Babylonian army to destroy Tyre, which they did. It lay in ruins for 250 years, but in 332 BC, Alexander the Great attacked a small city built on an island just off the coast where Tyre once stood.

He took the ruins of Tyre and pushed them into the sea to build a causeway out to that island city. ¹ I have seen a picture of this causeway. It consists of only flat rocks now, where there are fishermen's nets laid on them, exactly as the Bible foretold.

In the next chapters you will learn who was in Babylon. But, let's just go over the prophecy about the end of Babylon. It was a magnificent city; its hanging gardens were considered one of the Seven Wonders of the World. The River Euphrates ran through it, which provided a constant source of water. There are scholars who believe that its food supplies would have fed the inhabitants for twenty years! Over two hundred temples were in it, and it was a center for education, art,

commerce, and international trade. The walls were very thick; it was considered impregnable. You can imagine that the population was immense.

But, in 595 BC, when Babylon was also at its height, the prophet Jeremiah said in Jeremiah 51:37 "And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwellingplace for dragons, an astonishment, and an hissing, without an **Real Myths and False Realities 15**

inhabitant." (The use of dragon here is the Hebrew "tanniym", which is "a marine or land monster, i.e. sea-serpent or jackal". Obviously, jackal fits since this area was not in the sea). Well, General Cyrus of Persia attacked the city fifty-six years later, and overthrew it. It became a "heap"; nobody has lived there since.²

The Prophet Daniel, in the Book by his name, related prophecies from dreams that he and the King had. These dreams foretold the powers that would rule from his time on. Daniel was in Babylon for seventy years, (which was also fulfillment of prophecy). These prophecies also told that Babylon would be conquered by Medo-Persia in 538 BC Then the Medes & Persians would be conquered by Greece in 331 BC, who would be overtaken by Rome in 168 BC. The prophecy then showed that Rome would not be conquered, but would separate into divisions with no central king governing them. This is exactly what happened.

There are 26 different prophecies just concerning Jesus' coming the first time in the Old Testament. Many of these were concerning specific things. Not just His birth, and where He would be born and when, but about His death also. One of these is Psalm 22: "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me, ...I am poured out like water, And all My bones are out of joint...dogs have surrounded Me; The assembly of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet...They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots." (NKJV) No wonder that Paul was able to convince many Jews "and that publicly, [sic] shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ." Acts 18:28

It is said that the probability of even 17 predictions in the Old Testament of Jesus, coming true, would be 1 in 480 billion x 1 billion x 1 trillion.³ Just this should give you some idea of the probability of fulfillment of the hundreds of prophecies we know that have come true accurately, without Divine foresight.

Of course, Jesus gave many prophecies during his three and-a-half year ministry. Some were for the end of time, with at least twelve warnings just in Matthew 24. These warnings are what to look for, to know that we are living in the last days on earth before Jesus comes again.

Some of His prophecies were for certain people. One of these was about the

destruction of Jerusalem, which happened in AD 70. Matthew 24:2 says: "...Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down." (NKJV) Luke 19:43 & 44 says: "For the days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side. And level you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation." (NKJV)

God had even given a prophesy of this in Micah 3:12 "Therefore because of you Zion shall be plowed like a field, Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins, And the mountain of the temple Like the bare hills of the forest." (NKJV)

In AD 70, the Roman army advanced upon Jerusalem. However, shortly after they had surrounded the city, word came that the Emperor had died, and they retreated back to Rome. Now, Jesus had told His followers in Matthew 24 both about the destruction of Jerusalem and about the end of time. Regarding the destruction of Jerusalem, He told them that when they saw the "abomination of desolation" spoken of by Daniel, standing in the "holy place" (which was the area that surrounded the city where the priests had their gardens), that they were to flee immediately to the mountains.

When the Christians, who were in Jerusalem, saw the Roman army come, stand in the "holy place", and then retreat, they realized that this was the time Jesus had spoken of. From all reports, not even one Christian died. They did as Jesus had told them; they immediately left and were saved.

Unfortunately, when the army came again, the Jewish people in the city had no escape. This was a time of year when they were having many visitors to Jerusalem, and it is estimated that there were around one **16 Real Myths and False Realities**

million people in Jerusalem. Now, Jerusalem was a wonderful city with good walls and their beautiful temple. The people inside thought they would be safe, but they weren't.

The food supplies were quickly used up because of all the visitors. Some people were so hungry, they went outside the city at night to eat grass, where some were captured and killed.

When the Roman army took the city, the General told them to preserve the temple. It was a magnificent temple, and the General felt that it should not be destroyed. However, many people had gone inside the temple believing that it would be a safe haven for them. The soldiers, concerned for their own safety

upon entering, threw lighted torches into the temple to smoke the people out. What they didn't realize was that the temple had beautiful woods and curtains inside, and these caught fire.

As they burned, the incredible amount of gold inside the temple started to melt. As the soldiers saw gold running outside in small trickles, they forgot the General's command, and thought only of the gold. The poor people inside died, but the soldiers now only wanted that gold. The temple was totally destroyed by people trying to get at it.

When the siege was over, not only did not one stone remain upon the other, as Jesus said, but the prophecy in Micah was fulfilled also. People plowed through the dirt where the temple had been, trying to get at the remaining little bits of gold. What God says comes true!

In the chapters on history, there are also prophecies in the Bible we will examine at the time they are fulfilled. Some prophecies were fulfilled in a short time, like certain times of drought, in the days of Joseph and also Elijah. Then, there were prophecies that happened hundreds of years later. I would like to take every single prophecy and show the fulfillment. - Perhaps that would be a good choice for another book. We don't have space here to do that, but I challenge anyone to find even one prophecy in the Bible, of which we know the outcome, and show it to be wrong. (See Appendix A)

What about other findings that uphold writings in the Bible? In 1834, the principal city of the Hittites was found in northern Turkey. This city was mentioned 48 times in the Old Testament. In the finding of the Rosetta Stone, Egyptian hieroglyphics were at last able to be discerned.

The cities of Nimrud and Nineveh were found with a black obelisk of King Shalmaneser III who was mentioned in 2 Kings 17:3 and 18:9. (Remember the word "obelisk" because you will learn of its origin later). On the second row of reliefs is the name Jehu, whom you will find in 1 Kings 19:16. When they uncovered the palace of Nineveh, there were inscriptions about the fourteenth year of the reign of King Hezekiah. He is mentioned many times in the Old Testament.⁴

In 1977 a tablet of trade was discovered from diggings at the ancient city of Ebla that had references to Sodom and Gomorrah. Also, in Ebla, names were found on tablets of Abraham, Ishmael, Israel, and Esau.⁵ Even the finding of the magnificent tomb of Tutankhamun proves that there were gold, silver, bronze, and precious stones mentioned in the Bible that cannot be located in the Middle East today.

The Moabite Stone was discovered in 1868 in Jordan, and this confirms the Moabite attacks against Israel that you can read about in 2 Kings 1 & 3. The Lachish Letters found in 1932-38 (24 miles north of Beersheba), chronicle the attack of Jerusalem in 586 BC by Nebuchadnezzar.

Isaiah 20:1 says: "In the year that Tartan came to Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him, and he fought against Ashdod and took it..." (NKJV) Skeptics used to use this as a reason to discount the Bible, believing that ancient records didn't mention Sargon. However, people have now found his palace in Khorsabad, so this is another confirmation.

In the area of Shechem, where the Bible says Abraham built an altar to God, it has been found that there was an organized community which existed there during Abraham's time, nearly 4,000 years ago. During the summer of 1996, archaeologists digging in Israel found a stone tablet with a Phoenician inscription

Real Myths and False Realities 17

that had the name of the city of Ekron, mentioned in 1 Samuel, where the Philistines took the Ark of the Covenant after capturing it from the Israelites.

Also, during this same summer, archaeologists found a wine jug at Masada that has the name of King Herod on it. Even an ivory pomegranate was found that had "Holy to the priests, belonging to the temple of Yahweh" on it. It is believed that this may have come from Solomon's incredible temple.⁶

In Tel Dan in 1993, a piece of stone was found that said "King of Israel" and "House of David" on it. In Lake Hula, just north of the Golan Heights, there is evidence of a Great Flood.⁷ The Indians of North America and at least Central America have legends also of a great flood.

Archaeology has proven the Bible over and over. Of course, one of the greatest finds of all time has been the Dead Sea Scrolls, which are original copies of the Old Testament text found in 1947-48. Jewish scholars around 1000 AD took great pains to make sure that any corruptness in the Old Testament was eliminated. They were called Massoretes. Their Old Testament is called the Masoretic text and has been considered the litmus test for accuracy of the Scriptures. When the Dead Sea Scrolls were found, the Masoretic text was validated as correct.

While the Dead Sea Scrolls have some small differences, there are no differences in doctrine. All of the authorities on the Dead Sea Scrolls that I have heard or read agree that, for all intents and purposes, the Dead Sea Scrolls are accurate to the original words of the King James Bible that we have today.⁸

In fact, when authorities went over the book of Isaiah, which has “thousands of words and phrases...” [with only 13 small variations on the text] - “none of which significantly affect the meaning of any passage”⁹ were found. Imagine that over the years, from about 72 AD when they were placed in the caves, until 1948, only thirteen minor variations were found. With all of the copying of the Bible's original words can there be any other explanation except divine intervention?

In his excellent book *The Signature of God*, Grant Jeffrey quotes Dr. J.O. Kinnaman, who said: "Of the hundreds of thousands of artifacts found by the archaeologists, not one has ever been discovered that contradicts or denies one word, phrase, clause, or sentence of the Bible, but always confirms and verifies the facts of the biblical record."

The God who created the Universe, the God who created you and me, is certainly powerful enough to keep a BOOK the way He wants it! If He can make man from the dust, speak the sun, moon, vegetation and animals into existence, it is not a difficult thing for Him to preserve the book He wants for us to have.

We have already discussed how very important the Bible is to God, not just to us, and He certainly would make sure that we could have access to the original words of the Bible. Translations may vary, but you can research back and find that the original words, from which the King James Version was translated, are correct.

Some say that men wrote the Bible, so it cannot be dependable. Men, with one exception, wrote the Bible. God Himself wrote the Ten Commandments. However, men wrote all of the religious books in question, and their philosophies. How many times have any of us seen best sellers that are considered incredible works and true? Great honor is given them. Yet, people question just about everything about the Bible.

We are told, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 1 Timothy 3:16. These men wrote from inspiration of God; and only these writings were included in the Bible. Other works have claimed to be inspired by God, but the test is whether they are in concert with the Bible. Isaiah 8:20 says: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." 18 **Real Myths and False Realities**

The fact is that 40 authors, who wrote it over almost sixteen hundred years, from 1500 BC to about 100 AD, wrote the Bible. Even though the authors spanned such a great amount of time, and had very different lives, culturally and scholastically, there are no books of the Bible that contradict any other. This is a very important fact in looking at this as God's Word. And, whether you look for

simple truths, or dig down for deeper knowledge, one won't disagree with the other.

(We will go over the challenges to this later in the chapter).

There was a time before the flood, when people lived such long lives, (many over 900 years), they didn't have the same need for written material as those who lived after the flood. The spans of life decreased dramatically after the flood to about where we are now in just a matter of 8 or 9 generations.

After the flood, while Noah still lived a long time, most people did not. People many generations down from Noah died prior to the time that Noah passed away. In fact, Abraham, who was the tenth generation from Noah, was about 55 years old when Noah died. What God wanted people to know was probably handed down very accurately until sometime after Joseph died. Joseph was Abraham's great-grandson.

After Joseph's sons died, (who were 14 generations after Noah), it began to be difficult to keep records straight, as far as what was of God and what He wanted of His people. His people, the Children of Israel, Israelites, (or Jews after the Exodus), were made slaves of the Egyptian people, and lived 430 years in Egypt altogether.

It is difficult, over time, not to have some confusion enter into anything we learn if there is nothing written down, especially of people who are living among another culture. Have you ever learned something in school and then tried to keep it all straight afterward without any written references? Now, imagine doing this in another country. This was pretty much what the Israelites faced.

Even imagining such a thing can help us to understand the dilemma these people faced, when trying to keep the ways of God straight, in their worship and their minds. There were those, such as Moses' family, who more closely kept God's ways than others. But, it must have been difficult for all.

During the times that God and Moses met on Mt. Sinai, God had Moses write everything in great detail. But, He also gave Moses the history of things prior to his time so that there would be knowledge of how the world began, and what all had happened up to Moses' time. This also shows the credibility of God's Word, since the Bible would have had to be initiated when it became necessary to have written instructions. The time that this fits is while the Children of Israel were between Egypt and Canaan, near the beginning of their journey. The Bible fits this time exactly, and it's the only book that does.

Moses wrote Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Psalms

90. Most of the other Books bear the name of the person who wrote them. The New Testament mentions Moses writing in Luke 24:27. Jesus said that Moses wrote about him (John 5:46). Jesus quotes Isaiah in Matthew 13:14-15, and He talks of Daniel's writings in Matthew 24:15.

The early Bible was written on rolls of what was called papyrus and, of course, it was done by hand. Papyrus is a plant, (*Cyperus papyrus*). Egyptians discovered that if they laid two thin sheets of its pith at right angles to each other and beat them, this would form a sheet on which they could write. The pens were reed brushes, or reeds cut to make sharp points, and the ink was made from soot, gum and water.

In looking at the accuracy of the Bible, let's take into consideration also the vast knowledge given to the Children of Israel, during their search for Canaan. The Egyptian medical "experts" of the time used many different types of excrement, both animal and human, for "cures". Can you imagine using feces on a wound to make it "heal"?

God gave Moses many instructions regarding the proper way to treat disease, wounds, bury the dead, etc., using what they had available in their day. We are used to modern medicine, but the things **Real Myths and False Realities**
19

mentioned in the Bible have only come into use in about the last one hundred years! How could Moses have known these things without Divine guidance? He would have continued with what he had known, otherwise.

There were about 400 years between the time the last of the Old Testament was written and the time the first of the New Testament was written. That is called the "period of silence". However, Satan used this time to try to distort the Bible. The first example was about the third century BC, during the friendliness between the Greeks and the Jews during the reign of Alexander the Great.

The Greeks asked the Jews to send some of their best scholars to Alexandria to teach the Greeks about the ways of the Jews, and they, in turn, would share their knowledge of philosophies and sciences. The Greeks assured the Jews that their standards would not be compromised.

Many Jewish scholars went to train at Alexandria, and 70-72 of the best went to the island of Pharos to translate the Old Testament from the Hebrew text into Greek, which we know as the Septuagint. The problem was that because of the Greek philosophies these scholars had already learned, many errors were introduced into this translation.

These scholars believed they had the right to add what they felt was important to Scripture. However, God has given strict instruction that nothing is to be added or subtracted from it. (Deuteronomy 4:2, 12:32, Rev. 22:18). The scholars may have learned some good and interesting things, but it was not a part of inspired Scripture. Philosophy, good or bad was not to be part of it.

The scholars at Pharos didn't just add a word here or there, they added fourteen books! Besides some other words and verses they added to and changed, they added whole books! This is almost beyond belief! There are some other books of information regarding kings, etc. mentioned in the Bible. That doesn't mean that they were inspired or were supposed to be in the Bible. God clearly instructed those who wrote what was to be part of the Inspired Text.

How do we know that these 14 books and additions were not inspired? Evidence strongly suggests that there are portions of these additions that prove pagan influence, and are contradictory to the rest of the Bible. When all of the other areas are in concert, and there are specific warnings not to add or take from Scripture, and not to combine with paganism, one can be clear that these were not inspired. These were also not a part of Scripture until during this time when scholars were just supposed to be translating the Scriptures into Greek.

If people did not heed the warning not to add to, or remove from the Scriptures, books such as the Septuagint became available. But, God made sure that we could know what happened, so that we have the information that some works were not inspired. Psalm 12:6 & 7 say: "The words of the Lord are pure words, like silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. You shall keep them, O Lord, You shall preserve them from this generation forever." (NKJV) God has preserved them; He has kept a way for us to know and understand His Word and His Will. They are pure words, "a lamp unto my feet and a light to my path". Psalm 119:105 (NKJV)

There was something else that happened to the scholars in Alexandria. It was that over the course of their studies, they began to feel superior to other Jews because of their training. They wore different clothes than the others, and when they went back to their hometowns, they took over much of the training due to their "haughty" attitudes.

They introduced Hellenistic teachings into Jewish schools, and formed an educational aristocracy called the Sanhedrin, something that was certainly not in the simple teachings the Jews had previously. Courses in culture and philosophy were introduced. Had these been void of pagan influence, the education wouldn't have been "bad". But, there were many pagan ideas. Plus the fact is, over time more emphasis was placed on these than the Word of God. Realize too, that the Word that some of them were using was now the Septuagint, which was

contaminated scripture anyway. Of course, God was not about 20 Real Myths and False Realities

to let all Scripture be corrupted, and the pure text was kept intact. Many Jews would not use the Septuagint.

Later, after Christ, some of the people who continued their studies in Alexandria considered themselves superior in intellect. They started what became known as Gnosticism. Among their false beliefs, the most important was that these people believed in Christ, but as noncorporeal. Which means they didn't believe Jesus came in the flesh (Biblical description of an antichrist).

They took the things the Jews had learned from the Greeks, the parts of the Christian message they felt was great wisdom, and the proud attitude seen in many members of the Sanhedrin. They felt, (remember how Satan makes his ways to seem superior intellectually) that the true Christian message, filled with love and humbleness, was for the simple-minded. They also believed salvation was for only a few, those whose "faith" enabled them to transcend matter. This was certainly not the message of God!

Many people do not realize that there had come to be divisions among the Jewish people, almost like a small version of the divisions we have today in Christianity. One division, the Essenes, was also divided within their sect. The ones that retained the pure beliefs of the Jews were people who felt that their real purpose in life was to make exact copies of the Bible to keep it pure. They had buildings dedicated solely to this task.

The other group had taken on the Greek influence and other pagan traditions more than any other division of Judaism. It appears that this group was the one that developed the Cabala, (which we will go over later). I believe that Satan tried to corrupt all Essenes, so that the people who were trying the hardest to be accurate with copying the Old Testament would distort it.

Perhaps Satan realized that he couldn't get to all Essenes, so decided to destroy those who wouldn't go along with his plans. Whether this is true or not, in AD 71, just a year after the destruction of Jerusalem, the Roman army advanced upon these people. The Essenes took their scrolls, wrapped them, and put them in earthen jars. They hid many of these jars in caves, then took the rest and escaped to Masada.

Now, Masada was quite a fortress, set upon the top of a large rock, overlooking the Dead Sea. In a picture, it almost looks like a shorter, bigger version of the Devils Tower Monument in Utah. (Quite a comparison, considering the name, but

that is what it looked like to me).

The people felt that Masada was very safe, and they would be back to collect their jars from the caves. But they never did. They apparently had very good reserves of food and water in Masada, but the siege continued for two years. Finally, the Roman army decided they had waited long enough. They were tired and wanted this standoff ended. So, they built an earthen ramp up the side of this rock wall so that they could overtake the Essenes.

When these poor people realized that there was no escape for them, they realized they had two choices: End their own lives, or be subject to torture by the Romans. The night before the Romans marched up their finished ramp into Masada, about 960 people quietly committed suicide. When the Roman army reached the top, it was a hollow victory. Not one person remained alive.

But, the scrolls remained in their earthen vessels until 1947-48 when they were found and proven to be not only scripture but coincided almost exactly to the Masoretic text. This is the great archaeological find that became known as the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Satan did not stop trying to corrupt God's word with just the Septuagint, or trying to corrupt all Essenes. Later, after the close of the New Testament, there were other versions written with bias and unauthorized latitude. There were Bibles written by Justin Martyr, Clement, and Origen, all of which combined Christianity with paganism. Tatian, Clement, and then Origen studied down-line from Justin. (You will learn that he was not someone who could or can be considered credible when it comes to doctrine). **Real Myths and False Realities 21**

They preached and wrote from Justin's writings and his Bible. Can we consider their Bibles accurate? I think not! Fortunately, however, we have enough copies of the original Greek to discern the differences.

Origen belonged to a group called Arians, (not to be confused in any way with the Aryan Nation groups, who take that name due to the Nazi meaning of Caucasian gentile, especially of Nordic origin). They believed that Jesus was the highest created being, but He was not God. Of the religions that exist today, the Unitarians and Jehovah's Witnesses believe this.

Constantine, Emperor during the early 4th Century A. D., claimed to be a Christian. He was, in fact, a sun-worshipper who wanted many compromises with Christianity. (You will read more about him later, also). One of the church leaders at that time was Eusebius. He was one who had studied and followed the Christianity of Origen, not the Christianity of the true Apostles. He also had some

relation to Gnosticism.

Therefore, when Constantine requested Eusebius to make him 50 Bibles, naturally, he chose what he had followed already, the Bible of Origin. Eusebius, who later was called Saint Jerome, or simply Jerome, made this translation, called the Latin Vulgate. This was made up of the Greek Septuagint and Origin's New Testament, although the Septuagint he used was one that had been translated back to Hebrew.

Although the Latin Vulgate has been corrected in other areas of error fairly recently in history, the Catholic Church, which was the church to which Constantine, Jerome, etc. belonged, kept the fourteen books called the Apocrypha that had been added to the Septuagint. This is why the Protestant Churches do not consider these books canonical.

The Gnostic influence of Jerome brought the teaching of "original sin" into Catholicism. This was because Gnostics believed that only the spiritual part of man was redeemable, and that due to Adam's sin, it's impossible to keep from sin, even with Divine help. This is not Biblical, but came only from Gnosticism.

After the close of the New Testament, people continued to be painstakingly careful to copy word-for-word. Even during the Dark Ages, when there were not many Bibles to go around, mountain schools in Northern Italy were set up, in hiding, just for this purpose. The main people who did this were the Waldensians. They also taught children to memorize portions of the Bible in the event they were caught and the Bibles were taken from them. This was strictly and carefully taught because the Bible was so very precious to them. I think if they were alive today and could see the availability of Bibles, yet the dust that collects on many, they would be horrified.

The Italic Bible that the Waldensians used had been translated in the second century from Greek to Latin. In 1516, a Dutch scholar and reformer named Desiderius Erasmus translated this Bible back to Greek. Martin Luther took both Erasmus' Bible and the Waldensian Bible to make certain his translation into German was correct. Tyndale used both Bibles also to translate into English. In 1611, fifty-four scholars used the Erasmus and Waldensian Bibles to produce the King James Version. If going through all these hands is a concern, remember again that God is certainly powerful enough to keep things accurate in His Word!

Even though the versions that some of the Reformers had were tainted, there was still enough truth to determine that certain things they had been taught were not according to the Bible. After Reformers became vocal on their findings, people such as Martin Luther came into possession of the correct Bibles. When the Dead Sea Scrolls were found and shown to be the same as the Masoretic

text, it could be proven that the King James Version was indeed translated correctly.

If you wonder about which translations and versions, that have been made since are accurate, get the concordance with the original Hebrew and Greek from which the King James Version was translated. **22 Real Myths and False Realities**

Then you know you have the original words. Compare any words of question to this, and that should be helpful in determining accuracy.

Some people get caught up in Elizabethan English, in which the King James Version was written. That was just the way people spoke in their day. It has nothing to do with accuracy of the Bible, any more than it is necessary to learn and recite in Hebrew or Greek. "You" is just as correct as "Ye" when reading the Bible.

Most of the words of the Hebrew and Greek also have more than one meaning. Most translators used their beliefs in choosing the word to use. That isn't necessarily error. But in a very few texts, one of the correct words, not used, would have done a better job of explaining, than the one used. This is NOT changing the Bible. It is just using another of the correct translation terms that those who translated may not have understood, and we will cover these.

While I believe that some personal latitude was given to many of the authors of the books of the Bible so that their own personalities and observations were reflected, we are given instruction that nothing in Scripture is to be changed. Galatians 1:8 says: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

The Bible does not contradict itself. Some people would challenge that. However, the skeptics that challenge the Bible are usually picking up verses that separately could be contradictory. When looking at the Bible as a whole, these verses are not contradictory at all.

There are also books, tapes and videos out about the accuracy of the Bible. One video, in particular, challenges just about everything.¹⁰ The woman on the tape, Barbara Theiring, Ph.D., has come up with the ideas in the video, and states that there are "no miracles in the New Testament."¹¹

I don't know if she believes there are miracles in the Old Testament, or not. However, she says that the Dead Sea Scrolls contain information that explains

ordinary events that Christians had heretofore believed to be miracles, in the New Testament.

Some of the things she says could be taken as reality, if one is not familiar with the New Testament, and if one questions the validity of Jesus as the Son of God. For instance, apparently the Essene men (those of the sect who copied the Scriptures) were rather monastic in nature. According to Dr. Theiring, these men only procreated to continue their lines.

They had women who were like nuns, and would live with the man one year. If she became pregnant, they were then officially married, but before that the woman was still called a virgin. So, although the Bible says Mary was a virgin when Jesus was conceived, it was only because Joseph was an Essene and these conditions were in place.

At first glance, this might make sense. However, there are several items that aren't taken into consideration with Dr. Theiring's theory. First of all, this takes away Jesus' divinity all together. There are texts throughout the Bible that validate that Jesus is the Son of God.

As mentioned, there are many texts in the Old Testament that look toward Jesus. Jesus is the only One Who fits exactly the prophecies of the Old Testament.

Then, (in the New Testament), Luke 1 tells about the angel talking to Mary, and telling her that she would be the mother of the Son of God. She says: "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" (Verse 34) Now, if she were simply the mistress, so-to-speak, of Joseph, she wouldn't be questioning how she could become pregnant. She wouldn't say, (to an angel who would know better) that she hadn't been with a man if she had. Verse 35 tells that the Holy Spirit would come upon Mary. This isn't a simple-minded understanding of the Scriptures; it's very clear. **Real Myths and False Realities 23**

We are also clearly told in Luke that Mary would be giving birth to the Son of God, not a son of God. We are all children of God, but we are not at all on the same level with Jesus! Matthew 1:18 tells us that Mary "was espoused to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Ghost." Now, if Joseph were a monastic Essene, as Dr. Theiring believes, it wouldn't say "before" they came together.

Mark 1:11 tells us that after John the Baptist baptized Jesus, a dove descended upon Jesus, and the heavens opened, and a voice from heaven said: "Thou art my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." John 1:13 tells us that Jesus was born, "...not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of

God." John 1:1 tells us that "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Throughout the next 10 verses, it is clear that the Word is Jesus.

Hebrews tells us that Jesus has been sitting on the right hand of God, as our High Priest, since His ascension. Jesus cleansed a leper, healed a Centurion's servant, healed Peter's Mother-in-law, and stilled the storm. He called demons from a herd of swine, healed a paralytic, and raised a Ruler's daughter. He healed a woman who had a bleeding problem, healed two blind men, and cured a demon-possessed and mute man. He healed a man's withered hand, fed five thousand at one time, then four thousand at another. He walked on water, turned water to wine, raised Lazarus from the dead, and healed many other people. He even withered a tree that had no fruit. Either these things happened, or they didn't.

There are instances where traditions of the time could explain away happenings that some believed were miracles by just a person. But, these cannot explain away the many texts that tell us that these were indeed miracles. And, they can only be explained away if we put God on our level. But, if we take the Bible as a whole, we can only believe in Jesus and the Father God in Heaven as being infinitely more powerful than we are. God may love us as we are, but He is not on the same level as we are.

If Dr. Theiring's theories were true, Jesus couldn't have created us. Because if He created us, He is powerful enough to heal the sick, raise the dead, and turn water into wine. Why would we look to Him for help, for forgiveness, for anything, if He weren't powerful enough to perform miracles?

Another of Dr. Theiring's theories is that when Jesus was upon the cross, He took some poison offered Him, to end His suffering. This would mean that, in effect, He committed suicide rather than suffer. Although, she says that He only went unconscious, and His disciples were able to awaken Him in the tomb. And then He went and appeared to others, having never actually died.

From the time Adam and Eve sinned, everything sacrificed, every ritual performed, commanded actually by God, looked forward to the cross. Jesus' death was the culmination of all of these things! His death was the victory over sin! He died, and quickly, due to the weight of every sin of all time being heaped upon His innocent shoulders. All this is dismissed with Dr. Theiring's statements. Everything He sacrificed for us is wiped out. Besides this, in Matthew 27:34, we are told that he was offered sour wine mixed with gall, but when he had tasted it, He would NOT drink.

After Jesus' death, a soldier (John 19:34) pierced his side with a spear and out of

it came blood and water. She doesn't explain how He could have lived through this, either, if He was simply unconscious. 1 Corinthians 1:22-25 tells us: "For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

We can't even consider that Jesus was just a "good man" or "prophet", because good men and true prophets don't claim to be the Son of God if they aren't. These things make Jesus to be not only a liar, but blasphemous, if they aren't true! **24 Real Myths and False Realities**

There are many other examples of similar stories that are considered normal events by Dr. Theiring and others. The fact is that just because we generally can't SEE miracles today, many people think they don't exist. These people put God on our level instead of putting Him in the position of the God of Heaven.

He has power to do anything, absolutely anything. The fact that we don't see water turned to wine doesn't mean it didn't happen. Just because we don't see people healed from illness, or death (which the video doesn't address), doesn't mean it didn't happen! Jesus is in a position of having power over death, so He certainly could do those things! There are many people who do have miraculous recoveries today; people who can't believe in miracles simply believe in chance.

In 1978, my children and I were in a terrible accident. We were in a van, stopped, and they were sleeping on a bed in the back of the van. My son was 9 months, and my daughter almost five. Back then, we didn't have the seat-belt laws, and car seat laws, or even knowledge we have today, so they weren't restrained in any way.

An inebriated man driving 65 mph hit us. I had a whiplash so severe; it took a year before I could even walk fast without feeling jarring in my neck. The law of physics would say that my children should have been thrown to the front of the van, possibly out the window! They surely should have had serious injuries. But, the bed broke in two, and they were laid on the floor. My daughter had a slight injury; my son was absolutely fine. No one will ever be able to convince me that we didn't have guardian angels with us, or that this wasn't a real miracle of God.

Anyone who wants to discount the Bible, or God, or Jesus can find something that makes sense to them, but is it real? Do other texts in the Bible disprove what they say? It is important to ask these questions before giving credence to supposed "facts". With some people, if something can't be proven in science, it can't be possible. However, look at all we have learned that wasn't thought to be

possible fifty years ago! The Bible is actually backed by science much, much more than any other "theories". But, if a person doesn't want to see this, they won't.

You can line up a hundred "scholars", and get at least 50 different views on subjects. This doesn't mean they have taken more into consideration than what they want to believe. Most of the "scholars" have been trying to prove what they have been told by a certain religion whether upheld in the Bible or not. The people that really care about what God says, not just what they want to believe, won't try to abuse the meanings of the Bible. They will take the Bible as a whole.

There are other "scholars", who sit around in "seminars" trying to determine, and vote on what they believe Jesus said and what He didn't. (How arrogant!) They claim that they believe in Jesus. But, if they truly believed, they would know that God is powerful enough to keep the Bible as He wants it, and since He doesn't lie, Jesus said what is written! If one of the writers heard a little differently, that shouldn't be a problem as long as the doctrine or idea is not changed.

The Bible has been proven out 100% in archaeology and prophecy. Your real question is whether or not you believe in God. If you believe, truly believe, the Bible is clear and totally believable. But, if you don't believe in God, you have to find ways to discount Him. You have to find ways to discount the proof that upholds the Bible. Anyone can find some things to try to humanize miracles. But, every one of these things will run into other questions when taking the Bible as a whole.

If the skeptics would be honest, they'd admit that if the accuracy of the Bible were in any other book, or the prophecies fulfilled like that in the hands of any "psychic", such books or people would be practically proclaimed to be wonders of the world! Imagine that every time this person made a prediction, it came true. Every time. Talk shows would stumble over each other trying to get the "psychic" on their shows. The tabloids, along with credible news sources, would pay millions to converse with this person.

But, even though every time the Bible prophesied, it came true, people reject it. Because it is the Bible, and Satan wants very much for it to be discredited, millions of people discount it. They look for anything **Real Myths and False Realities 25**

they can to disbelieve it. Even a few churches that previously maintained total trust in the Bible are now denouncing it. Churches can denounce the Bible; many others denounce it, but the fact remains that there is so very much more compelling evidence to uphold the Bible, than any other book. The prophecies

have proven to be 100% true, not just 50%, or 80%, but 100%! Deny it if you want, but these facts are true. And, if these are true, then I believe we can take the rest on faith.

I believe in God by faith, and I believe in His Word by faith, but it is very nice and comforting, to have the confidence to be able to prove the prophecies and uphold the Bible by all the archaeological and historical evidence that there is. Like Jesus, we can confidently say, "It is written".