



# No Ordinary **BOOK**

What's so important about the Bible?  
Where did it come from anyway?

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illustrated by Matt Almy

**BACKGROUND BOOK**

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### Two ways to watch the videos

- Scan the **QR code**
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See visual aids explaining the content

Learn the thinking behind the ancient  
Egyptian religion that is still with us today



# introduction

This book is a quick read for those curious about the Bible. Each chapter touches only briefly on subjects which can be explored to great depth.<sup>1</sup>

It is unlikely this book will convince a person to believe the Bible—that is not its purpose. Rather, it briefly presents spheres of evidence that show the Bible to be a remarkable book.

The uniqueness of the Bible is often declared on its cover—which says, Holy Bible. The word *holy* means “unique” or “one-of-a-kind.” The word *Bible* is Latin and Greek for the word *book*. So in simple terms, the Holy Bible is a unique, one-of-a-kind book.

But what makes it so special? Where did the Bible come from? Is there any way to know if what it says is reliable? What about those who claim it contradicts itself or that it has been changed? Does the Bible say anything to me that is significant? This book is a brief answer to these questions.

The Bible (also called Scripture) speaks with great authority on life, death and life after death. When I quote from the Bible, I’ll give the location of the quote. It will look like this:

*For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.* *Romans 15:4 NASB*

The words **Bible**, **Word** and **Scripture**  
all refer to the same book.

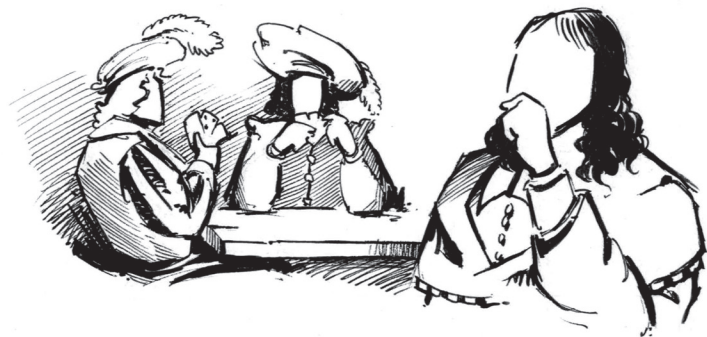
# what are the odds?

## — Statistical Evidence —

Born in 1623, Blaise Pascal was a man who believed the Bible was true. As a brilliant mathematician, his belief was not arbitrary—he had done the numbers.

At a young age, Pascal's father noted his superb mind and set about schooling him in math and science. His astounding aptitude in these fields shone so brightly that even as a teenager, other leading scientists of his day were amazed by his discoveries.

One of his friends, curious about gambling problems, prompted Pascal to investigate the odds of winning a game. His resulting mathematical formulas laid the foundations for what we now call Probability Theory.



Pascal only lived 39 years, but in his short life he developed an interest in the Holy Bible. From his written works it seems he turned his mathematical brain to determining the odds of the Bible being true.<sup>2</sup> You don't need to be a Pascal to consider the odds for yourself.

Here is one example:

About 40 men wrote the Bible. They were called prophets because they often wrote about the future. These men came from every imaginable walk of life and included kings, military generals, statesmen, scholars, peasants, philosophers, shepherds, poets, fishermen, a prime minister, a doctor, a tax collector, to name just a few. Their writing occurred on three continents—Asia, Africa and Europe—with venues as diverse as palaces and dungeons, deserts and cities. They wrote during war and peace, sometimes in grief, other times in joy.

The prophets wrote in three languages—Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek—two languages from the east and one from the west. In all, they recorded 66 books, written across a span of 1500 years. Compiled into one volume, these books constitute the Bible.

Although many of these 40 writers never knew each other, and though their subjects included hundreds of controversial topics, what they recorded spoke with harmony and continuity from beginning to end.

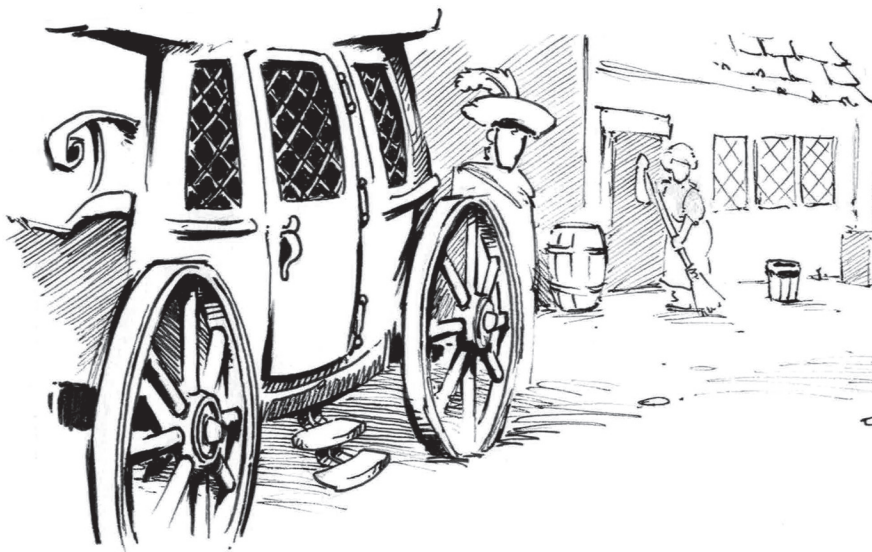
Now this is quite remarkable. Think about it for a moment. If we had just ten authors, all living today, all from the same generation, all in the same line of work, coming from the same geographical background, speaking the same language, what would be the odds of them agreeing if they were given only one controversial topic to write on and were unable to consult with each other? The likelihood would be extremely remote. And yet that is what happened with the Bible—not to ten men writing on one topic, but to 40 men writing on many controversial topics.

So how did it happen? What does the Bible say?

Simply put, none of these 40 writers claimed to be the source of the Bible's information. Instead, they claimed a common origin for the thoughts they wrote, a source that spoke as one voice to them all. So who or what was that source?

The Bible says that the source of all the information was a very powerful being or person named Yahweh. We also call him God or Lord, which refer to the one and same being.\*

Though the Bible talks about many gods, it only calls one of these gods "holy." Yahweh is different from all other gods. He is one-of-a-kind. Since Yahweh is a spirit, he cannot be seen, but he is not hidden. This God communicates—he speaks. The Bible is his message to mankind. It reveals who he is and what he is like.



It was this God who was the common source for those 40 men, giving Scripture its unique continuity and harmony. It was the only way 40 men could write over 1500 years and still be in complete agreement on so many controversial topics. According to the odds, there had to be a common source; there had to be God.

It was information like this that has led men and women, like Blaise Pascal, to become convinced that the Bible is more than just an interesting book. From their research, such a book could only exist if there was a God. This was no casual conclusion. By inference, it was necessary if you judge things just by the numbers.

\*Yahweh is God's personal name, just as we humans all have personal names.





# self claims

## — Internal Evidence —

If Yahweh was the source for all the information in the Bible, how did he tell the 40 prophets what to write? How can we know they did not include their own thoughts?

To begin with, we need to understand Yahweh was not random in his communication. According to the Bible, God chose one nation to record his message, the ancient nation of Israel. These people were Jewish or Hebrew by birth.

In communicating his message to Jewish prophets, God did not dictate Scripture as an executive would to a secretary. Rather, the process was compared to breathing.

*All Scripture is God-breathed.*

*2 Timothy 3:16 NIV*

Just as when one exhales his breath from his innermost being, so ultimately all Scripture was to be viewed as coming directly from God himself. God and his words are inseparable, which is one reason the Bible is also referred to as God's Word.



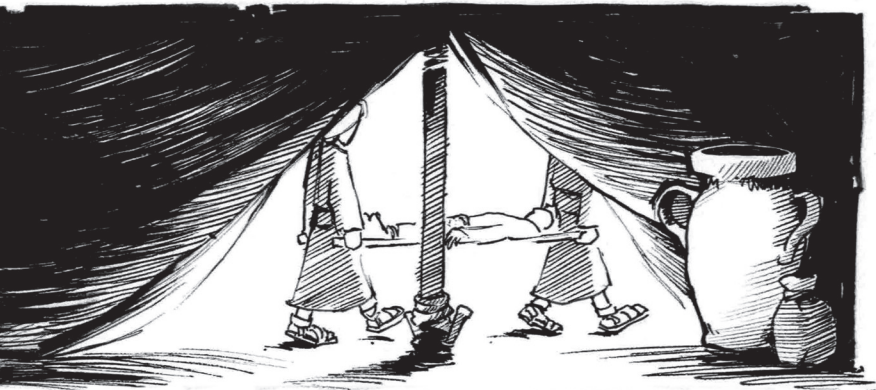
*Your word, O Lord, is eternal; it stands firm. Psalm 119:89 NIV*

According to Scripture, the Lord guided the 40 writers so that what was recorded was precisely what he wanted written. At the same time, God allowed each human writer to record the Bible in the prophet's own unique style, but to do so without error. These men were not free to add their own private thoughts to the Bible. Scripture, or what was sometimes called *prophecy*, was not something they dreamed up on their own.

*Recognize this: No prophecy of scripture ever comes about by the prophet's own imagination, for no prophecy was ever borne of human impulse; rather, men carried along by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.*

*2 Peter 1:20-21 NET*

The phrase *carried along* is used elsewhere in the Bible to refer to the transportation of a paralyzed man.<sup>3</sup> Just as a disabled man could not walk by his own power, so the prophets did not write the Scriptures at their own inclination. Nor did Yahweh put his stamp of approval on some literary effort of man. The Bible is clear—it was the Lord's message from beginning to end.



## 10 chapter two

An Israelite slave who became a palace prince wrote the first five books of the Bible. His name was Moses. As a prophet, Moses wrote the history that covered the beginning of time on earth to around 3500 years ago. Since Moses did not live all those long ages, he was reliant upon God to reveal to him exactly what had happened and what should be recorded. To get this information, the Bible says that...

*[Yahweh] would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend.*

*Exodus 33:11 NIV*

We are also told that sections of the first five books were...  
...written by the finger of God.

*Exodus 31:18 NLT*



The words of God were recorded on different surfaces. Often the prophets used a special paper made of a river reed, called papyrus. Another especially durable “paper” was made from the skins of animals. It was called parchment.

In many cases the parchment or papyrus was stitched together to form long sheets, which were then rolled onto spindles forming a scroll.

Since a prophet wrote the manuscript in his own handwriting, the original is called an autograph. The Bible is clear that the autographs were free of error and any sort of untruths. The Bible itself claims that:

*The very essence of your words is truth.* *Psalms 119:160 NLT*

*Your word is truth.* *John 17:17 NIV*

*God has given us both his promise and his oath. These two things are unchangeable because it is impossible for God to lie.*

*Hebrews 6:18 NLT*

The Bible clearly states that every word the prophets wrote was an accurate statement of God’s thoughts.

Of course, this happened many years ago, so we must ask ourselves some questions. How do we know that the Bible we read today is an accurate reflection of what the prophets wrote centuries ago? Is there sufficient evidence to believe that what we have in our hands is truly Yahweh’s words, free of errors and lies? Is it even possible to know?

# it is written

## — Manuscript Evidence —



As a linguist, Robert Dick Wilson determined to establish whether the Bible was reliable or not. Born in 1856, Wilson was a brilliant student of languages. While still in college he could read the New Testament portion of the Bible in nine languages. He graduated from Princeton at the age of 20. Over his lifetime he held professorships at several prestigious universities.

At the age of 25, Wilson determined he would invest his life in the careful study of the oldest part of the Bible known as the *Old Testament* or *Hebrew Bible*.<sup>\*</sup> Based on the lifespans of his ancestors, he determined he might live to be 70 years of age. Since he was 25 at the time, he divided his remaining years into three periods of 15 years each. For the first 15 years he would study every language that was related to or part of the text of the Old Testament. During that time he mastered over 26 languages and dialects!<sup>4</sup> He committed the next 15 years to a thorough investigation of the Old Testament text itself. The last 15 years were committed to writing his conclusions.

Wilson knew that the original autographs written by the Hebrew prophets were long gone. Only copies remained. But copies of the Bible were not the product of a casual process.

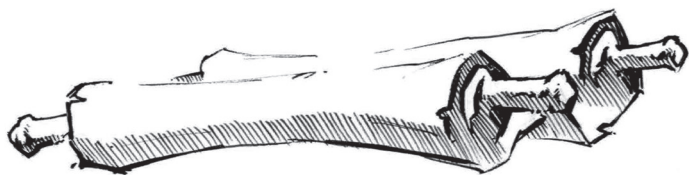
<sup>\*</sup>Old Testament or Hebrew Bible (Tanakh) – both refer to the oldest of two sections in the Bible. The other section is called the *New Testament*.

A Jewish man who desired to be a professional copyist had to qualify under the most rigorous training. These copyists or scribes worked according to well-defined rules. Scribes could only use certain surfaces to write on. If an animal skin was used, it had to be from a “clean” animal, and the skins prepared in a special way. Ink also had to be “kosher” or fit for use. No metallic objects could be used on the parchments. Ivory was often used instead.

Scribes were masters at writing. They knew that if one scribe wrote in his own style, centuries later a scribe might misread a word and copy it differently. To prevent this from happening, only one typeface was used, and there had to be a specific space between each letter and each line. Each letter was studied to make sure it was legible.

The scribe could not copy the text from memory. Each letter was copied while the word was spoken or sung. Upon completing a page, other scribes would study the copy for accuracy. The words would be counted and the middle word would be noted. The same was done with individual letters. These were then compared to the older scroll to make sure there were no variants.

Because the scribes were conscious that they were copying God’s Word, they were convinced that to be careless in any way was to tamper with God himself.



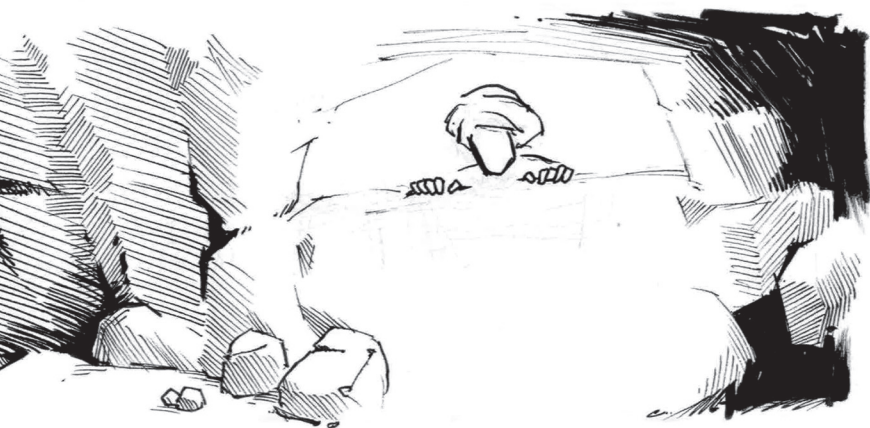
Robert Dick Wilson found no significant differences in the manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible, a reflection of the faithfulness of the scribes. He confidently wrote that what we have today was “the same as that written by the original composers of the Old Testament documents.”<sup>5</sup>

Robert Dick Wilson died in 1930. The oldest Hebrew Bible manuscript at his death was from around AD 900. Though the evidence given by Wilson and others was hard to refute, many still felt that the Bible had been altered.



Then in 1946, two Bedouin shepherds chasing a lost goat stumbled across a cave near the Dead Sea. Throwing a stone in the opening, they heard pottery break. Returning the next day, one of the shepherds came across seven scrolls housed in jars. What came to be known as the Dead Sea Scrolls burst on the academic world. Further investigation of other caves revealed a treasure trove of texts—927 in eleven caves. All but one book of the Old Testament was in the find.

Scholars dated the Dead Sea Scrolls to around 100 BC. By comparing the oldest copy of the Hebrew Bible (AD 900) with the Dead Sea Scrolls (100 BC), scholars were able to determine the accuracy of the scribes copying the text across a span of 1000 years. Robert Dick Wilson's conclusions were proven beyond doubt. There were no significant differences.<sup>6</sup> The manuscript from AD 900 and the Dead Sea Scrolls were essentially the same. This sort of precision in ancient times is one of the reasons the Bible is considered so unique.



Now we have to ask ourselves a question. Since it seems there is reasonable evidence that the text we have today is the same as what the Jewish prophets wrote, can we be certain that what the prophets wrote was accurate in and of itself? In the next four chapters, we will endeavour to answer this question.

For a deeper look at how the Bible came to us, watch the video clip. (For instructions, see page 2.)





# digging up the past

## — Archaeological Evidence —

Much of the Bible is written as a story, describing events that happened in real places. If the Bible is true, we should be able to find those locations, especially if they are quite large. One such place is the city of Nineveh. Nineveh is mentioned numerous times in the Bible, yet for many years there was doubt as to its very existence. Other big cities had left ruins, but no one could find Nineveh. What happened?

We now know that Nineveh did exist. It was located in Iraq on the eastern bank of the Tigris River. It was the capital of Assyria, an ancient empire that lasted until 612 BC.<sup>7</sup> The Bible says:

*Nineveh was an exceeding great city.* *Jonah 3:3 KJV*

According to the Bible there were...

*...more than 120,000 persons who do not know the difference between their right and left hand.* *Jonah 4:11 NASB*

If one assumes that this is speaking of the number of children in the city, scholars have estimated that the population was as high as 600,000 people.<sup>8</sup> The city was described as being surrounded by huge walls with massive gates and full of every kind of wealth.

Nineveh dominated the known world at that time. The Assyrians were a ruthless people, boasting of their savagery, of how they buried or skinned their enemies alive, impaled them on stakes to roast in the sun, cut

off their hands, ears and noses, blinded them, or nailed them to walls to suffer.<sup>9</sup> The Bible says Nineveh was a...

*...city of blood, full of lies, full of plunder, never without victims!*

*Nahum 3:1 NIV*

God considered the city to be so vile that he told the prophets Nahum and Zephaniah to warn the city that...

*...with an overwhelming flood he [God] will make a complete end of Nineveh.*

*Nahum 1:8 NET*

Other historical accounts tell us that the Babylonians, Medes and others laid siege to Nineveh in 612 BC. When battering rams were unable to break the huge walls, they decided to starve the people out. After three months, heavy rains flooded the river, collapsing part of the city wall. The Assyrian king, knowing his end was near, gathered all his wealth and wives to himself and committed suicide in a massive fire.<sup>10</sup>

In fulfillment of Nahum's prophecy, God made...

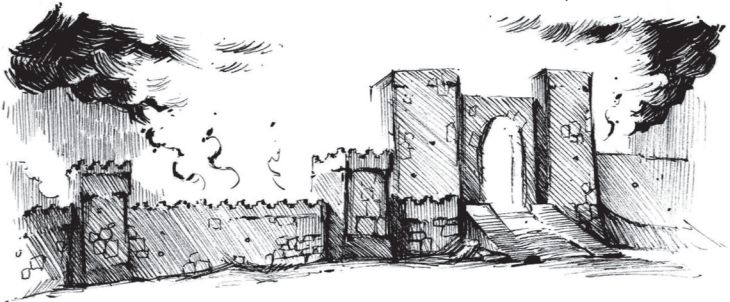
*...an utter end of the place.*

*Nahum 1:8 KJV*

The prophet Zephaniah had foretold that...

*[Yahweh]...will make Nineveh a heap of ruins; it will be as barren as the desert.*

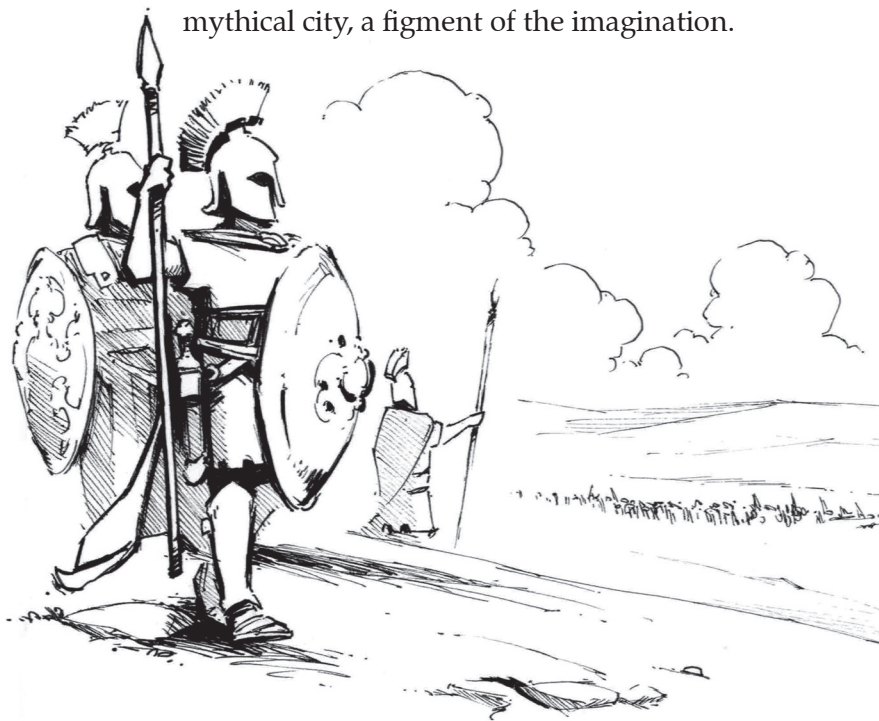
*Zephaniah 2:13 NET*



And that is exactly what happened. A little over 200 years later in 401 BC, Xenophon, a Greek general retreating along the Tigris River, led his mercenaries, the famous Ten Thousand, past the site without even realizing it was there. It was as barren as the desert.<sup>11</sup>

By the second century AD, the Greek satirist Lucian could write: *"Why, as to Nineveh, it is gone, friend, long ago, and has left no trace behind it; there is no saying whereabouts it may have been."*<sup>12</sup>

By the nineteenth century, scholars were saying that Nineveh had never existed and it must have been a mythical city, a figment of the imagination.



Then in 1847, Sir Austen Layard, a young British traveller, began to investigate the vast mounds that lay across the river from Mosul, a city in Iraq. In the process he found Nineveh. Layard uncovered the palace of Sennacherib and unearthed a famous library with 22,000 clay tablets, some of which lent support to the biblical story.

Since then, palace after palace has been unearthed, revealing the daily lives of the ancient Assyrians, their wars and religion, as well as the grandeur of their kings.

Over the intervening years, digging up the past has become more sophisticated. Though still prone to individual interpretation, whenever the shovel has gone into the ground, what has been uncovered has over and over again authenticated the reliability of the Bible's message.

Nelson Glueck, an American archaeologist, stated, *"To date no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a single, properly understood biblical statement."*<sup>13</sup>



# what we know

## — Physical Evidence —

The Bible is not a book about science. But since the Bible claims to be true, whenever it touches on the subject, it should be in agreement with what we observe in the physical world, both big and small, visible and invisible.

For example, it would not be accurate if the Bible said there were only 5000 stars in the universe. But far from making this error, the prophets compared the stars to...

*...the sand which is on the seashore.*

*Genesis 22:17 NASB*

With only 5000 stars visible in the night sky,<sup>14</sup> how could they have known to compare the stars to the seemingly infinite number of grains of sand?

Or consider this. It has been recognized that for anything to exist you must have time, space and matter. But long before that was understood, the first page of the Bible opened with these words:

*In the beginning [time] God created the heavens [space] and the earth [matter].<sup>15</sup>*

*Genesis 1:1 NLT*

How did they know that back then? According to the Bible, Yahweh told the prophets what to write, and it was He who kept the information accurate.

Even though popular culture has often stood against the Bible, Scripture has always remained consistent with observable science. For example, centuries ago it was commonly believed that the earth was flat. This thinking

never had its origin in Scripture. Rather, the Bible uses a word that alludes to the spherical shape of the globe when it speaks about...

*...the circle of the earth.*

*Isaiah 40:22 NIV*

In the same way, some ancients speculated that the earth sat on a strong foundation, possibly a turtle.<sup>16</sup> The Greeks believed that Atlas, a mythological god, supported the globe. But from its earliest pages, the Bible said the Lord...

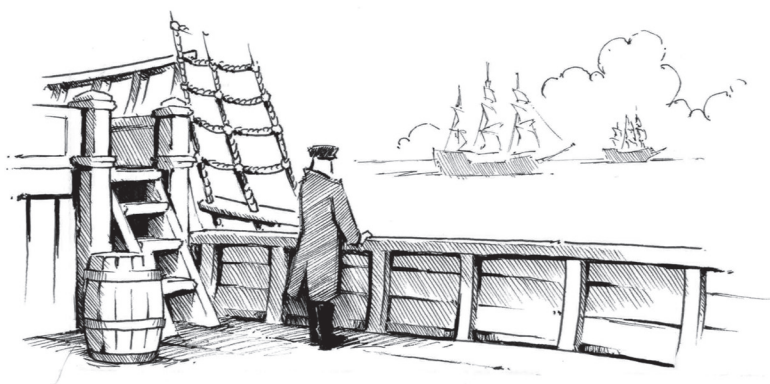
*...hangs the earth on nothing.*

*Job 26:7 NKJV*

The Bible has inspired many esteemed scientists to search out the laws of the physical universe. Such was the case with Matthew Fontaine Maury, an officer in the American Navy in the mid-1800s. Although Maury never fought a battle and was prone to seasickness, he became one of the U.S. Navy's most esteemed officers when he plotted the currents of the ocean and air. Until that time in history, the flow of air and water remained a mystery. But Maury was motivated by verses in the Bible that spoke of...

*...the paths of the seas.*

*Psalms 8:8 NKJV*



What applied to the sea seemed true for the air.

*The wind blows to the south and goes around to the north;  
around and around goes the wind, and on its circuits the  
wind returns.*

*Ecclesiastes 1:6 ESV*

Inspired by the Bible, Maury mapped the currents in both ocean and air. The monument raised in his honour shows him with sea charts in hand and a Bible at his side.<sup>17</sup>

The Bible speaks of a past earth where the geography, climate and ecology changed radically to what we now know. If this is so, then discoveries in science should support drastic change.

This it does abundantly. For example, Axel Heiberg Island is near the top of the world, not far from the North Pole. And yet, here we find the remains of redwood forests, huge ferns, flowering plants, and a great assortment of fossilized animals. How did they get there? The current climate does not allow for this kind of life. Yet the island is littered with trees like driftwood, trees that were up to 35 metres tall (115 feet), the largest having a diameter of three metres (10 feet). Normally trees from the past



are petrified, but these are dehydrated. One thing is for sure—there was a time when Axel Heiberg Island was quite different and then changed.<sup>18</sup>

What is true of that island is true of the whole planet. In the last 200 years, physical evidence has been collected and recognized, all speaking to an earth that existed at one time but is no longer. On this the Bible agrees.

As the years pass, science continues to authenticate the Bible in remarkable ways.

For example, the Bible speaks of the entire population of the earth coming from one man and one woman. In studies of human DNA, scientists have concluded that we all have one man and one woman in our ancestry.<sup>19</sup> Whether this is the same man and woman found in the Bible is open to discussion and further research, but what is interesting is that the findings are consistent with the Bible.



These few examples illustrate the accuracy of the Bible in spite of the fact that none of the 40 prophets could have known any of these things during the centuries they wrote. This is another aspect that makes the Bible unique.



# checking the date

## — Historical Evidence —

Since much of the Bible is written as history, it talks about dates, rulers, wars, disasters—an endless stream of detailed historical data. If this data were true, we should be able to authenticate many of those events. There should be a consistency of truthfulness across the years.

Volumes of books have been written on this subject, but for our purposes here, we will choose one of the 40 prophets to represent the rest. This writer's name was Luke. Possibly a Greek by birth, we know he was a physician by profession. He wrote two books in the Bible, the books of Luke and Acts. Both contain significant amounts of historical detail.

Regarding the subject matter on which Luke wrote, he claimed to have travelled and...

*...carefully investigated everything from the beginning.*

*Luke 1:3a NLT*

*It was so that he could...write a careful account.*

*Luke 1:3b NLT*

So just how careful of a historian was Dr. Luke? Did God guide his hand as was claimed?

To answer that question we will go to one of the most recognized scholars on the historical events recorded in the book of Acts.

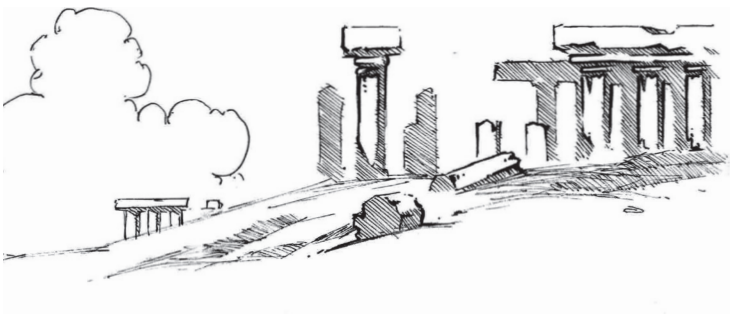
Sir William Mitchell Ramsay was born in Scotland in 1851. As a student, Ramsay was taught that the Bible was unreliable when it came to the history of the first century.

Since no other document spoke of the places and events Luke recorded in the book of Acts, they were considered inaccurate at best, if not just plain fabrications. Many of the cities referenced by Dr. Luke had no known address.<sup>20</sup>

Ramsay left school firmly convinced that the learned men of his day knew what they were talking about. Later Ramsay wrote, "... about 1880 to 1890 the book of Acts was regarded as the weakest part of the New Testament. No one who had any regard for his reputation as a scholar cared to say a word in its defense."<sup>21</sup>

As a budding academic, Ramsay received an Oxford scholarship to do research in Greece. This was soon extended to include Turkey. Ramsay travelled to the Mediterranean believing that monks wrote much of the New Testament, possibly several hundred years after the fact.

Ramsay at first did not consult the Bible, since within a few decades of an event, no writer who had not been an eyewitness could possibly know specific and detailed facts. He assumed the Bible spoke in generalities. He knew that only eyewitnesses could give him the detail he wanted and he assumed Luke had not been an eyewitness.



Ramsay travelled widely and became knowledgeable about all historical documents related to that part of the world. Since so little was written, desperation for more detail drove him to read the books written by Luke. Skepticism turned to belief as his study revealed the precision with which Dr. Luke had written. He discarded the “monk” theory and embraced the obvious conclusion of his research: a physician by the name of Luke had written his two books at the time of the events.

By the time of his death in 1939, Ramsay had become the leading authority on the history of ancient Turkey. He concluded: *“Further study...showed that the book [of Acts,*



*written by Dr. Luke] could bear the most minute scrutiny... it was written with such judgment, skill, art and perception of truth as to be a model of historical statement."*<sup>22</sup>

Ramsay said, "I set out to look for truth on the borderland where Greece and Asia meet, and found it there [in the book of Acts]. You may press the words of Luke in a degree beyond any other historian's and they stand the keenest scrutiny and the hardest treatment..."<sup>23</sup>

Ramsay, like so many people, was taught that the Bible was historically inaccurate. He believed this was true until he did his own research. Fluent in Latin and Greek, trained as a historian, he was well-equipped to check out the facts. The research of Ramsay and others has been rechecked many times and stood the test.

Ramsay investigated the New Testament, but the Old Testament also stands up to rigorous analysis. In a previous chapter we noted the precise research of Robert Dick Wilson. In one of his books he noted the Old Testament's accurate record of kings, a history that spans many centuries. He wrote: "...these kings...all appear in proper chronological order both with reference to the kings of the same country and with respect to the kings of other countries contemporary with them. No stronger evidence for the substantial accuracy of the Old Testament records could possibly be imagined than this collection of names of kings."<sup>24</sup>

It is without question that as scholars, both Ramsey and Wilson were confident that the Bible was accurate history — geographically, politically and otherwise.

# future talk

## — Prophetic Evidence —

One of the most interesting and unique evidences for the reliability of the Bible comes in the form of prophecy. Whereas most sacred books of other religions make little attempt to foretell the future,<sup>25</sup> the Bible has hundreds and hundreds of prophecies. It is estimated that approximately 27% of the Bible is prophecy. Of these predictions, a significant number have already been precisely fulfilled. Indeed, Yahweh claims to be a God who can foretell the future.

*I am God, and there is none like me. Only I can tell you the future before it even happens.*

*Isaiah 46:9-10 NLT*

Daniel was a prophet who lived at a very hard time in the history of Israel. Born in the seventh century BC, Daniel witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar. Taken into slavery, Daniel was one of a number chosen to serve in the king's palace.

Being part of the palace staff brought its own pressures. Daniel and his Jewish friends were expected to worship Nebuchadnezzar as a god. Their refusal and deliverance from punishment is just one of many stories that makes the book of Daniel so fascinating to read.

But Daniel is also remarkable for his prophecies. They are so detailed and specific, so grand in their scope, that skeptics of the supernatural insist the book must have been written long after the fact rather than before the prophetic events happened. But is it true? Daniel made it clear that

his prophecies had their source in the God of the Bible, and it was Yahweh who revealed the future to him.

For example, Daniel prophesied about empires. Here is an excerpt of what he wrote about 300 years before the fact:

*Suddenly a male **goat** appeared from the west, crossing the land so swiftly that he didn't even touch the ground. This goat, which had one very **large horn** between its eyes... charged furiously at the **ram** and struck him, breaking off both his horns...*

*Daniel 8:5-7 NLT*

The animals represent empires; the horns symbolize kings.

*The **goat** became very powerful. But at the height of his power, his **large horn** was broken off. In the large horn's place grew four prominent horns...*

*Daniel 8:8 NLT*

So what is this all about? Daniel doesn't leave you guessing. He explains the prophecy.

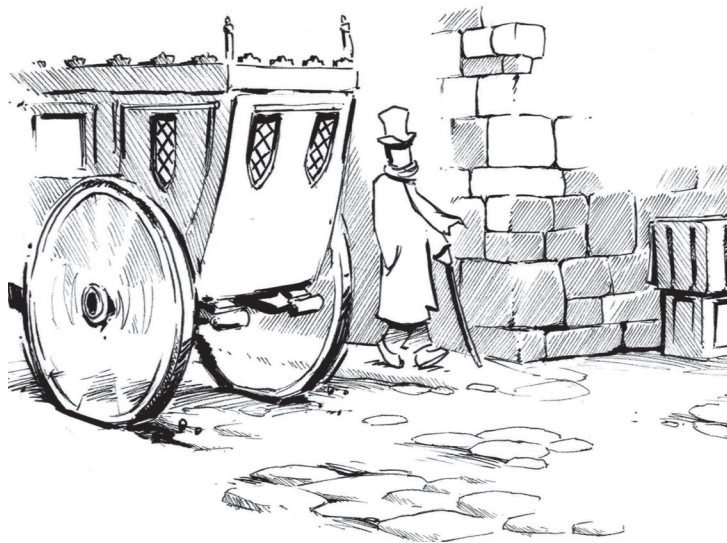
*The two-horned **ram** represents the kings of **Media and Persia**. The shaggy male **goat** represents the king of **Greece**, and the large horn between his eyes represents the first king of the Greek Empire. The four prominent horns that replaced the one large horn show that the Greek Empire will break into four kingdoms, but none as great as the first.* *Daniel 8:20-22 NLT*

History tells us that Alexander the Great and his Greek army (the male goat) charged out of the west and swiftly destroyed the two kings of the Medes and Persians (the two-horned ram). But then at 33 years of age, Alexander the Great (the large horn) died at the "height of his power," as the prophecy said, and the Greek Empire was split into four kingdoms (four prominent horns). Notice how all these details are woven into the prophecy.

Such precision in prophecy did not escape the eyes of Sir Robert Anderson. Born in 1841, Anderson's keen, analytical mind took him to the top of London's Metropolitan Police, often called Scotland Yard. He was appointed Assistant Commissioner and served out his active life giving oversight to the crime unit. During his tenure, crime actually dropped in London.<sup>26</sup>

Sir Robert was active in reforming the British prison system that, to a certain extent, was still built around the concept of a dungeon. W. H. Smith, a famous bookseller and later a high-ranking British politician, stated on the floor of the House of Commons that Anderson *"had discharged his duties with great ability and perfect faithfulness to the public."*<sup>27</sup>

Before his death in 1918 of the Spanish influenza, Anderson authored seventeen major books on Bible themes. In his writing he exposed erroneous beliefs about the Bible with



the same tenacity that he tracked down criminals. He openly refuted the idea that faith in reasonably established facts was the same as superstition.

In the late 1800s, European skeptics were saying that the book of Daniel was written after the events, not before. It was the only way they could explain away the precision of Daniel's prophecies. Anderson lent his keen mind to refuting these charges, showing that Daniel had been written decades or even centuries before the prophesied events occurred. When the Dead Sea Scrolls were found, they lent further weight to Anderson's scholarship. Others have built on his work, but it was Anderson who first led the charge.<sup>28</sup> He believed it was just as the God of the Bible had said:

*Long ago I told you what was going to happen. Then suddenly I took action, and all my predictions came true. Isaiah 48:3 NLT*





# the big questions

## — The Legal Method —

In the previous chapters we touched on seven evidences for the reliability of the Bible, giving a small sampling of what makes the Bible a unique or holy book.

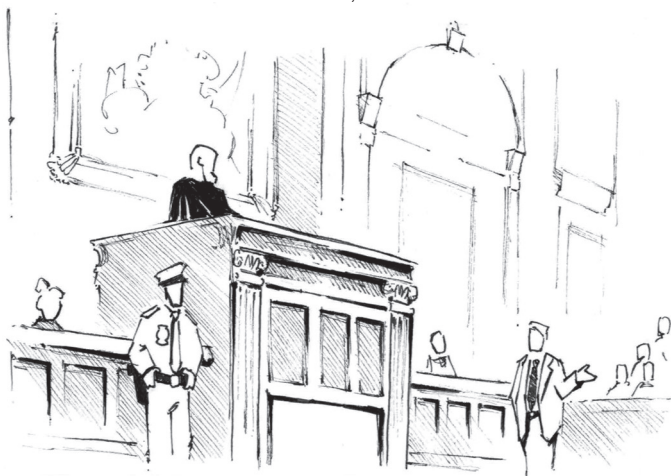
1. Statistical Evidence: The odds are extremely remote of a book being perfectly unified in message when written over 1500 years by 40 men, most of whom never knew each other.
2. Internal Evidence: The Bible itself claims to be a message from God to mankind.
3. Manuscript Evidence: The message has been handed down to us with remarkable accuracy.
4. Archaeological Evidence: What we dig out of the ground is consistent with the biblical record.
5. Physical Evidence: The Bible is consistent with what we observe in the physical world.
6. Historical Evidence: The Bible has proven to be precise in what it has to say about events in history.
7. Prophetic Evidence: 27% of the Bible is prophecy, much of which has been precisely fulfilled.

These seven evidences point to a very unique and reliable book. That being said, some people say, *"I won't believe the Bible unless you prove it using the Scientific Method."*

One may have reasons to not believe the Bible, but the Scientific Method should not be one of them. The

Scientific Method wasn't designed for evaluating the accuracy of historical documents. It is built around repeatable experiments and history is not repeatable.<sup>29</sup>

To evaluate the reliability of historical documents, such as the Bible, one must use some form of the legal method. These methods are used in courtrooms to determine the reliability of evidence, such as that found at a crime scene—an unrepeatable historical event. In that sense, investigating the Bible has more in common with a “whodunit” than a laboratory test tube.



As I said in the preface, the purpose of this book is to show that the Bible is a remarkable book, important enough to warrant further research. With that in mind, one can then use the legal method to ask a question: *Is there reasonable evidence to believe that the Bible is reliable and true?* The key to it all is the word *reasonable*. Is it a reasonable belief?

The idea of investigating the Bible for yourself is not something to be passed over lightly. The Bible has a unique message. It claims to be a letter written by God and addressed to every man, woman and child on this planet. It has answers to the “big questions” in life, questions like:

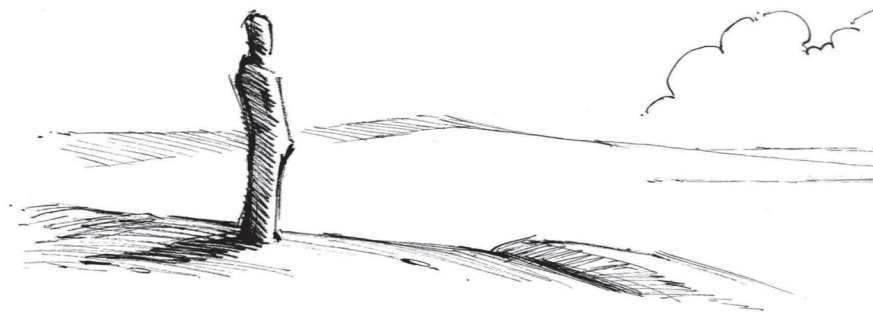
- *Where did we come from?*

Not just where your family came from, but where the entire human race came from, where the planet came from, indeed, the beginning of the whole universe.

This is the question of “origins” and how it all began. The Bible uses the legal method to answer that question. It answers it from the perspective of an eyewitness.

- *But now that we are here, how should we live?*
- *What is the right way to live? And the wrong way?*
- *What is our source of information for determining right and wrong?*

These are important questions. How we answer them guides us in how we relate to our fellow human beings, how to treat them and how they should treat us. Whether



we are children or adults, we need a guide to life. It can't just be that the smartest wins or the strongest survives.

The Bible has input on an entire spectrum of behaviour, whether it is sharing toys, running a business or relating to a marriage partner. The Scriptures speak very clearly on these issues with advice proven over the centuries. It gives direction, purpose and meaning to life. Above all, it tells us how we can know Yahweh, on a personal level.

But the Bible doesn't just address the here and now. It also looks at the big question of death.

- *What happens to us when we die? Is there a life after death, and if so, what is that life like?*

The Bible speaks with great authority on this issue—it clearly talks about a life to come. Most importantly, what it claims about this subject is not just made-up stories or friendly advice, but pertains to life and death issues. It is important for each person to take the time to check this information out, to personally see just what it has to say.

There is one other big question that deserves a brief look. It has to do with the condition of the world. It is a mess. What is going on? Does the Bible address that question?



# a battle royale

— Behind the Scenes —

Why is the world in such chaos? The Bible gives a fairly complete answer to that question. It speaks of a battle occurring in the universe between good and evil. The battle is illustrated as a fight between light and darkness, between a lamb and a dragon, between truth and a lie.

What makes this so significant is that we are on the front lines and it is not a battle from which we can exempt ourselves. Though much of this battle is invisible, it does affect us in every way. It is one reason why bad things happen to good people. If this battle is real, then it makes sense to know where we fit in the scheme of things.

Every battle has an epicentre, a primary target. The Bible is clear that the target of this cosmic battle is Scripture itself — Yahweh's message to mankind.

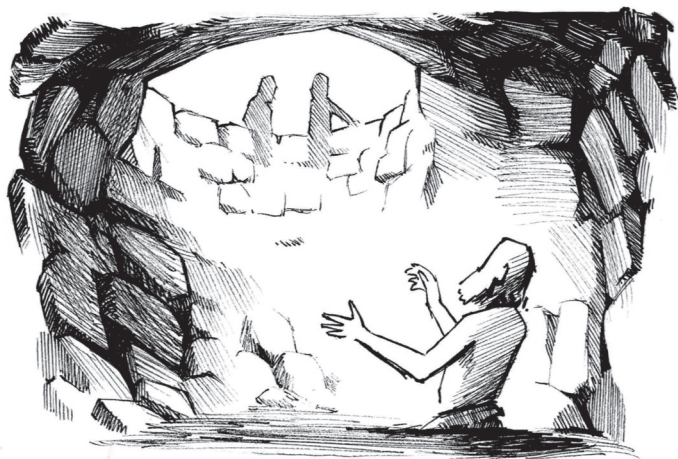
## Jeremiah the Prophet

The Bible has been under attack from the day it was given. A prime example of this would be Jeremiah, a Jewish prophet. Born around 655 BC, Jeremiah was one of the 40 prophets chosen by Yahweh to record Scripture.

Jeremiah lived at a time when everything was falling apart. Both young and old were morally bankrupt. The world was in chaos with Israel being invaded by nations on every side. Life was grim. God told Jeremiah:

*When your people ask, "Why did the LORD our God do all this to us?" you must reply, "You rejected him..."* Jeremiah 5:19 NLT

The book named after Jeremiah is quite negative about the reigning religious and political establishment. When the king heard that Jeremiah had recorded a message from God, he burned the book page by page and threw Jeremiah into a cistern full of mud. Jeremiah was later rescued but his troubled life illustrates the point. The Bible has been under attack from the day it was given to mankind.



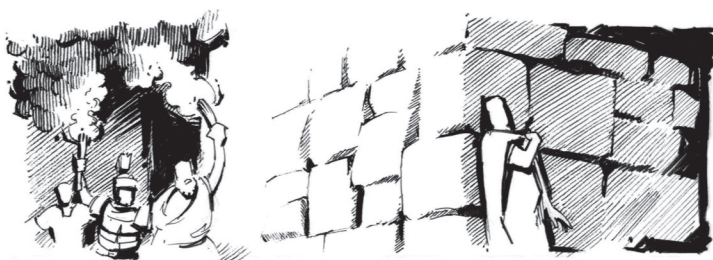
### Athanasius the Leader

Born in Egypt around AD 296, Athanasius lived after the Jewish prophets completed the 66 books of the Bible. As a leader well-known to Bible believers, he recognized the clear distinction between the books known as “God’s Word” and those that were not. To be God’s Word, the book needed to meet strictly defined criteria or measurements. If a book qualified, it was considered part of the *canon*, a word meaning “measuring stick.”\*

\*Church councils did not determine the canon. These books were considered part of the canon from the time they were penned. Athanasius formalized this recognition.

By the time of Athanasius, the Old Testament canon had been set in stone for centuries. But now Athanasius was instrumental in officially recognizing the New Testament canon of 27 books, the only ones having met the demands of the measuring stick. Thus he protected the canon from being contaminated with false books.

Athanasius paid a price for his defense of the Bible. Seventeen years of his life were spent in five exiles, two in the desert and one in his father's tomb. Six times he fled for his life. In the larger scheme of things, the trouble Athanasius faced was just part of the cosmic battle between good and evil.



### Tyndale the Translator

As mentioned earlier, the Bible was originally written in Hebrew and Greek. But few of us read those languages, so from its earliest days the Bible was translated into other languages. Historically, being a translator was a risky business.

Born in AD 1493, William Tyndale translated the Bible into English. Facing resistance by one of the religious leaders of his day, Tyndale responded: *"If God spares my life, ere many years, I will cause the boy that driveth the plow to know more of the Scriptures than thou dost!"*<sup>30</sup>

Tyndale was a highly trained scholar, but he wanted the common man to be able to read and understand the Bible for himself. Though Tyndale was able to complete his English translation, he paid a cost. The religious establishment had him tied to a stake, strangled and burned.



Today men and women continue translating, promoting and carrying the Bible, often at great risk to themselves. They are on the front lines of the battle between good and evil.

As in Jeremiah's day, the Bible is being cast into fire. Flames have consumed no other book so often. As with Athanasius, evil is making every effort to dilute or amend the Bible with counterfeit claims and sources. None stand the test, but the effort is being made nonetheless.

As in Tyndale's day, corrupt political and religious powers work to prevent the Bible from spreading. Why? Really, it is puzzling, but according to the Bible, it's quite simple. It has to do with the Bible's message, a message about love and justice, of how evil is overcome with good, a message of hope for all who will read it.



# the link

## — Genuine Understanding —

I remember well the day the president of the United States, John F. Kennedy, was assassinated. It was November 22, 1963. Kennedy's death overshadowed two other notables who died the same day: Clive Staples Lewis and Aldous Leonard Huxley.

### The Professor

C. S. Lewis was the author of "The Chronicles of Narnia." In his day he was a well-known British academic, an Oxford and Cambridge professor who identified himself as an atheist at age 15. He supported his atheism with two lines from a Roman poet:

*Had God designed the world, it would not be  
A world so frail and faulty as we see.*<sup>31</sup>

For a time Lewis also took an interest in the occult.

But then Lewis became convinced of the truthfulness of the Bible. It came through much study and discussion with Bible believers. He changed his mind *"kicking, struggling, resentful, and darting his eyes in every direction for a chance to escape."*<sup>32</sup>

Speaking of his resistance to believing in the God of the Bible, Lewis wrote, *"You must picture me alone...night after night, feeling, whenever my mind lifted even for a second from my work, the steady, unrelenting approach of Him whom I so earnestly desired not to meet. That which I greatly feared had at last come upon me. ...I gave in, and admitted that God was God...perhaps, that night, the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England."*<sup>33</sup>



C. S. Lewis did his own research, set aside his pride and decided there were good reasons to trust the Bible. He became an outspoken defender of the book he had once despised.

### **The Philosopher**

Aldous Huxley was also a well-known Oxford author. His grandfather, Thomas Huxley, was a self-educated zoologist who called himself “Darwin’s Bulldog” since he defended Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution. It was Thomas who coined the word *agnostic* to define his religious beliefs. He felt the Bible should be amended.

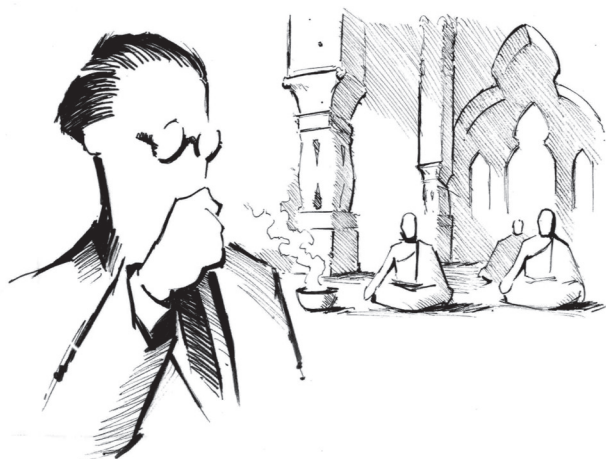
In many ways, Aldous followed in his grandfather’s footsteps. Aldous embraced eastern philosophy, writing an amended “bible,” a mix of Scripture and mysticism. He experimented with parapsychology—the study of telepathy, clairvoyance and reincarnation. He was an early proponent of hallucinogenic drugs. On his deathbed, at his request, his wife shot him full of LSD.

To this day, New Age proponents quote Aldous Huxley as a source of knowledge.

It is clear that both Lewis and Huxley searched for truth. In the end, Huxley became a proponent of psychedelic drugs “in a search for enlightenment.” In contrast, Lewis became a staunch defender of the Bible as the source of meaningful life. What made the difference?

Though Lewis was a “reluctant convert,” he genuinely wanted to know what the Bible was all about. He quizzed his friends often—to learn. When evidence for the Bible stacked up, he humbled himself and made the tough decision to change from an atheist to a Bible believer. That must have been hard but the result was genuine understanding.

On the other hand, Huxley seemed to recognize that the Bible offered purpose and meaning in life, but he rejected it. He wrote, *“I had motive for not wanting the world to have a meaning...”*<sup>34</sup>



*For myself, the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation, sexual and political.”<sup>34</sup>* Huxley had a motive. He wanted sex without obligation and from his viewpoint, the Bible got in his way.

In this book we have touched on seven evidences for the reliability of the Bible. However, the Scripture only uses one in its defense: prophecy. According to the Bible, fulfilled prophecy was the potent test to determine whether a writer was genuine or not. If the prophecies they recorded came to pass, then everything else they wrote would be considered reliable as well.

*“I am the Lord; that is my name!*

*Everything I prophesied has come true, and now I will prophesy again. I will tell you the future before it happens.”*

*Isaiah 42:8-9 NLT*

Since the Bible has so much prophecy and since quite a bit of it has been precisely fulfilled, it would seem wise to look into the Bible more, to find out just what it has to say about life, death and life after death. Above all, it would seem to be wise to find out what it has to say about God, and how God can be known.

*No Ordinary Story*, booklets one to eight, will take you on a journey through the Bible from A to Z. As you read, be like C. S. Lewis. Be sincere in your search. Don't allow personal pride or passions to get in your way. Only then will the Bible make sense and only then will you have genuine understanding.



## The Path Forward

Every religion or belief system relies on books or traditions that purport to be truth. Islam has the Koran and Hadiths. Hinduism relies on tradition and gurus who interpret the Vedas and Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita and the Agamas. And so it is with every religion.

As we have done with the Bible, all religious books need to be analyzed to see if there are grounds for reliability.

Have you caught a glimpse as to why the Bible is so unique? Take the next step. Learn for yourself what the Bible teaches about life and death. **No Ordinary Story** does just that.

## No Ordinary STORY

Read a booklet in five days  
5 minutes in the morning  
5 minutes in the evening

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### SERIES

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- ✓ Background Book - No Ordinary Book
- ☐ 1. No Ordinary God
- ☐ 2.

time to  
move to  
next book

The Bible has three major themes. To understand each theme, read the above booklets in sequence, as each booklet builds on previous content.

Booklets 1 to 8 (Theme One) give an understanding of the central message of the Bible. This theme offers freedom from shame and guilt in the past, and promises hope and joy for the future.

# endnotes

1. There are many books that go into significant depth on the origin of the Bible. For an overview of the central message of the Bible, see *No Ordinary Story*, Theme One, booklets one to eight. Available at [www.goodseed.com](http://www.goodseed.com)
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22. *Ibid.*, 85.
23. *Ibid.*, 89.
24. *Ibid.* 5: 86.
25. The Bible has strict internal criteria for what qualifies as biblical prophecy. Recognizing the authenticating nature of fulfilled prophecy, cults misuse the Bible to claim authenticity for their belief systems. Islam presents a list (usually less than 30) of fulfilled prophecies derived from the Koran, however most of these would not fulfill the biblical criteria for prophecy.
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28. *Ibid.* 25: xviii-lviii.
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# No Ordinary Book

## What's so important about the Bible? Where did it come from?

Edition 1

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