

# The Shield



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# **The Shield**

## **(The Bible Defended)**

**“taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one”  
Ephesians 6:17**

**Introduction:** This booklet is intended as a sequel to the previous booklet, “The Sword.” It is best to have a clear understanding of that booklet and, thus, of what the Bible teaches, before beginning this booklet, which is a defense of that teaching. The Bible has been under attack since the Garden of Eden. There Satan told Eve that God was lying to her (Genesis 3:4-5). It should be no surprise to anyone that, from all sides, attacks against the Bible have been launched continuously ever since. There are many present-day attacks. These attacks can devastate those who don’t believe in the Bible just as well as those who do. In the case of the former, the attacks dissuade them from giving the Bible the serious consideration that it deserves. In the latter case, the attacks may weaken their faith and reduce their effectiveness. In this booklet, my goal is to help free you, the reader, from the devastation these attacks may cause. I’ll try to help you see reasons for believing the Bible that will persuade you to give it the consideration and attention it truly deserves.

## Higher Criticism

In the middle 1800s, a professor of Biblical Studies named Julius Wellhausen promoted a theory called “the documentary hypothesis.” According to this theory, Moses didn’t write the first five books of the Bible, books that have traditionally been attributed to him. The strongest argument in support of Wellhausen’s view was the supposed fact that alphabetic writing had not yet been invented in the time of Moses, meaning it would have been impossible for Moses to have written those books. In Wellhausen’s time, the oldest known alphabetic writing dated from the ninth century BC, about 500 years after Moses’ death. Wellhausen theorized that four independent writers contributed various portions to the Bible’s first five books, ten centuries after the time of Moses. He used the designations “J,” “E,” “D,” and “P” for these four writers. Wellhausen supposed that the Jewish people, in particular, had no alphabetic writing until the 5th century BC. Wellhausen’s field of study is known as “higher criticism”. (“Higher criticism” deals with questions about the authorship and purpose of any given writing. By contrast, “lower criticism”, also called “textual criticism”, deals with the copying of documents and mistakes or changes that have been introduced in the process of copying.) Later, both Wellhausen and a succession of Biblical scholars following his basic ideas (throughout this booklet, I’ll refer to this group as “the Wellhausen School”), applied his methods to the study of the New Testament as well.



Wellhausen’s arguments were so persuasive that a large percentage of Biblical scholars all over the world adopted his views, and the basic rationale behind his views is widely followed even today. As a result, anyone who does much study of the Bible will run across references to “the documentary hypothesis”, “the J, E, D, P theory”, or to “higher criticism”. This kind of teaching can be an obstacle to a person’s faith in the Bible as the Word of God. If we can’t believe what the Bible says about Moses, why should we believe anything else the Bible teaches?

It is not my purpose to go deeply into this subject. I want to point out only two simple facts:

1. The belief that alphabetic writing didn’t exist in Moses’ day has been proven to be false. Modern archaeological excavations after Wellhausen’s death have uncovered examples of alphabetic writing in Egypt and the Near East from before Moses’ time. At this point, archaeologists consider alphabetic writing to have been first used in the Near East by the 19th century BC, 400 years before Moses. There is, therefore, no reason that Moses could not have written the five books attributed to Him as the Jewish people have traditionally believed and as Jesus believed.

2. The other main pillar that supported the position of Wellhausen and his followers was an anti-supernatural bias. Wellhausen stated that his goal was to apply the methods of modern science to Biblical scholarship. What this meant to him was that, just as scientists in a laboratory do experiments expecting all results to be in accord with the laws of science without supernatural intervention, so Wellhausen ruled out the possibility of any miracles or divine intervention being involved in the history of the Bible. In effect, what he was saying was:

A: There is no God.

B: Therefore, there can be no supernatural intervention into the affairs of men on earth.

C: Therefore, the Bible cannot be the Word of God.

Then he began his work, which was intended, assuming points A, B, and C are true, to answer the question: “How then could the Bible have been written?” The documentary hypothesis was his answer.

If Wellhausen was correct in his ideas that there is no God, there has never been any supernatural intervention in human history, and the Bible is not the Word of God, then most people wouldn't care how the Bible got here. It wouldn't make any difference to them. The main questions that most people normally ask are:

A: Does God exist?

B: Has He intervened in human history?

C: Is the Bible His Word?

Wellhausen and all those who follow his line of teaching can't provide honest answers to these questions. Simply assuming that the answer to each of these questions is "No" is not an honest attempt at answering them.<sup>1</sup> Isn't it a little bit absurd to approach the study of a book that purports to demonstrate that there is one true God, He has intervened in human history and the Bible is His Word, by denying the book's main premises? Instead, it seems to me, for people seriously to consider these questions, they need to look at the claims the Bible makes and the reasons it gives for believing those claims. Wellhausen apparently examined the Bible's claims and rejected them for himself. It was his right to do that for himself. Each other person should, I believe, also have the opportunity to consider those claims for himself and make up his own mind what he's going to do with the Bible. In the previous booklet, "The Sword," I attempted to begin presenting people with this opportunity. Throughout the remainder of this booklet, it is my intent to continue, more fully, presenting this opportunity.

1. The same observation applies to their treatment of the New Testament. Their position is, "Since Jesus can't be what the New Testament claims Him to be, who might Jesus really be?" If Jesus is not what the New Testament claims Him to be, most people wouldn't care who He really is. It wouldn't make any difference to them. The only thing most people need to know is whether or not Jesus is what the New Testament claims Him to be. You can't honestly answer that question either, by simply assuming that the answer is "No."

## The Bible's Trustworthiness

Critics of the Bible have been launching the following two common attacks against it for many years:

A. The original authors of the Bible had no idea that their writings would ever be regarded as divinely inspired. Such an idea was foisted upon their writings by others long after the original authors had died.

B. It's impossible to know what the Bible's authors originally wrote. The number of errors and changes introduced to their writings through the process of copying and recopying hundreds of times over several millennia has masked and distorted beyond recognition whatever might be left of their original writings.

For these reasons, they assert that it's naïve, foolish and misguided to view the Bible as being the authoritative Word of God. I'll try to address these two objections in this chapter.

**The Bible's Claim:** Let's look at what the Bible claims about itself, and what its human authors claim about their writings. In numerous places in both the Old and New Testaments, the claim is made by the Bible's human authors that they were writing down exactly what God had personally instructed them to write. One example of this claim is Exodus 24: 3-4: **"Then Moses came and recounted to the people all the words of the LORD....Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD..."** Another example is Jeremiah 30:1-2: **"The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord saying, 'Thus speaks the Lord God of Israel saying, write in a book for yourself all the words that I have spoken to you.'" Expressions like "Thus says the Lord" or "The word of the Lord came to me" occur hundreds of times in the Old Testament. The New Testament contains similar claims, e.g. 1 Corinthians 14:37, "If anyone thinks that he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things I write to you are the Lord's commandment" and Revelation 1:10-11, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet, saying, 'Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches..." The New Testament shows that Jesus treated the Old Testament as the unique, accurate and dependable revelation from God. Many examples could be cited. Here are just two: Matthew 4:4, **"But He answered and said, 'It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God'"** and Luke 24:44, **"Now He said to them, 'These are My words which I spoke to you while I was with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.'" The Jews of Jesus' day also regarded the Old Testament as being divinely inspired and called it Scripture. Referring to this framework of thought, Paul wrote that all Scripture comes directly from God (2 Timothy 3:16). Peter wrote that in the writing of Scripture, holy men of God were controlled by the Spirit of God as to everything they wrote (2 Peter 1:21). Peter wrote that Paul's writings were Scripture (2 Peter 3:15) and that what he and the other apostles had written was to be regarded in the same way as the rest of the Scripture (2 Peter 3:2). When we put these and many other verses together, we can see that the Bible itself claims to be, both Old and New Testaments, the unique revelation from God to mankind, that is to say, the Word of God.****

The New Testament quotes mentioned above also reveal the context of thought into which the New Testament books were received. The New Testament believers were groomed to expect that further additions to what they considered to be the authoritative Word of God (the Old Testament) would be made by the apostles and their associates.

**Eyewitness Accounts:** According to the early church fathers (the church fathers were the most prominent leaders in the Christian churches during the next few centuries after the deaths of Jesus and His original 12 disciples), two of the four accounts of Jesus' life, the books of John and Matthew, were written by two of Jesus' disciples. They were first-hand eyewitnesses to most of the events

they recorded. The other two accounts of Jesus' life, the books of Mark and Luke, were contemporary, second-hand eyewitness accounts (by this I mean that Mark and Luke personally interviewed actual first-hand eyewitnesses). Mark was Peter's assistant and wrote Peter's version of events as Peter related it to him. Peter, of course, was one of Jesus' original twelve disciples and was an eyewitness to most of the events Mark recorded. Luke was an associate of Paul. He was in Palestine for several years while Paul was in prison there for his faith. Like a modern-day journalist, he interviewed many of the eyewitnesses to the events of Jesus' life in order to write his account. Paul was also an eyewitness of the fact that Jesus came back to life from the dead (albeit several years after the fact). He recorded his testimony to this fact in 1 Corinthians 15.

**The Synoptic Gospels:** People have wondered why the first three books of the New Testament seem so similar. These three books (Matthew, Mark and Luke) are called the synoptic Gospels, because they view things in a similar way and describe events with similar words. Here is probably the best explanation of the fact that they're so similar. Many Jewish men in New Testament Palestine were able to read and write. No doubt, one or more of these men who were believers in Jesus made a written record of His miracles and works within a short time of His crucifixion, probably to keep things straight and to not forget anything He had done. Later, when Matthew, Mark and Luke wrote, they freely referred to these writings to refresh their own minds and to help them formulate their accounts. (Any of us would do the same kind of thing if writing about a series of events that happened in past years.) Using such a procedure would in no way alter the writer's belief or other people's belief that they were being guided by the Spirit of God in the process of writing Scripture.

**Dating the Writing and Dispersal of the New Testament Books:** Most of the New Testament books (probably all the books except some or all of John's writings) must have been written and begun to be spread around among believer gatherings by AD 70. For one thing, the New Testament authors Paul, Peter, James, Mark and possibly Matthew were all put to death as martyrs for Jesus between AD 66 and 68. Also, the great war between the Jewish state and Rome took place from AD 66 to 70, ending with the destruction of the Jewish temple and the expulsion of all Jews from their capital city, Jerusalem. This was such a cataclysmic event in the lives of both the Jews and the early Christians that it is very unlikely that the New Testament writers would have made no mention of it in their writings if it had already happened.

No doubt the leaders and the people in the believer gatherings to which the New Testament books were first presented regarded these books as authoritative Scripture, copied them carefully, distributed them to other groups of believer gatherings and preserved them as a treasure. The writings of the very earliest church fathers at the end of the first and the beginning of the second centuries AD demonstrate that this was the case. Both Clement of Rome, writing in AD 90, and Ignatius of Rome in AD 107, quote or refer in their writings to about half of the New Testament books (significantly including the gospel accounts of Jesus' death and resurrection) as authoritative Scripture. Polycarp was a fanatically loyal disciple of the apostle John. He memorized most of John's teaching and would never deviate even the tiniest little bit from exactly what John had taught him. John appointed Polycarp as the head of the believer gatherings in the city of Smyrna in AD 90. One writing of Polycarp has survived, his letter to the Philippians. In that letter, Polycarp either quotes or refers to all 27 books of the New Testament. This suggests that John, who was himself an eyewitness of Jesus' resurrection, must have told Polycarp that the 27 New Testament books were authoritative Scripture. Since these books were apparently accepted as Scripture at these early dates under the supervision of John, an eyewitness of Jesus' resurrection, it is most likely that the authorships assigned to the New Testament books by the early church fathers were correct. John would have known about such authorships. Even though Wellhausen and his followers dispute what I have just written concerning the dates and authenticity of the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), their reasons for doing so are based on their anti-supernatural assumptions discussed in the last chapter, rather than upon the evidence of the early documents, which I have cited above. I'm not claiming that the facts I have cited prove beyond any doubt that the four Gospels are first century documents written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, as the church fathers uniformly affirm, but that all the facts available strongly point in this direction.

**The Answer to the Charge That the Bible Has Been Corrupted:** Just because the Bible (including the New Testament) claims to be the authoritative Word of God and the New Testament believers considered it to be so, of course, doesn't prove that it is. Some claim that it has been changed and corrupted over many centuries. They doubt that it can even be trusted as reliable testimony, let alone as the Word of God. As we consider these matters, we need to think more deeply about the early days of the New Testament. Before the printing press was invented, all copies of all documents were made by hand. In those days, transportation and communication between distant geographic sites was slow and difficult.

**Initial Writing:** When each book of the New Testament was first written and presented to a group of believer gatherings and their leaders in a specific location, quite logically, copies were soon made and carried to other believer gatherings. More copies were made in each new location and further dispersed until they were present in believer gatherings all over the Roman world. By AD 90, many copies of all the New Testament books must have already been made and widely dispersed (for Clement, Ignatius and Polycarp to have quoted them in their writings, as has already been mentioned). As copies got old or worn, new hand-written copies were made to replace them in each geographic location to which they had been dispersed.

**Copyist Errors:** As with all hand-written copies, despite the best efforts of trained scribes, copyist errors occurred and occasionally even some intentional changes were, apparently, also introduced. Whenever a copyist error or intentional change occurred it was passed on only to future copies made from the copy with the error or change in it. This created families of copies having the same identifying copyist errors or changes. But those changes or errors would not appear in other families of copies made in other geographic locations.

**Strength in Numbers:** In the case of the New Testament, there exist in museums and private collections today over 24,000 handwritten Greek manuscripts originating from diverse locations all over the ancient world. Some of these manuscripts are of the entire New Testament, some are fragments of the New Testament and some are writings from early Christian writers quoting the New Testament. No other ancient document has even 1/500th as many such handwritten copies in their original language available for analysis. Textual critics spend their lives comparing these handwritten copies. They can, to a large extent, detect what errors or changes have crept into which families of copies and correct them. Because the New Testament books were copied and dispersed to various geographic locations so soon after their original writing, textual critics can come close to recapturing the actual original documents. The highly acclaimed textual critics Westcott and Hort were convinced that only about 0.1% of the New Testament (about 1/3 of one page, consisting of the last few verses in the Gospel of Mark and the first half of the eighth chapter of the Gospel of John) is in any doubt.

**Reliable and Authentic:** This means that, other than 1/3 of a page, the Greek New Testament we now have is, for all practical purposes, identical to what was originally written. This makes the New Testament an extremely authentic document. It is the unaltered actual writing of the apostles and their associates.

**The Real Choice That We All Have:** As a result, I suggest that everyone is left with one of three choices as to what to believe regarding Jesus' resurrection:

1. The New Testament writers engaged in a conspiracy to foist a con job on the world, even sacrificing their lives to pull it off. Jesus didn't rise from the dead. He's a fake.
2. Or, some unknown individual or group of individuals fooled all of Jesus' disciples and Paul. The disciples and Paul were well-meaning dupes, even to the point of death. Therefore, again, Jesus didn't rise from the dead. He's a fake.
3. The eyewitness accounts of the New Testament are sincere expressions of what the authors



knew from first-hand experience and believed to be true. When you combine this fact with the empty tomb in spite of the Jewish leaders having posted guards, the many fulfilled prophecies surrounding Jesus' life and work, the uniquely remarkable and reportedly sinless life of Jesus, the character of his disciples and their willingness to die for their faith, the fact that Sunday worship began at this time in commemoration of Jesus' resurrection and the fact that celebration of the Lord's Supper also began at this time commemorating Jesus' death and (implicitly) also His resurrection, you have almost overwhelmingly strong evidence that Jesus did rise from the dead. If Jesus did rise from the dead, then, logically, He's everything the Bible claims Him to be. Since options 1 and 2 are difficult to believe (though there were people in the first century, and there are people today, who believe one of these options), the Bible makes as strong a case as can be made in support of option 3.



Admittedly, it is an extreme claim to say that Jesus rose from the dead and is God. Many people may refuse to believe that claim regardless of what evidence supports it. The Bible itself tells us that no one is going to believe option 3 unless God personally touches their mind in such a way as to enable them to believe it. The Bible says that such faith is a gift from God. We all have our natural, sinful, anti-God bias. This will very likely lead us to fight to avoid believing option 3. Nevertheless, I hope we can all see that, even if any of us doesn't yet believe that Jesus rose from the dead, it is, in view of the evidence, not unreasonable for people to believe that He did. For those who do believe option 3, it follows that Jesus is God and that all He said must be true.

**Old Testament Reliability:** Therefore, those people who believe option 3 conclude that the Old Testament of Jesus' day was the accurately-transmitted and dependable Word of God, because what they consider to be authentic eyewitness documents report Jesus as saying so.

**The Argument for the Bible's Total Reliability:** Also, based on what they consider to be the authentic eyewitness reports of Jesus' sayings, people who believe option 3 consider Jesus, as the true Son of God, to have authorized the apostles and their associates to write the New Testament Scriptures.

Therefore, for those who believe option 3, it follows that the entire Bible is the Word of God. They also, very reasonably, consider it all to be virtually identical to what was originally written by Moses, all the prophets and all the apostles. To these people, it also seems that God had perfectly arranged the time of Jesus entering the world. With the Roman Empire being what it was, and with the Greek language being known all over the Roman world, it was possible, probably for the first time in history, for a verifiably authentic New Testament resulting in a verifiably authentic entire Bible to be presented to the world.

Let's return now to the two objections, A and B, with which we began this chapter.

**A. Was divine inspiration unknown to the original writers of the Bible? Was it something foisted upon them by later generations? Clearly, we have seen that the answer is "No." Many of the Biblical authors stated explicitly that God was personally directing them in everything they wrote. Because of this fact, a culture must have developed in Old Testament times in which the Jewish people were expecting writings to be added to God's Word and were scrutinizing candidates that came along. They chose the 39 books we have today in the Jewish Scriptures which we call the Old Testament. These are the same Jewish Scriptures that Jesus had and that He declared to be inspired Scripture. Therefore it is apparent, for people who believe option 3, that the Jewish people were directed by God and chose correctly as to which books to include in the Old Testament, even though a very few of the authors (the authors of the books of Ruth and Esther, for example) give no indication of their awareness of divine inspiration.**

**B. Was the Bible altered beyond recognition because it was copied so many times over a period of two or three millennia? Clearly the answer again is "No." Because copies of the New Testament**

books were made very soon after their initial writing and dispersed to geographically separated groups of believers and because there are so many hand-written Greek New Testament manuscripts still in existence, New Testament copyist-errors can be identified and corrected, resulting in a fully reliable New Testament. This process in turn authenticates Jesus' resurrection and, as a result, all that the New Testament claims about Him. Finally, Jesus Himself, as recorded in a fully reliable and authentic New Testament, confirms the reliability of the Old Testament books.

## Miracles

We live in a scientific age. Many people (certainly Wellhausen and those following in his train) don't believe in miracles. Miracles are considered to be unscientific. They cannot be reproduced in a laboratory. Many so-called miracle workers on the religious scene appear to be fakes, exploiting people's gullibility for the purpose of financial gain. The assumption is often made that the miracles reported in the Bible are similar and were only believed at that time because of people's greater gullibility in a prescientific age. If real miracles were occurring then, why aren't the same kinds of miracles taking place today? Consider four points in the Bible's defense:



First, miracles did not occur uniformly throughout Bible history, but only rarely at specific times and for specific purposes. For example, miracles occurred during the life of Daniel and then during the lives of Jesus and His disciples, but not during the intervening period of 500 years. Therefore, an apparent lack of miracles today is not inconsistent with the Bible's claims.

Second, it is helpful to consider a story Jesus told in the 16th chapter of Luke. A rich man who ended up in Hell begged Abraham to "send [the recently deceased] Lazarus back to earth to warn my brothers so they don't end up in this terrible place." Abraham said, "they have Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them." But the rich man objected. "Oh, if someone comes back to them from the dead, they would believe." Abraham said "No, if they don't believe Moses and the prophets, they won't believe if someone rises from the dead either." When we ask for such miracles today, this story suggests that God would probably say: "Let them listen to Jesus and the apostles. If they won't listen to them, they won't listen if anyone does miracles today either." Not that God can't or doesn't do miracles today, but it is foolish and misguided for anyone to demand them. Apparently, according to the Bible, God would have us understand that what He has done in giving us the Bible is sufficient. Nothing else is needed. So, an apparent lack of miracles today is not a good argument against believing the Bible.

Third, the believability of the Bible is strongly tied to the historical fact of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The previous chapter (as well as Chapter 2 of the previous booklet, "The Sword") recount the facts supporting belief in His resurrection. If a person is convinced that Jesus has risen from the dead, then that person will very likely also believe that Jesus is God, that all He said is true, that the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God and that all that is recorded in them is true and dependable, including the accounts of miracles. Even if you're a person who does not yet believe that Jesus rose from the dead, my hope is that, from reading this booklet, you might acknowledge that there is strong evidence for His resurrection and that, even from your point of view, His resurrection might just possibly have occurred. If so, logically, you should acknowledge that the miracles reported in the Bible might, just possibly, also have occurred.

Fourth, the Bible tells us plainly that Jesus' main purpose in coming to earth was to forgive sins (I Timothy 1:15). The many miraculous healings during Jesus' ministry authenticated His identity as the promised Messiah and, most importantly, His authority to forgive sins (Matthew 9:1-8). Once Jesus' power to forgive sins was established, the proliferation of miraculous healings ceased. If miraculous healings had continued occurring at the same rate as they occurred during Jesus' life, the attention of the world would have been diverted to healings rather than being focused on His central purpose, the forgiveness of sins.

In conclusion, the mention of miracles in the Bible, particularly the large number of miraculous healings reported during the time of Jesus and His apostles, does not provide grounds for rejecting its claim to be the Word of God, and the scarcity of these kinds of miracles today is also entirely consistent with the Bible's claims.

## Archaeology

Today, many college students will hear professors make statements like: “Moses, David and Solomon never existed as historical figures. These are the findings of modern archaeology.” Sitting under this kind of teaching can undermine people’s trust in the Bible as God’s Word. After all, if what the Bible says about Moses, David and Solomon cannot be trusted, why should we believe anything else the Bible teaches?

Let’s think about the study of archaeology for a few minutes. Biblical archaeology is based on what can be learned by digging up the ruins of old towns, cities and sites where people, in Bible times, used to live. After thousands of years, anything that can rot, burn or rust has long since disintegrated. In most cases, that limits archaeologists to what they can learn from bricks, broken pottery, and broken glass. These are normally all that’s left in the trash heaps of ancient civilizations after opportunists have scoured the sites for anything of value, like gold or jewelry. It’s obvious that only limited kinds of information can be gathered in this way. Styles of pottery change over time. Broken pieces of pottery indicate that a city was occupied in a certain time period, but it may not tell how many people lived there or their names or their life stories. These kinds of details are normally found only in written records.



Usually written records are on paper, parchment, cloth or leather. All these materials rot and burn. In Mesopotamia, there is an exception to this rule. There, first in the Sumerian culture and later in the Assyrian, Babylonian and Persian cultures, from 3000 BC to AD 100 a tradition flourished of writing with letters made by pressing a wedge-shaped stick into soft clay tablets (sometimes these were in shapes other than tablets, such as prisms and cylinders) and then drying the tablets in the sun. This material didn’t rot and only became more durable if burned in a fire. This was called cuneiform writing. This writing was mainly used by government officials making various kinds of official records. In 1849, a pioneer archaeologist named Austin Henry discovered the library of the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal, in the remains of the palace of Sennacherib in ancient Nineveh. It contained 30,000 cuneiform clay tablets. Most of these were sent to the British Museum. Since that time, impoverished and opportunistic local people began digging up other cuneiform tablets from all over Mesopotamia and selling them to museums and collectors from England, the United States and other places. Today, there are well over 100,000 of these cuneiform tablets in museums and private collections all over the world. In most cases, the actual origin of the tablets is unknown. Only about ten percent of these tablets have even been deciphered and translated.

As a result of these cuneiform writings, some information with a direct bearing on the Bible has happened to turn up.

**Belshazzar:** In the Bible, chapter 5 of the book of Daniel has the story of “the hand-writing on the wall.” According to the Bible, Belshazzar, the king of Babylon, was having a feast for 1000 of his nobles. Suddenly a hand appeared and wrote some words on the wall. Belshazzar was terrified and started to shake. He offered, as a reward to anyone who could explain the message, to make that person the third-ranking ruler in the kingdom. Eventually Daniel was brought in and explained the message. He said it meant that the king had been weighed in God’s scale and was found to be too light. His kingdom was going to be taken over by the Medes and the Persians. Then, that same night, the armies of the Medes and Persians entered the city, took over and, also on that same night, Belshazzar was put to death.

Critics used to have a field day with this story. They said it clearly had no basis in history. Belshazzar never existed. There was no such feast. According to the critics, the book of Daniel wasn’t written until 400 years after this event. The author, they asserted, created a good story that had no basis in fact. Herodotus and others had written extensively about the fall of Babylon, saying Naboni-

us was the king of Babylon at the time, not Belshazzar. Outside of the Bible no mention of a person named Belshazzar had ever occurred.

In the 1880s, three cuneiform documents were found and translated, "The Nabonidus Chronicle", "The Nabonidus Cylinder" and "The Cyrus Cylinder".<sup>2</sup> These three documents revealed the fact that Belshazzar was Nabonidus' oldest son, that Nabonidus was away from Babylon at the time of its fall and during much of his reign as king, that Belshazzar was in charge as the acting king, that Belshazzar had a feast for 1000 nobles on that night and that also on that night Belshazzar was put to death.

Of course, the critics easily explain this away. The writer of Daniel, 400 years later, must have had a historical document, unknown to us, giving him a few valid facts upon which to build his story.

Others, who are suspicious of such extreme coincidences, suspect that the accurate details of the story in the book of Daniel, including the offer to make Daniel the third-ranking ruler in the kingdom since Belshazzar was only the second-ranking ruler, suggest that the book was written by Daniel himself and that the hand-writing on the wall may have actually occurred.

**Sennacherib:** In II Kings chapter 19, the Bible tells the story of a godly king named Hezekiah (the king of Judah) being threatened by a large army of the Assyrian king, Sennacherib. (Twenty years before the reign of Sennacherib, the Assyrians had already forced the entire population of Israel out of Palestine and into exile.) Hezekiah prayed to God for help. God answered his prayer and promised that, by the next morning, the attacking army would all be dead. It happened as promised, and Sennacherib went back home with his tail between his legs.

The critics used to say that this too is a fabrication invented by an unknown writer 130 years after the event. According to Herodotus, the Assyrian army was defeated by the Ethiopians at the Egyptian border, and that's what saved Jerusalem, not a plague outside Jerusalem as the Bible describes.

However, a cuneiform writing called The Taylor Prism was discovered in Nineveh by a British soldier, Colonel Robert Taylor, in 1830 and translated in 1851 by Henry Rawlinson. This cuneiform document recorded Sennacherib's version of his campaign in Judah. This is what it said: "I carried away 200,000 captives from 46 of the fortified cities of Judah" (which the Bible confirms). "I had Hezekiah bottled up in Jerusalem like a bird in a cage" (which the Bible also confirms). Conspicuously absent is any mention of 185,000 soldiers being killed by an act of God in one night, but also conspicuously absent is any denial of this fact or alternate description of the outcome of that campaign. Seemingly, the Bible's account is accurate. The Assyrian king's account is doctored to only include those details of the event that place the Assyrian king in the most positive light and no details that would detract from his greatness.

The critics, of course, have an explanation for this unexpected new information. A freak occurrence of bubonic plague or some other disease struck the Assyrian camp.

Others, who are suspicious of coincidences, suspect that God miraculously delivered Hezekiah and Jerusalem just as the Bible affirms.

Also, this situation may well demonstrate the reason for a lack of information in the royal annals in the tombs of Egyptian kings regarding Moses, David or Solomon. There was no free press in ancient times. Scribes wrote only what passed the scrutiny of whatever king was in power at the time. It was not permissible for anything they wrote to detract from their king's power and glory. Therefore, it's

2. One of these was known at the time as "the Annals of Nabonidus", first discussed in print by Sir Henry Rawlinson in the *Athenaeum* magazine of 14 February 1880, with the first English transliteration and translation being published two years later by Professor T. G. Pinches in the *Transactions of the Society for Biblical Archaeology* (1882). The second was The Nabonidus Cylinder, discovered by Hormuzd Rassam in Sippar in 1881. The third was The Cyrus Cylinder, discovered by Hormuzd Rassam in 1879 in Mozul, Iraq.

hardly surprising that in the tombs of Egyptian kings, no mention is made of Moses, David or Solomon. Reference to any of the great achievements of these men would have made the Egyptian kings look bad by comparison.

**Jericho:** In the 20th century, archaeology became painstakingly slow and disciplined. The exact original position of every grain of sand and debris at archaeological sites, as well as artifacts, was carefully recorded.

Some sites of Biblical significance were excavated in this way. Jericho was one of the most important.

Most people know the story of the walls of Jericho. The Bible tells us that after Moses died, his assistant, Joshua, led the people of Israel into the land of Palestine. The first city they attacked was Jericho. According to the Bible, Joshua and his army marched around the city once a day for 6 days. The seventh day, they marched seven times around the city, blew their trumpets and shouted, and the walls of Jericho came tumbling down. They walked straight in over the collapsed walls and easily conquered the city. As God's instruments of judgment, they killed everyone and everything, took no plunder and, instead, burned everything.

Critics in the Wellhausen tradition considered this story to have been a pure fabrication invented by an unknown author almost 1000 years after the supposed time of Joshua.

Here is a case where one of the Bible's seemingly unbelievable stories could be tested against the actual physical remains of an ancient city to see whether there's any correlation.

Kathleen Kenyon, a renowned British archaeologist, led a team in a slow and careful excavation of a small portion of Jericho in 1952-1958. She found that the walls of Jericho were in two parts. The lower part was made of earth and stone. On top of that was a higher part made of bricks. When the city was destroyed, the higher brick part had collapsed in an outward direction (caused, she conjectured, by an earthquake) in such a way that the fallen wall created a ramp allowing an invading army to walk straight into the city by climbing up the ramp over the lower part of the walls. She further found that everything inside the city was covered with a three-foot thick layer of ash, indicating that everything in the city had been burned. She also found that inside the ash layer were clay storage pots full of grain which was charred from burning. This indicated that the city's stores of food were not depleted as they would have been after a long siege. The city must have fallen quickly after only a very short siege. Also, the attack happened just after the harvest season when the containers storing food were full, but those stores of food were burned with the rest of the city. This was highly unusual, because stores of grain had value and were normally carried away as plunder by any invading army. All these facts lined up precisely with what the Bible describes in the story of Joshua's conquest of Jericho.

However, Kenyon concluded that Joshua had nothing to do with the city's destruction. It had occurred, she affirmed, not later than 1550 BC, 150 years before Joshua's supposed arrival on the scene. She published these conclusions in 1957, much to the delight of the critics and much to the chagrin of Bible-believing scholars.<sup>3</sup>

The situation changed, however, in 1983, after Kenyon's death, when the actual field data from her Jericho excavation was published. Other archaeologists looking at Kenyon's data found that she had dated the fall of Jericho based on the absence of a certain kind of expensive, imported Cyprian pottery that was in use between 1550 and 1400 BC. The problem with this means of dating the fall of Jericho was that Jericho was a backwater community off the main trade routes, and the part of the city Kenyon excavated was an impoverished area, a slum. It was unlikely that expensive Cyprian pottery would be found in such a location. Its absence could hardly be a significant factor in deter-

3. Kenyon, *Digging Up Jericho* (London: Ernest Benn, 1957), p. 262.

mining the date of the destruction of the city. Surprisingly, Kenyon's field data indicated that she had found many examples of three other kinds of local pottery that were in use only between 1450 and 1400 BC. For some unknown reason, Kenyon ignored all three of these other kinds of local pottery in arriving at her conclusions. In the light of all the field data, the correct date for Jericho's destruction<sup>4</sup> is about 1400 BC, the same time the Bible gives for Joshua's attack on the city.

Of course, the critics find a way to argue around this fact as well, calling it just a coincidence, and suggesting that the Bible writer happened to have a little more accurate historical information available to him than he was previously given credit for.

But to those of a suspicious nature who find it hard to believe in coincidences, it looks like the whole thing happened just as the Bible describes. It also looks suspiciously like the book was written by a contemporary witness who was able to get all the facts straight, Joshua himself, rather than an unknown author who came along 1000 years later. Finally, those suspicious individuals might tend to suspect that, if the book of Joshua (who had been Moses' assistant) wasn't written 1000 years after the fact, then neither were the five books of Moses. They may have been written by Moses himself, not an unknown group of writers operating 1000 years after the fact, as the Wellhausen school proposed.

There are many unanswered questions in Biblical archaeology. I am not even remotely claiming to be an expert in this subject. There are experts in this field who don't believe the Bible to be historically accurate. They base their opinion on the absence (at least up until now) of evidence in support of certain Biblical references, not the presence of evidence that contradicts the Bible. There are also experts in this field who do believe that the Bible is historically accurate. As far as I can tell, what the renowned archaeologist, Nelson Glueck, wrote 60 years ago remains true today.<sup>5</sup>

**"It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference. Scores of archaeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or exact detail historical statements in the Bible."**

All things considered, it seems entirely possible that a person with a suspicious mind could reasonably suspect that, given the three examples cited in this chapter (Belshazzar, Sennacherib and Jericho), and the fact that no archaeological finds have been found to contradict the Bible, not only are these three miraculous stories true, but that the rest of the Biblical stories are as well.

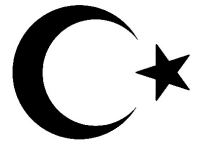
We return to our college student who has heard his or her professor state that, due to a lack of archaeological evidence, Moses, David and Solomon are not considered by many to be real historic people. Shouldn't this same student also be told that, for other people, actual archaeological evidence in support of a small number of Biblical stories, as well as a total lack of evidence to the contrary for the rest of the Biblical stories, are valid reasons for some people to suspect that all the stories in the Bible may be true? Isn't that no more than fair?

A few archaeological facts give confirmation of some biblical events. On other points, the silence of archaeology doesn't mean that the Bible isn't true. The minimalists are free to take their minimalist view. But they have no right to try to force their view on everyone else. There's no good reason that any of us can't, in good conscience and fully informed, take a maximalist view and believe that everything in the Bible is true. We should still honestly admit that only a few Biblical stories are supported by the results of archaeology while for many more Biblical stories, archaeology is silent. But that silence does not constitute proof, or even evidence, that those stories are not true. Archaeology is, by its nature, very incomplete. The fact that its picture of Bible times is incomplete is exactly what everyone should have always expected.

4. Bryant. G. Wood, "Did the Israelites Conquer Jericho? A New Look at the Archaeological Evidence," *Biblical Archaeology Review*, March/April 1990, pp. 44-58. (Dr. Wood is an expert in the dating of Palestinian pottery.)

5. Dr. Nelson Glueck, *Rivers in the Desert* (New York: Farrar, Strous and Cudahy, 1959), p. 136.

## Other Religions



In the modern world, we're surrounded by a vast number of religions. We come into daily contact with people who are serious practitioners of all the world's major religions, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. We also frequently encounter those involved in an almost endless array of cults and isms: Scientology, Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, the list goes on and on. Many of those we meet are very serious about their beliefs and are totally committed to whatever religious group they adhere to. Most of these groups claim to be the one true way. It's difficult for any of us to make sense of all this. Many people throw up their hands and say, "I have no idea whom to believe. I see no way to make an intelligent decision regarding any kind of religious belief." It's also common for people to say, "They're probably each right in some sense. Each person probably finds and follows the religion that's right for him. It might be right for you and wrong for me."

It is helpful to consider what the Bible has to say about this situation and to see what instruction, guidance and help it offers.

First, we ought not to think that it's surprising or unexpected that there are so many confusing religious voices. The Bible claims that it is the one and only true Word of God. But it also affirms that people will not automatically gravitate towards its truth. According to the Bible, we all have a sinful nature. This pulls us away from the God of the Bible and towards something else that is more appealing to that sinful nature. To understand and follow the Bible takes effort and work, not because it's difficult to understand, but because so many other people are going in a different direction and urging us to join them.

Second, according to the Bible, there is an evil personal spirit called the devil, or Satan. He also has other personal entities called demons who can influence and affect people's lives. These forces act to direct people away from the Bible and towards something else. It could be another religion, a hobby, a pleasure, or anything that moves us away from the Bible and the faith it explains. As a result, the Bible makes it plain that we will continually be presented with many spiritual choices that can draw us away from God. In our environment, with our sinful nature and with all of Satan's activities, coming to the true biblical faith is difficult. Everyone is in a spiritual battle. Battles, by definition, are not easy. We need God's grace and help.

God, according to the Bible, has primarily provided that needed grace and help in the Bible itself. Only the Bible is based on such an amazing, unique historical event as the resurrection of Jesus from the dead as well as on other powerful evidences. Becoming convinced of the truth of Jesus' resurrection from the dead helps us to accept all of Jesus' and the Bible's claims. Once we accept those claims, we will begin to realize that the Bible is God's idea of how to make mankind right with Himself and that other religions are, by contrast, people's own ideas of how to get to God. We can, then, begin to let the Bible help us evaluate various religious claims and distinguish those that are erroneous and harmful from those that are true and helpful. It will require some effort and struggle, but with the help of God's Holy Spirit and the Bible, God's Word, we can succeed in that struggle.



## Evolution

It makes the most sense to me to begin this chapter by asking you to agree with me on the following definition of evolution: **“Evolution is the belief that all life evolved by naturalistic chance alone from a single, common ancestor over approximately the past 4 billion years.”** According to this definition, when people say they believe God used evolution as His means of bringing the present world into being, they, by saying this, are changing evolution into something else altogether. If God did control, direct or use evolution, this, by definition, is no longer evolution. It’s a form of creation. No matter what means God may have used, if God is responsible for what happened, it ceases to be evolution because it was not caused by blind, naturalistic chance. It was caused by God. What evolution teaches (by this I mean macroevolution and not, as will be explained later, microevolution) is that all is caused by blind chance. What the Bible teaches is that all is caused by God. I believe it to be essential that we make this distinction and, by so doing, recognize that evolution (that is, macroevolution) and the teachings of the Bible are mutually incompatible.

Evolution is taught in our high schools and colleges. When you realize the degree to which evolution stands in direct opposition to the teaching of the Bible, the fact that the majority of students attending colleges and universities turn away from any kind of Biblical faith should be a surprise to no one. I would like to show you in this chapter, whether you’re a college student who is intimidated by the uniformly anti-Biblical stance of your professors or whether you’re anybody else, that the apparently overpowering attack against the Bible by evolution is, in reality, only a paper tiger. It is no excuse for rejecting the Bible and for failing to give its claims the most serious consideration. I’ll attempt to do this by making three points.

**1. Punctuated Equilibrium:** Fossils, the petrified remains of animals that lived in past times, are construed by evolutionists to demonstrate the evolution of life, over a long period of time, from simple forms to all the complex life forms that exist today. During the early years, after Charles Darwin devised the theory of evolution, scientists searched diligently for fossils to confirm his theory. They believed that once all the fossils were unearthed, the full history of the evolution of life from simple to complex forms would be clearly laid out for everyone to plainly see.

However, as the fossil record was more fully explored, it became apparent that there was no fossil evidence for any transitional forms between completely different basic kinds of creatures. There were plenty of examples of little horses turning into big horses and many things like that, but no examples showing a horse turning into anything else. The absence of transitional forms became so striking and acute that the renowned evolutionist and Harvard professor, Steven Jay Gould, proposed the “Punctuated Equilibrium” theory of evolution in 1972. What that means is that Gould fully accepted the fact that no transitional forms between distinctly different kinds of life forms had been found in the fossil record and probably never would be. Therefore, he postulated that, whenever a large step in the evolutionary process occurred, it happened so suddenly that it left no trace in the fossils. In other words, he admitted that the fossils show only sudden changes from one completely different kind of organism to another completely different kind. They never show a series of gradual changes from one organism to a completely different kind. The fossils show gradual changes between similar organisms only. Following these gradual changes are huge gaps whenever something new and different appears in the fossil record. In other words, the fossils make it look like there was a creator who, at various times, suddenly created completely different kinds of creatures. Gould’s viewpoint would be that, “because we assume there is no such creator, and because we assume different creatures came about only by chance evolution, we must conclude that evolution must work by punctuated equilibrium!” How can a scientist discern whether one of these sudden jumps to a new and completely different life form occurred due to chance or due to the creative power of God? No experiment scientists can conceivably perform will shed any light on this question. Science cannot make a determination whether an event should be attributed to chance or an act of God when there is not even any observable evidence about that event. This conclusion, that Dr. Gould’s steps

of punctuated equilibrium happened by pure chance and were not acts of divine creation, is nothing more than Dr. Gould's personal opinion. It should not be regarded as science at all, and it is an opinion that is counter-intuitive. After all, for thousands of years, people have concluded from looking at the different amazing and complex life forms which exist that they require a divine creator. Now, just because Dr. Gould ascribes the sudden appearance of exactly the same variety of life forms to pure chance, says they suddenly came into existence a long time ago, and gives it a fancy name (punctuated equilibrium), everyone's supposed to suddenly discard what common sense has always told them and say, "Yes, Dr. Gould, all these complex life forms just appeared suddenly by chance." Dr. Gould hasn't given us any reason to change from what people have always believed before the theory of evolution was ever invented. The whole idea of evolution was that everything occurred in very small steps by chance over vast periods of time, not by sudden huge leaps to tremendously different and complex organisms out of nothing. That new twist Dr. Gould has put on things makes no more sense now than in the days before Darwin. The fact that such a desperate measure was necessary demonstrates the fact that the theory of evolution stands on very shaky ground. The Bible says that we all know in our heart of hearts that, when we consider the complex life forms that exist (as well as the rest of creation), there must be a divine creator (Romans 1:20). This is true regardless of whether or not steps in the history of life progressed from simpler to more complex forms and whether or not it happened a long time ago.<sup>6</sup> The sudden appearances of many vastly different kinds of complex life forms requires a divine creator.



**2. Microevolution vs Macroevolution:** Microevolution is the transition from one form of life to one that is similar but slightly different. For example, Charles Darwin observed that a certain kind of bird called a finch had found its way from South America to the Galapagos Islands and had evolved into four or five distinctly different types of finches. This is called microevolution, because, in the end, they were all still finches, although having some differing physical traits. Microevolution was not well understood in the time of Darwin. It could be argued that he discovered microevolution and mistakenly confused it with macroevolution. It seemed logical to Darwin that, if one kind of finch could, over time, transform itself into 5 distinctly different, though similar, types of finches, then, over a far greater amount of time and by the exact same process, some early life form could transform itself into all the vast array of life forms that we have today. It turns out that Darwin's logical conclusion was not born out by the fossil record. Hence, we have Gould's punctuated equilibrium theory. Microevolution is the only real, verifiable fact that evolutionists can point to in support of their theory. It is true that there are hundreds of examples of microevolution everywhere. It can be argued, for example, that the entire cat family, including lions and tigers, descended from one common cat ancestor. Practically no one will disagree with that statement today, even those who firmly believe the Bible. But that's still only microevolution, not macroevolution. They're all still cats. When evolutionists confidently affirm, "All scientists are so sure that evolution is a fact that they no longer even discuss whether or not it took place. The only thing up for discussion now is the details of how it happened," they're not talking about macroevolution. They're talking about microevolution, like all cats descending from a common ancestor. Now that microevolution is understood and accepted, it turns out to be just as compatible with the Bible and divine creation as it is with the theory of evolution. Hence, the fact that microevolution is a reality is not even evidence for, let alone proof of, the theory of macroevolution. After all, why wouldn't God, if He were going to create different kinds of animals, create each kind with a capacity for microevolution? That way, each kind of creature would be adaptable to changes in the environment and better able to survive.

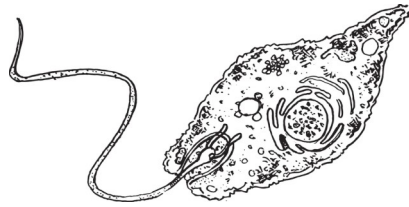


About the only argument evolutionists have left, after we point out the lack of evidence for and absurdity of punctuated equilibrium and the fact that microevolution is inadmissible as evidence for macroevolution, is the old question, "Well, how else could everything have gotten here?" To which

6. The questions about time are difficult and complex, hence they are not suitable for inclusion in this booklet. If anyone wants to know my viewpoint on questions of time, feel free to email me and enquire: [jschleh@juno.com](mailto:jschleh@juno.com)

question, of course, the answer is, “God created it.”

**3. Irreducible Complexity:** Besides the fossil record, when one considers evolution, he or she needs to think about the detailed microscopic structure of living creatures. In the beginning of the study of evolution, Darwin’s followers believed that a more thorough knowledge of the details of living organisms would make it clear how they evolved. They reasoned that most people believed in creation because, by simple observation, living creatures seemed to be so amazingly designed that a divine creator was required, just as has already been pointed out here. But they believed that this was only the result of mere superficial observation. Once the true nature of living organisms was understood on the microscopic level, they assumed, it would become apparent that all creatures evolved by chance. However, now that modern science has uncovered much of what happens on



the molecular level, many scientists have begun rethinking this position. They are finding that living organisms contain a multitude of complex machines on the molecular level that are intrinsically complex and cannot be simplified. Many scientists have concluded that these machines cannot have arisen by chance. An intelligent creator is required.<sup>7</sup> Of course, the evolutionists counter with the same kind of argument that invented punctuated equilibrium. Here the punctuated equilibrium they’re proposing resulted in the sudden appearance of

these complicated machines that exist on the molecular level. But the same common-sense objection applies. Just as common sense tells us that complex living organisms don’t suddenly appear by chance, the same is obviously true of the intrinsically complex molecular machines.

When a person understands the three points shared above, belief in evolution is seen to be a lot less scientific than most people suppose. I would even suggest that it’s not scientific at all.

**Conclusion:** Even though evolution is so seemingly intimidating and has a stranglehold on higher education, I strongly urge everyone who reads this booklet not to be intimidated by Gould’s and other evolutionists’ bold assertions. They turn out, under careful examination, to be nothing but their own personal opinions and without *scientific* support. The three points shared above demonstrate that belief in a divine creator (and thus belief in the Bible as the Word of God) is actually more consistent with the latest findings of science than belief in evolution.

7. *Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution* by Michael J. Behe, professor of biochemistry at Lehigh University in Pennsylvania (New York: Free Press, 1996).

## Final Thoughts

Let me bring this booklet to a conclusion. I hope we can all agree that, when examined carefully, none of the challenges to the Bible rule out the possibility that the Bible is all true, that it is the Word of God and that all its glorious promises will be a future reality. I don't think that I (or anyone) can prove that all that the Bible affirms is true to every person's satisfaction. The best we can do is demonstrate that it quite possibly might be. We can point to the strong evidence in support of the New Testament's four eyewitness accounts of the details of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. Most fair-minded people will, I hope, look at the evidence and at least say, "That is strong evidence. Jesus might possibly have come back to life from the dead, even if I, personally, don't think He did." I have pointed out before that no one is going to trust in Jesus unless God personally touches his heart and mind and enables him to do so.

My hope is that all who have read this far can, at least, see good reasons why people believe in Jesus' resurrection, as well as in all the rest of the Bible, and even if you might not yet be personally convinced that all these things are true, you will acknowledge that, just possibly, they could be!

If I've accomplished that goal, it seems to me that you face a dilemma.

First, on the negative side of things, if you are not yet convinced that Jesus rose from the dead, but you agree that, just possibly, He might have, then you have this problem: Suppose you think that there's only a one percent chance that Jesus rose from the dead and that therefore the Bible is all true. Think about what that means. There's a one percent chance that when you die, you'll stand before Jesus in a day of judgment. He'll say, "What have you done with my claims?" Then He'll say, "I never knew you. Depart from Me into the fire prepared for the devil and his angels." It's a terrible thing for you to face even a one percent chance of this happening. For other much less serious threats, we take protective action. We may have a less than one percent chance of our houses burning down, but we all have home-owners insurance to protect us just in case they do. What action are you going to take to protect yourself against even a one percent chance that you will die and go to Hell? What if there's more than a one percent chance? What if it's a twenty-five percent chance? (What if, as I believe, it's a one hundred percent chance?) **"It's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."**

Let's suppose, from your point of view, there's just a one percent chance. What can you do? Here's what I suggest. Make up your mind to spend time every day reading the New Testament for 15 or 20 minutes and writing down in a notebook what you think it's saying and why. Commit to doing this every day for a year. (Is that a ridiculous proposal? How about a month? A week?) As you do it, try to have this attitude: "God, if you're really there and if this is really your Word, show me, and I'll obey it." There's a promise in John 7:17 that, if you do this, God will enable you to know that it's all true. I know, you're probably scared to death to attempt such a thing. It might turn your life upside down!

So second, on the positive side of things, if you're not convinced that Jesus rose from the dead, but you agree that, just possibly, He might have, there are all those glorious Bible promises that might also possibly be a reality and might come true for you. Shouldn't that make you eager to do what I've suggested above and explore this glorious possibility? Try it and see what happens. I think you'll be glad you did.

These two booklets that I've written ("The Sword" and "The Shield") are only a poor and feeble attempt to introduce and defend the Bible. But the Bible is like a tiger. The many attacks against the Bible that cause people to close their minds to it, serve to, from their point of view, put the tiger in a cage and prevent it from getting to them. Getting anyone to actually engage with the Bible, in the

right attitude of mind and in a prolonged way, is like letting the tiger out of the cage. Once it's out of the cage, God and the Bible will do all that needs to be done in that person's life.

Here's my final comment. God takes no pleasure in anyone going to Hell. Neither do I. He wants people to repent and believe, and be saved from Hell. God has brought judgment on the world at different times in the past (at Belshazzar's feast, to Sennacherib's army, to the inhabitants of Jericho, to the inhabitants of Sodom), most notably during the flood of Noah's day. At that time only 8 people entered the ark and were saved. Presumably more could have entered the ark, but Jesus said they were too preoccupied with the affairs of life, eating, drinking, marrying and giving in marriage. Then the flood came and took them all away. The judgment of God will come again. Don't imagine that you'll escape. It's a good thing to be afraid. The Bible says that Noah, **"moved with fear, built an ark to the saving of his soul"**. Today, the Bible says that Jesus is the ark. The ark in Noah's day could have held more people, but not everyone. But Jesus, the present-day ark, can hold everyone. I deserve to go to Hell as much as anyone, maybe more than most. But I'm not going there, because I'm in the ark. I ran to Jesus, and I'm safe. Do the same thing. The Bible promises that Jesus will never turn you away if you want to come to Him (John 6:37). Jesus is the ark. Run to Jesus, and you'll be safe too!

Feel free to share any comments or feedback with me: [jschleh@juno.com](mailto:jschleh@juno.com)

Both this booklet and the companion booklet, "The Sword" are posted online. Here's the link:

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Wishing you the best always,

Rev. John Schleh

**About the author:** He graduated from Princeton University with a degree in Physics in 1966. He then attended Grace Seminary, from which he graduated in 1969 with an MDiv degree. He served as an assistant pastor for 2 years and then served as an urban missionary to youth in inner city Philadelphia for 42 years. In 2014, he formed Mentoring Ministry, training young men in home renovation skills and Bible study while helping needy families with home repairs. He is presently the director of Mentoring Ministry and is also semi-retired.

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