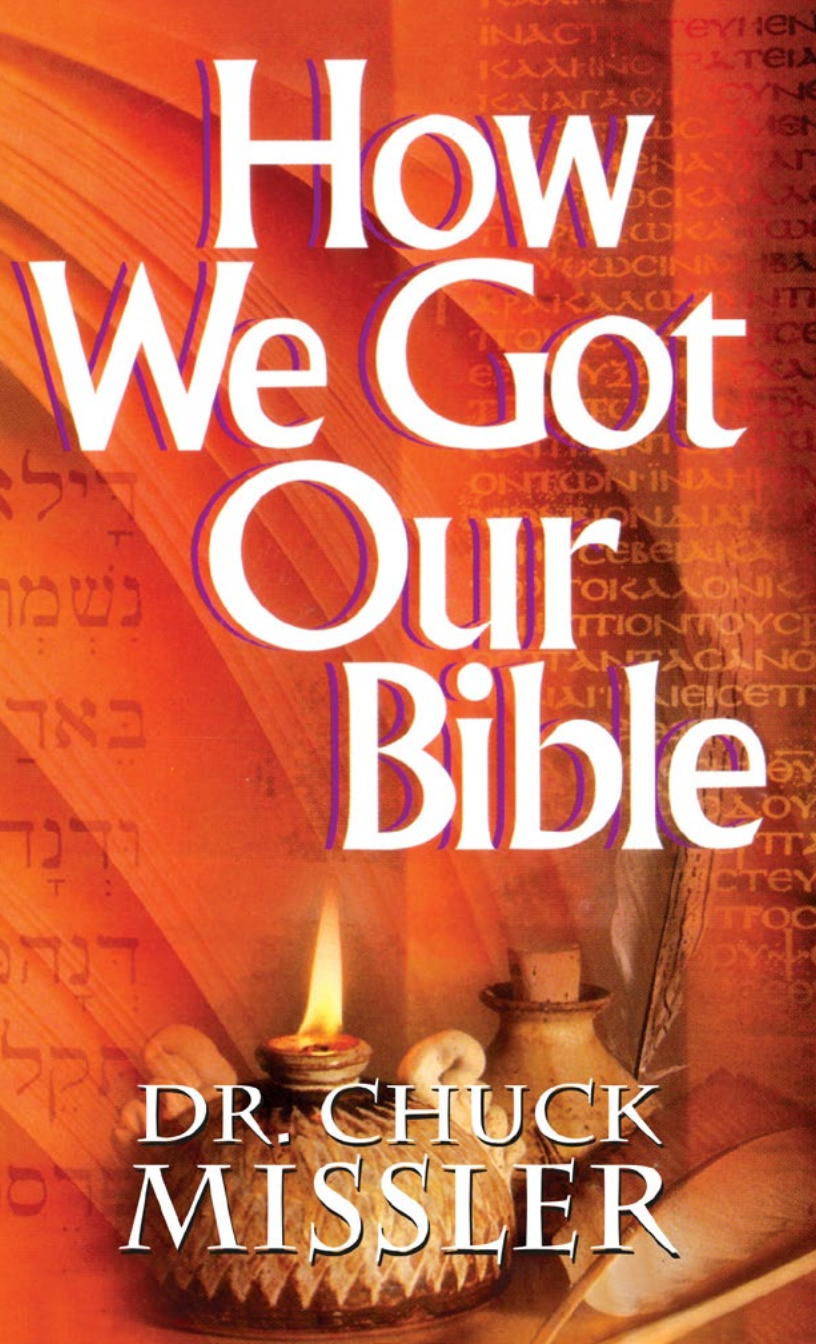


How We Got Our Bible



DR. CHUCK
MISSLER

How We Got Our Bible

By Dr. Chuck Missler



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How We Got Our Bible

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Introduction

Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me,

Psalm 40:7

The Bible is the single most important book of all time, selling an estimated 5 billion copies. It has been translated into 349 languages, and 2123 languages have at least one book of the Bible. At the same time, the Bible is scrutinized and attacked more than any other book in the world. It has been outlawed, confiscated and burned at different times and places in history. It has been smuggled into jail cells and across borders. John Huss was burned at the stake for teaching from the Bible as the final authority for the Church over any earthly church rulers. William Tyndale was strangled and burned for translating the Bible into English. Every week, millions of Christians gather to discuss its words, even as “higher” critics attempt to explain it through the lens of metaphysical naturalism. What we believe about the Bible can be the most important, central issue in our lives, threading its way into the very fabric of who we are and how we live each day.

Where did the Bible come from? Why do we believe its origin is supernatural? Who defined the canon of Scripture? Most importantly, is the Bible the Word of God? You and I are gambling our eternity on the answer to that last question. Why do we believe God is the author of the

Bible, and can each one of us defend that belief? Dark times are on the horizon, and it is increasingly important that we learn to live by faith. Where we place our faith fully depends on how we view the Scriptures.

Over the past 50 years, I have been privileged to travel around the world and talk to people about the Word of God and the saving power of Jesus Christ. Of course, I always get a lot of questions about the Bible. People ask me: “Chuck, how do I know the Bible is the Word of God?” “How do I know the Bible is true and accurate?” “How did we even get the Bible we have today?” “Which version of the Bible is the best?”

The purpose of this little book is to deal with these question and to assure its readers that the Bible is reliable, accurate, and applicable to the world today. Through these pages, we will explore some lesser-known facts about the Bible and take common knowledge about its pages to a deeper level. We will defend the authenticity of the Bible as the Word of God so that you, dear reader, might equip others to do the same. The Word of God is a miracle the Lord has given to us so that we may know Him better and live our lives according to Truth. May God bless each one of us as we absorb this material and press onward to live it out every day.

Chapter 1

The Nature of Reality

Within recent years, many members of Protestant denominational churches and the Roman Catholic Church have turned away from the Bible as the fully inspired Word of God. We hear arguments that the Bible contradicts itself or that it contradicts the “truths” of modern culture and science. Many people say the Bible *contains* the Word of God, but cannot be relied on to *be* the Word of God in all its entirety. This is a key issue. Is the Bible really true?

Two World Views

Ultimately, there are two basic world views we can hold. One view regards everything we experience as the result of some cosmic accident. “In the Beginning there was nothing, and then it exploded.” The other view is that everything we experience is the deliberate result of a Creator. Of course, there are numerous variations on each of these views, but each of us must decide where we will place our trust. Each of these world views holds possible solutions to the biggest puzzles of life:

- Who am I?
- Where did I come from?
- Where am I going?
- To whom am I accountable?

It is ultimately important that we find the true answers to these questions.

Rejection of Authority

You and I live in a time of rebellion and self-worship. Parental and marital authority are challenged in the homes and courts. Political, academic and ecclesiastical authority are challenged across the land.

Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

Genesis 3:1

Here, near the very beginning, we are introduced to Satan, the serpent, our adversary, and the first thing we see him do is question God's Word. "*Yea, hath God said?*"

His next step is to slander God's character with straight denial. "*Ye shall not surely die,*" ([Gen 3:4](#)). Thus, Satan encouraged the rejection of God's authority at the very beginning, while humanity was yet in its infancy. Eve failed to trust God, Adam followed her in directly disobeying what

God had told him, and humankind lost everything as a result.

We find the same pattern today. A number of social indicators deteriorate rapidly after 1963 in the United States. There were fewer than 10 births per 1000 unmarried teen women (ages 15-19) prior to 1947, and between 1955 and 1964, the number remained steadily between 15 and 16.¹ After 1964, however, the numbers of teenagers giving birth out of wedlock climbed steadily during the next 30 years to more than 46 births per 1000 teen women in 1994.² Divorce rates escalated, families broke up, crime rates rose, and the acceptance of homosexuality became commonplace. As of 2015, more than 58 million unborn children have been murdered in the United States because they were considered inconvenient. Fifty-eight million. That is nearly ten times the number of Jewish victims in the Holocaust.

It's noteworthy that in 1963, as a result of the combined court cases *Abington School District v. Schempp* and *Murray v. Curlett*, the U.S. Supreme Court banned school-led reading of the Bible and recital of the Lord's Prayer. These court cases alleged to uphold the principles of freedom and human dignity, yet the end result of turning our backs on God has been destruction and misery. As we choose our own way over God's way, we're losing everything. There is little dignity in divorce or high crime rates.

It is ironic that the elements we most desire in life are rarely attained through our own weak wisdom and fleshly desires. After trying our own methods, over and over again we have had to learn that we experience human dignity and true freedom only through moral obedience and accountability to the Creator who fashioned human beings for a high spiritual destiny.

Facing the Skeptics

Skeptics have brutally attacked the Bible throughout history, and during the past century it has become popular among intellectuals to regard the Bible as merely a conglomeration of Jewish writings. It's considered respectable to dispute the authorship of the books of the Bible and to disregard fulfilled prophecy as events reported after-the-fact.

In 1898, Hermann Schultz, professor of Theology at the University of Gottingen, declared:

*Of the legendary character of the pre-Mosaic narrators, the time of which they treat is a sufficient proof. It was a time prior to all knowledge of writing, a time separated by an interval of more than four hundred years, of which there is absolutely no history.*³

Yet, the patriarchal accounts in the Bible have been corroborated by archeological evidence.⁴ The information we have of Abraham, Isaac and

Jacob matches the culture we know of that time in history.⁵ Job, the contemporary of Abraham, had the ability to write.⁶ Sumerian cuneiform writing certainly predates Moses by much more than 400 years; Ira Spar at the Metropolitan Museum of Art notes that, “By the middle of the third millennium B.C., cuneiform primarily written on clay tablets was used for a vast array of economic, religious, political, literary, and scholarly documents.”⁷ The old criticism that no written language existed in Moses’ day has been proven to be false.⁸ The theories that the Gospels and the Epistles were written in the second century, over a hundred years after the fact, have been shredded and refuted by archeological discoveries, documentary discoveries and competent analysis.⁹ The common skeptical assertions thrown about in “academic” circles can be shown to be short-sighted.

We will go into these things in more depth as we continue through this book.

God-Breathed

As we read the Bible, we find there are a number of highly significant verses found at the address “3:16.”

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 3:16

Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

1 John 3:16

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

1 Corinthians 3:16

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

2 Timothy 3:16

2 Timothy 3:16 is one of these significant “3:16” verses – a little fact that makes it easy to remember its address. This particular verse gives us a foundational message, and we should read it carefully and take it to heart:

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God...” Note this verse says, “*All Scripture*” - not just certain passages that we might select because we like them best. If we accept only those parts of the Bible that suit us and reject the others, then we are believing in ourselves and our own (unreliable) judgment rather than in the Scripture.

The word “inspiration” in the Greek, θεόπνευστος - *theopneustos* - means “God-breathed.” That is, the Scriptures were not just influenced by good ideas about God; they were actually infused into human beings by the Spirit

of God, who breathed into the hearts and minds of the Bible's authors.

All Scripture “*is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction.*” *Doctrine* is about teaching correct understanding while *reproof* is involved in addressing wrong conduct and *correction* deals with wrong understanding. As we study the epistles of Paul, for example, we discover that while Romans is a doctrinal statement of Soteriology (the study of salvation), 1 Corinthians was sent to reprove wrong conduct and Galatians to correct wrong doctrine. Again, Ephesians presents the doctrine of Ecclesiology (the study of this mystical thing we call the “Church”), while Philippians then presents the reproof and Colossians presents the correction for the Church. 1 and 2 Thessalonians present the doctrine of Eschatology (the study of the last things), and 1 and 2 Peter and Revelation continue that theme.

The more we study the Bible, the more we discover that it's very well organized specifically for its purposes.

Chapter 2

Integrated Design

The Bible is not merely a collection of writings by scattered desert nomads who combined the worship of two different gods named El and Yahweh into one God, who scratched their faith together from a mishmash of Canaanite beliefs. Every book of the Bible, every place name and strange detail work together to describe the God of the Universe and His passion for mankind. The whole package hangs together. It's an integrated message system from outside our time domain.

In its entirety, the collected books of the Bible work together to describe our need for a Savior. Together, they prophesy about that Savior and give us the fulfillment of those prophecies. They promise us a future where He rules and reigns over all the earth. The entire dramatic narrative is told from Genesis to Revelation, from the promise in the Garden that the seed of the woman would crush the head of the Serpent¹⁰ to the destruction of the Dragon, the old Serpent in Revelation.¹¹ There's nothing accidental about it; the Bible's 66 books tell one complete story.

Terms

The word “Bible” is derived through Latin from the Greek word *biblia*, which is a diminutive of *biblios*, the word for “book” or any kind of written document. Originally it connoted something written on papyrus, but today the word “book” has become the name for *the* Book, the ultimate Document of all time.

The word “testament” - whether we speak of the Old Testament or the New Testament - comes from the Latin *testamentum*, which hails from the Greek term, *diatheke*, indicating a legal arrangement.¹² When Jesus says in [Matthew 26:28](#), “*For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins,*” he does not mean “testament” the way we think of a testimony today. Language changes over time, and the word we might choose today would be “compact” or “covenant.” While the Jews had lived for centuries under the Law, Jesus’ blood offered a new legal setup, one in which grace triumphed over legalism. Following the meaning of Jesus’ words, we might be better off today using the terms Old Contract and New Contract.

The Jews of Christ’s day considered the Old Testament to be Scripture, but Peter makes a novel step and calls Paul’s New Testament writings “scripture” as well. (Another 3:16 verse!)

...[E]ven as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction.

2 Peter 3:15-16

When we read the first sixteen verses of 2 Peter 3, it's clear that Peter regards Paul's writing as equivalent to the Hebrew Law and the Prophets. In those days, most Jews read the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament. Peter recognized Paul's writings as of equal authority, and Paul cites [Luke 10:7](#) alongside [Deuteronomy 25:4](#) as Scripture, quoting them together in [1 Timothy 5:18](#). The writers of the New Testament books declare they are ministers of God, whom God uses to bring His Word.¹³

This is not out of line on their part, for Jesus preapproved their ministry through the Holy Spirit in the upper room discourse:

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.”

John 14:26

The Writers

How did these documents actually come about? The writers were chosen and prepared for their writing of these documents.

*Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee;
and before thou camest forth out of the womb
I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet
unto the nations.*

Jeremiah 1:5

The authors of the books of the Bible wrote exactly what God wanted to communicate through them to the world, which has been confirmed through subtleties in the coding structures. As we examine the text even more carefully, we have found that there are a wide variety of messages that disappear if we change one letter. God spoke to Moses face to face,¹⁴ and as we carefully study the books of Moses, it appears that the Torah was given to Moses letter by letter, whether he realized it or not. The prophets claimed to be speaking the very words of God. *“The word of the LORD came to...”* As we continue our study, we will review some examples of those details.

Infallibility and Inerrancy

The Doctrine of Infallibility is the subjective consequence of divine inspiration; that is, we trust that the Bible is reliable to all who turn to it in search of God’s truth, because it provides

us with information that God gave us through human pens.

The Doctrine of Inerrancy states that the Bible contains neither errors of fact (material errors) nor internal contradictions (formal errors). Inerrancy is generally attributed only to the original autographs and not to the translations or copies, because we recognize the potential imperfections inherent in the transmission of Scripture, whether by copying error, inadequacies in translations, et al. There are also cultural, historical and rhetorical gaps between the writer and the reader, which can lead to confusion. When humankind gets into the act, it messes things up, but we affirm that the original documents penned by the original writers were fully reliable.

While there are always skeptics, it is important to appreciate that less than one percent of the Scriptures are under competent dispute. And fortunately, no doctrine of the Scriptures depends on any of the disputed passages. There are questions about certain verses and there are issues that scholars ponder, but they don't impact any critical doctrine. We find that we have in the Bible an integrated package that God superintended and watched over in every detail.

If we accept any of it, it all ties together. There's no excuse to buy part of it and not the others. If we want to reject any of the Bible, then we

should reject the whole thing, but if we accept any of it, we must accept the total package because it has integrity - it works together as a whole.

The Bible as a Hologram

If you're a communications engineer and you're designing a message system that you anticipate will be subject to hostile jamming by an adversary, one of the things you do is you take your message and spread it across the available bandwidth. That's exactly what the Bible has done. It's what Isaiah mentions in [Isaiah 28:10](#) "I have established my truth, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, there a little." It's deliberately spread out that way, so that pages can be torn out of the Bible without destroying any of the vital doctrines. We may lose clarity on some issue, but the whole design has been integrated.

From a communications engineer perspective, the Bible is fascinating. I've even written a book called *Cosmic Codes: Hidden Messages from the Edge of Eternity* to explore these things from an information technology point of view, because when taken all together, we see that the Bible had to have been written by one Author who sees things from outside of time.

In fact, as we begin to understand the Bible from an information science point of view, we discover the integrity of the total package manifests a strategy to avoid hostile jamming. It's interesting

to note that we can't say, "Where's the chapter in the Bible on baptism? Where's the chapter on salvation?" There is no critical subject in the Bible that is found in only one passage. Every major issue is explained or portrayed repeatedly by a wide variety of authors in a multitude of passages.

One of the things we find throughout the Scriptures is what would be called in the computer field a "macrocode." The Bible contains a multitude of "anticipatory macrocodes" that demonstrate a message originating from outside our time domain. As we study the Hebrew Scriptures, we discover again and again that there are elements introduced early on, elements that make no sense except in the context of an event that occurs a thousand years later. There is a story with a multitude of small parts, a story that is detailed in advance and only brought together at the end. In other words, certain ideas or concepts came from Someone who knew what was going to happen well in advance, Someone who "knows the end from the beginning."

The Brazen Serpent

For example, in [Numbers 21](#) Moses is told to hold up a bronze serpent in the wilderness. Deadly serpents covered the desert camp of the Israelites, and people were being bitten and killed. Moses went to the LORD for help, and the LORD told him to raise up a brazen serpent on a pole so

that everyone who looked to it would be healed. Moses did as the LORD instructed, and the people who obeyed were spared from death.

Why a serpent? What in the Jewish understanding could have connected a serpent with anything good?

It's a challenge to read the Old Testament and find an explanation for that serpent on a pole. It makes no sense. Why would God use a snake of all things? From a Levitical viewpoint, a serpent is a symbol for sin, and bronze is a symbol for judgment. Everybody who looked to a snake symbol on the pole was healed? Why? If we go through the whole Old Testament, we find no explanation for this serpent-held-high imagery. In fact, many centuries later, that bronze serpent was still around and the Israelites had started worshipping it. King Hezekiah had to have it destroyed because it was becoming an idol (2 Kings 18:1-4).

Then, Jesus Himself explains the imagery in John 3 during His meeting with the Pharisee Nicodemus, who came to Him one night. Jesus describes the serpent as a symbol anticipating the cross of Christ. As Moses raised the serpent in the wilderness, so would the Son of Man be raised up. Suddenly, the fog lifts and we realize that the serpent in the wilderness was a Messianic anticipation of Jesus Christ: He was held up;

He became sin for us and bore our transgressions; and through His death we are healed.

We find dozens of these types placed all through the Scripture like woven threads that bind the entire design together. If we reject any part, then we should reject the whole thing, because it is all tied together. If we accept it, we need to accept the entire package. The important question is not whether we like any particular part of the Bible, but whether it is true.

The New Testament is in the Old Testament concealed, the Old Testament is in the New Testament revealed. It is one book, it has an integrated design, and once you discover that for yourself it will change your entire perspective on every passage in the Bible.

Chapter 3

The Old and New Testaments

The books that we find in our Old Testament today are in a different order than we find in the Hebrew Bible. The Jews divided the Hebrew Scriptures into three sections:

The Torah is the “Law” of Moses, made up of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. These five books are also called “the Pentateuch,” and they are the Jews’ most venerated portion of the Scripture.

The *Nevi'im* is the “Prophets.” It includes both the Former Prophets - Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings - and the Latter Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Twelve Minor Prophets. These 12 books are called “minor” because they’re smaller in size and not smaller in importance. They are often grouped together into The Book of the Twelve Prophets.

The *Ketuvim* is the “Writings” portion of the Scriptures. This includes the Psalms, Proverbs, Job, The Five Scrolls of the Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther, and finally, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles.

Torah	Nevi'im	Ketuvim
Genesis	Joshua	Psalms
Exodus	Judges	Proverbs
Leviticus	Samuel	Job
Numbers	Kings	Song of Songs
Deuteronomy	Isaiah	Ruth
	Jeremiah	Lamentations
	Ezekiel	Ecclesiastes
	The Twelve	Esther
		Daniel
		Ezra / Nehemiah
		Chronicles

Together, the Torah, Nevi'im, and Ketuvim make up what we consider the Old Testament. The Jews call this collection of books by the acronym, *Tenach* - from (T)orah, (N)evi'im and (Ch)ethuvim. As we can see, the Tenach has a slightly different order for the books of the Hebrew Bible than we find in the King James, and we Christians have split the books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles into two books each, but this is essentially the same Old Testament that we read.

The New Testament is also divided into sections, the Gospels and Acts, the Pauline Epistles, the General Epistles, and Revelation. Hebrews is often placed with the Pauline epistles, since there is evidence that Hebrews was written by Paul.

Gospels(+)	Pauline Epistles	General Epistles	Revelation
Matthew	Romans	Hebrews	Revelation
Mark	1 & 2 Corinthians	James	
Luke	Galatians	1 & 2 Peter	
John	Ephesians	1, 2, & 3 John	
Acts (Luke II)	Philippians	Jude	
	Colossian		
	1 & 2 Thessalonians		
	1 & 2 Timothy		
	Titus		
	Philemon		

The Gospels and Acts tell us about Jesus, His ministry, death and resurrection, as well as the history of the early Church. The Pauline Epistles are the letters written by Paul to the various communities of early Christians he had visited. These early church groups needed instruction, encouragement and admonishment. The General Epistles add additional instruction and answer questions the early Christians struggled over. Finally, Revelation is dedicated to the prophetic visions that Christ gave John regarding the spiritual end of times.

The Inspired Canon

The word “canon” comes from the Greek κανών which means a “ruler” or a “standard of measurement.” The canon of the Bible is the specific set of books considered God-breathed, the very Word of God. There are many *other* useful

books from those early centuries, and scholars can study them for their historical and literary and cultural value, but they are not God-breathed. They can be valued as sources of information, as lenses for clearer insight into the beliefs and teachings of the people who lived in Biblical times, but they should not be considered as more than human works. The *canon* is a unique list of books which the early Church fathers recognized as birthed by the Holy Spirit, by God Himself.

This all began with the Torah. The five Books of Moses were placed in the Ark of the Covenant along with the two tablets of the Ten Commandments ([Exodus 34:7ff](#); [Deut. 31:24-26](#)). That was the beginning of the veneration of the narrative and the text. The whole idea of the canon is based on two convictions: the words of Scripture are God's own words; and men simply transmitted what they received from the LORD Himself.

Men, therefore, may have influenced the form of the Scriptures, but God determined the content. That's the distinction. God's own words were penned by human writers. The Old Testament includes a large number of passages described as God's actual speech dictated to the prophets (e.g. [1 Kings 22](#), [Nehemiah 8](#), and most of [Jeremiah](#)). Clearly, the intent was that these were literally God's own words to whomever He was speaking.

The Old Testament is a story of a nation that was brought forth to present the Messiah, and the New Testament tells about the arrival of that Messiah. Jesus Christ is not an afterthought. For thousands of years the Scriptures had foretold His coming. Every book of the Old Testament offers types and foreshadows and direct prophecies of His suffering and death and victory and future reign. The Messiah was validated by all the details that were anticipated centuries before He was born. The Old Testament establishes Christ's identity in advance, and He in turn authenticates the whole package. Jesus Christ fulfills all the specifications beyond competent dispute, demonstrating the supernatural origin of the Hebrew Scriptures.

This is important. The books of the Bible are not merely a scattered collection of Jewish writings describing the history of a messy group of people who traveled about the Middle East. The books of the Bible are parts of a whole. As we study the Bible, we are able to establish the integrity of the design. We discover that these 66 books, penned by 40 different individuals over several thousands of years, are an integrated message and every detail is there by deliberate design. Once we understand this amazing reality, we find we can understand the full story of Jesus Christ from beginning to end. We know who Jesus Christ was and is as we read about Him in every book.

Mel Gibson's movie "The Passion" is an excellent portrayal of Christ and a remarkable piece of work. On the other hand, it doesn't go far enough. It does not emphasize that Jesus is the Son of God. Nor does it mention that God's plan for salvation had been planned before the foundation of the world - that Jesus faithfully went through the process for the benefit of each one of us. We need to understand it was an achievement, not a tragedy.

Authentication

We know Jesus is the Messiah because He fulfills the Law and the Prophets. The first thing He did after His resurrection was give two disciples a seven-mile Bible study starting with Moses, pointing out all the references to Himself.

Epistemology is the study of knowledge, its scope and limits. It answers the question "How can we know?" How do we know that Jesus Christ was the Messiah? Our answer is that He fulfilled a multitude of prophecies - not just one or two specific, individual verses, but the Hebrew Scriptures as an integrated whole. Our epistemological approach recognizes the incredible power of fulfilled prophecy.

According J. Barton Payne's *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy*, at least 8000 predictive verses forecast the future in 1800 different predictions on more than 700 different matters. This is just one catalog, but it makes the point that the Bible is

prophetic. It's not just a quaint collection of tribal history over the centuries. It is far more than that. It is supernatural in its origin, and it demonstrates its authenticity by manifesting an origin from outside the dimensionality of time altogether.¹⁵

There are more than 300 prophecies of Christ's First Coming, and we could take several books to carefully examine them one after another. For our purposes here, we don't need to look at all of them. Nine will do, nine prophecies given centuries before their fulfillment:

- The Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (Mic 5:2; Mat 2:1, 5).
- He would present Himself as King riding a donkey (Zec 9:9; Mat 21:1-9; John 12:12-16).
- He would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver (Zec 11:12; Mat 26:15, 27:3-5).
- The "blood money" transaction would occur in the temple and the money would end up finally in the potter's hands (Zec 11:13; Mat 27:6-10).
- He would have wounds in His hands (Zec 13:6; John 20:24-28).
- He would make no defense even though He's innocent (Isa 53:7; Mar 15:3-5).
- He would die with the wicked yet be buried with the rich (Isa 53:9; Mar 15:27; Mat 27:57-60).

- He would be crucified (Psa 22:16, Zec 12:10; John 19:16ff).
- He would rise again (Psa 16:10; Isa 53:12; Mat 12:40; Mat 28:6, 7).

These are just nine prophecies, and by analyzing the circumstances surrounding each one, we come up with an *a priori* likelihood of each taking place. When we do this, the statistical calculation of a single person fulfilling all nine gives a ridiculously improbable number. There may have been several people born in Bethlehem and crucified during the years Rome ruled the world, but few would have been buried with the rich even though they died with the wicked, after having been betrayed for 30 pieces of silver, after having ridden into town on a donkey and hailed as King. Jesus didn't just ride into town on a donkey; the people crowded Him to lay down palm branches and welcome Him, calling "Hosanna" and celebrating Him as the Son of David - the Messiah, the King (Mark 11:1-10; John 12:12-16). Then, above all else, He rose again from the dead! Remember, these are just nine verses. There are more than 300 to take into consideration.

The main point is that these prophecies establish Jesus' identity with more certainty than probably any other person on the face of the earth. I'm more certain that Jesus Christ is the Messiah of Israel than I am of my own name, and I can demonstrate that mathematically.

Those nine prophecies are the easy ones. The Old Testament lays out in great detail in [Genesis 22](#), [Psalm 22](#) and in [Isaiah 53](#) narratives that are just astonishing in their precision. [Psalm 22](#) reads as if it were dictated by Jesus in first person singular while He hung on the cross. It opens and closes with His first and last statements, and it describes what He sees as He hangs on the cross. Crucifixion was not around until the Persians devised it, yet David describes the Messiah's death and suffering 1000 years before Jesus Christ was born.

[Isaiah 53](#) explains the purpose of the cross and its achievement with more detail than all of Paul's epistles put together.

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Isaiah 53:5-6

The Old Testament is filled with types and foreshadows of the purpose and identity of the Messiah, but it also describes certain aspects of His coming in exquisitely precise detail. In [Daniel 9:24-26](#), Gabriel tells Daniel the exact day the Messiah would present Himself as King to Jerusalem, and Jesus held the "teachers of the

Law” accountable to do the math and expect His coming. Their failure to recognize that day is the reason, according to Jesus in [Luke 19:42-44](#), that Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70. The precision and the accountability is all there and clearly laid out in the Scriptures.

Form and Content

What was the human role in all of this? From the standpoint of *form*, the human writers contributed much to the writing of Scripture. They did historical research (like Luke), gave theological meditation, and used their own linguistic styles, favorite vocabulary, and so on. The writers each had their own writing styles, and over 200 different kinds of rhetorical devices or figures of speech are used in the Scripture. The majesty of Isaiah’s book, the pragmatic pastoral rhetoric of Amos, the quick movie-script like descriptions of Mark, demonstrate the personalities of the writers. Their role shows up in the form but not in the content, and that is an important distinction.

Theologically, from the standpoint of content, the Bible regards the human writers as having contributed little. They are the conduits that God has used to give us His words. These concepts are what make the Bible distinctive, and a study on the inspiration of the Scriptures could alone fill volumes. It is a topic that Bible readers should research seriously.

Chapter 4

Literary Criticism

The authentication of Biblical authors is one of the critical aspects of cryptography, archeology and literary criticism. In 1670, philosopher and Jewish pantheist Baruch Spinoza argued that writing did not exist prior to the time of Isaiah in the 8th century B.C., and that Moses could not have written the books of the Pentateuch. Spinoza insisted that Ezra had written out these books after the Babylonian exile. For his audacity, Spinoza was excommunicated from the People of Israel for heresy.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, many scholars began to divide up the Pentateuch into four different sources of authorship. Jean Astruc examined Genesis and parted it into two sources he believed Moses had used to compile the history of the Israelites,¹⁶ but others who followed denied that Moses had written any of it. It became popular to reject the Mosaic authorship of any of the books of the Torah and to place the earliest writings during the 10th century B.C., shortly before the Northern and Southern kingdoms of Israel had split. The approach was basically codified in the Documentary Hypothesis of K.H. Graf and Julius

Wellhausen, also called the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis. The Documentary Hypothesis posited that the Pentateuch was a collection of Jahwist (J), Elohist (E), Deuteronomist (D) and Priestly (P) sources, and the scholars chopped up the books of Moses according to perceived differences in the writing and the tenor of the text, starting with the names of God used in different passages.

It is important to recognize that a great deal of this theorizing had its birth in skeptical anti-supernaturalistic biases thousands of years after the Pentateuch was written. These textual critics wanted to divide up the Pentateuch into groups of contributors based on some massive assumptions, starting with the view that *writing* didn't exist in the time of Abraham or even Moses. The critics suggested that what they regarded as stylistic differences distinguished one passage from another. They read into the text the "purpose" each of the J, E, D and P contributors had for writing their own part of the text, which may or may not give us valuable information about certain passages of the Bible, but does speak volumes about the arrogance of its critics. These assumptions have not been supported by any real evidence.

Textual scholar and professor Kenneth Kitchen denied the true power of the Documentary Hypothesis in 1966:

Even the most ardent advocate of the documentary theory must admit that we have as yet no single scrap

*of external, objective evidence for either the existence or the history of J, E, or any other alleged source-document.*¹⁷

The reality is that the men of the 19th century had no way of knowing how much evidence would show up to disprove their view. The archeology of the 20th century showed us that writing was actually very common in the centuries before Moses. There are thousands of cuneiform tablets from the centuries prior to Abraham, cutting the legs out from under the assumption Moses couldn't have written the books the Bible says he did. While the Documentary Hypothesis is commonly embraced by textual critics, there are a variety of historical and textual reasons to reject it.

In several places, the Torah itself says that Moses wrote it¹⁸ and the history that is written in the Bible takes place within a culturally short time after the events that took place. According to **1 Kings**, Solomon began to build the Temple fewer than 500 years after the children of Israel left Egypt:

And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD.

1 Kings 6:1

That is not the vague allusion to a legend, but a specific date. It is the writing of a historian and not a redactor editing long after the fact. To give perspective, the birth of Queen Elizabeth I took place fewer than 500 years ago, yet we know the history of the Tudors in fairly extensive detail, even though their reigns have little to do with our religious beliefs. We possess the works of Shakespeare, faithfully handed down year after year, and we still have copies of his plays published within years of his death. The British Library possesses five copies of Shakespeare's First Folio, the first full collection of his plays published in 1623. Consider that Solomon began work on the Temple merely 480 years after the Israelites left Egypt. The information did not have to be handed down orally; Solomon moans that many books that had been written by his time:

*And further, by these, my son, be admonished:
of making many books there is no end; and
much study is a weariness of the flesh.*

Ecclesiastes 12:12

Jesus

Throughout the Bible, Moses is credited with writing the Torah. Those who feel their confidence undermined by the JEDP Documentary Hypothesis should remember the fact that Jesus attributes the Torah to Moses in the following verses: [Matthew 8:4](#); [19:7](#), [8](#); [23:2](#); [Mark 1:44](#); [10:3](#), [4](#); [7:10](#); [Luke 5:14](#); [16:19](#), [31](#); [20:37](#);

24:27, 44; and [John 3:14](#); [5:39](#), 45, 46; [6:32](#); [7:19](#), 22, 23.

If Jesus is who He claims to be, then Scripture is authenticated by the highest authority possible, and anyone who believes in Jesus Christ has no problem in the authorship of the Pentateuch. If you don't believe in Jesus Christ, you've got bigger problems than the authentication of the Books of Moses.

The Torah is quoted directly 165 times in the New Testament, with over 200 allusions. One of Jesus' first acts after His resurrection was to give a seven-mile Bible study to two disciples on the road to Emmaus, as we see in [Luke 24](#). During those hours, he explained in-depth the full description of the Messiah from the Scriptures, and He did this speaking in the third person:

... O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

Luke 24:25

And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

Luke 24:27

The Bible study Jesus gave was exceptionally important and provided the disciples with the whole picture of the Scriptures' prophecies about

the Messiah. He began at Moses and went through all the prophets, expounding “unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” Not just here and there, *all* the Scriptures. One of the biggest discoveries you can make for yourself is finding that Jesus Christ is on every page of the Old Testament. Some references are very clear while others are indirect, but always they are there in *all* the Scriptures.

Jesus took the Hebrew Scriptures very seriously:

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Matthew 5:17, 18

A jot and a tittle are Hebrew expressions. A jot is the smallest of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. We might mistake it for an apostrophe. It's just a mark, almost like a blemish on the paper. A tittle is the tiny hook on certain Hebrew letters, equivalent to our dotting of the “i” or the crossing of the “t.” This is a call to literalists. Jesus clearly indicated that we should be taking the Scriptures very literally, very strictly.

Chapter 5

The Languages of the Bible

And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.

Genesis 11:1

Hebrew

The whole world of people originally spoke one language, and I'm among those who believe that the original language was Hebrew - a proto-Hebrew perhaps - but still Hebrew. The Hebrew language has some distinctive characteristics that no other language on the planet Earth has.

All the early languages were written without spaces between the words, and the Hebrew language is self-parsing. In Hebrew, there are five letters that have a slightly different shape when they're used as the last letter of a word. Because of that, it's possible to read Hebrew without spaces between the letters.

There are only consonants in Hebrew, and no vowels. It's what's called a consonantal script. The meaning of a word derives from a root of three letters, and each three letter root word can be expanded to create all manner of other words.

Prefixes and suffixes can be added to those three letters, forming different parts of speech or even entirely new words; the meaning is related to those three base letters. The particular meaning of the word depends on how it's pronounced when vowel sounds are added.

For instance, the three letters *sfr* create the word for “book” and it's pronounced “sapher.” A writer, on the other hand, somebody who makes books, would be called a “sopher” - same letters. The plural form requires a “ym” ending - *sfrym* – “sefarim.” The pronunciations are therefore very important. It's not difficult for a native speaker to vocally add the appropriate vowels. We often use the consonants “bldg” for “building” and we understand the word even with the vowels (and one consonant) removed. Native speakers would naturally read the words correctly.

The root consonants are designed to give Hebrew a semantic backbone and stability not characteristic of Western languages. It also leads to word play. Verb usage is dependent on the context, and the language lends itself to puns. There's often far more meaning implied in the Hebrew sentence than there would be in a Greek sentence.

As centuries passed after the destruction of Jerusalem and fewer Jews spoke Hebrew as their first language, schools of Torah scholars called the Masoretes worked to preserve the accurate

pronunciation of words, and therefore their meaning. In the ninth century A.D., the Masoretes developed a system of “pointings” that would give readers cues about the vowel sounds used in the text of the Bible. These dots and dashes beneath the consonants are found in the text that is used in Hebrew Bibles today, giving readers the correct pronunciation of the words.

One of the peculiarities of the Hebrew language is that the alphabet is not just phonetic, but also symbolic. The alphabet of most languages are phonetic. Words can be sounded out if the letter sounds are known. Hebrew is phonetic, but it is a special language, because it is also symbolic. Individual letters can have their own meanings. Early in Hebrew writing, the letters were also pictographs. *Aleph*, for instance, was shaped like the head of an ox and represented strength and leadership. The letter *kaf* was originally shaped like a hand, and “kaf” means “palm of the hand” or “to coerce.”

The Hebrew language is astonishingly vivid, concise and simple. It is also so dense that it makes it difficult to translate fully. While the Greek language is precise, each word holding a specific intended meaning, Hebrew leaves many ideas to be “understood.” It requires the reader to fill in the blanks. It often takes two or three times as much space to translate the Hebrew into English because the words carry so much significance on their own.

Greek

The Greek language is a beautiful language, rich and harmonious. It's a fitting tool for vigorous thought and argumentation, because Greek is very, very precise. It can penetrate and clarify phenomena using exact words in an exact order so that there is no confusion. Classic Greek is sometimes called the *Attic* Greek or High Greek because the syntax is so subtle and expressive in its use of participles. It's sometimes difficult to translate the words into English and capture the full nuances of their meaning. Attic Greek (which was spoken in Attica and Athens) was used when the culture was at its zenith.

Koine Greek, or common Greek, was the result of Alexander the Great's effort to encourage the spread of the Greek culture. All throughout the world, the regional dialects were replaced by common Greek. It's simpler and less elegant than High Greek but it nevertheless retains most of the strength, beauty, clarity and logical rhetorical power of the Attic Greek. The New Testament is written in Koine Greek.

Greek is a very precise language. Every Greek verb has five aspects - person, number, tense, mood, and voice. From just the verb itself, we can understand who is performing the action (I, you, they), whether one or more persons are doing it, when it's done, whether it is a single event or a

process, and how it's done. Was there an action? Was there a command or merely a wish? The verb usage will tell us.

We have active and passive voices in English, "I hit the ball" versus "the ball was hit by me." The Greek also has a third voice that's "optative" - indicating a wish or desire. We do not have a true optative mood in English, but we understand it in certain constructions, like, "May you be truly happy," or "Have a good day!" It is that "optative" voice that causes many people to misunderstand some of the statements in Paul's epistles because of a lack of sensitivity to the Greek syntax. Greek is incredibly precise and expressive, with few blanks to fill in - and therefore Greek and Hebrew are very different.

Aramaic

The Book of Daniel contains large portions originally written in Aramaic, the language spoken in Babylon at the time of the captivity. Aramaic is similar to Hebrew, and a number of Aramaic words entered the Hebrew language during this time. One of the easiest ways to see this mixing is in the names of the months. The Hebrew month names today reflect that time in Babylon. Prior to the captivity the month of Nisan was called *Abib*, and the month of Iyyar was originally *Zif*.

Jesus and Pilate

What did Jesus speak? He spoke Hebrew and read the Old Testament. The common language in Israel during His day was Aramaic, as [Mark 15:34](#) highlights. In [Mark 7:24-30](#), He has a conversation with a Syro-Phoenician woman in Greek. He spoke initially to Mary in Greek in the garden on Resurrection morning. She didn't recognize Him until He said her name, and then they spoke in Aramaic.¹⁹

Pontius Pilate was apparently fluent enough in Hebrew to interact with the people. He was assigned to be in charge of that region, and it would have been expedient for him to know the local languages. He spoke Greek, which was the common commercial business language of that day, and he spoke Latin because it was the official language of the Roman Empire. In fact, it would take several centuries before Latin displaced Greek throughout the Roman world, but Pilate was obviously fluent in all three.²⁰

Pilate wrote the title on Jesus' cross in Hebrew, Greek and Latin.²¹ In the Hebrew, the first letters of the words, "Jesus of Nazareth and King of the Jews" would have spelled out YHWH, the holy unspeakable name of God.

HaYehudim	v Melech	HaNazarel	Yeshua
יהודה	ו מלך	הנצרי	ישוע
ה	ו	ה	י
H	W	H	Y

Yeshua HaNazarei v'Melech HaYehudim in English is “Jesus the Nazarene and King of the Jews.” Pilate deliberately embarrassed the Pharisees by making an acronym of Christ’s title. The Pharisees asked him to change it, but he refused. Pilate clearly understood that Christ was delivered up because of envy.²²

Chapter 6

Non-Canonical Books

There are a number of books that are historically valuable, but which were not included in the canon of the Bible. The Roman Catholic Church embraced 13 of these books, the Apocrypha (“hidden”), at the Council of Trent in 1546, but these writings were never held as canonical during the earlier history of the Church. The Greek translation of the Old Testament contained the Apocrypha, but when Josephus spoke about the scriptural books of the Bible, he specifically excluded those books that had been written *after* the reign Artaxerxes, because they were not written by prophets:

*For we have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from, and contradicting one another: [as the Greeks have:] but only twenty two books: which contain the records of all the past times: which are justly believed to be divine. ...’Tis true, our history hath been written since Artaxerxes very particularly; but hath not been esteemed of the like authority with the former by our forefathers; because there hath not been an exact succession of prophets since that time.*²³

The following apocryphal books are included in the Roman Catholic Bible, where they are considered “deuterocanonical”: Tobit, Judith, Additions to Esther, Wisdom, Sirach, Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah, Additions to Daniel (Prayer of Azariah, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon), and 1 & 2 Maccabees.

The apocryphal writers themselves recognized they were not writing as prophets, because the time of the prophets was in the past.²⁴ What’s more, the Apocrypha contains ideas and doctrines that are clearly not in line with the Word of God, including the disastrous idea that sins can be atoned for with payment of money:

Tobit 4:11: For alms deliver from all sin,
and from death, and will not suffer
the soul to go into darkness.

2 Maccabees 12:43: And making a
gathering, he sent twelve thousand
drachms of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice
to be offered for the sins of the dead,
thinking well and religiously concerning
the resurrection.

There’s an additional group of books we call the Pseudepigrapha (“false inscription”). While the apocryphal books might be considered useful historically, the pseudepigraphal books have been determined to contain a great deal of false information. There are 54 of these books,

including Jubilees and 1 Enoch, written under pseudonyms between 200 B.C. and A.D. 200. They're interesting books on a scholastic level, but they were not taken seriously by the early church, and they have a variety of negative characteristics that have excluded them from the canon. They contain a wide range of false doctrines and are not written by trustworthy sources.

Books Lost to History

On the other hand, there are a group of books that are alluded to in the Scriptures but have since been lost:

- The Book of the Wars of the Lord:
Num 21:14
- Book of Jasher:
Josh 10:13; 2 Sam 1:18
- Book of the Acts of Solomon:
1 Kgs 11:41
- Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel:
1 Kgs 14:19; 16:20, 2 Kgs 14:15
- Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah:
1 Kgs 14:29; 22:45, 2 Kgs 14:18
- Book of the Kings of Israel:
1 Chron 9:1; 2 Chron 33:18; 36:8
- Book of Gad the Seer:
1 Chron 29:29
- Book of Nathan the Prophet:
1 Chron 29:29; 2 Chron 9:29

- Book of Shemaiah the Prophet:
[2 Chron 12:15](#)
- Visions of Iddo the Seer:
[2 Chron 9:29; 12:15](#)
- Book of Jehu son of Hanani:
[2 Chron 20:34](#)
- Words of the Seers:
[2 Chron 33:18](#)
- Jeremiah's Lament for Josiah:
[2 Chron 35:25](#)

These are alluded to, but they've been lost and so remain the subject of conjecture by scholars. From time to time false versions of these will surface, but they are discredited for one reason or another.

Chapter 7

The Ancient Manuscripts

Old Testament Texts

While the many books of the Bible were being produced since the days of Moses, the full canon of the Hebrew Scriptures, complete with the major and minor prophets, was compiled during the days of Ezra and Nehemiah (circa 515 B.C. - 458 B.C.). The Tenach was reproduced with great care by Hebrew copyists, who recognized that the words they painstakingly wrote out had been breathed by God.

The original text of any translation is called its “vorlage” - from the German word for “prototype.” Any particular text will have its vorlage - its source.

Masoretic Text

After the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and the subsequent scattering of the Jews in the centuries that followed, it became increasingly important for Jewish scribes to preserve the pronunciation of the Hebrew text. Medieval scribes from Tiberias were charged with Old Testament text preservation from about A.D. 500 and following. These Masoretes codified the earlier Hebrew text

and invented a “pointing” system for implied vowels in the Hebrew. The oldest dated manuscript that we have is the *Codex Cairensis* from about A.D. 895, copied by Moses Ben Asher in Tiberias. This book contains the Prophets portion of the Tenach, including what the Hebrew Bible calls the Former Prophets (Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings). The oldest complete Old Testament was once the famous *Aleppo Codex*, produced in about A.D. 930 and attributed to Aaron ben Moses ben Asher. In 1947, a large portion of the *Aleppo Codex* was either burned or the pages were stolen. The *Leningrad Codex* is very similar to the *Aleppo Codex*, and is now the oldest complete manuscript of the Hebrew Bible, dated to A.D. 1008. The official copy of the Masoretic Text (MT) used today is based largely on these manuscripts.

Samaritan Pentateuch

Sometime after the Samaritans won their independence in the 4th century B.C., they produced a version of the five books of Moses using their own alphabet. Copies of this are preserved to this day as the Samaritan Pentateuch (SP). It contains about 6000 variants from the Masoretic Text of the Pentateuch, 1000 of which are fairly significant. A variety of passages in the SP are expanded and added, much like an amplified Bible.

The Septuagint

In 285 B.C., Ptolemy II Philadelphus funded the translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek. He had established a library at Alexandria in Egypt and wanted to include a copy of the Jewish Scriptures. Greek was the language of the land, and most people - including the Jews - spoke Greek. The Jewish people of Egypt used Hebrew primarily for ceremonial purposes, much as Roman Catholics consistently used Latin before Vatican II. Not all Jewish people had facility in Hebrew. Alexandria was one of the major literary centers of the world in those days, and according to tradition, 70 scholars (some say 72) were funded to translate the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek. Thus, the Greek work was given the name "Septuagint" from the Greek word for 70. The Septuagint translation is usually abbreviated with LXX, which is "70" in Roman numerals.

The five books of Moses, the Pentateuch, were translated first, and they were done quickly - though perhaps not in 72 days as the legend said. The rest of the books were likely translated within a few years, but it's difficult to know exactly how soon they were finished. We know for certain the whole Old Testament was completely translated into Greek by the time Jesus the son of Sirach alluded to them in his Prologue in B.C. 130, but they were certainly finished long before that date. The son of Sirach complains

that there are some major differences between the LXX and the Hebrew originals. It was a difficult thing to translate Hebrew ideas into Greek, because the Hellenistic culture simply didn't have corresponding words to use.

There are certain things to note about the LXX: the translators used a clearly Alexandrian form of Greek, and they often pulled their texts from the Samaritan Pentateuch rather than the copies of the Pentateuch used in Jerusalem. They also used their own interpretations of passages to move them from the "understood" language of Hebrew to the highly precise language of Greek. As Sir Lancelot Charles Lee Brenton wrote in the Introduction to his English translation of the Septuagint:

One difficulty which they had to overcome was that of introducing theological ideas, which till then had only their proper terms in Hebrew, into a language of Gentiles, which till then had terms for no religious notions except those of heathens. Hence the necessity of using many words and phrases in new and appropriated senses.

These remarks are not intended as depreciatory of the Septuagint version: their object is rather to show what difficulties the translators had to encounter, and why in some respects they failed; as well as to meet the thought which has occupied the minds of some, who would extol

*this version as though it possessed something resembling co-ordinate authority with the Hebrew text itself.*²⁵

The Septuagint is a valuable document for many reasons. First of all, it demonstrates that the prophecies detailed in the Old Testament were in black and white virtually three centuries before Christ's ministry. The existence of those prophecies are beyond dispute, because they are locked away in a book that an Egyptian king had translated into Greek several centuries before Christ's birth. It also gives us a precise Greek rendering of the Old Testament. The translators chose their Greek terms carefully, and these help us better understand what the Alexandrian Jews of the day believed was the correct understanding of certain passages. For instance, where the Hebrew calls the offspring of the sons of God and daughters of men *nephilim* - fallen ones - the Septuagint translates them *gigantes* - "earth born" - which had the connotation of "giants." The Septuagint translation gives us greater insight into the Hebrew understanding of these strange hybrids. The Greek *gigantes* truly were giants, not just strong men or warriors.

The Septuagint is also significant because it became the Bible of the early Church. The early Greek Christians used the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament along with the letters of Paul and the other apostles as their Scriptures. The Septuagint is the most-often quoted text in

the New Testament, and the text can be correlated with the same passages in the Hebrew.

Aramaic Targums

There are a variety of different “targums” of the Old Testament, which originally began as oral explanations of the text. It was initially forbidden to write down these lessons, but written copies eventually came out. Aramaic became the official language of the Persian Empire in the 5th and 6th centuries B.C., and the targums eventually included full translations of the text into Aramaic as the Hebrew became less well understood by the general population. Post-exilic synagogue liturgical needs led to several translations. The official targum of the Pentateuch is the Targum of Onkelos, which is highly venerated. There is also the Targum of Jonathan, the Jerusalem Targums/Palestinian Targum, and the Targum on the Hagiographa. The Samaritan Pentateuch has an Aramaic targum of its own.

There are some very interesting differences between the Onkelos translation and the King James Bible. In [Genesis 4:26](#), Enosh is listed as the first son of Seth. The second part of that verse in the King James states, “...then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.” This is a weak interpretation of the true meaning of the verse. The passage in the Targum of Onkelos states, “...Then in his days the sons of men desisted

(or forbore) from praying in the name of the Lord.” The Targum of Jonathan adds even more commentary: “...That was the generation in whose days they began to err, and to make themselves idols, and surnamed their idols by the name of the Word of the Lord.”

There is another document we might mention: the Peshitta is the Eastern Aramaic targum used in the Syriac church. The word *peshita* means “simple” or even “common.” The Peshitta contains translations of both the Old and New Testaments. Its literary history is very complex and problematic; there is debate about exactly where it originated, and it did not originally include [2 Peter](#), [2 John](#), [3 John](#), [Jude](#), or [Revelation](#). It is believed the Old Testament portion of the Peshitta was translated into Syriac from the Hebrew, and the New Testament was translated from the Greek. Luke tells us in [Acts 11:26](#) that the members of the early Church were first called Christians at Antioch; a Syrian version of the New Testament writings would have reasonably come into translation fairly early in Church history.

New Testament Texts

There are a multitude of ancient documents from the New Testament. They come in four different forms:^{[26](#)}

Papyri were written on papyrus (a plant material) and date to about 3rd and 4th centuries

A.D. Papyri are brittle and deteriorate easily in the damp, and 127 have survived, according to the most recent count by the Institute for New Testament Textual Research.²⁷

Uncials were written on parchment, which was made from the skin of animals. While parchments were far more resilient than papyri, they were also more expensive and did not come into popular use until the 4th century when the Church became respectable in Rome (although there do exist important uncials that are older than many papyri). There are about 320 of these uncials on parchment.²⁸

Both the papyri and uncials are written in “uncial” or “majuscule” script. That is, they were written in an upper-case continuous-text form of writing, and there were no forms of punctuation or spaces between the words in the early days. This writing style easily leads to confusion.

By the ninth century, a form of cursive had developed that sometimes included punctuation and spaces and breathing marks. *Miniscules* were manuscripts written in cursive hand, and they number as many as 2903.²⁹ Finally, *lectionaries* were developed for liturgical use, and they can be found in either majuscule or miniscule script and on parchment or papyri. There are about 2445 of these in existence as of this writing.³⁰

In other words, there are nearly 5800 texts of the New Testament documents, and scholars are confident about the meaning of most New Testament passages. Study Bibles include any variations in the footnotes, and alternate wordings or textual differences are minor and do not bring into question any major Christian doctrines.

The oldest (nearly) complete texts of the New Testament are found in three major manuscripts: *Vaticanus*, *Sinaiticus* and *Alexandrinus*. The first two date from the fourth century, and the last from the fifth century. There are papyri older than these three codices, and their great age does not necessarily make them the most reliable (as we'll see in a few chapters), but they are important, complete New Testament texts.

The Vulgate

Latin versions of Biblical texts show up in the second century under the early Christian writer Tertullian (A.D. 190). We find fragments of text in Old Latin as Latin began to replace Greek as the common language in the third century. In A.D. 382, a priest named Jerome was commissioned by Pope Damasus I to revise the Old Latin texts of the Bible and translate them into the common Latin of the people. His "commonly used" version was published into what is now known as the Latin Vulgate. It is a composite of the Septuagint, Hebrew, Latin and other manuscripts available

at that time. Jerome finished his translation in A.D. 405. It was Jerome who first called the non-canonical books of the LXX the “Apocrypha.” He translated them, but he did not regard them as the Word of God.

Dead Sea Scrolls

We can’t talk about the Biblical manuscripts without making allusion to one of the most important finds in Biblical archaeology: the Dead Sea Scrolls. These contain a multitude of manuscripts, including 127 different scrolls from just the five books of Moses. Between 1946 and 1956, 981 different texts were found in eleven caves from the area of Qumran near the Dead Sea. Of these, about 230 scrolls are considered Biblical, while others are routine documents that describe the daily life and rules of the community that lived in Qumran during the first century.

During the past half century, a vast 60,000 fragments have been discovered (85% parchments, 15% papyrus), many of which have yet to be examined. Every Old Testament book except Esther has been found among the fragments. There are additional books, including those contained in the Pseudepigrapha and previously unknown works. The ancient documents can be confidently dated prior to the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.³¹ The biblical texts agree closely with either the Septuagint or the Masoretic Text,

and thus these materials offer highly significant corroboration of the Bible we hold in our hands.

Researchers were able to compare the Dead Sea Scrolls with the Masoretic Text and demonstrate the great care in copying that had preserved the holy texts for centuries. It was found that some of the Dead Sea Scrolls more closely followed the Samaritan Pentateuch and some more closely followed the MT. In these cases, there are clearly differences between the Dead Sea Scrolls and Masoretic Text that are linked to differences between the MT and the SP. However, the majority of the relatively few differences between the Masoretic Text and the Dead Sea Scrolls are related to spelling and syntax.³² The Great Scroll of Isaiah is a notable example. Considering the thousand-year passage of time between the Scrolls and the MT, the copyists had made very few mistakes, and none that had any effect on any core doctrine of the Bible.

Chapter 8

Masoretic vs. LXX Text

As I mentioned, there are some fairly significant differences between the Septuagint and the Masoretic Text, primarily when the LXX includes material that isn't found in the MT. Sometimes the Dead Sea Scrolls have been able to address misunderstandings caused by a copyist error in either or both the LXX and the MT, and sometimes the LXX clarifies confusion found in the MT.

Here is an example. I was doing some research in [Ezekiel 38](#), and I happened to stumble into [Amos 7:1](#). [Amos 7:1](#) in the King James reads as follows:

Thus hath the Lord GOD shewed unto me; and, behold, he formed grasshoppers in the beginning of the shooting up of the latter growth; and, lo, it was the latter growth after the king's mowings.

What does that mean? I have no idea. It makes absolutely no sense to me as it stands.

In the Septuagint, [Amos 7:1](#) looks very different. It says:

Thus the Lord showed me; and behold, a swarm of locusts were coming from the east; and, behold, one of the young devastating locusts was Gog the king.

Let me back up. According to [Proverbs 30:27](#), “The locusts have no king...” Normal locusts that swarm across the earth do so without the leadership of a locust king. Yet, we find something very interesting in Revelation. [Revelation 9:3-11](#) speaks of a plague of terrible locusts upon the earth, and these brutal locusts *do* have a king over them - the angel of the bottomless pit. This locust king’s name in the Hebrew tongue is *Abaddon*, and in the Greek tongue his name is *Apollyon*, both of which mean “destruction” or “destroyer.” Proverbs states that the locusts have no king, yet [Revelation 9:11](#) tells us that these particular locusts *do*. [Proverbs 30:27](#) helps us understand that the locusts in [Revelation 9](#) are not literal natural locusts; they’re demons of some kind, and “locusts” is being used as a figure of speech.

This makes [Amos 7:1](#) in the Septuagint particularly interesting when it says:

Thus the Lord showed me; and behold, a swarm of locusts were coming from the east; and, behold, one of the young devastating locusts was Gog the king.

The Greek version makes it clear that Amos is talking about the demonic locusts, because Gog is their king. I was very excited as I kept researching this, because Gog shows up in [Ezekiel 38](#) and [39](#). Both Gog and Magog make their appearance there, with no background, no linkage. It's very strange in the Bible to find an important person without a family line or historical explanation.

My friend Hal Lindsey and I spent a great deal of time together talking about biblical questions. During one of these sessions, we discussed this surprising treasure in Amos. It was tremendously exciting for me to discover this information about Gog, because I had never found it in any of the literature. The more Hal and I compared the Septuagint literature, the more we realized that it contained the better text. It's not even a variant reading, it's accurate. This led to a discussion of [Daniel 12:4](#):

But thou, O Daniel shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end for many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

Many people quote this verse thinking that it refers to knowledge in general. The context, however, implies that the increased knowledge is that of prophecy. As we get closer to the end times, we should not be surprised to make discoveries that have eluded scholars in the past. I have found

that the key to unraveling the Old Testament has often been the Septuagint translation in the Greek.

Chapter 9

Hidden Codes

Is the Bible “inerrant”?

This is the question that always comes up. Are there mistakes in the Bible? Does it contain errors? When I was a teenager, I had a friend who was the son of a Unitarian minister. He knew his Bible, but he didn’t take it seriously, and he loved to challenge me about the math in [1 Kings 7:23](#). This verse deals with the large laver described for Solomon’s Temple:

And he made a molten sea, ten cubits from the one brim to the other: it was round all about, and his height was five cubits: and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about.

We know that the circumference of a circle is π (3.14159) times its diameter and not 3.00 times, as apparently described in this verse. If the laver were ten cubits from one brim to the other, then the line that “did compass it round about” should have been more precisely 31.4 cubits. Some people point out that this adjustment from 31.4159 to 30.0 can attributed to the thickness of the laver Solomon was building, so they don’t see a problem.

The handbreadth thickness of this massive basin takes into account the extra 1.4 cubits.

Another answer can be found in the text, however. In later years, a rabbi explained the apparent error to me. In this passage in the Hebrew, the word for “line” (circumference) is misspelled. When the Masoretes found an apparent copyist error, they didn’t have the audacity to correct it. Rather, they made an annotation of it in the margin. The permanent written text is called the *ktiv*, and the corrected version in the margin is called the *kri*. In due respect for the text, the copyists wouldn’t change it, but they’d annotate what they thought was the correct spelling. The annotated version would be read out loud while the *ktiv* remained the permanent text.

It turns out that the spelling of the word “line” was actually quite important. Both Hebrew and Greek are distinctive in that each letter of the alphabet has a numerical value, which can be used in a number of ways. In the Hebrew alphanumeric, if we take the *ktiv* (the parent error) the way it is written in the Masoretic Text, the word for “line” is *qvh*. That’s where the error occurred. The *kri*, however, has the word written as *qv* - without the *h*. In this way, both are included; the original is written and the correction is spoken. If we add up the numbers of this word, the *q* is equal to 100, the *v* equals six, and the *h* equals five. The written

ktiv adds up to 111 (100+6+5), and the noted *kri* adds up to 106 (100+6). The ratio of 111/106 times 30 is 31.415, which is close enough for government work. When we correct that ratio, we find there's an error of less than 1/15,000 of an inch. The Hebrew therefore makes that adjustment for the circumference of the bronze laver.

I want to share with you something else that comes up with all of this. There are a couple of constants in the Universe that are dimensionless. They have no units. We are all familiar with the first, which is π . The number π is defined as 3.14159... Whether we are measuring in metric units or in imperial units, in centimeters or in kilometers, π is always 3.14159... There is another dimensionless number called *Euler's number*, commonly written as e . The number e is the base of the natural logarithm, and it has the value 2.71828... It is also the limit of $(1 + 1/n)^n$ as n approaches infinity. John Napier discovered e as he was developing natural logarithms (as opposed to "common" base 10 logarithms). Most of us have heard of π , but it generally takes a course in calculus or engineering to be introduced to e . E has a variety of uses in advanced mathematics - in calculating compound interest, in number theory or in differential equations. It shows up in a variety of strange ways.

We can find something fun in the Bible regarding both of these dimensionless numbers.

There are two major passages in the Bible that have to do with the Creation: [Genesis 1:1](#) and [John 1:1](#). We find that if we read [Genesis 1:1](#) and make the following calculation, we get a very interesting result:

$$\frac{(The\ number\ of\ letters) \times (The\ product\ of\ the\ letters)}{(The\ number\ of\ words) \times (The\ product\ of\ the\ words)}$$

The answer to this is 3.1416×10^{17} -- the value of π to four decimal places! Hmm.

Now, let's look at the other major Creation passage, John 1:1. If we read the Greek and make the same calculation that we did with the Genesis passage, we get another very interesting result:

$$\frac{(The\ number\ of\ letters) \times (The\ product\ of\ the\ letters)}{(The\ number\ of\ words) \times (The\ product\ of\ the\ words)}$$

The answer to this is 2.7183×10^{40} -- the value of e to four decimal places. Hmm again!

I don't know what we should do with this fact. It doesn't prove anything exactly, yet it's interesting that everywhere we turn, we discover properties in the Biblical text that clearly go beyond the understanding of the people who wrote it. There's no way you'll ever convince me that John the Apostle was acquainted with John Napier's logarithms. My view is that this is a fingerprint of the Holy Spirit.

Hidden Messages?

Are there hidden messages in the Bible? That's a big debate these days. [Proverbs 25:2](#) states, "*It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.*"

The 16th century rabbi Moshe Cordovero wrote about the skipping of letters to find hidden meanings, saying in the introduction to Gate 30 in his book *Pardes Rimonim*:

The secrets of our holy Torah are revealed through knowledge of combinations, numerology (gematria), switching letters, first-and-last letters, shapes of letters, first- and last- verses, skipping of letters (Dilugai Otiyot) and letter combinations.

These matters are powerful, hidden and enormous secrets. Because of their great hidden-ness, we do not have the ability to fully comprehend them.

We find "codes" in the Bible that are discovered by counting equal numbers of letters. For instance, we might take a simple sentence and count every fourth letter, and we might find that doing so gives us a complete word or phrase, demonstrating that another message is "hidden" within the text itself.

Of course, we must be careful not to focus more on hidden messages than on the meaning of the plain text. Equidistant letter sequencing does not give us a new message or a new gospel. It simply shows us God's fingerprints on the text that we already have.

Equidistant letter sequences are difficult to find when counting one letter at a time. Dedicated rabbis have hunted down equidistant letter sequences mechanically over the years, but in our era of computers, we can have silicon chips do the hardest work for us. Let's take the Book of Genesis as an example. Remember that Hebrew reads from right to left.

The word for *Torah* - תורה - in Hebrew is comprised of four letters: a tau (ת), vav (ו), resh (ר) and a heh (ה), the equivalent of our letters T O R H. Beginning in top right of Genesis in the Hebrew, we can count from the first tau (ת) 49 letters. Doing so brings us to a vav (ו). We then count another 49, which brings us to a resh (ר), and then another 49 letters brings us to heh (ה). In other words, counting the product of 7x7 repeatedly from the very first verse of Genesis spells out the word "Torah" in Hebrew.

That's interesting.

It's even more interesting, though, that the same word is spelled when counting out 49 letters, one after another, in Exodus. Once is interesting. Twice is astonishing. Statistically, it starts to blow away any thought that this was a convenient accident.

Leviticus is different. We do not see the sequence in Leviticus, and we almost feel a sense of relief. However, in Numbers, we find something even more interesting. This time, counting 49 letters gives us the word in reverse – ה – ר – ל – ת. There's still a 49-letter interval, but it spells TORH backwards. In Deuteronomy, the same thing happens again! Again it spells Torah backwards (this time starting on the 5th verse, and including the 49th letter in the count).

That's amazing. It's also puzzling. We find the word "Torah" spelled forward in Genesis and Exodus and backwards in Numbers and Deuteronomy, each with the 49 letter intervals. Leviticus doesn't fit in. Yet, when we go back and examine Leviticus and apply the number seven instead of 49, we find that the seven-letter intervals give us the letters for the name of God Yahweh³³ – יהוה – the I AM.

*creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life,
I have given every green herb for meat: and it
was so.*

It is very interesting that in the verses from **Genesis 1:29 to 2:10** - in that small segment of the Biblical text - we find encrypted the names of the 25 trees that are mentioned in the Bible:

Trees in Genesis 2			
אשל	Tamarisk (2)	רמון	Pomegranate (8)
אלה	Terebinth, (-2)	נפר	Gopherwood or fir (8)
עבז	Thicket (or Dense forest) (-3)	סנה	Thornbush [Crataegus] (9)
הדר	Citron (-3)	זית	Olive (-9)
שטה	Acacia (-3)	בטן	Pistachio Nut (13)
שקד	Almond (5)	לון	Hazel (-13)
חטה	Wheat (5)	תאנה	Fig (14)
חמד	Date Palm (5)	ערבה	Willow (-15)
אדז	Cedar (-5)	נפן	Oak (17)
אהלים	Aloe (6)	נפן	Vine (-18)
ענב	Grape (-6)	שערה	Barley (-28)
אטד	Boxthorn or Bramble (7)	ערמו	Chestnut (44)
אדה	Cassia (7)	לבנה	Poplar (-85)

Words are not readily available just for the hunting. We find that if we search for the word “Israel” in Hebrew, it only occurs twice - at intervals of seven and fifteen in the first 10,000 letters of Genesis.

However, if we continue our study in Deuteronomy, we find the following references to the Holocaust, all encrypted: Hitler, Auschwitz, the Fuhrer, Eichmann, king of the Nazis, Germany, and Mein Kampf in Hebrew letters.³⁴

Isaiah 53 is a precious prophetic passage that has been called the Holy of Holies of the Old Testament. The hidden codes found in this passage are also exciting. In these twelve verses, we find encrypted the names of the people who stood at the foot of the cross: Peter, Matthew, John, Andrew, Philip, Thomas and James. In fact, we find a reference to two different Jameses - James, the brother of John (James the Greater) and James, the son of Alphaeus (James the Lesser).³⁵ There is a third James mentioned in the Bible, James the half-brother of Jesus, but he did not become a believer until after the Resurrection.

Additionally, we find the following: Messiah, Nazarene, Galilee, Pharisee, Levites, Caiaphas, Annas, Passover, Simon, Thaddeus, Matthias, Salome, Joseph and three Marys.³⁶ In fact, one of the Marys is encrypted in such a way that it's interlinked with the name "John." What's even more impressive to me than the names that are encrypted in those twelve verses is the name that's *missing*. The name of "Judas" consists of high-frequency letters in Hebrew, so we should expect that name to show up by statistical accident. It's conspicuous because it does *not* appear.

Jots and Tittles

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Matthew 5:17-18

Jesus took the Hebrew Scriptures very seriously, even to the “jots” and “tittles” – the smallest dots and hooks on the letters. We have previously mentioned that Hebrew is a symbolic language as well as a phonetic one. The letters can act as pictograms to convey a meaning that is directly related to the image of the letters. Jesus appears to be calling attention to even the pieces of the letters themselves.

I want to briefly highlight some characteristics of the Hebrew alphabet. The *aleph* is the first letter of the alphabet, and *bet* is the second, which gives us the Hebrew term “alephbet.” During the Babylonian captivity, the Jews adopted the Babylonian “square script” letters, along with a large number of Babylonian words and phrases and month names and so forth. The Hebrew letters we read today are not the originals. If the letters aleph and bet are written out in their original paleo-Hebrew form, they create an interesting illustration.

letter	meaning	early	late	now	Latin	letter	meaning	early	late	now	Latin
Aleph	strength, leader				ʾ	Lamed	shepherd staff				L
Bet	house, tent				B	Mem	water, blood				M
Gimel	foot, walk				G	Nun	sprout				N
Dalet	door				D	Samekh	thorn grab				S
Hay	reveal / look!				H	Ayin	eye, watch				ʾ
Vav	hook, tent peg				V	Peh	mouth				P
Zayin	mattock, plow				Z	Teade	man on side desire				Ts
Hhet	wall, divide				C	Qoph	sun on horizon				Q
Tet	basket				T	Resh	head				R
Yod	arm, work				Y	Shin/Sin	front teeth				Sh
Kaph	open palm				K	Tau	covenant, sign				T

The “aleph” showed the head of an ox and represented strength. The bet represented a house, as in Bethlehem “house of bread” or Bethel “house of God.”

If we place an aleph and a bet together as the word “ab” in the ancient Hebrew, we get the word “father.” We know this word - we know the word “abba” is “daddy” in Hebrew. What is the father? He is the strength of the house.

Let’s go one step further. There’s a Hebrew letter called *beh* . It’s like a “breath” and it may represent hands lifted up, or an open window that lets the breeze in. The letter implies the word “behold” or “revealed.” It also can indicate a wind or spirit. Remember Eliza Doolittle in *My Fair Lady*. She had to practice her “H” sound

by saying, “In Hertford, Hereford, and Hampshire, hurricanes hardly happen.” The *heh* in Hebrew is that “H” sound. Placing a *heh* in the middle of a word inserts a breath into that word. The word *aleph-heh-bet*, therefore, is the *aleph* and the *bet* combined with a breath of life. The *heh* gives us the essence of the father. What is the essence of the father? It’s the Hebrew word for love - אהב. Love is the essence of the father. And in [Genesis 17](#), when God changed the name of Abram to Abraham and Sarai to Sarah, all God really did was add a *heh* to their names, thereby signifying the presence of the Spirit of God.

The point I’m trying to make is that the letters in their original carried meaning, not just sound. The Hebrew Department at the University of Arizona pointed out to me that if they teach the students how to recognize Hebrew in terms of the ancient letters, it takes half an hour to learn the meaning of a large number of words. The students make a list of 22 Hebrew letters and learn them and what they signify. Once they do that, they can figure out about 80% of Hebrew by making informed guesses about the semantics of the words in a passage.

Names

Names had great significance in the Bible. For instance, Methuselah was the oldest man in the Bible; he lived for 969 years. When he was

born, his father Enoch was given a prophecy regarding the future; Enoch was told that as long as his son was alive the judgment of the Flood would be withheld. He named the child “Methuselah,” which comes from two Hebrew roots, *muth*, which means “death,” and *shalach*, which means “to bring or send forth.” *Methuselah* literally means “his death shall bring.” For four generations Noah’s family prophesied about the Flood and the coming judgment. We discover from [Genesis 5](#) that when Methuselah was 187, his son Lamech was born, and when Lamech was 182, Noah was born. [Genesis 7:6](#) tells us the Flood came in the 600th year of Noah, when Methuselah was $600 + 187 + 182 = 969$. The math is very simple: the year that Methuselah died proved to be the year the Flood came.

Methuselah’s father didn’t just preach about righteousness. He gave his son a prophetic name. Methuselah is just one example of the great importance placed on names in the Bible. He’s not alone. All the names from Adam to Noah have meanings, and when we place them in order, they give us a message, a message planned from the foundation of the world:

Adam	Man	Gen 1:27
Seth/Sheth	appointed	Gen 4:25 ; 1Ch 1:1
Enosh	mortal	Gen 4:26 ; 1Ch 1:1
Cainana/Kenan	sorrow	Gen 5:9 ; 1Ch 1:2

Mahalaleel	the blessed God	Gen 5:12; 1Ch 1:2
Jared/Jered	descending	Gen 5:15; 1Ch 1:2
Enoch/Henoch	to train/teach	Gen 5:18; 1Ch 1:3
Methuselah	his death shall bring	Gen 5:21; 1Ch 1:3
Lamech	despairing	Gen 5:25; 1Ch 1:3
Noah	comfort/rest	Gen 5:29; 1Ch 1:4

Most of the names are easy to understand based on their root words. *Kenan* means “sorrow” or “dirge,” which isn’t recognized in the Strong’s Concordance. The other confusing one is *Lamech*, which comes from a root word meaning “disparity.” Together, these 10 names form a sentence in the fill-in-the-blanks manner of the Hebrew language: “Man is appointed mortal sorrow, but the blessed God shall descend, teaching that His death shall bring the despairing comfort.”

Every time I do this I get goose bumps. Right here at the beginning of the entire Bible, we find a reasonable summary of the Christian Gospel. You will never convince me that a group of Jewish rabbis contrived to hide the Christian Gospel in a genealogy in the Torah. It also tells us something else. It speaks to the integrity of the design of the whole thing. That’s why I bring it up here. This genealogy in Genesis indicates that God’s plan of redemption was not a knee-jerk reaction in response to Adam’s failure. God was not surprised. He had our redemption planned before the foundation of the world. He had you

and me on His mind before the earth began, and the names and their meanings are a demonstration of His plan hidden in the text itself.

As we read the Bible, we recognize the primary implication that this collection of 66 books penned by more than 40 people over several thousand years is a skillfully designed package. Every detail, every place name, every number is there by deliberate design. We trust that God rewards the diligent. If we take the trouble to dig behind each one of these things, we believe we will make new discoveries. The New Testament and Old Testament are not separate books representing two separate religions. The entire Bible is a unified whole. The New Testament is in the Old Testament concealed, and the Old Testament is in the New Testament revealed.

Chapter 10

Dating the New Testament

People often ask me whether the New Testament texts are reliable. They also love to ask which translation of the Bible is the best. As we seek to study the Bible, one important question to answer well is the fundamental one: how can we be certain that the Bible is the Word of God?

That's our challenge.

The Old Testament is the story of the nation of Israel, and it was compiled over at least 2000 years. The New Testament, on the other hand, was compiled over the course of one lifetime, and it is the story of a man named Jesus Christ. These two covenants, new and old, are different in many aspects from the beginning.

An Early New Testament

The Bible has stood long and has had the victory despite the spiritual attacks of the ages. At one time, it became trendy to say that the New Testament was written by drunk monks in the Middle Ages. If you've heard this bit of slander, it's utterly baseless. It follows the general spirit of 19th and 20th century textual critics that argued

most of the New Testament was written late, up to a century after the events that took place. Neither drunken clerics nor the grandchildren of the apostles wrote the New Testament. There is far more evidence for early dates than the skeptics want to admit. Archeologist William F. Albright wrote in 1956:

*We can already say emphatically that there is no longer any solid basis for dating any book of the New Testament after about A.D. 80, two full generations before the date between 130 and 150 given by the more radical New Testament critics of today.*³⁷

The great literary scholar C.S. Lewis wrote in 1950 of his certainty that the Gospels were not merely legends:

[T]hey are not artistic enough to be legends. From an imaginative point of view they are clumsy, they don't work up to things properly. Most of the life of Jesus is totally unknown to us, as is the life of anyone else who lived at that time, and no people building up a legend would allow that to be so. Apart from bits of the Platonic dialogues, there is no conversation that I know of in ancient literature like the Fourth Gospel. There is nothing, even in modern literature, until about a hundred years ago when the realistic novel came into existence. In the story of the woman taken

*in adultery we are told Christ bent down and scribbled in the dust with His finger. Nothing comes of this. No one has ever based any doctrine on it. And the act of inventing little irrelevant details to make an imaginary scene more convincing is a purely modern art. Surely the only explanation of this passage is that the thing really happened? The author put it in simply because he had seen it.*³⁸

Christian apologist C.S. Lewis was trained in Greek from his youth under the tutelage of the scholar William T. Kirkpatrick - "the Great Knock" - once the headmaster of Lurgan College in England. Lewis grew so skilled that he said he learned to "think in Greek." He studied great works in their original languages, and he eventually taught English Literature at Oxford University. His comments on the Gospels are worth noting. He recognized that the writing of the Gospels was unique in their time, the efforts of fishermen and tax collectors and doctors to record the things that had been seen among them.

The early church had at its disposal the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The letters of Paul and the other epistles were circulated among themselves, passed around from church house to church house to be read with the Septuagint for instructional worship. The first century Church took as Scripture the Septuagint

Old Testament, the four Gospels and the body of apostolic letters.

These were not books written long after the deaths of those involved. Luke and Paul relied on the fact that they were talking to contemporary eyewitnesses.

Early on, Luke's letters to Theophilus were combined as one manuscript, a history of Jesus and the Church. Luke's works were ultimately divided into Volumes 1 and 2: the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts. Luke clearly made careful investigation of the history of Jesus, as he tells Theophilus at the beginning of his Gospel:

Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus...

Luke 1:2-3

The Gospel writers understood that their readers also would have been eyewitnesses to many of the events they mention. After all, a multitude of people saw Jesus after His Resurrection, and Paul notes in his first letter to the Corinthians that *most* of these were still alive at the time of his writing:

And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five

hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.

1 Corinthians 15:5-7

John takes care to note that he himself was there, that he was a participant in the events that took place, saying:

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

1 John 1:1

John did not write as somebody who had heard about these things from others. With his own hands he had touched the Word of life - whom he identifies as Jesus Christ in [John 1](#). At the end of his Gospel, John confirms that he was directly involved in the events he described.³⁹ The New Testament was written during a time when there were people available to confirm the stories being passed around by the early Church.

New Testament Omissions

It is important to note the historical nature of the New Testament. It is also important to recognize which things the New Testament does *not* mention. For instance, there is no description of Nero's persecution of the Christians. It was A.D. 64 when Nero began to blame the Christians

for the burning of Rome, among other things. That horror is conspicuous by its absence. The execution of James the brother of John is mentioned in [Acts 12:2](#), but the martyrdom of Jesus' own brother James in A.D. 62 is not mentioned. After initially rejecting Jesus early in his life,⁴⁰ James converted and went on to become the leader of the Church in Jerusalem. His execution was an important event, yet there is no mention of it in any New Testament literature. A second century Christian named Hegesippus described the brutal public martyrdom of James, who was thrown from the top of the Temple and beaten to death with a club.⁴¹

Another crucial event was the Jewish revolt against the Romans in A.D. 66. That defeat ultimately led to the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (which Jesus predicted in [Matthew 24](#)). The destruction of the Temple created a paradox for the Jewish people; they believed that “the shedding of blood was essential for forgiveness,”⁴² but when the Temple was destroyed, they were left without a place to make sacrifices. The peculiar book of Hebrews makes little sense unless it was written to Jewish believers while the Temple was still standing.

The exclusion of these events in the NT implies that those canonical letters were written prior to A.D. 70. The writings were evidently in existence prior to those historical events.

The Gospels

...in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

Matthew 18:16

The New Testament is not the result of one man, but of many. There are four different accounts of the life and teachings of Jesus. There are four accounts describing His many miracles, His lessons, His death and His resurrection.

While John is unique among the Gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke contain a large number of the same passages, and their stories often follow each other in order.⁴³ Because of their many similarities, they are called the “Synoptic Gospels” from the Greek word, *synopsis*, meaning “seen all together.” Who wrote first, though? There is no consensus about whether Luke and Matthew both borrowed from Mark, or whether they conferred with each other, or whether they used the same oral tradition, or whether there was common source all three used that has since been lost.

There are some clear facts. About 90% of the material in Mark is also recorded in some form in Matthew, and 50% of Mark is found in Luke. There is also a significant body of information in both Matthew and Luke that isn’t found in Mark. The majority view is that Matthew and Luke both drew from Mark, and they both drew

from another source, whether oral tradition or a speculative collection of Jesus' sayings called the "Q" document.

The Jerusalem school of thought argues that there were original drafts of Jesus' words and works written in Hebrew. These were translated into rough Greek around 40-45 A.D., and they evolved into a Greek and Aramaic history "Q" source document. We don't have this other document, but it's been surmised as the source of the common material shared by both Matthew and Luke.

The Role of the Amanuensis

When seeking to answer the "Synoptic problem," it's valuable to remember who Matthew was. When Jesus called him, Matthew (Levi) worked as public contractor at the receipt of custom.⁴⁴ That is, in his pre-Christ life, Matthew was a tax collector. This is important, because Matthew would have been trained in shorthand. The professional stenographer, the secretary, in the ancient world was classically called an *amanuensis* – a "servant from the hand." All early documents were written by hand. There were no printing presses or copiers or carbon paper.

Much of the New Testament was written by professionals. In the New Testament, we know the names of at least three "short hand" professionals. In about A.D.180, early church father Irenaeus of Lyons wrote, "... Mark, the disciple and

interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter.”⁴⁵ The young man, John Mark, apparently was a skilled stenographer in taking down the things that Peter said. The Gospel of Mark is very much Peter’s style. It’s an action document, like a movie’s shooting script. It jumps from scene to scene describing events with little commentary.

Tertius acted as Paul’s amanuensis in writing Romans, and he personally greets the believers in [Romans 16:22](#). The epistle of 1 Peter was penned by Silvanus (Silas), a “faithful brother” who had spent much time with Paul on his missionary journeys.⁴⁶ Silvanus was a skilled secretary, and there’s a large difference in the quality of Greek between the writing of 1 Peter and 2 Peter. The style of 1 Peter is highly polished Greek, while 2 Peter is a very rough, written by Peter himself. Silvanus was educated with fine writing skills, while Peter was raised as a fisherman, and this difference is expressed in their writing styles.

In those days, shorthand writing was a professional skill. The idea of a “ready writer” was in existence in the time of David, as we see in [Psalm 45:1](#). The Hebrew word there is translated in the Septuagint as ὀξυγράφος – *oxygráphos* – three centuries before Christ’s ministry. This word in Greek literally means “writing fast” and it was in the vocabulary of the man on the street well before the time of Christ. The common word for

a shorthand writer was the synonym *tachygraphos*, from which we get the term tachygraphy today.

The apostle Matthew wrote the Gospel of Matthew, and it is highly likely that he took down Jesus' words in shorthand. Significant portions of Jesus' teachings are found in his gospel alone. As a former customs official, Matthew would have had a working knowledge of tachygraphy. He spent most days writing out receipts and other materials, and Matthew would have been able to transcribe the Sermon on the Mount and other major discourses verbatim. This explains why Matthew's gospel is longer than the others. If we remove the discourses from the Gospel of Matthew, it becomes shorter than Mark's gospel.

The Writing Materials

Until this time, most documents were written on paper scrolls. The scrolls were made of papyrus, and the writing was done primarily on the smooth side. During the time of the New Testament, writing on vellum parchment began to grow in popularity. Vellum was more expensive, being made out of calf skin. It was smooth on both sides and it was foolish to waste the space on the more costly material.

*The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus,
when thou comest, bring with thee, and the
books, but especially the parchments.*

2 Timothy 4:13

“Especially the parchments.” Paul mentions the *membranas*, which refers to a notebook of parchment pages. Writing on both sides didn’t work well in a cumbersome scroll format. Parchments were soon bound in a “codex” – a notebook format with pages. It was much more practical to turn to a specific page rather than having to deal with a 20-foot long scroll.

Abbreviations

The abbreviations used in the New Testament are important for at least two reasons; they indicate honor and they also help us to date the text.

Zipf’s Law is an odd mathematical rule of thumb that the most commonly used word in a language is used twice as much as the second most frequently used word and three times as much as the third. This same strange “law” has been seen in cities and even in national incomes. The largest city in a country has been observed to have about twice as many people as the second largest city and about three times as much as the third largest. The person with the highest income can be seen to have twice as much income as the second richest person, and so forth.

Zipf’s Law says that as we use something more frequently, we adopt a shorter version of it. In biology, we don’t like to walk around saying “deoxyribonucleic acid” all the time. It’s much easier to call the molecule “DNA.” In political

science, we prefer to call the North American Free Trade Agreement by the acronym “NAFTA.” Commonly used terms are quickly shortened to make them easier to manage, and this even includes personal names like “Bob” and “Bill” and “Joe.” In doing this shortening, we are following a mathematical procedure called the Principle of Least Effort. It’s a procedure that minimizes the energy required for repeated activities, and it actually follows certain mathematical laws.

The same process took place in the early Church. Certain words became abbreviated, and the very abbreviation implied a common understanding or doctrine. Early Christian manuscripts used abbreviations called *nomin sacra* – “sacred names.” One example of this is the word “Christ.” The Greek spelling is *Christos* with seven letters, which I think is interesting, because throughout the Bible the number seven represents wholeness or completeness. However, instead of writing out all seven letters every time they used this title for Jesus, they would instead use just the first two letters Xp to represent the word *Christos*. This was not considered a sign of disrespect any more than our abbreviations “Mr.” or “Dr.” are disrespectful. In fact, this usage was used as a form of honor. Bruce Metzger’s book *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible* lists fifteen abbreviated words in the early Christian writings, including God, Lord, Jesus, Christ, Son, Spirit, David, cross, mother, father, Israel, savior, man, Jerusalem, and Heaven:⁴⁷

Word	Abbreviation	Meaning
θεός	<u>θς</u>	God
κύριος	<u>κς</u>	Lord
Ἰησούς	<u>ις</u>	Jesus
Χριστός	<u>χς</u>	Christ
υιός	<u>υς</u>	Son
πνεῦμα	<u>πνα</u>	Spirit
Δαυεΐδ	<u>δαδ</u>	David
σταυρός	<u>σς</u>	cross
μήτηρ	<u>μηρ</u>	mother
πατήρ	<u>πηρ</u>	father
Ἰσραήλ	<u>ιηλ</u>	Israel
σωτής	<u>σηρ</u>	Savior
άνθρωπος	<u>συος</u>	man
Ἱερουσαλήμ	<u>ιλημ</u>	Jerusalem
οὐρανός	<u>ουνος</u>	Heaven

The abbreviation for the term “Lord” is perhaps the most interesting. The word *Kurios* was originally used to translate the name of God, YHWH, from the Hebrew. Reverent Jews did not speak the holy name of God out loud, but instead substituted the word “Lord,” when reading His name. The word *Kurios* was written as the abbreviation KS. When the word “Lord” is referring to God, it is abbreviated with a kappa and a sigma. Due to the numerous uses of the word “Lord,” the writers chose to use the word “kurios” primarily when it was used with theological significance, when referring to God as “Lord.”

The use of the abbreviations was deliberate and standardized and therefore reflected the writers' theological position on these topics.

The First and the Last

Yahweh is called by the unique name, “The First and the Last” in [Isaiah 44:6](#) and [48:12](#). Jesus is called by this same name in [Revelation 1:11](#), [17](#) and [22:13](#) in conjunction with the another similar title: “the Alpha and the Omega.” These are the first and last letters in the Greek alphabet, and the construction is equivalent to being called “the A and the Z” in English. He is the Beginning and the End, the All in All.

In the Hebrew alphabet, the א “aleph” and the ט “tau” are the first and last letters. They are used commonly together as a direct object marker. That is, when aleph and tau are used with a maqqeph, a connecting dash, the two letter prefix “-אט” indicates that the following word is a direct object. (Remember, Hebrew is read from right to left.) However, there are instances when אט is used without a maqqeph, and then it is used as a pronoun. For instance, אט appears in a prophetic verse in [Zechariah 12](#) with no direct object following. In English, the verse reads:

And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look

upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

Zechariah 12:10

The middle of the verse is very interesting in the Hebrew. There are two untranslated letters, **א**, between “me” and “whom.”

וְתִתְחַנְּנִים וְהָבִיטוּ אֵלַי אֶת־אֲשֶׁר־דָּקְרוּ וְסָפְדוּ

If these were translated, the two letters would read as follows: “And they shall look upon me, aleph and tau, whom they have pierced.” This may be an intentional reference to Yahweh as the Aleph and the Tau, the First and the Last. It would be equivalent to “the Alpha and Omega” in the Greek.

In Revelation, this last title is given to Jesus Christ. He declares that He is the First and the Last, the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.⁴⁸ We have many passages in the Scripture that ascribe the Creation to Jesus Christ.⁴⁹ Lest there be any confusion about who He is, He says in [Revelation 1:17-18](#), “Fear not; I am the First and the Last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore.”

Chapter 11

New Testament Manuscripts

Today, we have roughly 5,800 Greek New Testament manuscripts.⁵⁰ In contrast, fewer than 1600 ancient papyri of Homer's *Iliad* still exist⁵¹ and about 250 manuscripts of Plato have survived.⁵² There are just 193 existing manuscripts of Sophocles' plays⁵³ and 200 manuscripts of the *Natural History* written by Pliny the Elder,⁵⁴ who died in A.D. 79 at Pompeii. What's more, the earliest manuscripts of Plato date from 1300 years after he lived and wrote, and there's a 400-year lapse of time for Homer and Pliny the Elder.

Among ancient literary works, the New Testament is the richest in its documentation. There are thousands upon thousands of New Testament documents, and there are fragments dated to within a lifetime of the events described.⁵⁵ As Bible scholars Metzger and Ehrman have noted:

In contrast with these figures, the textual critic of the New Testament is embarrassed by the wealth of material. Furthermore, the work of many ancient authors has been preserved only in manuscripts that date from the Middle

*Ages (sometimes the late Middle Ages), far removed from the time at which they lived and wrote. On the contrary, the time between the composition of the books of the New Testament and the earliest extant copies is relatively brief. Instead of the lapse of a millennium or more, as is the case of not a few classical authors, several papyrus manuscripts of portions of the New Testament are extant that were copied within a century or so after the composition of the original documents...*⁵⁶

Significant Papyri

There are a number of papyri from the New Testament that are especially noteworthy:

The Oxyrhynchus Papyri are a group of Greek and Latin written materials found in an ancient garbage dump near the town of Oxyrhynchus (modern Egyptian Arabic el-Bahnasa) in Upper Egypt. A wide variety of materials were found there, including legal documents, classical works from Sophocles and Euripides, Menander and Euclid, and pieces of the New Testament. These last include portions of at least 15 canonical books: Matthew, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Hebrews, James, 1 John, Jude and Revelation. Bible scholars Philip Comfort and Jason Driesbach offer the following list of very early New Testament papyri from Oxyrhynchus:⁵⁷

- P1 ([Matthew 1](#)), ca A.D. 200
- P5 ([John 1; 16](#)), early third century
- P13 ([Hebrews 2-5; 10-12](#)),
early third century
- P20 ([James 2-3](#)), early third century
- P22 ([John 15-16](#)), third century
- P30 ([1 Thessalonians 4-5; 2 Thessalonians 1](#)), early third century
- P49+65 ([Ephesian 4-5; 1 Thessalonians 1-2](#)), third century
- P70 ([Matthew 2-3](#)); [11-12; 24](#)),
third century
- P77 ([Matthew 23](#)), second century
- P90 ([John 18](#)), second century
- P100 ([James 3-5](#)), third century
- P101 ([Matthew 3-4](#)), third century
- P104 ([Matthew 21](#)), early second century
- P106 ([John 1](#)), third century
- P107 ([John 17](#)), ca. 200
- P108 ([John 17](#)), ca. 200
- P109 ([John 21](#)), ca. 200
- P115 ([Revelation 3-12](#)), early third century

Remember that the second century began in A.D. 101, and the third century began in the year 201. Papyri of the Gospel of John from the second century date to less than 100 years after the beloved disciple of Jesus wrote his testimony. We still have the original letters of Theodore Roosevelt a century after they were written, available for those who want to study them. We still have the original Declaration of

Independence 240 years after it was signed. Papyri from the 2nd century have the *potential* of having been copied from the original.

The Chester Beatty Papyri are a collection of manuscripts mostly dated to the third century, housed partly at the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin, Ireland and the University of Michigan. This collection contains several notable papyri:

- P45 (portions of all four Gospels and [Acts](#)), second century
- P46 (all of Paul's epistles except the Pastorals and Hebrews) first century
- P47 ([Revelation 9-17](#)), third century

The Dishna Papers/ Bodmer Papyri are a collection of various manuscripts found in 1952 north of the Dishna Plain in Jabal Abu Manna. The manuscripts may have been part of the library of fourth century Pachomian monks in Upper Egypt. These include:

- P66 (all of [John](#)) about A.D. 175
- P72 (all of [1](#) and [2 Peter](#), [Jude](#))
third century
- P75 ([Luke 3](#) – [John 15](#)) ca A.D. 200

The Magdalen Papyrus

One of the best known and most important papyri currently known to us is P64. It is a piece of the Gospel of Matthew, purchased in

Luxor by missionary Charles Bousfield Huleatt, and given to Magdalen College, Oxford, where it was catalogued as *P. Magdalen Greek 17*. The Magdalen Papyrus includes three fragments which contain a total of 24 lines, written on both sides in the format of a codex rather than a scroll. The text can be recognized as a segment of [Matthew 26](#), with verse [23](#) on one side and verse [31](#) on the back, and the wording corresponds to the *Textus Receptus* Biblical text. The fragments are large enough to discern that the original codex had two columns with about 35 lines per page. It is one of the oldest codex fragments in existence. The Barcelona Papyrus, P67, has other fragments of the Gospel of Matthew that Ramo Roca-Puig argued are from the very same codex,⁵⁸ and his view is now widely accepted.

Textual experts originally went back and forth on an age for the Magdalen Papyrus, finally settling on a date of A.D. 200. In 1995, however, German archeologist and professor of New Testament history Carsten Peter Thiede argued that the Magdalen fragments were older than previously thought.⁵⁹ Yes, they were written as a codex rather than a scroll, he said, but that didn't justify a younger date. He made a case they were written in the first century, during the actual lifetime of the apostles.

Thiede had been examining the Magdalen fragments while they were in the custodianship of

the Oxford library. He used a new scanning laser microscope to measure the height and length of the ink and even the angle of the stylus the scribe had used. Thiede did a paleographic comparison of the Magdalen fragments with four other first century manuscripts dated A.D. 58 from Qumran, ca A.D. 79 from Herculaneum, A.D. 73-74 from Masada and A.D. 65-66 from Oxyrhynchus. Thiede concluded from careful comparison of the letter shapes that P64 had been wrongly dated too late and was more likely written in the first century. If Thiede is correct, then P64 was copied while Matthew and the other eyewitnesses were still alive.

One thing Thiede notes is that the Matthew 26 fragments use the *nomina sacra* designations for both “Jesus” and “Lord,” thereby showing the very early use of these abbreviations.⁶⁰ This indicates that the deity of Jesus was recognized centuries before it was accepted as official church doctrine at the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325. Clearly, Jesus was recognized as Lord in His lifetime.

Thiede concludes:

The fragments of Matthew's gospel in the Old Library of Magdalen College Oxford ... remain the oldest extant papyrus of that gospel; but it may be argued that it could be redated from the late second to the late first century, some time after the destruction of the Temple

*in Jerusalem. It appears to be the oldest known codex with **nomina sacra**.*⁶¹

Thiede and Matthew d'Ancona, then a deputy editor for the British *Sunday Telegraph*, published their findings in a book, *The Jesus Papyrus*.⁶²

These ancient fragments of the New Testament are one of the many pieces of evidence we have that the Gospels and epistles were written very early, by the apostles themselves, and certainly not by drunk monks in the Middle Ages.

Chapter 12

The Gnostics and the Alexandrian Codices

There are multitudes of New Testament fragments, but there are few complete manuscripts. Papyri and even parchments do not withstand the brutality of time without loss. However, there are three codices which have been preserved through the ages, nearly complete New Testament manuscripts from as early as the fourth century. Unfortunately, their great age does not necessarily make them the most reliable documents. Sometimes materials can last because they haven't been *used*; they've been set aside while the best manuscripts were read every day and worn out. These three manuscripts are ancient, but they are not very good, and that has been the source of a lot of confusion and controversy regarding the correct Greek rendering of the New Testament.

Codex Alexandrinus: According to tradition, Cyril Lucar, Patriarch of Constantinople and former Patriarch of Alexandria, gave this ancient codex as a gift to King Charles I of England. It has since been moved to the British Museum. It is a highly important, nearly complete Greek Bible from the fifth century.

Codex Sinaiticus: About 200 years later, around the early 1800s, a German scholar named Constantin von Tischendorf discovered the *Codex Sinaiticus* in Saint Catherine's Monastery at the traditional Mount Sinai. This manuscript, dated about A.D. 350 (fourth century), is one of two oldest complete manuscripts of the Greek New Testament.

Codex Vaticanus: This manuscript has been in the Vatican Library in Rome since at least 1481, but was not made available to scholars until the 19th century. It was dated slightly earlier (A.D. 325) than *Codex Sinaiticus*, and is regarded by many as one of the most reliable copies of the Greek New Testament.

These texts are therefore the oldest, most complete texts we now have of the New Testament. At the same time, they are missing certain verses and passages and contain a number of other deviations from the Greek texts that Jerome used to translate the New Testament portion of the Latin Vulgate (A.D. 382 - 405) and the Byzantine Greek manuscripts that were passed along into the Middle Ages. Generally speaking, it is wisest to use the oldest manuscripts, because we assume that the oldest complete Greek manuscripts contain the material with the fewest errors, the ones that are word-for-word closest to what the apostles originally wrote. In the case of these codices, however, that appears *not* to be the case.

We must remember that one of Satan's strategies has been to create doubt about the Word of God. From the beginning in the Garden, he hooked Eve with, "Yea, hath God said?"⁶³ As promised in [2 Peter 2:1-3](#), by A.D. 55 the twisting of God's Word had already begun. Greek philosophies and concepts were infiltrating the early Christians ranks, and certain individuals started disparaging the existing writings of both the Old and New Testaments.

The Gnostics

Alexandria in Egypt was one of the major centers of Greek thought. The library at Alexandria was renowned for its size and dedication to housing the great classic Greek works. Alexandria also appears to be the city of origin for heretical groups called the Gnostics.

The word *gnostic* comes from the Greek word for "knowledge" - γνῶσις. The Gnostics professed themselves to be wise but became fools; they saw their knowledge as a secret and special source of information, but they embraced philosophies that contradicted Scripture. For instance, they saw the physical, material world as evil while the spiritual was considered good. The Gnostics taught that Jesus Christ was not God in the flesh; Jesus must instead have been a phantom, an apparition with only the appearance of physical presence. They also disparaged existing apostolic writings and mixed

the revelation of God with contradictory Greek philosophies.

Gnosticism did not include just one set of believers holding a unified set of doctrines. Instead, it presented a strange mix of groups espousing what we might call New Age philosophy with Greek ideas stirred in - wrapped in a facade of Christianity. This movement didn't take long to sprout up and was gaining momentum even before John died. The first epistle of John rebuts its false ideas in several places: e.g., [1 John 1:1-2](#), [4:2-3](#).

At their headquarters in Alexandria, the Gnostics would expurgate the scriptures, delete passages, and mutilate other verses or passages. The second century church father Irenaeus taught extensively against the Gnostics. In his work *Against Heresies*, he wrote:

Since, therefore, they have been deserted by the paternal love, and puffed up by Satan, being brought over to the doctrine of Simon Magus, they have apostatized in their opinions from Him who is God, and imagined that they have themselves discovered more than the apostles, by finding out another god; and [maintained] that the apostles preached the Gospel still somewhat under the influence of Jewish opinions, but that they themselves are purer [in doctrine], and more intelligent, than the apostles. Wherefore also Marcion and his

*followers have betaken themselves to mutilating the Scriptures, not acknowledging some books at all; and, curtailing the Gospel according to Luke and the Epistles of Paul, they assert that these are alone authentic, which they have themselves thus shortened...But all the rest, inflated with the false name of "knowledge," do certainly recognise the Scriptures; but they pervert the interpretations, as I have shown in the first book.*⁶⁴

The three codices – *Alexandrinus*, *Vaticanus* and *Sinaiticus* – are called the “Alexandrian codices” – “Codex A,” “Codex B,” and “Codex Aleph” respectively – and there is reason to regard them all as corrupt. It is true that they are very old and complete New Testament manuscripts, but they are all low-quality documents that were poorly transcribed, and they likely survived the destruction of the ages due to not being *used*.

That is the view of John William Burgon (1813-1888), an Oxford divinity professor, vicar of St. Mary’s Church in Oxford and eventual Dean of Chichester. Burgon traveled across the world to examine the Alexandrian codices in depth. The son of a British merchant, Burgon had been born in Smyria, Turkey and studied the Greek classics as a youth. He spent the last three decades of his life researching the Greek texts related to the New Testament. He traveled to the Vatican and examined Codex B firsthand. He did the same

with the *Sinaiticus* manuscript, and he determined that these two “oldest and best” manuscripts were, in fact, horrible transcriptions. Burgon rails against *Vaticanus*, saying:

*It is undeniable ... that for the last quarter of a century, it has become the fashion to demand for the readings of Codex B something very like absolute deference. The grounds for this superstitious sentiment, (for really I can describe it in no apter way,) I profess myself unable to discover. Codex B comes to us without a history, without recommendation of any kind, except that of its antiquity. It bears traces of careless transcription on every page. The mistakes which the original transcriber made are of perpetual recurrence.*⁶⁵

The *Vaticanus* text omits words and half verses and sometimes several verses. These omissions may be willful, due to a Gnostic view, or they may be the result of something else. Burgon blames the errors on “oscitancy” – that is, the weariness and dullness of a yawning copyist who isn’t paying attention to what he’s doing. Burgon continues:

[I]n the Gospels alone, Codex B leaves out words or whole clauses no less than 1,491 times...accounted for by the proximity of a “like” ending... On the other hand, I can testify to the fact that the codex is disfigured throughout with repetitions. The original

*scribe is often found to have not only written the same words twice over, but to have failed whenever he did so to take any notice with his pen of what he had done.*⁶⁶

Tischendorf did find the *Sinaiticus* codex in the great library of St. Catherine's Monastery, but he rescued it in a burn bin where it was being readied to warm the room on a cold February. It had been thrown away – likely because of its poor quality. First, the penmanship is bad. Second, Codex Aleph has the same problem as Codex B; words and even whole sentences are repeated, or clauses are left out because they have the same endings as another clause just written. This “homoeoteleuton” error takes place no less than 115 times in the *Sinaiticus* New Testament.⁶⁷

Yet, it became the “fashion” in the 1800s to admire the Alexandrian codices because they were very old manuscripts and written in the Alexandrian style. Before these manuscripts came into popularity, translations of the Bible depended on the Byzantium text, which had developed into the *Textus Receptus* – the “received text.”

Textus Receptus

At the end of the third century Lucian of Antioch compiled the Greek text to become the primary standard throughout the Byzantine world. At that time, the capital of the world was in Byzantium, not Rome. From the sixth

through the fourteenth century, the majority of New Testament texts were produced in Byzantium and were in Greek, not Latin. The Latin version of the Bible, the Vulgate, was translated from the early Greek texts as well as the Masoretic text, and it is therefore highly regarded. While Jerome translated the Vulgate, he was able to take advantage of early texts we certainly no longer have at our disposal.

The early English Bible translators like Tyndale drew upon the Vulgate even while working to translate the Bible from the available Greek and Hebrew texts. Erasmus of Rotterdam produced what became the *Textus Receptus*. By the time the King James was translated in the early 17th century, the translators had access to the Vulgate, the Septuagint, the *Textus Receptus*, the Masoretic text, and the Tyndale Bible. After all this, in the 19th century, certain textual critics argued that the Alexandrian codices provided an older and preferable Greek text.

But we are getting ahead of ourselves. Before we continue with the controversy over which Greek text is best, let's take a moment and overview the history of the English Bible.

Chapter 13

The English Bible

John Wycliffe (1329-1384) was the most eminent Oxford theologian of his day. He viewed the words of the Bible itself as more important than papal authority, and he and his associates were the first to translate the entire Bible from Latin into English by 1382. Three decades after his death, his writings were officially banned, and the Pope had his remains exhumed and burned in 1428.

In 1525, Desiderius Erasmus, best known as “Erasmus of Rotterdam” (1466-1536), updated the Latin version of the New Testament. For unknown reasons, he translated a full Greek version at the same time, producing a Greek-Latin parallel New Testament pulled together from the Greek New Testament documents available at that time. Most of these were copies from Byzantium and not especially ancient in themselves, but they were respected as faithful transcriptions. He also used the Latin Vulgate and quotations from the early Church fathers in producing his Greek manuscript, picking and choosing whether to use the Byzantium text or the Latin text and the wording of the Church fathers.

This was not illegitimate, since Jerome and the Church fathers themselves had used very early manuscripts. His Greek texts were missing the last six verses of Revelation, for instance, so Erasmus was forced to back-translate the Latin into Greek. Erasmus continued to update this Greek and Latin Bible, and his fifth edition did away with the Latin column entirely. This final version was used as a basis for the official *Textus Receptus*, the Greek edition that became the primary text for translations like the King James Version.

About the same time that Erasmus was doing his work, William Tyndale (1494–1536) translated the Bible to English like Wycliffe had done, but he used the available Greek and Hebrew texts rather than the Latin. Tyndale had graduated in 1515 from Oxford, where he'd studied Greek and Hebrew. He was a genius at languages and became fluent in eight of them. He committed his life to translating the Bible from its original languages into English for the common man, and in 1526, Tyndale made use of the Gutenberg printing press to become the first person to print the New Testament in English.

Tyndale's translation earned him the title "Architect of the English Language" because he coined many terms familiar to us today. Idioms like "twinkling of an eye" and "signs of the times," and "scapegoat" entered into English through his translation. He improved on later

Bible editions with beautiful illustrations. Yet, because he came against the authority of the Church of England, Tyndale's version of the Bible didn't sit well with King Henry VIII and was banned. Tyndale went into hiding in Germany (visiting Martin Luther in 1525), and there he worked to translate the Old Testament. He was eventually betrayed by his friend Henry Phillips, and in 1536 Tyndale was burned at the stake.

Tyndale was only able to finish the New Testament and about half the Old Testament before he died, but in 1537, Tyndale's friend John Rogers produced an entire English Bible, complete with both Old and New Testaments. Rogers published the "Matthew-Tyndale Bible" from Tyndale's notes, using the pseudonym "Thomas Matthew."

Tyndale's last words at the stake were said to be, "Lord! Open the King of England's eyes."⁶⁸ His prayers appeared to be answered within a few years; Henry VIII soon authorized the Church of England to produce an official English Bible. The Bishop of Exeter, Myles Coverdale, finished William Tyndale's version and produced the Coverdale Bible. He was also involved in a complete Bible published in 1539, called the "Great Bible" because it was large and very expensive. Coverdale edited the portions that the crown had found objectionable in Tyndale's translation, but Coverdale didn't read Greek, so he

had to fill in missing portions of Tyndale's work with translations into English from the German and Latin.

There followed a series of English Bibles. The Geneva Bible was produced by Protestants who fled to Geneva, Switzerland during the reign of Queen Mary I. It was finished by 1560, but the full Old and New Testaments were not published until 1576. This was the Bible used by Shakespeare and carried to America on the Mayflower. The authorities of the Church of England took issue with the clear Calvinism of the Geneva Bible. In response, they fixed problems with the Great Bible in what came to be called the "Bishop's Bible," publishing it for respectable Anglicans in 1568.

The Roman Catholic Church also produced an English Bible between 1582 and 1610. Rather than returning to the original Greek and Hebrew, the Douay-Rheims Bible was translated from the Latin Vulgate as a means of upholding the authority of the Roman Catholic Church in the face of the Protestant Reformation.

The King James Version

In 1611, the King James Version of the Bible was completed. James VI of Scotland became the King of England and adopted the name James I. He commissioned 47 scholars to go back to the original Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic texts and

translate the Bible with excellence, in a manner that would uphold the ecclesiology and structure of the Church of England. The best translators were employed, and prayerfully they set to work taking advantage of more than 5556 manuscripts. The result was a crowning achievement of scholarship and beauty. The title of the first edition declared:

THE HOLY BIBLE, Containing the Old Testament, AND THE NEW: Newly Translated out of the Original tongues: & with the former Translations diligently compared and revised, by his Majesties special Commandment.

All the available manuscripts that were available during those days were at the disposal of these scholars, but they primarily relied on the *Textus Receptus*, the Greek text put together largely by Erasmus of Rotterdam. The document they developed (The King James Version) is, to this day, recognized by most as the noblest monument of English prose. Modern translations may be more readable to our contemporary eyes, but none enjoy the majesty or the veneration of the King James Version.

In short, there were nine different English versions of the New Testament produced over the course of 230 years, as well as Luther's German Bible, and the Erasmus Greek text.

1382	Wycliffe Bible	From Vulgate
1525	Erasmus New Testament	Basis for Textus Receptus
1526	Tyndale Bible	First English New Testament
1534	Luther's Bible	First German Bible
1535	Coverdale's Bible	First complete English Bible
1537	Matthew's Bible	From Tyndale's notes
1539	Great Bible	Coverdale's Revision
1560	Geneva Bible	Protestant / Calvinist
1568	Bishop's Bible	Revised Great Bible
1609	Douay-Rheims Bible	Vulgate Catholic Translation
1611	King James Version	

Westcott and Hort

We find that the tides will wax and wane in every area of research. The same is true for Biblical scholarship. It became popular to disparage the *Textus Receptus* during the 19th century while all veneration turned to the three Alexandrian codices. Scholars noted that the recently discovered codices were the oldest complete manuscripts and argued that we should rely on them and less on *Textus Receptus*.

The trouble began in the 18th century with Johann Albrecht Bengel. In the 1730s, Bengel produced a text that deviated from the *Textus Receptus* while relying on earlier manuscripts. In typical German style, he believed that the harder readings should be preferred. He was followed by Johann Jakob Griesbach (1745–1812), who published several editions of the New Testament. Griesbach developed 15 rules for determining

which manuscripts were best to use, including *Lectio brevior praeferenda*, “the shorter reading is better.” It was thought that copyists were more likely to *add* their ideas to manuscripts than to remove verses, which was fairly short-sighted. In 1831, Karl Lachmann produced a text that represented the fourth century Alexandrian codices, and then Samuel Tregelles, who was self-taught in Latin, Hebrew and Greek, published a text in six parts from 1857 to 1872.

Finally, Brooke Foss Westcott and Fenton John Anthony Hort came along. Westcott and Hort were two Anglican churchmen who had contempt for the *Textus Receptus*, even though it had been the basis for their own King James Bible. Based on what we now regard as the corrupt *Vaticanus* and *Sinaiticus* documents, these two men began a work in 1853 that 28 years later resulted in a Greek New Testament. This effort undoubtedly took additional time for the simple reason that they had to reconcile all the differences found between *Vaticanus* and *Sinaiticus*. In his book *Codex B and Its Allies*, H.C. Hoskier documents 3036 variations between these two manuscripts – in just the four Gospels alone!⁶⁹

It is a mystery why these men held the corrupted Alexandrian codices in such high regard. We do know, however, that both men were involved in the occult at points in their lives and questioned many tenets of Biblical Christianity. Both of these men

were influenced by Origin and others who denied the unique position of Jesus Christ and embraced the prevalent Gnostic heresies. In college, they founded at least two occultic secret societies - the Hermes Club and the Ghostly Guild. The latter was concerned with the existence of spiritual entities, as its *Ghostlie Circular* states: “serious and earnest inquiry into the nature of the phenomena which are vaguely called ‘supernatural’ will scarcely be questioned.”⁷⁰

The particular beliefs of Westcott and Hort do matter a great deal, because their own brands of faith went into the specific choices of words they used in their final Greek text. These men do sound like orthodox Christians at times, speaking of the deity of Christ or forgiveness of sins, the Resurrection or the Ascension. Certain statements they made over the years, however, disclose a quiet distancing from sound Biblical doctrine and the preference for peculiar New Age-type beliefs.

These can be seen first in the open rejection of the history in the Bible, preferring allegorical interpretations of such things as the Creation and the Fall. When they speak of the “Resurrection” and the “Ascension,” they mean different things by these words than a straight-forward literal interpretation. There is a twisting of ideas that goes on in their writings that indicate they don’t believe much of it to be literally true. The dismissal of sound doctrine is more subtly seen in strange

views on such things as the Fatherhood of God and the substitution of Christ to pay for sins.

Chapter 14

The Westcott-Hort Heresies

Consider the following quotes taken from the letters and commentaries of either Westcott or Hort. They contain a land of mush, words that don't seem to mean anything substantial, but which quietly twist the truth of God's Word into something other than what is bold and literal. Westcott stated in a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1890:

... I am quite sure that our Christian faith ought not to be perilled on any predetermined view of what the history and character of the documents contained in the O.T. must be. What we are bound to hold is that the O.T., substantially as we receive it, is the Divine record of the discipline of Israel. This it remains, whatever criticism may determine or leave undetermined as to constituent parts. No one now, I suppose, holds that the first three chapters of Genesis, for example, give a literal history - I could never understand how any one reading them with open eyes could think they did - yet they disclose to us a Gospel. So it is probably elsewhere.⁷¹

Hort, on the other hand, was fascinated by Charles Darwin and mentioned him repeatedly in his letters. For instance, he wrote to the Rev. John Ellerton on April 3, 1860:

*But the book which has **most** engaged me is Darwin. Whatever may be thought of it, it is a book that one is proud to be contemporary with. I must work out and examine the argument in more detail, but at present my feeling is strong that the theory is unanswerable.*⁷²

Westcott and Hort were both willing to question Genesis.⁷³ By rejecting the first three chapters of the Bible, these men both deny the Creation of the world by the Word of God, a truth confirmed many places elsewhere in Scripture.⁷⁴ God gave the Israelites the blessing of a Sabbath Day of rest as a constant reminder of His work as Creator, and the Mosaic Covenant is based on it:

Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed.

Exodus 31:16-17

Jesus Christ recognized the first chapters of Genesis as literal history, as we see in [Matthew 19:4-6](#). If God did not make humans “male and

female” in [Genesis 1:27](#) and bind them together in [Genesis 2:24](#), then our whole basis of marriage according to Christ is built on false premises.

We also have the painfully central issue of the first sin and the Fall. If there was no literal Adam, then Jesus could not come and replace him, making [1 Corinthians 15:21ff](#) completely meaningless. Jesus didn’t just come to die for our sins, He came to reverse the destruction that Adam caused, to take Adam’s place and remove the curse that has infected every one of us from birth. As Paul tells us:

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

1 Corinthians 15:22

Christianity makes no sense without the first three chapters of Genesis.

From this starting point, Westcott and Hort offer an array of peculiar teachings. For instance, Westcott repeatedly denied that Jesus said, “my Father” and chose to use text that said “the Father” instead, promoting a concept called the Universal Fatherhood of God. In his commentary on [John 10:29-30](#), he states (emphasis in the original):

The thought, which is concrete in v. 28, is here traced back to its most absolute form as resting on the essential power of God in His relation of universal Fatherhood...

*...I **and** the Father **are one**. Every word in this pregnant clause is full of meaning. It is **I**, not **the Son**; **the Father**, not **my Father**; one essence...not one person... **are**, not **am**. The revelation is of the nature of Christ in the fulness of His double nature, of the incarnate Son in the fulness of His manifested being, and that in relation to **the Father**, to God as He is Father at once of the Son and of men. The Incarnation was the proof of the complete unity of the Father and the Son. Through that was shewn the true connexion of God and man. And so it is that the union of believers together is made dependent on the union of the Father and the Son (xvii,22,according to the true reading).⁷⁵*

The error here is very subtle. The explanation sounds correct; Jesus does have the double nature of God and man. However, Westcott manages to bend the meaning of this powerful verse to equate the Sonship of Jesus with the sonship of mankind, and these two sets of relationships are very different. The Bible makes it clear that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God, God made flesh, and the rest of us are made the children of God by adoption.⁷⁶ Westcott cunningly advances the idea that all humans are the children of God, equal with Christ.

It is true that God made us all, but the Bible teaches that we are made sons of God when we are born again – and some people are *not* God's children. Jesus tells Nicodemus he must be born again, and He calls the Pharisees the sons of the devil:

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

John 3:5-6

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

John 8:44

The Apostle Paul understands these things and states them clearly, making no bones about the difference between being born of the flesh and being born of the Spirit. We are sons of God by salvation who “believe on His name.”⁷⁷

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:26

That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

Romans 9:8

It seems strange that something as simple as changing “my Father” to “the Father” could have such massive theological implications, but these are the sorts of decisions that Westcott and Hort deliberately and pointedly made when developing their Greek text.

Fenton Hort repeatedly struggles to understand Christ’s sacrifice and our position in Him. In his letter to Westcott on August 14 and 16, 1860, he states his view that man is divine, having been made in the image of God:

*... It is of course true that we can only know God through human forms, but then I think the whole Bible echoes the language of Genesis 1:27, and so assures us that human forms **are** Divine forms.⁷⁸*

He also has confusion over the idea of Christ as a “ransom,” saying:

Of course, I confess I have no repugnance to the primitive doctrine of a ransom paid to Satan, though neither am I prepared to give full assent to it. But I can see no other possible form in which the doctrine of a ransom is at

*all tenable; anything is better than the notion of a ransom paid to the Father.*⁷⁹

This is an issue Hort long wrestled over. Almost 11 year earlier, on November 16, 1849, he wrote a long letter to one F.D. Maurice on his bewilderment about Christ's substitutionary punishment for our sins, evil and the Devil. His biggest frustration here at age 21 seems to be that some people might have their sins paid and others not, and that offends him (emphasis in the original):

*The fact is, **I do not see how** God's justice can be satisfied without **every man's** suffering in his own person the full penalty for his sins. I **know** that it **can**, for if it could not be the case of some at least, the whole Bible would be a lie; but if in the case **of some**, why not **of all**?*⁸⁰

Hort's views of universalism are thus seen early. He knew the Bible and orthodox Christian doctrines well, but those doctrines bothered him. In fact, the ransom is *not* paid to Satan, who is himself a criminal doomed to ultimate destruction.⁸¹ The ransom *is* paid to God the Father, whose laws we have broken. It is the Father who has a right to judge us and charge us for our crimes, and "the wages of sin is death."⁸² Yet, Jesus' sacrifice that pays the price of death for us originates in the words of Jesus Himself:

*And whosoever will be chief among you,
let him be your servant: Even as the Son
of man came not to be ministered unto,
but to minister, and to give his life a ransom
for many.*

Matthew 20:27-28

Surely Hort could appreciate the simple idea of dying so that somebody else could live. Hort wanted all mankind to be saved, though, and the Bible's punishment of some and not others bothered him. It led to his unorthodox views on the nature of man. By 1860, Hort had completely flipped the meaning of salvation in a letter to Westcott:

My dear Westcott...I entirely agree - correcting one word - with what you there say on the Atonement, having for many years believed that "the absolute union of the Christian (or rather, of man) with Christ Himself" is the spiritual truth of which the popular doctrine of substitution is an immoral and material counterfeit.⁸³

Hort wrongly unifies all mankind with Christ Himself (not just Christians), and he dismisses as "immoral" the view that Jesus was substituted for us as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. His error is clear, because the entire Bible supports Christ as a substitutionary sacrifice: the Day of Atonement in [Leviticus 23](#) is of a substitute for sin. The entire Levitical sacrificial system was set up to represent

the atoning sacrifice of Christ, with His blood spilled for our sins. [Hebrews 10](#) describes this very directly.

Westcott and Hort created a Greek New Testament to reflect the twisted doctrines they wanted to believe - ideas not based on the clear meaning of the Word of God. Hort blatantly confuses the unity of the Church and Christ by declaring that Christians (and non-Christians) *are* Christ, mixing in the heretical New Age idea that we are God, taking the authority from God Himself and handing the power and glory to us, where it does not belong.

Hort writes in a letter to F. D. Maurice which expands on his confusion in central concept:

It is easy to see that there is a close relation between this idea and that (whatever it may be) which underlies sacrifice, the prohibition of the eating of the blood, circumcision and its abolition, and finally St. Paul's mysterious words, "Without shedding of blood there is not remission of sins." But I have labored so utterly in vain to apprehend in any measure what this idea is, that I hope you will deepen and widen the hints you have already given.

I am quite conscious that I have given but few distinct objections to the common belief in what I have written, but so indeed it must be; language cannot accurately define the

*twinge of shrinking horror which mixes with my thoughts when I hear the popular notion asserted...*⁸⁴

Often Westcott's commentaries sound perfectly orthodox. Yet, there are numerous other questionable statements made by both men in reference to Christ and the Biblical teachings.

Hort supported the idea of purgatory: "I agree with you in thinking it a pity that Maurice verbally repudiates purgatory..."⁸⁵

Westcott doubted the reality of a physical Heaven: "No doubt the language of the Rubric is unguarded, but it saves us from the error of connecting the Presence of Christ's glorified humanity with place; 'heaven is a state and not a place.'"⁸⁶

The Westcott-Hort Greek Text

All these statements, however, are not as striking as a simple comparison of the words and phrases that Westcott and Hort left out of their Greek New Testament.⁸⁷ The differences are easy to find with a comparison of verses in the King James with newer versions like the RSV, NASB, NIV or NLT that use the Westcott-Hort Greek text. Trends can be seen just from words removed from a few verses in the Gospel of Matthew.

Matthew:

1:25	And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.
5:44	But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;
6:13	And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.
9:13	But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.
13:51	Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord.
16:20	Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.
17:21	Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.
18:11	For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.
19:9	And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.
19:17	And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.
20:16	So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.
23:14	Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.
25:13	Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.
27:35	And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

Jesus as Lord

These trends continue through the rest of the Gospels. From the very beginning of the book of Mark, Christ's deity is denied with the rejection of the words, "Son of God." References to Jesus as Lord and Christ are removed ([Mark 9:24](#); [11:10](#); [Luke 4:41](#), [7:31](#); [22:31](#), [23:42](#); [John 1:14](#), [4:42](#), [6:69](#)) and in [Luke 2:33](#) the name of Joseph is replaced with "father" as a subtle way to discredit the virgin birth.

Punishment and Rewards

There is a reluctance in the Westcott-Hort text to recognize that anybody will be lost. In [Mark 9:44](#) and [46](#), they've removed the verses that say, "where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." The entire verse of [Mark 11:26](#) is omitted: "But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses." The mention of negative consequences are gone from [Mark 6:11](#) and [John 3:15](#) as well. Not all, but many references to Heaven and Christ's return to the Father are removed, as in [Luke 11:2-4](#); [24:51](#) and [John 3:13](#), [16:16](#).

The Power of the Scriptures

Christ's fulfillment of scriptural prophecies are consistently scrubbed in the Westcott-Hort text, as in [Mark 13:14](#), [15:28](#) and [Luke 11:29](#). The end

of [Luke 4:4](#) is removed and with it Jesus' emphasis on "every word of God."

And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, that man shall not live by bread alone, ~~but by every word of God.~~

Outside the Gospels

The purging doesn't stop at the Gospels. In Acts "according to the flesh," is removed from the following verse in accordance with Gnostic prejudices:

Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, ~~according to the flesh,~~ he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;

Acts 2:30

In [Acts 8](#), Westcott and Hort chop out the Ethiopian eunuch's confession of faith by removing verse [37](#).

And Philip said, ~~If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.~~

Acts 8:37

They also hacked up the verses in [Acts 9](#) when Jesus speaks to Paul:

And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

Acts 9:5,6 (KJV)

Versus

“Who are you, Lord?” Saul asked. “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” he replied. “Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”

Acts 9:5,6 (NIV)

Consider others:

Ephesians 3:9	And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus-Christ:
Ephesians 3:14	For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ:
1 Peter 1:22	Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart
1 Peter 4:1	Forasmuch then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

1 John 5:7, 8	For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.
Revelation 11:17	Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou has taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

It seems that Westcott and Hort chose the Alexandrian codices with their many errors because these texts gave them the freedom to pick and choose what they would and would not keep in the New Testament. Sometimes their choices coincide with the Latin Vulgate, and sometimes they do not. Yet, Westcott and Hort were able to defend their text by saying they used the oldest complete manuscripts.

Chapter 15

The “Sevens” in Scripture

Requirements for a Genealogical Chart

Here is an exercise to try on your own sometime. It is a design challenge for a genealogy. On a sheet of paper create a fictional genealogy, a family tree, but follow this list of rules:

- The number of **words** must be evenly divisible by 7.
- The number of **letters** must also be evenly divisible by 7.
- The number of **vowels** and the number of **consonants** must also be divisible by 7.
- The number of words that **begin with a vowel** must be divisible by 7.
- The number of words that **begin with a consonant** must be divisible by 7.
- The number of words that **occur more than once** must be divisible by 7.
- The number of words that **occur in more than one form** must be divisible by 7.
- The number of words that **occur in only one form** must be divisible by 7.
- The number of **nouns** shall be divisible by 7.

- Only 7 words shall **not be nouns**.
- The number of **names** shall be divisible by 7.
- Only 7 **other kinds of nouns** are permitted.
- The number of **male names** shall be divisible by 7.
- The number of **generations** shall be divisible by 7.

Every time another requirement is added, the complexity of the genealogy increases exponentially. Of course, this happens to describe the genealogy of Jesus Christ in the first eleven verses of the Gospel of Matthew in the Greek, which is far more rigid and far more difficult, because Greek has so many syntactical rules.

The above exercise is an example of the heptatic structure of the Bible, the seven-fold structure discovered by Ivan Panin. Panin was born in Russia on December 12, 1855 and was exiled from Russia at an early age, due to his involvement in a plot against the Tsar. He immigrated to Germany and ultimately to the United States, where he graduated from Harvard with a PhD in Mathematics in 1882. Along the way, he discovered Jesus Christ. In 1890, he discovered the heptadic structures underlying the Biblical text. From there, he committed the next 50 years of his life generating 43,000 pages of discoveries with very small handwriting. He went home to the

Lord on October 30, 1942. He was an incredible genius, and he is owed a great debt for his insights.

Dr. Panin's background is included as an introduction to the controversy over the last twelve verses in the Gospel of Mark, to which he provided illumination.

The Last 12 Verses of Mark:

Mark 16:9-20 was left out of the Westcott and Hort text, and modern translations offer a footnote that these final twelve verses of Mark were probably added by some scribe. Yet, there is much early evidence that Mark 16:19-20 belonged in the original. Justin Martyr refers to the ending of Mark in the middle of the second century (several centuries before the Alexandrian codices were copied).⁸⁸ In A.D. 180, Irenaeus quotes Mark 16:19 outright in his commentary.⁸⁹ Tatian the Assyrian compiled all four Gospels in a work called the *Diatessaron*, and the full ending of Mark is found at the end.⁹⁰ What's more, Codex B leaves a column blank after Mark 16:8, betraying a sense on the part of the scribe that something is missing. From a historical point of view, this puts a cloud on the validity of the Alexandria codices and the work of Westcott and Hort.

Let us pause for a moment to read Mark 16:

*And when the sabbath was past, Mary
Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James,*

and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.

And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.

And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.

But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid.

Mark 16:1-8

This is where the Westcott and Hort text finishes the book of Mark. This ending is obviously very abrupt and incomplete. It makes little sense to stop at this point, yet many Bible footnotes will state that the verses that follow were added later, because

they were missing from *Sinaiticus* and *Vaticanus*. The summary from which Papias, Irenaeus, Tatian and others quote does sound like Mark with his habit of getting to the point, and it makes far more sense.

Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept.

And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.

After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.

And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them.

Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

*And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.
Amen.*

Mark 16:9-20

The Heptadic Structure

The Bible has an automatic security monitor that's watching over every letter of the text. It doesn't rust or wear out and it's been running continually for several thousand years. It is there for protection; it is the fingerprint of the Author, and it's a design that can't be compromised. This security monitor is the heptadic structure that Ivan Panin systematically laid out in the first half of the 20th century.

Groups of sevens occur in the Bible in over 600 passages. Some of these are overt, some are structural and some are hidden. I believe these heptadic signatures are the autograph of God, and we find them in the controversial last twelve verses of the book of Mark. These verses follow the heptadic rules to the tee:

- **Words** - number of words (not repeated) must be a multiple of 7 = 98
- **Vocabulary** - number of **total words that appear** must be a multiple of 7 = 98
 - # of words found before in Mark - distinctive = 84
 - # of words found only in this section of Mark = 14
- **Letters** - number of letters must be a multiple of 7 = 553
- **Vowels** - number of vowels must be a multiple of 7 = 294
- **Consonants** - number of consonants must be a multiple of 7 = 259
- **Used in the Lord's address** (vs. 15-18) – number must be a multiple of 7 = 42
- **Not part of His vocabulary** - number must be a multiple of 7 = 56

There is a one-in-seven chance of getting it right by chance with just one rule. Two rules decreases the chance exponentially; with two rules, there is a one-in-49 chance of getting it right. By the time we reach the ninth rule, the odds are one in 7^9 that those verses will follow the rules by random chance. If we attempted to build our genealogy to follow these rules, at 7^9 , we would need 40,353,607 attempts at an average of 10 minutes per attempt. It could take 768 years.

α	1	ι	10	ρ	100
β	2	κ	20	σ	200
γ	3	λ	30	τ	300
δ	4	μ	40	υ	400
ε	5	ν	50	φ	500
Ϝ*	6	ξ	60	χ	600
ζ	7	ο	70	ψ	700
η	8	π	80	ω	800
θ	9	ϙ*	90	Ϡ*	900

* *The Greek letters Ϝ, ϙ, and Ϡ – vou (6), koppa (90) and sampi (900) later became extinct.*

Happily, there is more to verify God's fingerprint and not just statistical good luck.

Gematria

Greek, like the Hebrew, has a numerical value assigned to each of its letters, called the “gematrical” value of the letter. When the number values of all the letters in [Mark 9-20](#) are added up, the total gematrical value of those twelve verses comes to 106,666, which is a multiple of 7 exactly. The number of words, the unique vocabulary, the numbers of letters – both vowels and consonants – are all evenly divisible by 7 in this passage.

- Words 175 (7x25)
- Vocabulary 98 (7x7x2)
- Letters 553 (7x79)
- Vowels 294 (7x42)
- Consonants 259 (7x37)
- Total Vocabulary 98 (7x14)

- Found before in Mark 84 (7x12)
- Found only here 14 (7x2)
- Used in Lord's address 56 (7x8)
- Rest of passage 119 (7x17)
- Verses 9-11 35 (7x5)
- Verses 12-18 105 (7x15)
- Verse 12 14 (7x2)
- Verses 13-15 35 (7x5)
- Verses 16-18 56 (7x8)
- Verses 19-20 35 (7x5)

Even the constituent parts of the passage are all multiples of seven. Then, when the appropriate gematrical values are assigned to each word, those are found in multiples of seven as well:

- Total 103,663 (7x14,809)
- Verses 9-11 17,213 (7x2,459)
- Verses 9 11,795 (7 x 1,685)
- Verse 10 5,418 (7x774)
- Verses 11 11,795 (7x1,685)
- Verses 12-20 86,450 (7x12,350)

There's one word, "deadly," that occurs only here in the Greek New Testament and no other place, and it has a numerical of 581, which is also a multiple of seven (7 x 83). It is preceded in the vocabulary by 42 words (7 x 6) and in the passage itself by 126 words (7 x 18). The point is how quickly these statistics go beyond the realm of practical random possibility and become absurd. This is the thumbprint of design.

This design is not found only in Mark, but in the New Testament as a whole. The longest word in the titles of any New Testament book is ἀποκάλυψις – *apokalypsis* – the word for “Revelation.” Interestingly, this word has a gematria of 1512 (7x6x6x6). The shortest word in the title of any book is the word “the” - ὁ - with a gematria of 70. The list goes on and on.

In the Gospel of Matthew, there is a vocabulary that is unique to Matthew. In other words, there is a list of Greek words that Matthew uses and other Gospel writers do not. We find this list includes 42 words (7 x 6) and 126 letters (7 x 18).

The unique words in Mark, Luke and John are also multiples of seven. Furthermore, Peter, James, Jude, and Paul have words that are unique to them and are a multiple of seven exactly. We believe that this is a fingerprint of the Holy Spirit.

There are also words that are called “Inter-Testament Heptadic Bridges.” These are words found in both the Old and New Testaments, and these can also be found in multiples of seven. For example, the word “hallelujah” occurs 24 times in the Old Testament, four times in the New Testament, for a total of 28 times. There are several more of these:

Inter-Testament Heptatic Bridges

"Hallelujah"	24	4	28	7 x 4
"Hosana"	1	6	7	7 x 1
"Shepherd"	12	9	21	7 x 3
"Jehovah Sabaoth"	285	2	287	7 x 41
"Corban"	82	2	84	7 x 12
"Milk"	44	5	49	7 x 7
"Isaac"	112	14	126	7 x 18
"Aaron"	443	5	448	7 x 64
"Abaddon"	6	1	7	7 x 1
"Christ at the right hand of God"	2	19	21	7 x 3
"After Melchizedek"	1	6	7	7 x 1
"Stone ...refused...headstone..."	1	6	7	7 x 1
"Love thy neighbor as thyself"	1	6	7	7 x 1
"Uncircumcision of the heart"	6	1	7	7 x 1

The God of the Bible is serious about His Word.
He declares in Deuteronomy:

*Ye shall not add unto the word which I
command you, neither shall ye diminish ought
from it, that ye may keep the commandments
of the LORD your God which I command you.*

Deuteronomy 4:2

The Psalmist also declares the precious nature
of the words of God:

*The words of the LORD are pure words: as
silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified
seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD,
thou shalt preserve them from this generation
for ever.*

Psalm 12:6-7

*I will worship toward thy holy temple, and
praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for
thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word
above all thy name.*

Psalm 138:2

We recognize how God feels about His name. This verse therefore describes the vast weight God places on His Word. The LORD warns Jeremiah against failing to speak the words God has given him, while Proverbs wisely warns us against putting words in God's mouth. Isaiah tells us that God's Word lasts into eternity. Jesus takes up the theme in Matthew and Mark, declaring that His words are of the same caliber as the holy Word of God in the Old Testament.

*Thus saith the LORD; Stand in the court of
the LORD'S house, and speak unto all the
cities of Judah, which come to worship in the
LORD'S house, all the words that I command
thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word:*

Jeremiah 26:2

*Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove
thee, and thou be found a liar.*

Proverbs 30:6

*The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the
word of our God shall stand for ever.*

Isaiah 40:8

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Matthew 24:35

Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

Mark 8:38

Jesus gives severe warnings in Revelation; we are not to add or take away from the things that God has said, lest we receive His curse on us:

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

Revelation 22:18-19

Trusting God's Word

Notable Bible scholar Sir Frederic Kenyon summarized his conviction of the historical reality of the events in the New Testament:

It may be disturbing to some to part with the conception of a Bible handed down

*through the ages without alteration and in unchallenged authority; but it is a higher ideal to face the facts, to apply the best powers with which God has endowed us to the solutions of the problems which they present to us; and it reassuring at the end to find that the general result of all these discoveries and all this study is to strengthen the proof of the authenticity of the Scripture, and our conviction that we have in our hands, in substantial integrity, the veritable Word of God.*⁹¹

The newest translations are great for being readable and easily understood by the common man. Unfortunately, these lean too heavily on Westcott and Hort. In fact, one of the things that is happening in the scholastic community is that the *Textus Receptus* is re-establishing itself as authoritative. There are many modern translations and they are readable, but Christians who are maturing spiritually will outgrow them.

Of course, we do not simply read the Bible. We memorize it. As did the psalmist, we hide the Word of God in our hearts, that we might not sin against Him.⁹² As new versions of the Bible come out, it's tempting to use them for memory work, but there is a problem in this: they tend to fall to the wayside after awhile, and another popular version pops up in its place.

My generation primarily did memorization from the King James Bible. When the Revised Standard Version was published, many of my friends switched over to memorizing Scripture from it. I'm glad I didn't do my Scripture memory from the RSV because today it is an “also ran.” Every translation has its difficulties, including the King James. However, in the King James, the difficulties are well understood and well known. Modern translations are useful, but they are continually being eclipsed by better modern translations. Scripture memory work is essential to the growing Christian, and my personal preference is to do Scripture memory anchored in a translation whose majesty is still unequaled and which will still be around when my grandkids are having babies.

Why We Accept the Bible

Why do we accept the Bible? First, it is authenticated by Jesus Christ. He not only taught from the Old Testament as the Word of God, but he authenticated it by fulfilling *to the day* the 70 weeks prophecy in [Daniel 9](#).⁹³ This is just one of the multitude of prophecies Jesus fulfilled.⁹⁴

The Bible is unique among all holy books. It is not written by a single man, like Joseph Smith or Mohammed, who claimed to have received angelic revelation. The Bible is a collection of 66 books penned by at least 40 authors over thousands

of years, yet, these writers have handed us an integrated message from Beginning to End. It is a complete story, and we find Jesus Christ and the message of salvation written over and over again on every page. We find microcodes and macrocodes from [Genesis 5](#), [Genesis 22](#), [Ruth](#) and [Joshua](#). We also find the transcendent heptadic structure in its repeated packages of seven.

The most important question is this: how can each of us tell for ourselves whether the Bible is the Word of God? Jesus tells us in John:

Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

John 7:16-17

From this starting point, the next arena of exploration is *How to Study the Bible*. We have a helpful study on this by the same name. We also have extensive studies on cryptography in our book *Cosmic Codes*, which delves into the microcodes, macrocodes, and the metacodes found in the Bible, as well as how to search for them in private study.

Father, we thank You for Your precious word. We thank You for this opportunity to study about Your Word in our own language without the threat of death that so many others have had to face. Thank you, Father, for this Bible that has come to us at such a high price and for the extremes that You've gone to that we might have life in Jesus Christ. We do pray, Father, that You would increase in each of us a new hunger, a new appetite for Your Word, that we each might grow in grace in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, that we each might become more fruitful stewards of the opportunities ahead of us. In all these things, we commit ourselves into Your hands without any reservation, indeed in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

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About the Author



Chuck Missler

*Founder,
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Chuck Missler was raised in Southern California.

Chuck demonstrated an aptitude for technical interests as a youth. He became a ham radio operator at age nine and started piloting airplanes as a teenager. While still in high school, Chuck built a digital computer in the family garage.

His plans to pursue a doctorate in electrical engineering at Stanford University were interrupted when he received a Congressional appointment to the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis. Graduating with honors, Chuck took his commission in the Air Force. After completing flight training, he met and married Nancy (who later founded The King's Highway ministry). Chuck joined the Missile Program and eventually became Branch Chief of the Department of Guided Missiles.

Chuck made the transition from the military to the private sector when he became a systems

engineer with TRW, a large aerospace firm. He then went on to serve as a senior analyst with a non-profit think tank where he conducted projects for the intelligence community and the Department of Defense. During that time, Chuck earned a master's degree in engineering at UCLA, supplementing previous graduate work in applied mathematics, advanced statistics and information sciences.

Recruited into senior management at the Ford Motor Company in Dearborn, Michigan, Chuck established the first international computer network in 1966. He left Ford to start his own company, a computer network firm that was subsequently acquired by Automatic Data Processing (listed on the New York Stock Exchange) to become its Network Services Division.

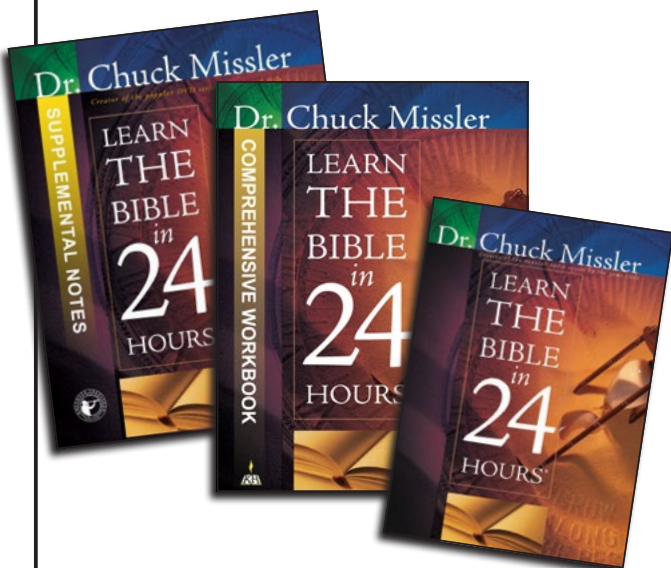
As Chuck notes, his day of reckoning came in the early '90s when — as the result of a merger — he found himself the chairman and a major shareholder of a small, publicly owned development company known as Phoenix Group International. The firm established an \$8 billion joint venture with the Soviet Union to supply personal computers to their 143,000 schools. Due to several unforeseen circumstances, the venture failed. The Misslers lost everything, including their home, automobiles and insurance.

It was during this difficult time that Chuck turned to God and the Bible. As a child he developed an intense interest in the Bible; studying it became a favorite pastime. In the 1970s, while still in the corporate world, Chuck began leading weekly Bible studies at the 30,000 member Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa, in California. He and Nancy established Koinonia House in 1973, an organization devoted to encouraging people to study the Bible.

Chuck had enjoyed a longtime, personal relationship with Hal Lindsey, who upon hearing of Chuck's professional misfortune, convinced him that he could easily succeed as an independent author and speaker. Over the years, Chuck had developed a loyal following. (Through Doug Wetmore, head of the tape ministry of Firefighters for Christ, Chuck learned that over 7 million copies of his taped Bible studies were scattered throughout the world.) Koinonia House then became Chuck's full-time profession.

In May, 2018, Chuck passed away peacefully at his home in Reporoa, New Zealand.

Learn the Bible



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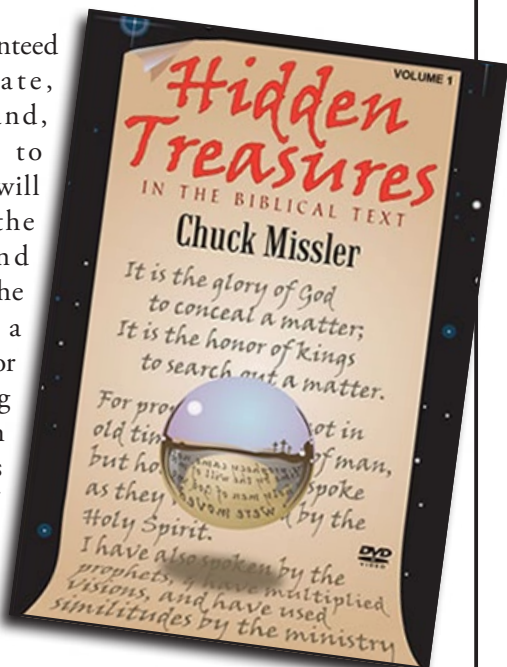
Using sound scientific facts, historical analysis, and Biblical narrative, acclaimed teacher Dr. Chuck Missler weaves together a rich tapestry of information—providing an accurate understanding of Scripture’s relation to itself, to us and to the world at large.

Examine the heroic tales of Exodus, the lasting wisdom of Proverbs, or even the enigmatic imagery of Revelation with the simple, Scripturally sound insights and fresh perspectives found in *Learn the Bible in 24 Hours*. Whether you want to explore some of the less-discussed nuances of Scripture or you need a comprehensive refresher course on the Bible’s themes and stories, *Learn the Bible in 24 Hours* is a great guide.

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For the novice as well as the sophisticate, this book is full of surprises. It includes subtle discoveries lying just “beneath” the text -- hidden messages, encryptions, deliberate misspellings and other amendments to the text -- that present implications beyond the immediate context, demonstrating a skillful design that has its origin from outside our space and time. Drawing upon over forty years of collecting, Chuck highlights in this book many of the precious nuggets that have become characteristic of his popular Bible studies around the world.

It is guaranteed to stimulate, provoke, and, hopefully, to disturb. It will confound the skeptic and encourage the believer. It is a “must read” for every thinking seeker of truth and serious inquirer of reality.



The Trinity

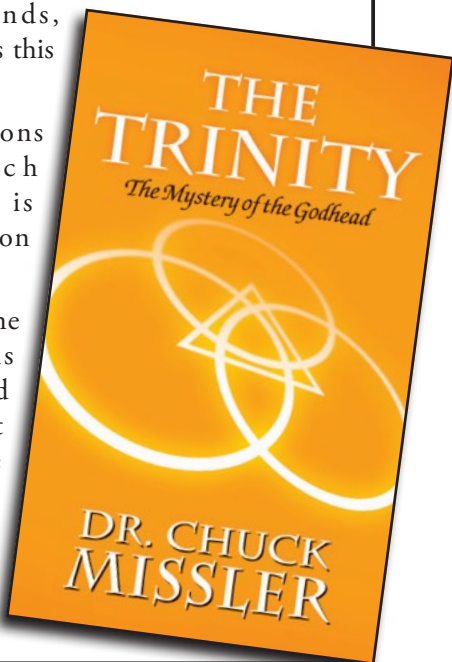
Is there One God or Three? How does one reconcile the “One God” of the Sh'ma with the “Three Persons” of the Trinity?

The doctrine of the trinity has been at the heart of much theological controversy. The routine objection is that the doctrine sacrifices monotheism to “tritheism.” But this objection thrives on a misconception of divine personality in the image of disparate, individual, human selves.

This type of rationalistic apologetics, promotive of trinitarianism on speculative rather than revelational grounds, regrettably encourages this misunderstanding.

One of the reasons we suffer such misunderstanding is due to our relying on “models.”

Chuck explores the ostensible tensions between the Old and New Testament revelations of the ultimate mystery of the Godhead. This is a foundational study for every Christian.



The Four Horsemen Series



They have become a popular idiom even in secular literature, in connotative terms, of the 'End Times.'

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