



THE BIBLE'S PROOF

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The Bible's Proof
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Introduction

The individual must accept that the Bible is the Word of God by faith, for “without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6).

At the same time, Bible faith is not a blind leap into the dark. It is confidence in the Record that God has given, for “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). The writers of the Bible explain to us that they were not delivering cunningly devised fables but a divinely-inspired record based on “many infallible proofs” (Acts 1:3; 2 Peter 1:16).

Following are some of the objective, time-proven reasons why we can have complete confidence in the Bible..

The Testimony of Jesus Christ

The testimony of Jesus Christ proves that the Bible is the Word of God.

Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, and His resurrection alone gives infallible witness to this claim. The evidence for Christ's resurrection is irrefutable, as we have shown in this book. Consider just four of these evidences:

First, there is the amazing candor of the Gospel accounts. When someone invents a religion, he glorifies its leaders, but the four Gospels paint the founders of Christianity as very weak (e.g., Peter denying Christ thrice; the disciples fleeing and hiding; Thomas and others doubting Christ even after He appears to them). Further, if men had made up the accounts of Christ's resurrection in the Gospels, they would *not* have said that the women were the first to believe. In that day women had no authority in the eyes of society. The account of the women believing first is not something that would have been written unless it actually happened and unless the writers were committed wholeheartedly to recording the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. This striking candor is powerful evidence that the Gospels are true, unvarnished accounts.

Second, the resurrected Christ was seen by hundreds of eye witnesses, most of whom were still alive with Paul interviewed them a couple of decades later and wrote about it in the first epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 15:1-8).

Third, the resurrection dramatically changed His disciples. Before Christ's resurrection they were fearful and in hiding, whereas after they saw and touched Him they became bold and were willing to suffer and die for their faith.

Fourth, the enemies of Christ have never produced His body; the tomb remains empty to this day. As George Hanson rightly says, "The simple faith of the Christian who

believes in the resurrection is nothing compared to the credulity of the skeptic who will accept the wildest and most improbable romances rather than admit the plain witness of historical certainties. The difficulties of belief may be great; the absurdities of unbelief are greater” (*The Resurrection and the Life*).

Christ taught that the Bible is the infallible Word of God. He quoted from every part of the Old Testament as the Word of God. Some of the Old Testament people and events that Christ referred to are the creation (Mk. 13:19), Adam and Eve (Mt. 19:4-6; Mk. 10:6-7), Cain and Abel (Mt. 23:35; Lk. 11:50-51), Noah and the flood (Mt. 24:37-39), Abraham (Jn. 8:39-40), the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Lk. 17:28-29), Lot’s wife turning to salt (Lk. 17:32), Moses and the burning bush (Mk. 12:26), manna from Heaven (Jn. 6:31-32), the brazen serpent in the wilderness (Jn. 3:14-15), Jonah and the whale (Mt. 12:39-41; Lk. 11:29-32), Nineveh repenting at Jonah’s preaching (Lk. 11:32), Solomon and the queen of Sheba (Lk. 11:31). Christ often quoted from the book Isaiah and said the historical prophet Isaiah wrote it, not an unknown group of men as the critics claim. In John 12:38-41, Jesus quoted from both major sections of Isaiah and said both were written by the same prophet named Isaiah.

Of the authority of the Old Testament, Jesus said,

“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” (Mat. 5:17-18).

In this passage Jesus taught that the Old Testament is perfect even to the very letters.

He further said that “the scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35). He was saying that nothing written in the Scripture

can be set aside or ignored. It is authoritative to every detail; it is a chain with no weak links.

On Christ's authority alone we would trust the Bible and reject the skeptics.

The Bible's Unique Construction

The Bible's unique construction proves that it is the Word of God.

The Bible was written by at least 40 different authors representing some 19 different occupations (shepherd, soldier, farmer, fisherman, tax collector, medical doctor, king, etc.) who lived during a period covering some 1,600 years. That is approximately 50 generations. The first 39 books of the Bible were written in the Hebrew language over a period of about 1,000 years. There was then a 400-year gap when no Scriptures were written. After that, the last 27 books of the Bible were written in the Greek language during a period covering roughly 50 years. The writers of the Old Testament could not have collaborated with one another and the writers of the New Testament could not have collaborated with those of the Old Testament.

Yet the product is one book that fits together perfectly, has one all-encompassing message, and contains no contradictions or errors. There is nothing else remotely like this in all of man's history. The one message of the Bible from beginning to end is the eternal plan of God in Jesus Christ. The earliest books of the Bible teach the same doctrine about God, creation, man, life, death, salvation, and judgment as the last books of the Bible. The genealogy of Jesus Christ appears in the first book and can be traced throughout the rest of the Bible.

Some have claimed to have found mistakes in the Bible, but I have studied it for 38 years and each time I have examined a supposed error or contradiction, I have found that the Bible is true and the critic is wrong. (See our book *Things Hard to Be Understood: A Handbook of Biblical Difficulties*.)

The Character of it's Authors

The character of the Bible's authors prove that it is the Word of God.

The Bible testifies that “holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:21), and an examination of the lives of the Bible's writers proves this testimony. These were holy, serious men. They came from all walks of life. They were men of good reputation and sound mind. They were not enriched by the prophecies they gave. Far from it; some were impoverished and many were viciously persecuted and killed for the testimony they held. Moses, the author of the first five books of the Bible, chose to live a life of terrific hardship in the service of God as opposed to the millionaire's life he could have lived as the adopted son of Pharaoh. Many Bible writers made similar choices. Their motivation certainly was not covetousness and worldly advantage. These were not perfect men, but they were holy men. They all claimed that God had put His hand upon them to speak His Word. The lives they lived, and the testimonies they held, and the deaths they died gave evidence that they were telling the truth.

Fullfilled Prophecy

Fulfilled prophecy proves the Bible to be the Word of God.

The Bible contains a vast amount of prophecy, much of which has been fulfilled. The Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecies by J. Barton Payne lists 1817 specific prophecies, 1239 in the Old Testament and 578 in the New. The predictions are precise and detailed, and the fulfillment is exact.

Isaiah says that fulfilled prophecy is evidence of divine inspiration, and this should be obvious since only God knows the future (Isaiah 41:21-23).

The God of Israel challenges the idols to prove their divinity by foretelling the future. No pagan religious book has ever done this. The so-called prophecies of Nostradamus, for example, are so vague that they could mean almost anything. The same is typically true for astrological forecasts. Bible prophecy, on the other hand, is clear and precise, and its prophecies have never failed.

Prophecies Pertaining to Jesus Christ

Jesus' entire life was written down in the Old Testament before He was born. There are 191 Messianic prophecies. The following examples are from three great prophecies: Psalm 22; Micah 5:2; and Isaiah 53:

His birthplace (Micah 5:2 - Luke 2:4-7)

His rejection by the Jewish nation (Isaiah 53:2 - Mat. 27:22)

His betrayal by a friend (Psalm 41:9 - Mat. 26:14-26, 47-49)

His trial and death

- The perversion of justice (Isaiah 53:7-8 - Mat. 26:57-60; 27:11-14)
- Numbered with transgressors (Isaiah 53:12 - Mat. 27:20-22, 38)

- The piercing of his hands and feet (Psalm 22:16 - John 19:16-18)
- The words spoken on the cross (Psalm 22:1 - Mat. 27:46)
- The mocking of the people (Psalm 22:7-8 - Mat. 27:39, 41-43)
- The people sitting and staring (Psalm 22:17 - Mat. 27:36)
- No bones broken (Psalm 22:17 - John 19:33-36)
- The soldiers gambling for his garments (Psalm 22:18 - Mat. 27:35)
- His burial in a rich man's tomb (Isaiah 53:9 - Mat. 27:57-60)

We know that these prophecies were written before Christ was born, because copies of the Old Testament books were found in the Dead Sea caves dating to at least 100 and more years B.C.

Prophecies Pertaining to Israel

The continued existence of Israel is one of history's most amazing stories, and it was prophesied in Scripture in great detail.

Israel's history was prophesied by Moses and recorded in the book of Deuteronomy about 4,000 years ago. God warned that if Israel broke His law she would be "plucked from off the land" and scattered "among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other" (Deut. 28:63-64). There the Jews would "find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life" (Deut. 28:65-66).

This is an accurate description of Israel's history from the first century until now. Jerusalem was conquered in 70 A.D. by the Roman armies under Titus. The Jewish temple was

destroyed and the city walls were torn down. Sixty-five years later Jerusalem was plowed under on the order of Emperor Hadrian in response to the Jewish rebellion led by Bar Kochbar. The Jewish people were scattered to the ends of the earth and found no rest. They were hated by the Muslims and hounded and persecuted by the Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic Church for a thousand years. Hitler's regime tried to destroy them. Giving preference to the Arabs, England tried to keep them from returning to their land after World War II. They are the object of hatred until this very day. Most of the world is opposed to Israel and the reporting in secular publications about the Middle East crisis is generally slanted against her.

All of this was foretold in Bible prophecy, but the prophecy also said that Israel would be brought back into her land and that she would remain a nation even after all of this, and that is exactly what happened in 1948. Never before in the history of the world has a nation of people been scattered throughout the world and persecuted for 2,000 years and then come back together as a nation with their ancient language intact. This is a divine miracle.

Bible prophecy describes the restoration of Israel in two parts. First, she would return to the land in a position of unbelief. Then she would be converted. The amazing prophecy in Ezekiel 37:1-14 describes Israel's restoration in these two stages. She is described as a valley of bones that are resurrected.

“Again he said unto me, Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you and ye shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord” (Ezekiel 37:4-6).

In verses 11-14, Ezekiel states that this vision pertains to the restoration of Israel to her land and to her repentance toward God. The dry bones symbolize Israel in her scattered, spiritually dead condition. When Ezekiel prophesies, the bones are brought back together and given life and become a great army, and this happens in two stages (verse 7-10). First the bones are given sinews and flesh, and next God breathes upon them and they live.

The first part of the prophecy has been fulfilled. Israel has been back in her land as a nation since 1948, but she is there in unbelief and spiritual death. She continues to reject her Messiah, Jesus Christ. She has no temple and priesthood and no true worship. She lives in constant fear.

But she is back in the land just as the Bible prophesied. In 1800 there were only six thousand Jews in Palestine, but by 2000 there were over five million (John Ecob, *Amillennialism Weighed and Found Wanting*, Herald of Hope, p. 44-45).

During the Great Tribulation God will grant repentance unto Israel and will breathe spiritual life into her and she will live.

The continued existence of Israel is a fulfillment of Bible prophecy. It is a very great miracle and an irrefutable evidence of the divine inspiration of the Bible. (For more on this see our illustrated book *Israel: Past, Present, and Future.*)

The Bible's Accuracy

The Bible's factualness and scientific accuracy proves that it is the Word of God.

Everything the Bible says is true and factual.

For example, the Bible says man is a sinner, and that is not difficult to confirm. Just look at the world! When asked for his opinion on original sin, Samuel Johnson, the famous British lexicographer, replied,

“With respect to original sin, the inquiry is not necessary, for whatever is the cause of human corruption, men are evidently and confessedly so corrupt, that all the laws of heaven and earth are insufficient to restrain them from crimes.” David Berlinski, a Princeton-educated “secular Jew,” says, “One need hardly be a Christian to appreciate the wisdom in these remarks” (*The Devil's Delusion*, p. 33).

The Bible is true not only in its statements about man, but also in its statements about everything. Though the Bible is not a scientific manual, it is scientifically accurate, even from its earliest pages, which were written nearly 4,000 years ago.

Following are some examples of the Bible's scientific accuracy, beginning with statements from the pages of Job, probably the oldest book in the Bible. The late Henry Morris, who had a Ph.D. in hydraulic engineering, said:

“These references are modern in perspective, with never a hint of the mythical exaggerations and errors characteristic of other ancient writings ... perhaps of even greater significance is the fact that in a 4000-year-old book filled with numerous references to natural phenomena, there are no scientific mistakes or fallacies” (*The Remarkable Record of Job*).

Job said the earth is hung upon nothing (Job 26:7). This is obvious to our modern generation, as we have seen the actual pictures of the earth hanging in space, but to previous generations it was not obvious and there were many commonly-held myths about the earth sitting on the back of Atlas or a turtle or an elephant, etc.

Job said the air has weight (“the weight for the winds,” Job 28:25). It was not until the 17th century that Galileo discovered that atmosphere has weight, and the modern science of aerodynamics is based on this scientific fact. Further, the weight of air is important in the function of the earth’s weather. “The ‘weight of the winds’ controls the worldwide air mass movements that transport the waters evaporated from the oceans inland over the continents” (Morris, *The Remarkable Record of Job*).

Job described the springs of the sea (Job 38:16). Man had no way to know about the fresh-water springs on the ocean floor by firsthand observation until recent times. Modern science has discovered that there are thousands of underwater springs that add millions of metric tons of water to the oceans each year.

Job understood that light has a way and that darkness has a place (Job 38:19). “That is, light is not to be located in a certain place or situation. Neither does it simply appear, or disappear, instantaneously. Light is traveling! It dwells in a ‘way,’ always on the way to someplace else. Though usually traveling in waves, sometimes it seems to move as a stream of particles, but it is always moving. When light stops, there is darkness. Thus, darkness is static, staying in place; but light is dynamic, dwelling in a way” (Morris).

The Bible says that the light creates wind (Job 38:24), but it is only in recent times that modern weather science has discovered that wind is created as the sun heats up the surface of the earth, causing the hot air to rise and cooler air to fall, creating weather systems.

Job describes the amazing hydrological cycle (evaporation, atmospheric circulation, condensation, precipitation, run-off) (Job 36:27-28; Ecc. 1:7; Jer. 51:16). The process of evaporation and condensation was not discovered until the 17th century and not well understood until the 20th.

The Bible says plants and animals reproduce after their kind (Genesis 1:11, 12, 21, 24, 25). This is in perfect harmony with everything that can be observed and tested by modern science. There is great variety within kinds, different types of roses and dogs, but there is no reproduction between kinds, between roses and dandelions or dogs and penguins. Breeding experiments have demonstrated that there are genetic barriers that restrict change. The fruit fly has been used in genetic experiments since the early 1900s. Tens of millions of fruit flies have been bombarded with x-rays, doctored, and poisoned. The result has been a variety of mutant fruit flies but no evidence that the fruit fly could evolve into some other type of insect or animal. This is proof of the Bible's 3500-year-old statement that all creatures reproduce according to kind.

The Bible says the heavens cannot be measured and the stars are without number (Genesis 22:17; Jeremiah 31:37). Before the invention of the telescope, man could see only a few hundred stars with the naked eye, but the very first book of the Bible says they are without number. This has been confirmed by modern science. There are 300 billion stars in our Milky Way galaxy alone. In 1999, observations by NASA astronomers, using the Hubble Space Telescope, suggested that there are 125 billion galaxies in the universe. The most up-to-date star count was announced in July 2003 as 70 sextillion observable stars (70,000,000,000,000,000,000,000). This was the conclusion of the world's largest galaxy study, the Two-Degree Field Galaxy Redshift Survey, which is considered 10 times more accurate than previous ones. The team of scientists did not physically count the stars. Instead they used some of the world's most powerful telescopes to

count all of the galaxies in one region of the universe and to estimate how many stars each galaxy contained by measuring its brightness. They then extrapolated these figures out to the whole universe visible through telescopes. This massive figure, of course, probably accounts for only a tiny percentage of the actual stars.

The Bible says there are paths in the sea (Isaiah 43:16; Psalm 8:8). Since the 19th century the ocean currents or paths have been charted and ships travel these paths just as trucks travel on roads. Writing in the mid-1800s, Matthew Fontaine Maury, Superintendent of the U.S. Navy's Depot of Charts and Instruments in Washington, D.C., observed, "There is a river in the ocean: in the severest droughts it never fails, and in the mightiest floods it never overflows; its banks and its bottom are of cold water, while its current is of warm; the Gulf of Mexico is its fountain, and its mouth is in the Arctic Seas. It is the Gulf Stream" (Maury, *The Physical Geography of the Sea*, 6th ed., 1856, p. 25). Since then, other sea paths have been discovered.

The Bible says the life is in the blood (Leviticus 17:11). This was written about 3,500 years ago, but it was not understood scientifically until recent times. For centuries doctors used "blood letting" as a healing method. George Washington, America's first president, probably died prematurely because of this bogus practice. Modern medicine has learned what the Bible has taught all along, that the life of the flesh is in the blood. The amazing system of vessels and capillaries transports the marvelous blood cells with their life-giving oxygen and other necessary elements to every part of the body. The blood also forms a major part of the infection fighting and clotting systems, which are necessary for the "life of the flesh."

The Bible is not a book of science, but wherever the Bible touches on science it is accurate. This proves its divine origin, because all other ancient books are filled with gross scientific

blunders. Even science books written a mere 100 years ago are filled with errors.

The Bible's Candor

The Bible's candor proves that it is the Word of God.

When men write biographies of their heroes, they commonly omit or whitewash their faults; but the Bible exhibits its divine quality by showing man as he is. Even the best of men in the Bible are described with all their faults. We read of Adam's rebellion, Noah's drunkenness, David's adultery, Solomon's apostasy, Jonah's pity party, Peter's disavowal of his Master, Paul and Barnabas' petty strife, and the disciples' unbelief in the face of Christ's resurrection. The Bible was written by Jews, yet it candidly describes the faults of the Jewish people: their stubbornness and unbelief that caused them to have to wander in the wilderness for 40 years; their idolatry during the period of the judges; their rebellion that caused them to be rejected from the land and scattered throughout the earth for two millennia; their rejection of the Messiah.

The Bible's Indestructibility

The Bible's indestructibility proves that it is the Word of God.

Above all other books combined, the Bible has been hated, vilified, ridiculed, criticized, restricted, banned, and destroyed, but it has been to no avail. As one rightly said, "We might as well put our shoulder to the burning wheel of the sun, and try to stop it on its flaming course, as attempt to stop the circulation of the Bible" (Sidney Collett, *All about the Bible*, p. 63).

In A.D. 303, the Roman Emperor Diocletian issued an edict to stop Christians from worshipping Jesus Christ and to destroy their Scriptures. Every official in the empire was ordered to raze churches to the ground and burn every Bible found in their districts (Stanley Greenslade, *Cambridge History of the Bible*). Twenty-five years later his successor, Constantine, issued another edict ordering fifty Bibles to be published at government expense (Eusebius).

In 1778, the French infidel Voltaire boasted that in 100 years Christianity would cease to exist, but within 50 years the Geneva Bible Society used his printing press and house to publish Bibles (Geisler and Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, 1986, pp. 123, 124).

Robert Ingersoll once boasted, "Within 15 years I'll have the Bible lodged in a morgue." But Ingersoll is long dead, and the Bible is alive and well.

The communist regimes in Russia and China tried to destroy the Bible and its influence, but they have been completely unsuccessful. There are more churches in Russia today than ever before in its history, and the presses cannot print enough Bibles to satisfy the insatiable demand in communist China.

The liberal skeptics in the 19th century tried to destroy the authority of the Bible by claiming that it is full of myths and that it is historically inaccurate. They claimed that writing didn't exist in Moses' day. They doubted the existence of Ur of the Chaldees, of the advanced ancient city-states and religious towers mentioned in Genesis 10-11, of complex legal codes in that era, of camels in Palestine in the days of Abraham, of King David and King Solomon, of the Hittites and the Philistines, of Sargon and Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar, to name a few. They said that the book of Acts was filled with historical inaccuracies.

In all of these cases and hundreds more, the skeptics were proven wrong and the Bible was proven right, as we have documented in this course in the section on archaeology.

In fact, many who have set out to disprove the Bible have been converted, instead. The following are a few examples:

Gilbert West, an English poet who was included in Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets*, while a student at Oxford set out to debunk the Bible's account of Christ's resurrection. Instead he proved to his own satisfaction that Christ did rise from the dead and published *Observations on the History and Evidences of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ*.

George Lyttelton, an English Statesman, author, and poet who was educated at Oxford, determined to prove that Paul was not converted as the Bible states. Instead, Lyttelton wrote a book providing evidence that Paul's conversion was real and that it is evidence that Jesus actually rose from the dead. The book was titled *Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul*.

Frank Morison, a lawyer, journalist, and novelist, set out to write a book to disprove the resurrection of Christ. Instead he was converted and wrote a book in defense of the resurrection entitled *Who Moved the Stone?*

Simon Greenleaf, Royall Professor of Law at Harvard University and one of the most celebrated legal minds of America, determined to expose the “myth” of the resurrection of Christ once and for all, but his thorough examination forced him to conclude that Jesus did rise from the dead. In 1846 he published *An Examination of the Testimony of the Four Evangelists by the Rules of Evidence Administered in the Courts of Justice*.

William Ramsay, a renowned archaeologist and New Testament scholar, began his historical research in Asia Minor with the assumption that he would find evidence to disprove the Bible’s historicity. He concluded, though, that the book of Acts was written during the lifetime of the apostles and that it is historically accurate. His discoveries led to his conversion to Christianity.

Josh McDowell was a skeptic when he entered university to pursue a law degree, but he accepted a challenge by some Christians to examine the claim that Jesus Christ is God’s Son. He says, “I decided to write a book that would make an intellectual joke of Christianity.” He traveled throughout the U.S. and Europe to gather evidence to prove his case, but instead he was converted to Christ and wrote a book defending the Bible entitled *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*. McDowell concluded:

“After trying to shatter the historicity and validity of the Scripture, I came to the conclusion that it is historically trustworthy. If one discards the Bible as being unreliable, then one must discard almost all literature of antiquity. ... I believe we can hold the Scriptures in our hands and say, ‘The Bible is trustworthy and historically reliable’ (*The New Evidence*, p. 68).

Dr. Richard Lumsden, professor of parasitology and cell biology, was dean of the graduate school at Tulane University and trained 30 Ph.D.s. When he was challenged by a student about the evidence for evolution, he sought to refute the

student by demonstrating evolution's scientific evidence. Instead, he became convinced that the evidence is lacking. This led to an examination of the Bible, which led to his conversion to Jesus Christ.

Lee Strobel, who has a law degree from Yale, was an atheist when he worked as a journalist for the Chicago Tribune. After his wife's conversion to Christ, he determined to use his investigative skills to prove that the Bible is not true. He says, "I plunged into the case with more vigor than with any story I had ever pursued. I applied the training I had received at Yale Law School as well as my experience as legal affairs editor of the Chicago Tribune." Strobel became convinced that the Bible is true and that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. He has written many books defending the Christian faith, including *The Case for Christ: A Journalist's Personal Investigation of the Evidence for Jesus and The Case for the Resurrection*.

"Down through the years, the Bible has been a mighty anvil that has worn out the puny hammers of the scoffers" (*Christian Home Bible Course*).

The Bibles Appeal

The Bible's universal appeal proves that it is the Word of God.

In spite of the aforementioned attacks, the Bible is the most popular book in the world, by far. Some books have been translated into a few dozen languages, but the Bible in whole or in part has been translated into every major language of the world, plus most minor ones--more than 2,450 so far. Translation work is progressing in another 2,000 languages. Compare this with other religious books. The Hindu scriptures have been translated into 46 languages, and the Muslim Quran into about 40.

The Bible's Doctrine

The Bible's doctrine of salvation proves it is the Word of God.

The Bible is the only religious Scripture that teaches the doctrine of salvation by grace. Every other one teaches salvation by works. Hinduism says salvation is attained by practicing dharma and working out one's karma. Islam says salvation is by surrender to Allah and obedience to his commands. Buddhism says salvation is by reaching nirvana through life works and meditation and asceticism. If you visit the Buddhist monastery at Boudha in Kathmandu any time of the day you will find Buddhists walking clockwise, fingering their prayer beads and twirling their prayer wheels. They do this because they are trying to work out their salvation.

The Bible, on the other hand, says that salvation is God's free gift to sinners. This gift was very costly for the Giver. It was purchased with a great price, which was the atoning sacrifice of God's Son on the cross. But for the sinner it is free.

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

The Bible says there is nothing that the sinner can offer God in order to atone for his sins. What could we offer? Righteous works? The Bible says our righteousness is as filthy rags before God's great holiness (Isaiah 64:6). Money? What would the God of creation do with our pathetic currency? A pure heart? The Bible says the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9). How, then, could we purchase our own salvation?

“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade

as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away” (Isaiah 64:6).

No, salvation is the free unmerited gift of a loving and deeply compassionate God. As the Christian hymn says, “We owed a debt we could not pay; He paid a debt He did not owe.”

“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).

The Bible! What a Book!

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