

Why The Bible?

Part One

In as much as men have put their hands to the task of writing books with claims of divine inspiration, there is one book which has faced centuries of criticism, yet continues to stand far above the rest. Its influence is seen throughout the world, its wisdom puts to shame the greatest human minds, and its value is worth more than the greatest treasures of the earth. It is known as the Bible. As one writer noted, ^k“The Bible is an enormous historical presence, the dominant piece of literature and a dominant influence in history since the time of Christ. No other piece of literature has come within a fraction of its impact. If the Bible is a mighty oak, then every other piece of literature is a sapling, a seedling or an acorn” (Roberson, pg. 12).

A Foundation of Faith

Before we answer the question “Why the Bible?” we must clearly understand this one point: whatever conclusion we come to in regards to the existence of God and the inspiration of the Bible, our conclusion will be upon FAITH, and nothing more. We can consider all of the evidences known to man which support the inspiration of the Bible, but it still holds true that our decision to deny or to accept it is based purely upon Faith. Faith is the foundation upon which every person builds their life. The fact is, no man can prove without question whether the Bible or any other book is the word of God, whether evolution or creation is true, or whether heaven and hell really exist. As difficult as this may be for some to accept, it cannot be avoided. Since we do not have the ability to observe such things first hand, it holds true that we also do not have the ability to prove them as fact. Rather, our understanding of all things eternal is limited to the evidences set before us. With this evidence in hand it is the responsibility of every person to draw a conclusion which is most supported by the evidence. The conclusion that we make becomes our faith. Therefore it is written, “*Faith...is the evidence of things not seen*” (Hebrews 11:1).

This principle is not strange to us, rather, it is common to every person. Thousands of court cases throughout America are decided every day based on evidences. People’s lives are granted or taken away by a jury or judge who examines the evidences and makes the most logical conclusion. This is what we must do with the question set before us. The only difference is that in this case our lives depend on making the right decision.

So, why do Christians believe that the Bible is the word of God? For the simple reason that the Bible is the only book which *claims* divine inspiration while at the same time *manifesting the qualities* of divine inspiration. As we will discuss in more detail throughout this series, it can be readily seen that all other allegedly inspired books are littered with the inconsistencies and errors that one would expect from human literature. The Bible, on the other hand, has no such inconsistencies or errors. Despite the efforts of scoffers and skeptics, no contradiction has been found in the Bible which cannot be answered with sound, logical reasoning. Therefore the words of Jesus have rung true through the ages, “...*and the scriptures cannot be broken*” (John 10:35). Having been tested in the categories of history, geography, science, and consistency the Bible has proven to be accurate in every case. No other piece of literature on earth has been able to make this claim. For these reasons Christians believe the Bible to be from God and, in accordance with its teachings, they believe the Bible to be the revelation of God’s will for all men throughout all generations.

Of course, these claims have no weight without the evidence to back them up. Therefore the remainder of this lesson will be devoted to discussing the evidences which support the inspiration of the Bible. These

evidences fall into the following categories: 1. The importance of the Bible, 2. The Bible's claims for inspiration, 3. External evidences, 4. Internal evidences, and 5. Fulfilled prophecies.

The Importance of the Bible

The Bible has influenced many aspects of humanity throughout the world. There is no culture, society, or generation that has not been affected by the Bible. This is exactly what one would expect from the revelation of God. If the words of men such as Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. can move nations, one would expect the word of God to be able to move the world. And so it has! Therefore, just as the created universe declares the glory of God (Psalm 19:1), so the Bible declares the wisdom and righteousness of God from generation to generation. *"Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heave. Your faithfulness endures to all generations; you established the earth and it abides"* (Psalm 119:189). Within the generations and societies that have taken even the slightest consideration of the words written in the Bible, the impact that can be seen is immeasurable. Consider the ways in which the Bible has affected the world:

SOCIETY

"Once a South Sea Islander proudly displayed his Bible to an American soldier during World War II. 'We've outgrown that sort of thing,' the soldier said. The Islander smiled back and said, 'It is a good thing that we haven't. If it weren't for this book we would have eaten you by now'" (Roberson, pp. 12-13). Such examples of the influence of the Bible can be seen throughout the world and, as the Islander said, "It's a good thing."

The family: Because of the teaching of the Bible there has been a great improvement in the family relationship throughout the world. In many societies where sons were desired and daughters cast off like dead weight, it is that way no more. The standard household consists of one wife to one husband. Wives are treated as vessels of honor rather than possessions or slaves, as it is written in 1 Peter 3:7, *"Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered."*

Labor: Throughout history laborers and servants were treated as less than human and beaten as animals. Sadly, this was taking place even in the relatively recent history of our own country. Yet, societies in which the Bible's standard has been considered have seen great improvements in this area. Men have applied the passage which says, *"And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise"* (Luke 6:31). In the Bible servants are taught to work for their masters *"as unto the Lord,"* while masters are commanded to treat their servants with respect and to *"give up threatening"* (Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:22-4:1). Fair treatment of laborers has resulted from teachings such as these.

Race Relations: James 2:1-9 discusses the need for men to treat other men with equality, condemning the attitude of discrimination for whatever reason. Therefore, one writer observed, "These principles were violated in our nation in a ghastly display of selective understanding when we tolerated slavery. But, terrible as that was, at least it is no longer legal. And the breakdown of support for slavery was encouraged to a great extent by the Bible. Today no one can claim support from the Bible to discriminate against another person. The Bible clearly establishes the equality of all people before God, and it is a sin to treat anyone otherwise" (Roberson, pg. 14).

Similar influences can be seen in areas of humanitarianism (helping others in need), government (the need for justice and righteousness among the leaders), and education (the fact that the Christian faith is attained through the written word has motivated many to increase education so that all may read the Bible). Though there are many undesirable things still taking place in the world today, consider the story of the South Sea Islander and think, where would we be today without that book?

SPIRITUAL LIFE

In a world where the common people once based all “truth” upon what the leaders wanted them to believe, the Bible became the light shining in darkness. In our history there was a period such as this which lasted for about eight hundred years. We refer to it as the Dark Ages. It was a time when the Bible was kept out of the hands of the common person and ignorance and superstition was preferred among the peoples. This “darkness” covered much of the civilized world. However, beginning in the 1500’s men devoted to teaching the Bible to the common people helped to free the world of such darkness by making the scriptures available to all.

It was from the Bible that men learned the importance of objective truth. Reasoning, rather than vain speculation, became the standard. Superstition gave way to logical thinking. This way of thinking affected social standards as well as spiritual standards. No longer was spirituality based upon what men desired, but upon what the word of God said. Men began to appeal to all things with the question in mind as that of Jesus who said, *“From where did it come? from heaven or of men?”* (Matthew 21:23-27).

Man’s appeal to the Bible also because the standard for moral life. Even today, those who ignore the Bible hold to the philosophy of, *“The end justifies the means.”* But the Bible teaches us to *“Do unto others as you would have others do unto you”* (Luke 6:31). With the acceptance of this principle many of humanity’s problems began to decrease. The Bible provides the standard for how we ought to treat one another. It teaches what is right and what is wrong. It teaches truth and morality over *“rather than the ends justifies the means.”*

In many ways the Bible has the power to change the lives of men. Many books can help a person to change, but those who consider the teachings of the Bible can be changed in a way that is not possible with the work of men. The lives of those who find themselves caught in a downward spiral of sin and woe have been completely altered for the better by simply applying the teachings of the Bible. Thus it is written, *“How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word”* (Psalm 119:9).

Why is the Bible so important? The Bible has been a massive historical presence. Its influence on nearly every area of life is difficult to exaggerate. Suffice it to say, the world would be a darker, uglier and crueler place than we can imagine if it were not for the light, beauty, and love revealed in the Bible. For evidence of this one need only to look at the historical record of the dark ages.

The Bible Claims Inspiration

Seeing the importance of such a book we must now consider its claims of inspiration. Only when a book claims to be from God can we then accept it as from God. And the Bible is by no means lacking in such claims. The expressions *“Thus saith the Lord,” “The Lord hath spoken,”* or *“The Lord testified, saying,”* occur 1,300 times in the books of the prophets alone. In the Old Testament, 2,500 such phrases, attributing the authorship to God, are found. Writers of the Bible claimed to speak as the Holy Spirit moved them along. Yet, if there is any question as to whether this claim holds true for the entire Bible, the following passage will result such question without a doubt.

2 Peter 1:20-21: *“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”*

2 Timothy 3:16-17: *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”*

2 Samuel 23:2: *“The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue.”*

Jeremiah 1:9: *“Then the LORD put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me: ‘Behold, I have put My words in your mouth.’”*

The Evidences of Inspiration

The evidence to support these claims is just as ample as the claims themselves. There are several avenues, in fact, by which men may test the Bible and find it perfect in every way.

EXTERNAL EVIDENCES

The external evidences are those which can be seen in the Bible's historical, archeological, and geographical accuracy. "The Bible tells of events that really happened, it describes real people, real places, real cities, and real events...Other religious books of mankind, such as the Koran of Islam and the Vedas of Hinduism, are philosophical and ethical; but they are not historical, while the Bible is" (Roberson, pg. 43). The Nuzi Tablets, the Hittite city of Hattusas, Belshazzar, Sanballat, Biblical Manuscripts. See Roberson.

The Nuzi Tablets. Nuzi is a land located southeast of Nineveh. Since 1925 excavations have been ongoing in this area which have revealed the existence of thousands of clay tablets from the fifteenth century B.C. It has been found that the Nuzi people are the same as the Horites in the Bible which are recorded in Genesis 14:6; 36:21, 29. The laws and practices of which are written in these tablets were common among many of the people in the days of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Many of their customs can be seen in the lives of these men by simply reading the book of Genesis. "For example, if a Nuzi couple was childless, it was customary for them to adopt a slave as their legal heir" (Roberson, pg. 44). This was exactly what Abraham and Sarah did in Genesis 15:2 before Sarah gave birth to Isaac.

The Hittite City of Hattusas: Until about 1900 it was thought among many archeologists that the Bible referred in the Old Testament as the Hittites never existed. This seemed odd since the Hittites are recorded as being a prominent people and are mentioned forty times in passages from Genesis to Nehemiah. But in the early 1900's this doubt was overturned by the discovery of Hattusas, the capital of the Hittite empire, in Central Turkey. Excavation of this city revealed thousands of tablets which confirm much of what the Bible records of this people. Since then other great artifacts have been found in other areas of the world. One of the most interesting artifacts found, however, was a sculpture of a dog attacking a lion. This is so interesting because it was actually found at Bethshan in Palestine. This proves that the Hittites were in Palestine in the days of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, just as the Bible says.

Belshazzar. ⁱⁱⁱThe Book of Daniel records the last king in Babylon being Belshazzar. This proved to be a quandary for many archeologists because of the fact that all known Babylonian records listed Nabonidus as the last king of Babylon. However, this quandary was put to rest when archeological records were found which revealed that Nabonidus left Babylon for ten years and went to Arabia. In his absence, his son Belshazzar ruled as king in his place during the time of Daniel.

Bible Manuscripts: Perhaps one of the greatest archeological findings which supports the Bible's claim is the recovery of the Biblical manuscripts. In 1947 a young Arab was tending his goats several miles south of Jericho when he came upon a cave in a ravine known as Qumran. In this cave he found several jars which contained a library of ancient Hebrew and Aramaic writings. These manuscripts were leather rolls enclosed in cloth wrappings. These scrolls are known by many as the Dead Sea Scrolls, as the location of their discovery was just northwest of the Dead Sea. Of these scrolls the most valuable to Bible scholars was one scroll which contained the text of Isaiah in Hebrew as well as the first two chapters of Habakkuk. Until that time the earliest known texts of these books were from around 1000 A.D. But these scrolls were dated slightly before 100 B.C. With them Bible scholars were able to prove the accuracy of the preservation and translation of the Bible record through the centuries.

What does all this mean? To be completely candid, we must assess what all this means. By itself, this does not mean that the Bible is the word of God. It does mean that the Bible has never been proven wrong on any point of history or geography. However, the historical – geographical test must be passed if we are to conclude that the Bible is the word of God. Mistakes in the record would cause us to doubt the Bible as the word of God. Since there are no mistakes in it, it passes the historical – geographical test and allows us, on that ground, to conclude that it could be the word of God (Roberson, pg. 47).

INTERNAL EVIDENCES

It is the case that a great number of inconsistencies can be found in every literary work of men. Such inconsistencies may also be found in the religious works of men. One may conclude, however, that if God were to write a book it would be perfect, just as the universe is perfect. It would make sense, therefore, that an examination of the Bible text itself would provide strong evidence as to the Bible's inspiration if found to be perfect, and that the opposite would be true if the Bible contained the same errors as the works of men. The following are the results of such an example of the internal evidences of the Bible.

1. The unity and Consistency of its teachings: The Bible is a compilation of the writings of forty men separated by about 1,500 years, yet there is complete harmony concerning the doctrines of God, man, morality, salvation and immortality. Old and New Testaments are organically connected. Not even modern day denominations can make this claim as doctrines and practices change from year to year and decade to decade. Only God, by His inspiration, could cause such collision between so many writers from so many backgrounds over so many years.
2. The Bible's profound and rational Doctrines: The imagination of men may be categorized as ridiculous when it comes to dreaming up their gods and worship of the same. Yet there is much to be said of the rationality with which the Bible approaches the doctrines of God, man, salvation, and immortality. These doctrines have been found in every way to be true and wholesome. Such cannot be said of men left up to their own imaginations (Romans 1:20-23).
3. Purity of its Ethics: Righteousness if everywhere commanded and commended; sin is always condemned (Psa. 1:6; Psa. 51:10; Matt. 5:8).
4. Historical Character: Covering history from the creation to the end of the Book of Acts and just beyond never is its religious teaching wrested from the stream of human history. It is a historical book not a flight of the imagination, nor mosaic of myths, legends, folk-lore and human traditions.
5. Its relevancy to Human needs: man's longing for God, complements man's conscious weakness, gives positive assurance of truth, affords comfort in trial, promises the solution of all problems, it meets the desire to be right with God, meets the desire for inner purity, it cancels the fear of death.

Fulfilled Prophecy

In the Old Testament there are literally thousands of prophecies. Concerning the validity of a prophet the Bible says, "*And if you say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?' --when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him*" (Deuteronomy 18:21-22). The likely hood of thousands of prophecies being fulfilled is near impossible. Yet, we will find that "*The things which are impossible with men are possible with God*" (Luke 18:27). For this reason every prophecy found in the Bible has been fulfilled just as it was written.

In Ezekiel 1:2; 29:17 Ezekiel clearly predicted that God would make the city of Tyre "a bare rock" (26:5), "a place for the spreading of nets" (26:5), "throw your stones and your timbers and your debris into the water" (26:12), and "You will be built no more" (26:14). These prophecies were spoken between 595 and 570 B.C. In 332 B.C. Alexander the Great came against Tyre. When the people fled to a nearby island Alexander had every rock scraped up and thrown into the ocean to for a causeway. That causeway stands to this day.

In Isaiah 44:28 God mentions a man names Cyrus whom would allow Israel to be rebuilt after the Captivity." This passage was written between 740 and 681 B.C. It so happens that around 550 a man named Cyrus became king in Babylon. Of this man it is written in 2 Chron 36:23, "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is among you of all His people? May the LORD his God be with him, and let him go up." Thus the prophecy of Isaiah, which was also made by

Jeremiah, was fulfilled over 130 years after the prophecy was given. The account of Cyrus is also recorded in archeological findings.

Nowhere in the volumes of human writings can such clear prophecies be found which were also fulfilled. But in the Bible it is a common thing. Thousands of such prophecies were made concerning the Christ alone, and every one of them was fulfilled in Jesus. Therefore it is written in Acts 13:29, "*Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb.*"

ⁱ Guy Roberson, *Introduction to the Bible*.

ⁱⁱ Paul Little, *Know Why You Believe*, pg. 95

ⁱⁱⁱ Bert Thompson, Ph.D., *In Defense of the Bible's Inspiration*. Apologetics Press Inc. 2003.

What About the Apocrypha?

Why the Bible?: Part 2

As established in our previous lesson, that the Bible is the inspired word of God can be clearly seen. In spite of this, however, men continue assault the Bible from every direction. Men of “education” attack its inspiration, its message, its consistency, and its make-up. Some strive to remove from the scriptures that which they find disagreeable, while others strive to add other writings that clearly do not belong in the scriptures. Because of this many people ask, “What books really belong in the Bible?”

One set of writings which have been added to the scriptures by some are called the apocrypha. Among those who include the apocrypha in their Bibles there is the Catholic Church, the Church of England, the Russian Orthodox and Greek Orthodox Churches, as well as various individuals throughout the world.

What Is The Apocrypha?

The apocrypha is a list of twelve to fifteen books that were written at various times between 200 B.C. and 100 A.D. It should be noted that the last Old Testament book that was inspired of God, Malachi, was written about 420 B.C.—around two-hundred years before the apocrypha began to appear. The name apocrypha comes from the Greek word *apokruphon*. “It literally means *secretive or concealed*” (Cox, pg. 1). During the time of their writings, it appears that these books were secretive books which were circulated only within a select or secret group of people. For the most part, they were hidden from the general public for two reasons: 1. The information contained in them was considered esoteric (obscure, mysterious) and were believed to be for the eyes of “special ones” only (Martin, pg. 1), hence the name. 2. They were rejected by the majority due to their obscure nature and were never included in the original Old Testament texts (Consider Zach Smith’s article, *The Cannon and Extra-Canonical Writings*, pp. 9-15: www.apologeticspress.org). In many instances they are found to be in contradiction with the known inspired word of God.

A few manuscripts and letters from individuals living during the centuries following the establishment of the church have been found which make reference to the apocryphal writings. Except for these, however, the apocryphal books were rejected by the majority and were considered heretical. Ironically, “the Catholic Church that is so instrumental in presenting the apocryphal books as part of the sacred canon did not so recognize these apocryphal books until about fifteen hundred years removed from the First Century” (Martin, pg. 3).

Most people rejected the apocrypha with only a few exceptions until around the 1500’s A.D. Prior to this time councils had been held by various denominations and religious organizations by which those groups would determine, accept or reject certain books as inspired (See Smith, pg. 10). Some rejected the apocrypha, some accepted parts of the apocrypha, and some would accept it in one council and then reject in another council. It was not until the Council of Trent (A.D. 1546) that the apocrypha would be considered as cannon (authoritative) by the Catholic Church and then remain in that status to the present time. Even today, however, there is not agreement among those who view the apocrypha as scripture as to which of these books are cannon.

Standard for the Biblical Cannon

For many, however, the question still remains, “Is the apocrypha cannon or not?” “The phrase ‘**canon of scripture**’ refers to the books of the Bible commonly accepted as inspired of God, and thereby authoritative as expressions of His will....Most people do not understand how the canon of scripture was

set. Let it be understood that the books of the Bible are received as canonical **based upon the authority inherent within them** as inspired messages from God. They **do not** receive their canonicity by the decree of the Catholic church, as is erroneously believed by many.” (Cox, pg. 1). In other words, scripture was inspired at the moment it was written. Since God gave it, it was authoritative. Men had no say in that process (2 Peter 1:20-21). Therefore God is the one who determines what is and is not scripture, not men.

Why, then, do we have this process of determining the canon? To compare and contrast God’s holy word with the counterfeits that have circulated through the ages. When we hold the apocryphal writings to the same fire by which the Bible has been tested and proven, we will know for certain whether or not they are from God.

Since some believe that the apocryphal books are part of the Bible, we will look at the character of these writings and compare them to the Bible, which has already passed the test. We will first ask the question, do these books claim to be inspired of God? Second, we will ask, are these book referred to by other inspired writers. All of the books of Old Testament books either claim inspiration, are quoted from in the New Testament, or reference is made to the characters and/or events recorded in them (such as Job in James 5:11) by inspired writers. It would seem logical, therefore, that if the apocryphal books were cannon, they would hold to this same pattern. Finally, we will consider the historical accuracy, Biblical accuracy, and consistency of the Apocrypha.

The Apocrypha’s Claim of Inspiration

Do the apocryphal books claim to be inspired, or are they referred to by inspired writers as being from God? No! There are no claims of inspiration. Neither Jesus, the apostles, or the prophets made reference to any portion of these books. “In fact, some [of the books] either disclaim it, or reveal evidence of errancy. Several historical, geographical, and chronological mistakes can be found in the apocryphal books—errors that are not characteristic of the 39 Old Testament books” (Lyons, pg. 2).

We must be leery of books that do not claim to be inspired or are not affirmed so by God’s prophets. But, we must be ready to flee when a book that is viewed as inspired actually deny inspiration! Such is the case with the apocrypha. 1 Maccabees 9:27 states that *“prophets had ceased to appear among them,”* thus showing that its own author was not a prophet of God, and therefore not inspired. Thus, the apocrypha fail the first test of inspiration. In spite to this, there are many who still believe they are inspired. Why?

Some believe this because they were included in SOME of the copies of the Septuagint; the Greek Translation of the Old Testament. We know that they were not part of the original copies because the Hebrew Scriptures were completed with Malachi around 420 B.C., and they were first translated into Greek about 270 A.D. The apocrypha did not begin to appear until about seventy years after that date, some several hundred years later than that. Some people will argue that the “Church Father’s” (second and third century Christian writers) quoted from the apocrypha, therefore attesting to their inspiration. One writer noted, however, ⁸“While a few early church leaders appear to take some material from them, most were opposed to the inclusion of the Apocrypha into the canon of Scripture (Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Jerome, Origen)” (Copeland, pg. 3). Though these men, who were not inspired, chose to refer to the apocrypha, the apostles, who were inspired, did not. Therefore the argument is invalid. Even the Jews denied the validity of these books “as seen by the fact that the Council of Jamnia (ca. A. D. 90) recognized the sacred Hebrew canon as we have it today, without the apocrypha” (Martin, pg. 3).

Reasons for Rejecting these Books

The above arguments in favor of the apocrypha are not exhaustive, but show us the character of the rest of the arguments. In all, they are found to be inadequate and desperate. Not so with the Bible. Every book of God’s inspired word can make a case for its own inspiration due to the very nature of its contents. In the Bible we have sixty-six such books working together and supporting one another providing a list of evidences that would take years to discuss in full. The apocrypha just do not mach up.

Though arguments in support of the apocrypha are limited, arguments against them are extensive. Let us consider just a few here.

1. “The first, and most obvious, answer is that they contain false information about their respective authors. If a book lies about its origin, then its contents most likely contain falsehoods” (Smith, pg. 10). Having been written after 200 B.C., some of these books are supposed to be portions of other O.T. books that were written several hundred years before that. For example, the Wisdom of Solomon is supposed to have been written by Solomon who was born about 960 B.C. (over 760 years before the apocrypha appeared).
2. ^hNo apocryphal book has ever been in the Jewish Canon. Rather, they have recognized the same books of the Old Testament which we have in our Bibles today since their completion in 420 A.D.
3. None of the writers claim to be divinely inspired, but some do claim NOT to be
4. While the scriptures are filled with thousands of statements claiming inspiration from God, none of the apocryphal writers write with a message from Jehovah. All are without the true prophetic element.
5. Jesus and His apostles did not accept these books as part of the Scripture. There are no NT references to any of the Apocrypha as being authoritative. The NT writers quote not one part of the Apocrypha.
6. They contain many historical, geographical and chronological errors and distortions of the Old Testament, contradicting itself and secular history. “For example: Tobit was supposedly alive when Jeroboam led his revolt (931 B.C.). He was still living at the time of the Assyrian captivity (722 B.C.). Yet the Book of Tobit says he lived only 158 years – Tob. 1:3-5; 14:11” (Copeland, pg. 3). In the Bible, however, every historical detail in the Bible has been proven to be accurate.
7. It teaches doctrines and upholds practices contrary to the canonical Scriptures such as lying, suicide and assassination are justified. Salvation by works, magic, prayers for the dead, etc. are taught and approved (see Baruch 3:4).
8. The so-called miracles and the description of the deeds and supernatural beings are silly and unbelievable.
9. They were not considered canonical and authoritative for doctrine until the Roman Catholic Council of Trent in 1546 A.D.

Conclusion

The Sixty-six books which make up the Bible today have passed through this process generation after generation, each time passing the test, each time strengthening its status in the minds of men as the word of God. The apocrypha, on the other hand, have never been able to stand up such scrutiny. They are as a wet paper towel that shreds as one uses them to scrub the brick wall of scrutiny. See pg. 11 of *Cannon and Extra-Cannonical Writings*.

^c Stan Cox, *The Cannon and the Apocrypha*.

^d Don Martin, *The Truth About the Apocrypha*.

^e Eric Lyons, *Reasons to Reject the Apocrypha*. www.apologeticspress.org

^f Apocrypha quotes taken from <http://etext.virginia.edu>

^g Mark A. Copeland, *Old Testament Canonicity*. executableoutlines.com

^h Gary Hunt, *Apocrypha*, pg. 1.

Appendix

Fifteen Apocryphal Books

First Esdras
Second Esdras
Tobit
The Wisdom of Solomon
Additions to the Book of Esther
The Wisdom of Solomon
Ecclesiasticus
Baruch
Letter of Jeremiah
Prayer of Azariah
Susanna
Bell and the Dragon
The Prayer of Manasseh
First Book of Maccabees
Second Book of Maccabees

Those Accepted by Catholics

Tobit
Judith
Add. to the Book of Esther Judith
Ecclesiasticus
Baruch
The Letter of Jeremiah
The Prayer of Azariah
Susanna
Bell and the Dragon
1 Maccabees
2 Maccabees

What About The Book of Mormon? Why The Bible?: Part Three

Like the Apocrypha, the Book of Mormon does not claim to replace the Bible, but is supposed to be an addition to it as God's word. The Mormons describe it as "Another revelation of Jesus Christ." Many Mormons refer to the Mormon scriptures as a companion book to the Bible. In light of this, we must ask the question "Is the Book of Mormon equal in all respects to the Bible?" We have found the scriptures to be complete and accurate in every way, passing every test and standing far above the rest in the world of literature. Can this be said of the Book of Mormon? Does it contain the same immovable characteristics as the Holy Scriptures? In order to answer these questions, one simple step needs to be taken: to contrast the Book of Mormon with the Bible. If in our examination we find the Book of Mormon to be in conflict with the word of God, then we can know assuredly that it is not from God. For Jesus has said, "*the scriptures cannot be broken*" (John 10:35).

The Book of Mormon Story

The Book of Mormon begins with a family of Jews from the tribe of Manasseh who lived in Jerusalem just prior to the Babylonian captivity (In the days of Jeremiah the Prophet – 600 B.C.). Due to the persecution against Israel this family fled Jerusalem and wandered in the wilderness east of the Red Sea, offering sacrifices along the way. Eventually, they arrived at the shores of what is known today as the Indian Ocean.

When the family reached the ocean they built a small ship and set sail to a land which they referred to as "a promised land," believing God would guide them. After "many days" they landed on the shores of what many Mormons believe to be South America. This family then split into two tribes, the prominent one being called Nephi after the most faithful son in the family. The people of Nephi multiplied on the land and became a great civilization. Since the Nephites were faithful to God, He spoke to them through prophets just as He did with Israel. The Book of Mormon is a history of this people from 600 B.C. until about 421 A.D.

Mormons believe this to be the beginnings of the native peoples of the Americas, as well as the origins of the great temples of South America. Within in this story are accounts of men preaching and baptizing in the name of Jesus, the birth of Jesus, Jesus visiting the people of the land after His resurrection, and the rise and fall of the Christian faith in the Americas (in that order).

According to the Book of Mormon, since God spoke through prophets to the Nephites as well as the Jews (2 Nephi 29:10, 12), the Bible alone is not complete. "*Wherefore, because that ye have a Bible ye need not suppose that it contains all my words; neither need ye suppose that I have not cause more to be written*" (2 Nephi 29:10). It also teaches that a "great and abominable church" (which Mormons believe to be the Catholic Church) has removed "plain and precious parts" from the Bible, making it incomplete without the Book of Mormon (1 Nephi 13:25, 26; 2 Nephi 29:3-10). Thus, it is claimed that the Book of Mormon contains the "rest of the gospel of Christ" which the world has been without since the destruction of Jerusalem.

The Bible and the Book of Mormon Compared

In spite of fact that the Book of Mormon claims to be a companion to the Bible, it makes some very strong accusations against the Bible. As if it were not enough for the Book of Mormon to say that it is the additional word of God, it goes on to say that the Bible is corrupted and incomplete, therefore implying that the Book of Mormon and other Mormon scriptures are the only *perfect* revelations of God's will; an implication that the Mormon's readily affirm. This claim, first and foremost, must be dealt with before we consider any other contradiction between these two books. For in the scriptures God has assured His people that His "*word shall endure forever*" (Psalm 119:160; 1 Peter 1:25). At no point throughout all of its history and all of its writers does the word of God deny this fact, nor does it say that it is even possible for it to be corrupted, except that it

be in the minds of men. In fact, every single biblical writer makes it a point to emphasize the *eternal nature*, *eternal authority*, and *eternal sufficiency* of God's revelation. Through the writings of Moses God commanded His people to "be careful to observe" all of God's commandments (Deut. 5:32). Yet, even though Israel forsook the commandments of the Lord, His word continued to abide with them so that they would have no excuse for their iniquity. Men rejected God's word, yet it endures. When king Jehoiakim cut apart the prophecy of Jeremiah, God's word remained (Jeremiah 36:23, 27-28).

After four hundred and twenty years of silence from God (420 B.C. – 1A.D.) the scriptures that were revealed to past generations remained intact and perfect, so that when Jesus appeared on the scene He was able to respond to His adversaries with the words, "*It is written*" (Matt. 4:4). Jesus, the apostles, and all the New Testament prophets affirmed the inspiration of all Scripture, the completeness of all scripture, and the authority of the Scriptures. Therefore Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, "*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*" Notice again what he says, "*That the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*" Shall we suppose that a man can be made perfect through a revelation that has been corrupted? Shall we suppose that God promised that we may know every good work and then broke that promise by allowing the completeness of His word to be taken away? Certainly not! Just as God's word could not be destroyed by king Jehoiakim, neither can it be corrupted by what the Book of Mormon calls, "a great and abominable church" (1 Nephi 13:26). Rather, once God has revealed His word He places His seal upon it which is this (and mark these passage in your Bibles!), "*Concerning Your testimonies, I have known of old that **You have founded them forever***" (Psalm 119:152), and again, "*I know that whatever God does, It shall be forever. **Nothing can be added to it, and nothing taken from it***" (Ecclesiastes 3:14). God's word cannot be corrupted, except that it be in the minds of those who do not believe it.

This blatant attack on the validity and authority of God's word has spawned many other points of dissension which can be easily seen between the Bible and the Book of Mormon, a few of which we will consider here.

1. In 2 Nephi 29:6-12 of the Book of Mormon these statements are made, "Thou fool, that shall say: A Bible, we have got a Bible, and we need no more Bible. Have ye obtained a Bible save it were by the Jews? Know ye not that there are more nations than one?...Know ye not that the testimony of two nations is a witness unto you that I am God...For I command all men, both in the east and in the west, and in the north, and in the south, and in the islands of the sea, that they shall write the words which I speak unto them...For behold, I shall speak unto the Jews and they shall write it; and I shall also speak unto the Nephites and they shall write it; and I shall also speak unto the other tribes of the house of Israel, which I have led away, and they shall write it; and I shall also speak unto all nations of the earth and they shall write it."

In the Bible, however, God gives us a very different picture concerning the revelation of His word. In the Law God made a clear distinction between Jews and Gentiles. Every person and every nation that was not Israel was referred to as Gentile. Concerning these Gentiles Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:11-13, "*Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh -- who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands -- that **at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.***" Did God have a working relationship with the Gentiles before the crucifixion in the same manner that He did with the Jews, so that they could receive His Law just as much as the Jews? No He did not! Paul affirms this again in Romans 3:1-2, "*What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! **Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God.***" Were the Jews different from the Gentiles? Yes. Did they have an advantage over the Gentiles? Yes. What was that Advantage? "*Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God.*" The oracles of God are the utterances of God, the words, the Law and the revelation of God. The Jews were the only ones to receive the oracles of God; that was their *advantage*. Yet the book of Mormon affirms that God spoke "*unto all nations of the earth and they shall write it*" (2 Nephi 29:12). If this is true then the promise of God to Israel would have become a lie which said, "*And you shall be holy to Me, for I the Lord am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine*" (Leviticus 20:26). If the Book of Mormon is true then God did not really separate Israel from the peoples, nor did He make them holy.

Rather, if God really did speak to all nations, then Israel would have become like the rest of the nations when they were chosen of God, not separated from the nations! As a consequence of this Mormon teaching, they make God to be a liar, for He would have promised something to Israel that would not have been true. However, we know that this is not the case, for it is written in the scriptures that God cannot lie (Titus 1:2). So which is it? Do we make God a liar, or do we affirm that “*God be true but every man a liar*” (Rom. 3:4)? Do we believe the Bible or the Book of Mormon? If any man has any desire at all for truth he will choose the Bible, for it alone is God’s word and the entire volume of His word is truth!

2. The above point shows a certain ignorance of God’s word on the part of author of the Book of Mormon. Yet, it is by no means the only one, for there are many statements which manifests the authors ignorance of the Law of Moses. To see this we must first draw our attention to Deuteronomy chapter twelve. At the beginning of the Mormon story we are told of the adventures of the family of Lehi as they fled Jerusalem prior to the Babylonian captivity. Supposedly, Lehi and his son Nephi were righteous men and found favor in the sight of God. During their wanderings between Jerusalem and the Indian Ocean, we read that on several occasions the family built altars and offered sacrifices to God. Any person with limited knowledge of the scriptures might think this to be normal and acceptable since these people were Jews and the Jews often offered animal sacrifices to God. However, if Lehi and Nephi were as righteous and law abiding as the Book of Mormon says, they would have known that the Law of God strictly forbade the offering of sacrifices outside of the place where God chose for His name to abide. Consider Deuteronomy 12:5-14: “*But you shall seek the place where the LORD your God chooses, out of all your tribes, to put His name for His dwelling place; and there you shall go...But when you cross over the Jordan and dwell in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to inherit, and He gives you rest from all your enemies round about, so that you dwell in safety, then there will be the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide. There you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the heave offerings of your hand, and all your choice offerings which you vow to the LORD...Take heed to yourself that you do not offer your burnt offerings in every place that you see; but in the place which the LORD chooses, in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I command you*” (Deut 12:5, 10-11, 13-14). Did the Lord choose such a place? Indeed! “*And to his son I will give one tribe, that My servant David may always have a lamp before Me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen for Myself, to put My name there*” (1 Kings 11:36). Where did God choose to put His name? In Jerusalem! What did the law say about offering sacrifices out side of that place? “*Do not offer your burnt offerings in every place that you see; but in the place which the Lord chooses.*” Should we believe that this “righteous family” which is depicted as being zealous for God’s law were ignorant of this most basic command? Should we believe that God approved of their acts of disobedience? Some may say that since God chose them he gave them permission. Yet again, this would show a lack of knowledge of God’s word for if the family of Lehi were really Israelites then they would have been bound by the covenant between God and Israel. For God has said, “*My covenant I will not break, nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips*” (Psalm 89:34). The only way for Lehi’s family to be freed from that covenant would be for Jesus to have died and set them free, but that did not occur until over 630 years later. Should we trust the Bible or the Book of Mormon? Let God’s word be our guide.
3. Supposedly, the Nephites were of the Tribe of Manasseh. “*...Nephi, who was the son of Lehi, who came out of the land of Jerusalem, who was a descendant of Manasseh, who was the son of Joseph who was sold into Egypt by the hands of his brethren.*” Concerning the tribe of Manasseh; we know that there were twelve tribes in Israel. Of those twelve tribes, one consisted of two parts—Ephraim and the half-tribe of Manasseh, who were sons of Joseph (1 Chron. 27:20-21). In the Law of Moses we are told that of the twelve tribes, only one would be allowed to offer sacrifices to God. “*So you shall appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall attend to their priesthood; but the outsider who comes near shall be put to death*” (Numbers 3:10). In the scriptures, when a man tried to offer sacrifices to God who was not a Levite, terrible things happened to him. We can read the account in 2 Chronicles 26:16-20. These passages emphasize the fact that the Law of Moses required that only a Levite offer sacrifices to God. Yet, not only did Lehi’s family offer sacrifices outside of the temple, but they who were not of the tribe of Levi, but of Manasseh, offered their sacrifices. If this were not enough, the book of Mormon claims that they “*did observe to keep the judgments, and the statutes, and the commandments of the Lord in all things according*

to the law of Moses” (2 Nephi 5:10). If the Law of Moses required that sacrifices be offered in the temple and that only the Levites offer those sacrifices, how was it possible for the Nephites to offer sacrifices “*according to the Law of Moses,*” without a Levite among them? It was not! Clearly, whoever wrote the Book of Mormon forgot to read the Bible first!

4. Such discrepancies are not limited to the difference from the Law of Moses. There many found in Mormon’s account of the gospel of Christ as well. In the Bible Jesus gave great and wonderful promises concerning the arrival of the Holy Spirit. In the Book of Acts we are able to read how the Holy Spirit was poured out on the apostles and empowered them to preach the gospel to all nations and perform many signs and wonders. Before Jesus was crucified He spoke to the apostles concerning these things saying, “*Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you*” (John 16:7). While Jesus was on the earth, He gave His disciples the authority to perform miracles, as it is written, “*Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons*” (Mark 3:14-15). But nowhere do the gospels say that the Holy Spirit was “Poured out on them.” Rather, as Jesus taught in John 16, “*If I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you.*” In book of Mormon a similar account takes place according to Helaman 5:45, “The Holy spirit of God did come down from heaven, and did enter into their hearts, and they were filled as if with fire, and they could speak forth marvelous words.” It is interesting that Jesus told the apostles that He had to go to the Father after His crucifixion in order to send them the Holy Spirit. This was about 33 A.D. In the Book of Mormon there are dates recoded in the bottom right hand corner of each page that tells us when the events in the book supposedly took place. The date under **Helaman 5:45 is B.C. 29**. That is to say, the Holy Spirit was sent to that people 29 years before Jesus was even born! Not only had Jesus not gone to the Father after His resurrection, but He had not yet come down to the earth in the first place to preach the gospel. To add to this oddity, Mosiah 18:12-17 records the baptism of 204 people who received the Holy Spirit after their baptism and then were “*called the church of God, or the church of Christ, from that time forward And it came to pass that whoever was baptized by the power and authority of god was added to his church*” (vs. 17). What is the date under this section of scripture? B.C. 147. How is it that these men were being added to the Lord’s church when the words of Jesus in Matthew 16:18 indicate that Jesus was not yet building His church? How is it that these men were baptized in the name of Christ when Jesus had not yet come to institute His baptism? How is it that these people were baptized for salvation when that baptism did not come until after the death of Christ for it is written in Romans 6:3, “*Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?*” Did the truth of God’s word mean nothing to the author of this book?
5. In Mosiah 18:10 it also says that those who were baptized would enter in to the covenant of the Lord. We may recall from previous points that these people were descendants of the Jews and supposedly did all things according to the Law of Moses. For these reasons they would have been bound by the Law of Moses—the first covenant. We know from New Testament passages such as Col. 2:14 that the law was fulfilled and taken away in Christ. Concerning this, however, we also know that the law was not taken away UNTIL the death of Christ. Now, Jesus taught that one could not have two masters (Luke 16:13). Even so, one cannot be bound by two laws, for in obeying one he would have to disobey the other. For this reason, it was impossible for a person to be in the first covenant while at the same time becoming a part of the second covenant. Therefore it is written in Romans 7:1, 4, “*Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives...Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another -- to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.*” We also learn from this passage that in order to become a member of Christ’s covenant Jesus had to have died! However, this Mormon account was supposed to have taken place one-hundred-forty-seven years before Jesus came to the earth! Again, should we believe God’s word or the Book of Mormon?
6. In the Bible it says that believers were *first* called Christians in Antioch according to Acts 11:26. This was several years after the resurrection of Christ (35-40 A.D.). In the Book of Mormon believers were also called Christian According to Alma 46:15. What date was that? B.C. 78. Will we believe the Bible or the Book of Mormon?

7. The final discrepancy we will consider between these two books concerns the birth of Jesus. In Matthew 2:1 the scriptures say that Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea. This passage also shows that this was in fulfillment of Old Testament Prophecies. In the Book of Mormon, however, Alma 7:10 says, “And behold, he shall be born of Mary, at Jerusalem which is the land of our forefathers.” Which is it? Was Jesus born in Bethlehem or in Jerusalem? When asked about this, one Mormon said that He was born in the county of Jerusalem. However, if we look again at Matthew 2:1 we will find that the “county” is Judea, “*Bethlehem of Judea*.” Which book should we believe?

Conclusion

The evidence from our comparison of the book of Mormon and the Bible ought to be enough to conclude that these two books were not revealed by the same person. We have established that the Bible is from God. The Book of Mormon, however, does not pass the test, nor does it come close to comparing with the Bible. Aside from its differences with the Bible there are also historical discrepancies in the Book of Mormon, which we will not go into detail here except for one case. In the Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi 16:18 mentions that Nephi broke his bow while hunting. The bow was said to have been made of “fine steel.” It should be noted that steel was not discovered until about 200 A.D. Having been discovered in Italy, its development did not reach the area of Judea until sometime after that. That was over eight-hundred years after Nephi supposedly broke his “fine steel bow.”

Why do Christians choose the Bible as the word of God? Because God does not make mistakes like this. Indeed, as Peter said of the words of Jesus, “*Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God*” (John 6:68-69). Jesus has the words of eternal life. Those words are found only in the inspired word of God—the Bible (Galatians 1:8-9).

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