

# Is the bible reliable?

Can we trust it?

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## **Introduction**

In this booklet we present some of the evidence for the inspiration of scripture. We leave each reader to conclude for him or herself whether or not the bible really is God's word and what to do about it.

The study will take us to various disciplines to see what evidence we may find for our consideration of this vitally important question.

In the first section of this study we look at the various disciplines that demonstrate remarkable features of the scriptures. Later, in chapters 8 and 9, we will consider the actual manuscripts and the resulting translations. For the moment we are using the text of the King James and the New King James bibles - the reason will become clear in the later chapters.

The bible is the most important book one can ever read and study for it tells us what the Lord God wants to tell us. When we come to chapter 9 we will consider good and less good translations and see how adverse spiritual forces have been affecting it.

## **Contents**

- 1 The bible text
  - 2 Prophecy fulfilled
  - 3 Words
  - 4 Numbers
  - 5 Archaeology and science
  - 6 Time
  - 7 Choose your conclusion – is the bible reliable
  - 8 The bible manuscripts
  - 9 Translations
  - 10 How to treat the bible in life
- Appendix - examples

## Chapter 1

### The bible text

The bible claims to be 'inspired' or 'God breathed' - that claim is found in Paul's second letter to Timothy chapter 3 verse 16.

*'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, (Strong's number 2315 'theopneustos' - God breathed) and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and for instruction in righteousness.'*

Can this claim be justified?

So we ask ourselves, 'Is there any evidence to show that the scriptures are not just a human construct?'

In its original manuscripts, through hundreds of years and many human channels the bible gives a fully consistent story of the progress of mankind. It is our understanding that, in those original manuscripts, there is no contradiction or error. That in itself is remarkable. But there is more....

#### **Meet Ivan Panin.**

Ivan Panin was born in Russia in 1855. He was not a bible believer, rather he was firmly agnostic, rejecting religious and moral principles. Having been exiled by the Russian government he went to the United States (via some time in Germany)

At Harvard he graduated as a Master of Literary Criticism becoming very well known for his outstanding lectures. In 1880 he converted to Christianity – causing quite a stir as his agnostic position was well known.

His training and skill in literary criticism led him to a detailed examination of the scriptures. He then spent around 50 years, now at his Canadian farm, in detailed examination thereof.

He made discovery of a ‘watermark’ confirming the divine authorship of the texts.

The previously unknown ‘watermark’ related to the way in which all the Hebrew and Greek texts featured the number seven. This feature runs through all the Hebrew and Greek texts and is consistent.

An example of the way the number 7 features in the very words of the text here is the first seven words of scripture:

*‘In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,’*  
In Hebrew this is 7 words which have a total of 28 letters (4 x7). The three nouns, God, heaven and earth have a numeric value of 777 (111x7). The one Hebrew verb ‘created’ has a numeric value of 203 (29x7). We could go on with over thirty features of 7 in this one verse. The same watermark flows through the whole bible.

An example from the New Testament: Mark 1:1-8.  
Total number of words 126 18 x 7. Syllables 294 42 x 7, Number of different words 77 11 x 7, Letters in these words 427 61 x 7, Vowels within the 427 letters are 224 32 x 7, Consonants 203 29 x 7, and so on.

Panin wrote, 'No mortal in a hundred years could possibly have carried out the design found in a single book of the bible if he devoted the whole one hundred years to the task.'

The Nobel Research Foundation of Los Angeles having investigated Panin's claim that the bible could not possibly have been written except by the inspiration of God gave their verdict. 'So far as our investigation has proceeded, we find the evidence overwhelmingly in favour of such a statement.'

Panin challenged all and sundry of his contemporaries to prove him wrong, this is a time when the bible was under widespread 'attack.' - no one could do so.

(The existence of the watermark of divine authorship has enabled the validation of Mark 16:9-20 and John 7:53 to 8:11 which had been questioned by some.)

In our question, 'Is the bible reliable?' we have found that the very text carries a 'watermark' demonstrating authorship beyond the capability of man.

This remarkable phenomena is not present in the Apocrypha or in any other writings. It is the watermark of divine authorship.

*'The entirety of Your word is truth and every one of Your righteous judgements endures forever.'* Psalm 119:160

## Chapter 2

### Prophecy fulfilled

To make a case for the reliability of scripture we will consider; if it can be shown that the bible foretells events, which then come to pass, it is a confirmation of it's divine authorship and it's reliability.

We are aware that there are 'other voices' capable of making statements that then do happen. However, many of these 'other voices' make statements which prove to be in error.

The difference with biblical prophecy is that it is uniquely always accurate.

**Concerning Jesus**, an edition of Strong's concordance has a list of 117 Old Testament prophecies- most already fulfilled by Him. (There are still some to be fulfilled regarding His second coming.)

For example there are many prophecies speaking of His death. Isaiah tells us that He would be hated without cause, spat on, beaten, considered a transgressor, buried with the rich, silent before His accusers, raised from the dead and that the tombs would be opened. The Psalms have Him mocked, rejected by the rulers, betrayed by a friend, crucified, thirsty in the process and given vinegar, His clothes divided, His hands and feet pierced, raised from the dead and seated at the right hand of God.

Zechariah has Him sold for 30 pieces of silver, the price paid for the Potters field, His hands and feet pierced, and Him forsaken by the disciples.

Exodus tells us that none of His bones are broken as does Psalm 34:20.

Micah has Him struck on the cheek. Amos has the earth darkened. Daniel has Him cut off but not for Himself.

The fulfillment of all the above prophecies, written hundreds of years before, is recorded in the New Testament – particularly in the Gospels and also in Acts, Romans, 1 Peter, and Hebrews.

We should note that whilst Jesus could arrange fulfilment of some of the prophecies there are those that He could not affect. For example He could not stop the normal procedure of breaking the legs of one being crucified when Passover approached. He could not affect the paying of 30 pieces of silver or the use thereof to buy the potter's field. He could not affect the piercing of His hands, feet and side or the forsaking by the disciples and so on.

### **Old Testament prophecy.**

The Old Testament contains hundreds of prophecies - some regarding events, some regarding nations, some regarding people. As we have already seen many concerning the person of the Messiah to come – Jesus.

Here is one concerning a great city -

Under Sennacherib over 700 years before Christ, Nineveh became the greatest city in the world at that time.

It became extremely wicked and a centre for the worship of the goddess Ishtar. Jonah, famous for the great fish, had previously been sent there and the city turned away from its wickedness. However, it was not long before Nineveh was once again at its evil ways.

The Lord sent the prophet Nahum to announce its downfall. (Earlier prophets had already predicted its downfall – Isaiah mentioned it 4 times.)

*'Behold I am against you says the Lord ..... it will come to pass that all who look upon you will flee from you and say, "Nineveh is laid waste."'*

Today the remains of Nineveh consist of two tells (mounds containing ancient remains) and some broken down sections of city wall. You can find it in Iraq if you want to verify for yourself. The once greatest city in the world is laid waste – prophecy fulfilled.

### ***A biblical type.***

Jonah going to Nineveh, capital of Assyria an arch enemy of Israel, gave rise to a very important biblical type. Jonah was very reluctant to obey the Lord and to go and preach in and to Nineveh. So he took a boat in the opposite direction. A great storm resulted in him being thrown overboard. God's grace sent a large fish to swallow him. He spent 3 days and 3 nights in the belly of the fish before being regurgitated onto dry land. He then went to Nineveh, preached and saw a great turning away from sin – a revival.

When Jesus was asked for a sign He said, *'An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.'* Matthew 12:39-40

Jesus also said that He would rise on the third day. (Matthew 17:23 and others). At first it seems impossible that both these statements can be fulfilled. But actually it is very simple. Jesus was put into the tomb in the evening so we count night first then day. After three nights we arrive at the third day and Jesus rises from the dead. Exactly fulfilled.

So we see a biblical type or sign is another form of prophetic revelation and there are many others - for example the Passover Lamb is typifying the sacrifice of the Messiah for the deliverance of those who will believe.

There are hundreds of examples of fulfilled prophecy in the Old Testament. In addition there are prophecies yet to be fulfilled, many referring to the time when Jesus has returned to reign on earth in person in the period we know as the Millennium.

**Israel** is the subject of much prophecy. We live in a time when long standing prophecies are being fulfilled right before us.

Scripture tells us that Israel will be regathered in unbelief - happening now! There are prophetic statements yet to be fulfilled. Israel will inherit all the land given to it by God and will become the chief nation on earth when Jesus returns.

Is the bible reliable? Only the Lord God knows the end from the beginning, so only the Lord God can accurately state the future. Surely, the existence of so much stated prophetically, before the event, is evidence that the bible is indeed the divine word of God brought to us through human channels.

## Chapter 3

### Words

In the first verses of his gospel the apostle John writes: *'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.'* (Verse 1-3) *'And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.'* (Verse 14)

The reliability of the bible is centered in Jesus Himself - because He is the Word made flesh. Everything revolves around Him. For example we have read that everything that was made was made by Him. Therefore we should expect to see Jesus in the account of creation. *'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.'* Genesis 1:1

On the face of it Jesus does not seem to be there. But when we look more closely at the Hebrew text we find, right in the middle of the verse, there are two Hebrew letters not translated. They are the *aleph* and the *tav* - the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The 'first and the last' is one of the titles of Jesus found in Revelation 1:11. Jesus is certainly there!

God the Father uses words to confirm His Son. Sometimes through human channels - such as John the Baptist proclaiming, *'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.'* John 1:29.

Sometimes by direct voice from heaven. Like the voice from heaven on the occasion of Jesus' baptism, *'You are My beloved Son with whom I am well pleased.'* Luke 3:22

On the occasion of the transfiguration the voice from heaven states, *'This is My Beloved Son, in who I am well pleased. Hear Him.'* Matthew 17:5

Jesus declares His words in these terms. *'Heaven and earth will pass away but My Words will by no means pass away.'* Matthew 24:35. In so saying Jesus attributes eternal power to His words.

We can verify the power of Jesus' words by looking at what He said and the effects it had.

For example:

A man, a paralytic, was carried on his bed by four friends, bringing him to Jesus. They could not get near because of the crowds so they went up on the roof, dug out a hole, and lowered the man down to Jesus below. Jesus addressed the man, *'Son, your sins are forgiven you.'*

There was reasoning in their hearts among some Scribes who were present. *'Who can forgive sin but God alone.'* They considered it blasphemy.

But Jesus, in His Spirit perceived their reasoning. *'Why do you reason about these things in your hearts?'*

Now Jesus was going to demonstrate the power of His words.

*'Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your pallet and walk.' But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins' – He said to the paralytic, 'I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.' Immediately he arose, took up his bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying We never saw anything like this! Mark 2: 1-12*

So we see Jesus words carry the power for which they are sent. There are many examples.

In our consideration of the reliability of the bible we now ascertain that the words of Jesus, reported in the scripture, are powerful.

Paul writing to the Hebrews put it like this:  
*'For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart,' (4:12)*

Is the bible reliable? We are showing that the words of scripture are more than reliable, they are powerful and sharp. Not only that but they require us to give to Him an account.

It is joy to the believer when he hears God speak to him or her directly, whether by voice, through the scripture, by the still small voice or by other means. We find that when God does speak like this (Jesus said My sheep hear My voice) then as we receive what He says it comes to pass - we receive His miraculous intervention on our behalf. His word is still powerful

## Chapter 4

### Numbers

Now we come to a subject which has been, and is, the subject of controversy amongst some, who instead of making a proper study have, in fear or ignorance, turned away from one of the most remarkable aspects of the bible.

The letters of the Hebrew and Greek languages both share this in common – each letter represents a number. It would be no surprise to find that ‘aleph’ in Hebrew and ‘alpha’ in Greek both are number 1. Right through each alphabet each letter is also a number, ascending 1 to 10, then 20 to 90 in Hebrew , 20 to 80 in Greek, then 100 to 400 in Hebrew and 100 to 800 in Greek. The last letter in Hebrew is ‘tav’ which is 400. The last letter in Greek is ‘omega’ which is 800.

So with every letter also being a number it is possible to attribute number values to words. Scripture itself, describing it as wisdom, advises us to *‘calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: his number is 666.’* Revelation 13:18

#### **Jesus – His name is 888.**

In Greek Jesus is	I	iota	value	10
	E	epsilon		8
	S	sigma		200
	O	omicron		70
	U	upsilon		400
	S	sigma		200
<b>Total value of Jesus name is</b>				<b>888</b>

Because the number 8 represents resurrection that makes wonderful sense. Jesus is the Lord of resurrection for all believers.

However we can go much further with Jesus' titles: Working from the base  $37 \times 8$  that is 296 (The 296<sup>th</sup> word in Hebrew is *ahikam* meaning 'my brother has risen')

We use  $37 \times 8$  because 37 represents the living word and 8 represents resurrection, so  $37 \times 8$  is a good place to start.

<i>Title</i>	<i>Value</i>	
Godhead	592 (Colossians 2:9)	$37 \times 16$
Jesus	888	$37 \times 24$
Christ	1480	$37 \times 40$
Son of Man	2960	$37 \times 80$
<b>Total</b>	<b>5920</b>	<b><math>37 \times 160</math></b>

5920 is also the exact value of the phrase - '*Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him.*'

It is difficult to imagine a greater confirmation of the inspiration of the 'God breathed' scripture, or a greater confirmation of the born again believers as the bride of Christ.

However we won't leave the consideration of numbers just yet.

Look at number 296 - we can see it used as the base number in the table above. 296 is  $37 \times 8$

The number 37 represent Jesus as the living word - In that it represents Jesus flesh.

The number 8 is the number for resurrection.

So in 296 we have the perfect expression of the man Jesus who walked the earth and was resurrected from death.

From 296 the titles of Jesus above are all formed.

As every Hebrew and Greek letter is also a number there are endless combinations. Not every numerical equivalent will have any special meaning and we don't use numbers to determine our doctrine. However, as in the astonishing example above, many times the numbers can add another dimension of certainty to the truth we know.

Looking at 666. As we are urged to do so let's consider:

- 6 Goliath  
He was 6 cubits tall, had 6 pieces of armour and his spears head weighed 600 shekels of iron.  
Here is pride of man's fleshly might.
- 66 Nebuchadnezzar set up an image 60 cubits high and 6 cubits broad. Here is pride of man's absolute dominion.
- 666 is the mark of the beast. Here is man with satanic empowerment.

666 is also a multiple of 37. Indeed as antichrist sets himself up instead of Jesus Christ we might expect that to be case. The multiplier is 18. So 666 is  $18 \times 37$ . So what does 18 represent - it stands for oppression and bondage.

So we are confirming that 666 is the number of a man, as the scripture says, and that this man, also referred to as the beast, will seek to bring the whole world into bondage and oppression.

### **Remarkable numbers**

Who but the Lord God Almighty could create such a wonderful design. Words which convey to us all the truth - written over hundreds of years through many human channels. Then numbers, which we do not use to determine doctrine, but which add another level of certainty to biblical truth.

Is the bible reliable - you bet it is!

## Chapter 5

### Archaeology and science

We have already touched on how archaeology has confirmed Nineveh as a great city as per the account in the book of Jonah. (When we looked at prophecy.)

Babylon is probably the best known of all ancient cities. In the early 1900's German archaeologists excavated the site of ancient Babylon. They removed the Ishtar Gate and took it to Berlin where it can be seen. (Or google Ishtar Gate to see its magnificence.)

There are many examples of archaeology confirming bible accounts of cities mentioned in the bible.

Ezekiel foretold of the destruction of Tyre – another very wealthy city. Some of the remains can still be seen under the Mediterranean. Archaeology has confirmed the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and so on.

But archaeology has also helped us to understand ancient language. In the British Museum you can see the Rosetta Stone which carried the same message in 3 languages – Greek capitals, Egyptian hieroglyphic and Egyptian demotic helping our understanding of the languages.

Archaeology confirms biblical events:

The Black Obelisk records the triumphs of Assyrian king Shalmaneser III including his defeat of Ben-Hadad in 2 Kings 8:7-15.

The Taylor Prism tells of Sennacherib shutting Hezekiah up in Jerusalem. (See 2 Kings 18:13-16 for Hezekiah trying to buy him off.)

The Nabonidus Cylinder tells of Belshazzar – Daniel 5:1

The Cyrus Cylinder is world famous. It contained Cyrus decree which made it possible for deported peoples to return to their home lands. (See 2 Chronicles 36:22-23 and the book of Ezra.

We have mentioned some of the exhibits anyone can see for themselves in a visit to the British Museum. Space has restricted us. There is much much more.

There are coins with Julius Caesar on one side – Jesus challenged His questioners - *'Tell Me whose image is this? Then render to Caesar that which is Caesar's and to God that which is God's'*

Archaeology has confirmed the bible every time and no archaeological discoveries have proved the bible to be wrong. Is the bible reliable – it certainly is.

## **Science**

The bible makes one 'scientific' statement which mankind took many hundreds of years to realise – the world is round and is suspended on nothing. In the oldest book of the bible – Job, we will find references to both:

Job 26:10 *'He drew a circular horizon on the face of the waters at the boundary of light and darkness'* describes a circular earth. Isaiah 40:22 confirms, *'It is He who sits above the circle of the earth.'*

Job 26:7 *'He hangs the earth on nothing'* has the earth 'floating' in space as we now know.

The apostle Paul tells us that light is unapproachable – matter disintegrates before reaching the speed of light. Paul speaking of Jesus, *'who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light.'* 1 Timothy 6:16

Revelation chapter 11 tells us of something which will come to pass in the yet future period we know as the Tribulation. Two witnesses are prophesying in Jerusalem thoroughly annoying the world leader who kills them after 1260 days. The scripture tells us the whole world rejoices seeing their dead bodies. Three and a half days later the two witnesses rise from the dead, after having lain in the street, and ascend to heaven. At the time Revelation was written how would the whole world know and see such an event for many some thousands of miles away – or even conceive it possible. But now we have 'instant' knowledge and vision of worldwide events through TV and the internet. (Read it in Revelation 11)

Is the bible reliable and trustworthy? Yes.

## Chapter 6

### Time

The bible is full of dates. Ages, births and deaths, the length of the reigns of Kings and Judges abound. It has given rise to many attempts to try to work out things like the date of creation for example. Bishop Ussher is well known for his attempt. He dated creation as happening on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 4004BC. (He was Primate of all Ireland. He died in 1656.)

Over the years there have been degrees of revelation which have advanced our understanding to the point where we do now have a full biblical chronology.

In keeping with every other aspect of biblical accuracy we find that biblical chronology is no different. Dates are very specific and time periods follow a distinct and exact plan.

Bible time is based on the expression of God's favour. It starts with favour to all mankind. As that does not lead to Godliness, but to increasing evil, the Lord God adopts one nation to be His special nation. His intention is they will be so blessed that other nations will be drawn to Him. Israel fails through disobedience and unbelief.

So God's plan moves to a new stage. All the world's sin will be placed on Jesus. Belief in Him will bring new life – believers will be born again.

The Jewish rulers reject Jesus and the gospel goes extensively to Gentile nations - so we have a period of favour for Gentile nations.

God's plan has been very specific. The early church were aware that each day of creation represented 1,000 years for man to live on earth. Many early church writers confirm this understanding - for each day of creation man will dwell on earth for 1,000 years. Just as Peter wrote in his second letter, one day is as (or represents) 1,000 years. (chapter 3 verse 8.)

It has been discovered that historically each section of God's plan lasted exactly 2,000 years. That is 2,000 years from creation to Abraham. 2,000 years from Abraham to Jesus.

At this point one needs to understand that is 2,000 years according to God's method of calculation. This subject is worthy of study for it is quite fascinating and remarkable. To that end I have written two booklets containing the details of the time periods. 'Ostrich Christianity' or 'Last Orders' contain the details.

With 4,000 years complete 3,000 years remain to complete 7,000 years for 7 days of creation. The last 1,000 is easily identified being described in Revelation 20 after the return of Christ with His bride to rule on earth.

That leaves only the current period, in which we live, which following type will last 2,000 years. We are approaching the climax right now.

The bible measures time according to both the sun and the moon (Genesis 1) - so there are two methods of calculation to take into account. We have mentioned God's favour - this uses a lunar calendar which has already completed 6,000 years.

When the 6,000 lunar years of favour ended it became time for the gathering together of what needed to be completed before Jesus return - known as the consummation of the age. (Being a further 100 years for the solar calendar to complete 2,000 years.) The most obvious matter being the re-gathering of and the re-establishment of Israel as a nation - something we have been privileged to witness.

The existence of Israel is essential for the fulfilment of remaining prophecy - so it had to come to pass. The fact that it has come to pass is another confirmation of the bible's accuracy.

God's way with time is now known to be exactly precise.

Is the bible reliable -yes certainly it is so.

(Time is an advanced study and not everyone's 'cup of tea.' It is included for completeness sake. Time is precise and exact like all the works of the Lord.)

## Chapter 7

### Choose your conclusion – is the bible reliable

We have laid out extensive evidence that the bible is both reliable and trustworthy.

All that remains is to ask the question – what then does one do about it.

Jesus was emphatic, *'The scripture cannot be broken.'* (John 10:35)

Psalms 119 states, *'Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven.'* (v89). And *'Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.'* (v105)

The word of God is given for our benefit. God has given us freewill. So it is left to us to choose our response. We can choose to seek more and more understanding – it is one of the roles of the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth. Paul urged Timothy to study to show himself approved. (2 Timothy 2:15) Surely excellent advice for us also.

Once we know truth the next step will be our choice whether or not to live by it. All the pressures of the world and its people and ways will pull us away in its own direction. Satan may come as an angel of light trying to get us to disbelieve or ignore the eternal word of God.

So now we choose our own response:

Will I follow the word of God as revealed in the scriptures and particularly in the New Covenant?

Or will I pick and choose - that is leave out bits I don't want to obey?

Or will I consider some parts of the New Covenant have been superseded and not relevant today because that suits me and my desires better?

## **Chapter 8**

### **Bible manuscripts**

We have demonstrated that the bible shows that it is the work of its divine author writing through human channels. However, some will say 'but we don't have any original manuscripts - they are all lost to antiquity.'

It is true there are no original manuscripts. What we do have are remarkably accurate copies. This is because of the diligence of the copyists. When the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in the mid 1940's a wealth of material dating back to the Essenes came to light. (The Essenes of Qumran, where the scrolls were found, were an ascetic, monastic group from the time of Jesus.)

Amongst the material were various Old Testament scrolls and parts of scrolls including a virtually complete scroll of Isaiah. This scroll is over 1,000 years older than any other copies we have. When this older scroll is compared to the much later copies the accuracy of the newer copies is noted to be of the very highest order. No differences which effect the meaning being found at all.

Much of our New Testament was written as letters to people or to churches

Paul instructed the Colossians that his letter to them was also to be read by the Laodiceans and vice versa. So we can see that the letters were circulated in the churches and from the multitude of copies and fragments that we have it is apparent they were widely circulated.

Equally each early church would have wanted its own copy of the gospels and of Revelation – again accounting for the many copies.

(Indeed, when we read of the history of the church, there were times when authorities opposed to Christianity demanded that believers give up their manuscripts and destroyed them. Fortunately many survived including writings of early believers referring to their them and their contents.)

Together with the evidence of the watermark found in chapter 1 we conclude the bible is reliable.

## Chapter 9

### Translations

However, when we come to translations we have a mixed bag.

Historically the church had and used the 'Received Text' or Majority Text- the '*Textus Receptus*' for many hundreds of years. This is made up of copies of the early originals mentioned in the last chapter and is found to be in the earliest versions of the bible dating back to AD 150.

As time went on more manuscripts were discovered including some which were considered older than any others at the time. In particular two manuscripts written in Greek, of Egyptian origin, were discovered. These are known as 'Codex Vaticanus' and 'Codex Sinaiticus.'

We need a closer look at these two older manuscripts because of the very important part they have played in modern translations. However, we will see that older is not necessarily better or more accurate:

**Codex Sinaiticus** was discovered by Tischendorf in 1844. He was visiting the convent of St Catharine on Mount Sinai. He discovered the manuscript in the waste basket ready to be used for lighting the stove. Two experts from the British Museum, after detailed examination, stated that it was the work of three authors with numerous later 'corrections.'

Scrivener reports, 'The codex is covered with alterations of an obviously correctional character - brought in by at least 10 different revisers.'

Burgeon reports, 'Codex Sinaiticus abounds with errors of the eye and pen to an extent not indeed unparalleled, but happily rather unusual in documents of first rate importance. Letters and words, even whole sentences, are frequently written twice over, or begun and cancelled.' It is clear that the scribes who wrote the codex were not faithful men of God who treated the scriptures with utmost reverence. No wonder the monks had thrown it in the bin!

**Codex Vaticanus** was found to be in the Vatican library in 1481. It is written on expensive vellum but like Sinaiticus its quality is very poor. Burgeon again, 'The impurity of the text exhibited by codices is not a question of opinion but fact. In the Gospels alone, Codex Vaticanus leaves out words or whole clauses no less than 1,491 times. It bears traces of careless transcription on every page.'

A comment from the Westminster Dictionary of the Bible - 'it should be noted that there is no prominent biblical manuscripts in which there occur such gross cases of misspelling, faulty grammar and omission as in Codex B - Vaticanus.'

Dr David Brown comments, 'I question the 'great witness' value of any manuscript that has been overwritten, doctored, changed and added to for more than 10 centuries.'

The bible came under an onslaught of doubt and unbelief in the 1800's.

Two scholars, Westcott and Hort, produced a bible text preferring these late manuscripts, known as the minority manuscripts, because they differ from the huge number of other manuscript evidence.

Their 'version' was the basis for ERV and the Nestle UBS text. This was at a time when there was a strong move away from faith towards rationalism and away from a believing approach to scripture towards skepticism and unbelief.

The (ERV) English Revised Version 1885 was strongly influenced by Westcott and Hort. The other members of the revision committee were notorious for their beliefs including even the denial of the existence of God.

It was a time of moving away from truth - vital and strategic words and phrases were omitted or altered.

So far as our translations are concerned only the Authorised Version, known as the Kings James Bible, and it's newer version, the New King James Bible are based on the 'textus receptus.' All other translations are founded on the work of Westcott and Hort and their followers.

### **Which is more accurate 'textus receptus' or Nestle UBS and other modern translations.**

There is no shadow of doubt that it is the 'textus receptus' that is the more accurate for a number of reasons:

- 1 The two texts which form a substantial part of the work of Westcott and Hort are known to contain many faults and even contradict each other. Older they may be but age does not guarantee accuracy.

- 2 The motives of Westcott and Hort must be questioned. Neither of them were born again believers – indeed they are both recorded as being strongly anti-evangelical in their writings, and as rationalists and pro Catholic.
  
- 3 Westcott was known to be an active spiritualist. They were both known to be members of spiritist societies. (The Hermes Club and the Ghostly Guild). Both men supposedly talked to the spirits of the dead.
  
- 4 Hort at age 22 had expressed determination to overthrow that ‘vile Textus Receptus.’

Now it is apparent that the work of these two is not the work of men who believe in one true God and in the bible but the work of active followers of the other side easily influenced by both the spirit of the age and by evil forces. So it behoves us to look at the ‘fruit’ of their work which has been widely preferred over the textus receptus.

Now when we come to consider what has been questioned or omitted from all translations except the King James and New King James we will find the true nature of what is happening through evil forces by the influence of Westcott and Hort and others of like mindset.

One well known passage, omitted from the work of Westcott and Hort, and often only in our modern translations with a 'cautionary note,' - '*not found in the best manuscripts,*' is Mark 16:9-20.

Here is darkness trying to take us away from a most important passage - it contains the Great Commission and details of the power believers can expect.

The passage is not found in Vaticanus or Sinaiticus, but it is found or referred to in many writings of the Apostolic Fathers, in Jerome, in Latin and Syriac versions of the bible and in many uncials\* and cursives\*\*. Some predating Vaticanus and Sinaiticus.

\* uncials are portions of scripture written on parchment or vellum \*\* cursives are portions where all or some of the writing is joined up script.

Another pivotal passage either omitted or carrying the same erroneous message is found in John 7:53 to 8:11. This passage is about the woman found in adultery. It is pivotal because Jesus demonstrated the superiority of grace over the judgement of the Law.

Knowing the source is it surprising that these two very important passages were omitted? Who but our enemy would want to omit them?

In chapter 1 we saw how the true scripture carries a watermark which is not found in other writings. (Including the Apocrypha). Both Mark 16:9-20 and John 7:53 to 8:11 are proved to be a part of the inspired word of God having the watermark.

There are many other omissions from modern versions based on Nestle UBS and following works. The name Jesus, the word blood (particularly His blood) are found to be missing multiple times. 'In spirit' is missing in 1 Timothy 4:12 and other places.

Anyone desiring a full list can obtain one from The Trinitarian Bible Society in London as well as much other literature on the subject.

### **Which translation?**

There are no original manuscripts. The oldest evidence we have are early versions from AD 150 to AD 157 - in Aramaic and Latin. So we have to decide where we place our trust in the versions we have. Those based on *textus receptus*, majority text, had the wise acceptance of the church for 1800 years before the minority text came along with Westcott and Hort and formed the basis of Nestle / UBS used for modern translations.

Whilst we cannot prove that any translation is 100% accurate as we don't have the originals, for me, without shadow of doubt, likely to be the most accurate bibles are the King James and the New King James - all others are known to be based on substandard texts and have different levels of inaccuracy - some more serious than others.

Some versions outright change the word of God – one of the newest, the Passion Translation being a case in point.

(For example the Passion changes Jesus instruction to love your neighbour to love your friends – much more acceptable!)

### **Preserved forever**

*'The words of the Lord are pure words, like silver tried in a furnace of the earth, purified seven times. You shall keep them O Lord, You shall preserve them from this generation forever.'* Psalm 12:6-7

We saw with the dead sea scrolls how wonderfully preserved is the text of Isaiah. Who would doubt that the Lord God has preserved His word for us today, and added His Holy Spirit within us to give us understanding.

As the Lord states that He preserves His word forever in Psalm 12 then in my opinion we can safely place our trust in it.

Is the bible reliable and trustworthy. Fundamentally the answer is yes, subject to care with the newer translations.

*See the appendix for examples of important modern translation omissions.*

## Chapter 10

### How to treat the bible in life

Having presented a great deal of evidence that the bible is the 'God breathed' truth what do we do about it? First thing is to recognize that we serve -

#### **The God of absolute and exact precision**

We have demonstrated that scripture is exactly accurate and exactly what the Lord wanted to give to us for our benefit. When we look a little wider we find the same. Study creation and one will find that the earth is perfectly right for human habitation. The evidence of scientific disciplines confirm - cosmology, physics, astronomy, biochemistry, consciousness, biological information all require exact precision for life to exist at all. The evidence of design in every aspect of creation confirms the Lord as The Designer and Creator.

The God of absolute and exact precision proclaims the bible to be profitable for a number of things - found in 2 Timothy 3:16-17. We should not doubt it!

*Profitable for doctrine.* It has to be rightly divided - that means applying the New Covenant to daily life rather than those scriptures which refer to previous ages. Profitable for doctrine means it is good, advantageous for us to believe and adopt the scripture as our guidance for life.

***Profitable for reproof.*** This means it is good as the standard by which we test things. Is what I think or believe in agreement with what is written? If not, ditch it!

***Profitable for correction.*** The Greek is literally to put back upright – make straight again, those whose understanding has slipped away from the truth. We all need correction from time to time and the scripture is good for that.

***Profitable for instruction in righteousness.*** The Lord God wants His people to be righteous in their ways. The scripture brings the instruction of what is righteous and what is not.

***Result: 'That the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.'***

The gospel is good news and the scripture that will make us complete and thoroughly equipped has many encouraging things to say. We, as born again believers are told that:

Our sins are forgiven and washed away.

We have been made righteous.

We have an eternal inheritance reserved for us.

By faith we can receive healing for our bodies and souls.

God will give us wisdom when we ask.

We have authority over the works of the devil and many more things.... The scripture is indeed profitable!

The Lord God has given each one free will. So His way is not forced upon us. Instead we are to study and learn and make our way. This is of course a risky strategy for the Lord for we will all fail from time to time.

Our failure comes in different ways:

*Failure to actually read the bible* – surprisingly common amongst even mature Christians.

*Failure to study the scripture* - that is a deeper level than simply reading. Again very common even amongst the mature.

*Failure to accept the scripture as a plumbline.* Some elements of biblical truth, even in the New Covenant, seem difficult for some to accept, for a variety of reasons. Some scriptures may seem 'out of date.' Some may seem not wanted by the reader. Some may challenge strongly held opinions and so on. But the word of God is exactly what He says to us for our benefit – not for us to question and deny.

*Prevailing world teaching and some church teaching.*

The world adopts things which are totally anti God and His truth. Abortion is probably one of the worst examples. There are many others.

Regretfully many churches also indulge in false teaching, watering down the truth to try to suit their own purposes and rituals.

*Then there is deception.* Deception occurs where someone believes God has told them something which does not agree with the scripture. God will not contradict Himself. This usually occurs where the person has a strong desire. Where 'God's' personal message to them agrees with their strong desire then deception finds easy entry. This is the devil coming as an angel of light - pure deception which the scripture corrects if allowed to do so.

My experience tells me that it is very difficult to 'break' the deception that people fall under - for they believe that God has spoken to them. That is why it is so important to use the scripture for reproof - that is as the definitive truth against which to measure everything.

And so each one makes his or her own conclusion as to how to treat scripture and to what degree to align his or her life with the New Covenant guidelines.

By making our own choices, only we are responsible for the consequences that flow from any sin and disobedience. Aligning one's life with scripture is the wisest and most sensible thing any person can do.

Scripture is profitable if and when we follow it and live by it.

## Appendix

Sample examples of important omissions from modern translations: (either omitted, changed or included some with a note suggesting they are not in the 'best' manuscripts.)

When reviewing these omissions please note the importance of the truths omitted or changed.

- 1 'For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost' Matthew 18:11 Whole verse.
- 2 'The Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart you may." And he answered and said, "I Believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."' Acts 8:37 Whole verse.
- 3 Part of the Lord's prayer - '*For Yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever. Amen*' Matthew 6:13 part
- 4 Part regarding riches - '*Children how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God,*' mark 10:24 part
- 5 Regarding believing in Jesus - '*He who believes in Me has everlasting life.*' John 6:47
- 6 Blood omitted - '*In whom we have redemption through His blood the forgiveness of sins.*' Colossians 1:14
- 7 The Spirit ' Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth *through the Spirit* in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart.' 1 Peter 1:22

- 8 Watering down consequences - 'But he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation' is changed to 'is guilty of an eternal sin'. Mark 3:29
- 9 Remove the rock 'He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock' is changed to 'for it was well built.' Luke 6:48
- 10 Spirit changed to light. 'For the fruit of the Spirit (*changed to light*) is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth. Ephesians 5:9
- 11 'Only begotten of the Father' is doctrinally significant, meaning Jesus is the eternal and natural Son of the Father, of the same essence. Changed to '*one and only*' John 1:14,18 (NIV omits only begotten in 6 places except in the Gideons version.)
- 12 Purchased with His blood omitted. 'to shepherd the church of God *which He purchased with His own blood.*' Acts 20:28
- 13 Divine names omitted or changed:
  - 1 Timothy 3:16 'God was manifest in the flesh' changed to He. Luke 23:42 'And he said unto Jesus, Lord remember me' Lord omitted. 2 Corinthians 4:10 'dying of the Lord Jesus.' Lord omitted. 1 John 1:7 'blood of Jesus Christ His Son' Christ omitted.
- 14 Title omitted. Revelation 1:11, '*saying, I am the Alpha and Omega the First and the Last*'

- 15 Worship removed. Matthew 8:2 'a leper came and worshipped Him' is changed to knelt down before Him. (Same change found in Matthew 9:18, 20:20 and Mark 5:6. Important? You kneel before an earthly monarch, you worship The Lord.
- 16 Remove 'Christ' and substitute 'God.' This is done in Romans 14:10,12 'For we shall all stand before the judgement seat of Christ (*Changed to God*).'
- 17 Omitted - '*and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with.*' Omitted from Matthew 20:22
- 18 Scriptural verification omitted. The whole of Mark 15:28.
- 19 Jesus suffering 'for us' omitted in 1 Peter 4:1
- 20 'Because I go to the Father,' omitted John 16:16
- 21 Watch - 'watch therefore for you know neither the day nor the hour *in which the Son of Man is coming.*' (*omitted*)' Matthew 25:13

Note: Many prefer the Authorised King James version for its authenticity and language. I use the NKJV for its reliance on the textus receptus and its up to date language.

However in the NKJV there is one glaring addition to the Greek in Revelation 19 - talking of the Bride it says, 'for her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous *acts* of the saints. 'acts' not in the Greek is added. I would rather be before Jesus standing in His righteousness, than my feeble acts.

'First day of the week' should everywhere be 'weeks.'

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