

In Defense of the Bible

"It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God, and the Bible". George Washington

"The New Testament is the very best book that ever was or ever will be known in the world". Charles Dickens

"I believe the Bible is the best gift God has ever given to man". Abraham Lincoln

"I ask every man and woman in this audience that from this day on they will realize that part of the destiny of America lies in their daily perusal of the Bible". Woodrow Wilson

"The whole of the inspiration of our civilization springs from the teachings of Christ and the lessons of the Prophets. To read the Bible for these fundamentals is a necessity of American life". Herbert Hoover

"To read the Bible is to take a trip to a fair land, where the spirit is strengthened and faith renewed." Dwight D. Eisenhower

I am not sure that I could say it better, but one thing we know for sure, no book at any time has blessed man, frightened man, or inspired man more than the Bible, the Word of God. Without it, man would have no real understanding of God, creation, or even the source and purpose of life. Without it we would not understand where to direct our instinct to seek a higher power. We would be like past civilizations that, without the Bible, have worshiped everything from ancestors, to man made idols, to the natural elements. All animals have an instinct to help them survive in this world, yet man's principal instinct is to seek a power greater than himself.

Actually, the Bible is not one book, but rather a collection of 66 books. The Old Testament which contains 39 of these books, covers 3600 years of man's history, and was written by 32 inspired writers over a period of 1400 years. The New Testament contains 27 books, and was written by 9 inspired writers over a period of 100 years. One thing a student of this great Book of Books will learn to appreciate, is the continuity of the Bible. Many people one would presume to be intelligent have tried to find some inconsistency, only to be proven wrong by time. Without the Bible, we can still realize the existence of God, for David, the Psalmist wrote, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge" 1. Who among us could behold the intricacies and beauty of nature, and not acknowledge the Creator? But we as the family of man, should be thankful that our God has taken the time to clearly reveal Himself to us through his word, the Bible.

Ancient manuscripts of the Bible were written on clay tablets, wood, leather, parchment, sheets of papyrus, and even animal skins until the 13th century, when in Europe, paper making became common. As early as 700AD, a group of Jewish scholars known as the Masoretes, developed a system for the copying of scripture. Strict rules were established which disallowed writing scripture from memory, and required the scribes to pronounce each word before writing it. The words and letters of each section were counted, and the total had to match the total on the manuscript being copied. Just south of Jericho, in 1947 while driving goats to market in Bethlehem, a Bedouin shepherd discovered in a cave, 8 pottery jars containing linen wrapped scrolls, and some additional scrolls among some broken pottery. Eventually more scrolls, preserved in pottery jars were found in eleven near by caves. These are known as The Dead Sea Scrolls. Among them were two complete copies of the Old Testament book of Isaiah dating back to the century before Christ! These scrolls were a thousand years older than any previously known copies of Isaiah, yet they paralleled word for word our modern Hebrew versions in 95% of the text! The inconsistencies in the other 5% were variations in the spelling². The parchment, papyrus, and paper will fade with time, but God, in his kindness, has preserved his word for the human family.

This careful effort to preserve the scriptures continued until the 15th century, when German engineering gave us the first printing press, developed by inventor John Gutenberg. Prior to that time, only the wealthy were able to own books. But today, because of the printing press, you can go into a used bookstore and buy what at one time was an extravagance, for a quarter. Recently I purchased three Bibles for less than \$3.00. By 1966, the Bible had been translated into 240 languages, with portions of it translated into an additional 739 languages. And what do you suppose was the first book printed on the printing press? That's right! God was very concerned that His word get into the hands of as many as possible.

And the Word of God has persevered! Voltaire, the French atheist who died in 1778, predicted that in 100 years, Christianity would be wiped off the face of the earth. Yet 50 years after his death, the Geneva Bible Society used Voltaire's own printing press to print hundreds of Bibles for distribution³. The Bible was taken into outer space, where the Astronauts read, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth", Genesis 1:1. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away", Matthew 24:35.

History could have profited much more in their Scientific conclusions if they had relied on the Word of God to provide answers to the day's perplexing questions. Consider the following:

Ancient navigators believed the world to be flat, and this belief prevailed until the the time of Polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus (1500's). The navigators of old needed only to

consult the scriptures in order to expand their exploration. Isaiah wrote some 700 years before Christ, "It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth...". In the original Old Testament language of Hebrew, the word translated "circle" in our English Bibles actually meant a sphere, such as our globe.

Ancient men also believed that the earth was supported on giant pillars. They too could have consulted God's word to learn, "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing". This is found in Job, the oldest of all Bible books.

Hipparchus, called the father of Greek astronomy, in the second century counted 1,080 stars. That account was believed accurate until Galileo's invention of the telescope in the 1600's when it was discovered that there are countless millions of stars scattered throughout space. Today, scientists believe there are 100 billion stars in our galaxy alone! Yet the Bible, the most ancient of all knowledge, tells us, "...the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured....".

George Washington, the father of our great country died from a medically induced "bleeding" in the 18th century. Many others also died from "bleeding", which was a common medical practice at that time. How many lives could have been saved by careful consultation of the scriptures where we read, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood...". This is found in the book of Leviticus, and was written 1490 years before the coming of Christ!

Modern archeology has many times confirmed the Word of God. For example, some have criticized the account of the Christmas story found in the book of Luke by saying that there was no census, and that Quirinius was was not governor in Syria at any time, as recorded in the book of Luke⁷. Archeologists have, however, discovered records in ancient Rome that confirm an enrollment of taxpayers every 14 years. This procedure began the exact time mentioned in the book of Luke, and archeological diggings in the Turkish city of Antioch, just north of the Syrian border confirm that Quirinius was, in fact, governor of Syria at that time! The Bible tells us in the book of Romans, "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools".

In the 1800's, the French Academy of Science spent much time and money proving that apples could not grow in the Mesopotamian Valley, where the Garden of Eden is believed to have been. They contended that since Eve ate an apple, causing the fall of man, that the Bible was inaccurate! Yet the word "apple" does not even appear in scripture until the book of Deuteronomy, the Bible's fifth book! where God says that His people are "...the apple of his eye..."¹⁰. They did not even take the time to read the Genesis account of creation that they were attempting to disprove!

I am continually amazed at the number of people I meet who are experts on the Bible,

yet they have never taken the time read it; experts on it's accuracy, yet they have never studied it; experts on whether it is really the true Word of God, yet they have never dared to ask Him about it. Most intelligent people would not claim to be experts in a Science they had not studied, so

where do all these experts on the Bible come from? Have you ever criticized the Bible? Have you spent time reading it for yourself? Have you ever doubted it's accuracy? Have you ever studied it? The apostle Paul, whom God used to write 14 of the New Testament books, and one of the most learned men of his day said, "If any man think himself to be spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord".

If there is a God, and there is; and if He truly loves us, and He does; then wouldn't He let us in on what this thing called life is all about? And why we are here? And what the future holds? The answer to these questions is yes, yes, yes.... That is what the Bible is all about!

1 Psalms 19:1-2, NIV

2 Archer Gleason, A Sirvey of the Old Testament, p. 25

3 Norman Geisler, William Nix, A General Introduction to the Bible, p. 123-124

4 Job 26:7

5 Jeremiah 33:22

6 Leviticus 17:11

7 Luke 2:2

8 John Elder, Prophets, Idols, and Diggers, p. 159-160

9 Romans 1:22

10 Deuteronomy 32:10

11 I Corinthians 14:37