An UNSHAKEABLE FALSE

A Christian Apologetics Course

David Cloud

An Unshakeable Faith A Christian Apologetics Course

Copyright 2011 David Cloud First edition September 2011 Second edition 2013 Third edition 2015 Fourth edition 2024 ISBN 978-1-58318-119-5



Canada: Bethel Baptist Church 4212 Campbell St. N., London, Ont. N6P 1A6 519-652-2619

> Printed in Canada by Bethel Baptist Print Ministry

Contents

Suggestions for Teachers and Private				
Study4				
The Bible Critics Were Wrong6				
Introduction to the Course8				
The Bible18				
The Bible's Nature18				
The Bible's Proof27				
The Dead Sea Scrolls35				
The Bible's Difficulties40				
Jesus Christ51				
Historical Evidence for Jesus51				
Evidence for Jesus' Resurrection57				
Israel in Prophecy66				
Archaeology72				
Introduction to Archaeology				
Important Old Testament Dates				
Archaeological Treasures Confirming				
the Bible				
Ancient Writing94				
Hammurabi's Law				
Ur of the Chaldees98				
Egypt106				
Babylon111				
Assyria				
Hezekiah and His Times132				
Medo-Persia137				
Israel140 Luke's Writings146				
Evolution and Science149				
Introduction to Evolution149				
A History of Evolution157				
Darwin Skeptics Today165				
Natural Selection166				
Mutations				
Billions of Years				
Ape Men186				

Suggestions for Teachers and Private Study

As of March 2024, this apologetics course is a package consisting of the textbook (available in print and eBook editions), a series of PowerPoint/Keynote presentations, syllabus, review questions, and tests. (Keynote is the Apple version of PowerPoint.)

The syllabus, review questions, and tests, plus answer keys are available from Way of Life Literature with the purchase of the 2024 edition of the textbook.

https://www.wayoflife.org/bc/course.php

The 27 PowerPoint presentations include 3,579 slides dealing with archaeology, evolution/creation science, and prophecies pertaining to Israel's history.

The majority of the photos in the slides were taken by the author during visits to major museums and on research trips to locations in America, England, Europe, Australia, Asia, and the Middle East. Other photos and graphics were licensed from professional photographers and archaeological artists.

Archaeology 1 Introduction and Writing (95 slides)

Archaeology 2 Ur of the Chaldees (152 slides)

Archaeology 3 Egypt (72 slides)

- Archaeology 4 Babylon (218 slides)
- Archaeology 5 Assyria (169 slides)

Archaeology 6 Hezekiah and His Times (96 slides)

- Archaeology 7 Medo-Persia (70 slides)
- Archaeology 8 Israel (105 slides)

Archaeology 9 Luke's Writings (Luke and Acts) (37 slides)

Archaeology 10 The Roman Empire (114 slides)

Israel in Prophecy (100 slides)

Evolution and Science 01 - History of Evolution (242 slides) Evolution and Science 02 - Darwin Skeptics Today (24 slides) Evolution and Science 03 - Natural Selection (188 slides) Evolution and Science 04 - Mutations (154 slides) Evolution and Science 05 - Billions of Years (109 slides) Evolution and Science 06 - Ape Men (216 slides) Evolution and Science 07 - Fossil Record (171 slides) Evolution and Science 08 - Peppered Moth (39 slides) Evolution and Science 09 - Embryo (Recapitulation) (63 slides) Evolution and Science 10 - Vestigial Organs (84 slides) Evolution and Science 11 - Homology (39 slides) Evolution and Science 12 - Miller Experiment (71 slides) Evolution and Science 13 - Bird (106 slides) Evolution and Science 14 - Horse (47 slides) Evolution and Science 15 - Whale (60 slides) Evolution and Science 16 - Icons of Creation (148 slides) We suggest that when teaching these

sections of the course, the teacher first go through the printed material, then use the PowerPoint or Keynote slides for the actual presentation to the students, since the graphics are a great aid in grasping this particular type of material. Since there is usually more information in the printed material, the teacher will be better prepared to describe the slides and answer questions if he goes through the book before showing the PowerPoints.

The material in the course is extensive, and the teacher can decide whether to use all of it or to select only some portion for his particular class and situation.

The section "Tips for Using Apologetics in Evangelism" is a brief course on soul winning. A more comprehensive course is *Sowing and Reaping*, which is available from www.wayoflife.org.

There is a summary of the entire course at the end of the book. This section emphasizes the major points that the students should master so well that they can use them effectively in apologetic and evangelistic situations.

There is an introduction to the course itself as well as introductions to the sections on archaeology and evolution.

The course can be used for private study as well as in a classroom setting. In the case of private study, the student can go through the printed and PowerPoint material, then use the review questions to prepare for taking the tests. He can find someone to administer the tests.

The Bible Critics Were Wrong

It is the turn of the 20th century, and the Bible is under attack as never before.

It is under attack by theological modernists with impressive credentials. They say that the Bible is filled with myths. They claim that Ur of the Chaldees, the Hittites, Nebuchadnezzar and his Babylon, Belshazzar, Sargon, King David, and Solomon were mythical. They say that Moses couldn't have written the first five books of the Bible since writing was unknown in his day. They say there were no ancient complex law codes and no Babylonian captivity. They say that parts of the New Testament were not written until at least 100 years after the events and were based on mythical stories passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth. They say that the book of Acts is filled with historical inaccuracies. A chorus of voices has joined that of the infidel Thomas Paine who wrote in his popular book The Age of Reason that Genesis is "an anonymous book of stories, fables, and traditionary or invented absurdities, or of downright lies."

The Bible is also under attack by Darwinists. Charles Darwin claimed that his doctrine of natural selection explains the origin of species. Thomas Huxley claimed that Archaeopteryx is evidence that birds evolved from small dinosaurs. Ernst Haeckel, one of the world's most influential scientists, claimed that the doctrine of recapitulation proves that evolution is true and he has impressive embryo charts to demonstrate it. He says that life is continually formed at the bottom of the sea through simple lifeforms called monera and that these primitive lifeforms are the foundation of the "tree of life." He has even given monera a scientific name and has drawings of them in his books. Othniel Marsh at Yale's Peabody Museum

claims that his horse chart proves evolution. Evidence is supposedly growing for the doctrine that man ascended from apes. There is Neanderthal Man, Java Man, Piltdown Man, Peking Man, and Nebraska Man. Why, we even have drawings and models of them and their families and entire books describing their culture and habits! Percival Lowell is publishing books describing the canals he has observed on Mars through his 24-inch telescope near the Grand Canyon. He is even deducing many fascinating details about the lives of the Martians who built these canals.

What would you do in such a time as that, confronted with such an onslaught of apparent evidence against the Bible's authenticity?

Those who held fast to their faith in God and in the Bible as God's Word were vindicated, while the skeptics and the Darwinists were proven wrong.

Archaeologists have unearthed evidence for Ur, the Hittites, Nebuchadnezzar and his glorious Babylon, Belshazzar, Sargon, King David, Solomon, and so much more. They have proven that writing was prevalent at least 1,500 years before Moses and that complex law codes were well known in ancient times. They have unearthed evidence for the Babylonian captivity and have demonstrated that the book of Acts is historically accurate. They have proven that there are no canals on Mars and no alien civilization.

As for the Darwinist claims, it is obvious that natural selection has no creative power and thus could not possibly account for the origin of species, that *Archaeopteryx* was just a bird and not any type of missing link, that Haeckel's doctrine of recapitulation was as mythical as his embryo chart and his monera. It has been demonstrated that Marsh's horse evolution was based on assumption rather than scientific evidence, and all kinds of horses have been found in the same time and place in the fossil record. It has been learned that Neanderthal was just a man. Piltdown turned out to be a hoax. Java Man was a myth based on a fossil of an ape intermingled with that of a man. Nebraska Man was a myth based on a pig's tooth. Peking Man was an ape that was the unfortunate meal of an enclave of human limestone workers.

New skeptical challenges and Darwinian myths have been proposed to replace those that have been disproven, but how many times do skeptics and Darwinists have to be refuted before people realize that they are the emperor without clothes? It is high time that God's people give the critics the respect they deserve, which is no respect at all! It is time to stand on the Bible as God's infallible Word without equivocation.

This course contains powerful evidence *against* skepticism and Darwinism and *for* the Bible and Jesus Christ, and for that reason it is entitled "An Unshakeable Faith."

7

Introduction to the Course

1. What research went into the creation of this course?

The author doesn't include this information in order to boast but simply to explain the type of research that has gone into7 the creation of the course so that the teacher and student can have some level of confidence in the material.

First, the course is built upon 40 years of serious Bible study. The author has produced Bible study materials such as the Way of Life Encyclopedia of the Bible & Christianity, Things Hard to Be Understood, and the 20volume Advanced Bible Studies Series.

Second, the course is built on 30 years of apologetics research and writing. This has been a major thrust of the author's ministry since he began publication of the monthly *O Timothy* magazine in 1984. Many of his books also reflect this emphasis. The author's personal library of 6,000 volumes includes hundreds of titles on evolution and archaeology and general apologetics.

Third, the course is built on visits to many major museums, including the Museum of Man in San Diego, the Smithsonian Natural History Museum, the American Natural History Museum, the Yale Peabody Museum, the Chicago Field Museum, the Burke Museum of Natural History in Seattle, the Pennsylvania University Museum, the Michigan State University Museum, the Oriental Institute in Chicago, the Australia Museum, the National Archaeological Museum of Athens, the Louvre in Paris, the British Museum, the British Museum of Natural History, the Istanbul Archaeology Museum, and the homes of Charles and Erasmus Darwin.

Fourth, the course is built on archaeological and historical research trips to England, Europe, Turkey, Greece, and Israel.

Fifth, the course is built on experiences prior to conversion when the author pursued New Age and Hinduism, plus decades of experience as a missionary in the Hindu/ Buddhist culture of South Asia.

Most of the photos and video clips used in the course were taken in the context of this research.

2. What are the objectives of this course? *To protect you*

Our first objective in this apologetics course is to familiarize the student with commonly-held arguments against the Bible and to prepare him to answer those arguments. The first use of apologetics is not to convince the unbeliever but to protect the believer, his family, and fellow believers. Because we are grounded in apologetics, we are not confused when we hear arguments by evolutionists, atheists, new agers, and cultists, either in person, in print, on the radio or television, or on the internet. When we visit natural history museums we can see through the error of the displays. Our objective is to provide the student of this course enough knowledge to protect him.

Churches must prepare the people to face the onslaught of end-time skepticism and apostasy. Many have become confused and have even lost their faith in God's Word after being confronted with theological modernism, atheism, and evolution.

The average Baptist church, whether Southern or Independent, is simply not preparing young people to face the skepticism of the hour. The experience of Edward O. Wilson is all too typical. He is a prominent evolutionist, a professor in Entomology at Harvard University, a Fellow of the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry, and a Humanist Laureate of the International Academy of Humanism. He grew up in Alabama and joined a Southern Baptist congregation at age 15 with "great fervor and interest in the fundamentalist religion." He "lost his faith" at age 17 when he "got to the University of Alabama and heard about evolutionary theory" (Wilson, *The Humanist*, September/ October 1982, p. 40).

An *ABC World News* report in November 2010 focused on two Southern Baptist ministers who are agnostics. They "lost their faith" when confronted by the writings of the "new atheists" such as Richard Dawkins. The minister identified as Adam said, "I realized that everything I'd been taught to believe was sort of sheltered, and never really looked at secular teaching or other philosophies ... I thought, 'Oh my... Am I believing the wrong things? Have I spent my entire life and my career promoting something that is not true?" ("Atheist Ministers Struggle with Leading the Faithful," *ABC World News*, Nov. 9, 2010).

The reason for this type of thing is that, first, churches are often careless about trying to make sure that young people are genuinely converted to Christ as opposed to just going through the motions of "believing" and "praying a prayer." Then, too, young people are being coddled and entertained, but they are not being seriously discipled. As a result, children growing up in Baptist churches are being devoured either by the world or the contemporary church philosophy. Biblical faith is not a blind leap in the dark. It is established upon solid historical evidence which Luke described as "infallible proofs" (Acts 1:3). It is not difficult to defend the Bible and the gospel against the railings of the "new atheists," but most churches aren't even trying.

To prepare you to help other believers

God wants every believer to be a teacher (Heb. 5:12-14). We are to exhort one another (Heb. 10:25). Every child of God should have the objective of growing in Christ and learning His Word so that he can help disciple others.

To prepare you to challenge unbelievers

We are instructed to be ready to give an answer to the unbeliever (1 Peter 3:15). Paul believed in giving a defense of his faith in Christ (Philippians 1:7, 17). His practice was to dispute with both Jews and Gentile (Acts 17:17). He reasoned and persuaded (Acts 18:4). His message on Mars Hill in Athens was a masterly example of the use of biblical apologetics in evangelism (Acts 17:18-34).

We live in a needy world. And apologetics can prepare the soil of the unbeliever's heart so that he or she will listen to God's Word. That is what happened to the first friend God gave me after I was saved. Richard Tedder had grown up in a skeptical environment and was educated at a secular university. He assumed evolution is true. It was after he read a booklet exposing some of the scientific errors of evolution that he began to rethink his philosophy of life. He decided to read the Bible, and there he found truth and salvation. The exposure of evolution was a step in his conversion. Dr. Carl Werner was an evolutionist when he was in medical school, and through the challenge of a fellow student he decided to investigate evolution to see if it is true. Through that process he became a creationist. Dr. Jobe Martin, who was once an evolutionist, became a creationist after some of his students challenged him to study the design of nature. Arguments against evolution are effective for those willing to listen. The book Icons of Evolution by Jonathan Wells (who has a Ph.D. in religion and a Ph.D. in cell biology) which was

published in 2000, has changed the thinking of many highly educated people, including those who have gone on to become Christians as well as those who have adopted some type of Intelligent Design or theistic evolution position.

We deal with this in the chapter "Tips for Using Apologetics in Evangelism."

3. The Bible warns of an explosion of unbelief and skepticism at the end of the age and we must be prepared to face it.

See Psalm 2; 2 Timothy 3:1-5, 13; 4:3-4; 2 Peter 2:1-2; 3:3-7; Jude 3-4.

2 Timothy 3:13 says apostasy and error will grow throughout the age, and we can see this in church history, but the Bible also indicates that there will be an explosion of apostasy at the end of the age. The 19th century witnessed this explosion, and this is made plain in 2 Peter 3:3-7. Here Peter identifies the "last days" with a widespread rejection of the Bible's teaching about creation and the global Flood.

This occurred in the late 19th century.

Skepticism was in the air. The 19th century witnessed the birth of theological modernism, humanistic philosophy, Unitarianism, Marxism, Darwinism, Mormonism, Psychology, and New Age.

Consider some descriptions of the skeptical atmosphere of that time:

"Every thinking man I have met with is at heart in a state of doubt, on all the great points of religious faith. And the unthinking men ... are in as complete a state of practical unbelief" (Thomas Huxley, cited from Adrian Desmond, *Huxley*, p. 160).

"[It was a time] when speculations about the origin of species were most rife, when even the orthodox doctrines were being modified and complicated until it was hardly possible to know where orthodoxy ended and heresy started" (Gertrude Himmelfarb, *Darwin and the Darwinian Revolution*, p. 234).

"The unspiritual condition of the churches ... and the alarmingly prevalent skepticism, infidelity, and atheism among the masses of the people in Germany, Switzerland, and Holland is, without doubt, almost wholly attributable to the advocacy of these criticisms by a large majority of the prominent pastors and theological professors in those lands. The same condition of affairs is measurably true in England, Scotland, New England, and in every community where this criticism is believed by any very considerable number of people and openly advocated" (L.W. Munhall, The Highest Critics vs. the Higher Critics, 1896).

"The flood-gates of infidelity are open, and Atheism overwhelming is upon us" (George Romanes, 1878, cited from Ian Taylor, *In the Minds of Men*, p. 371).

"Attendance at places of worship is declining and reverence for holy things is vanishing. We solemnly believe this to be largely attributable to THE SCEPTICISM WHICH HAS FLASHED FROM THE PULPIT AND SPREAD AMONG THE PEOPLE" (C.H. Spurgeon, *Sword and Trowel*, November 1887).

Since the late 19th century, apostasy and skepticism has spread like wildfire, both in secular and Christian circles.

(We document this in the book *The Modern Version Hall of Shame*, which is available from Way of Life Literature in print and eBook formats.)

The bottom line is that we live in an age of terrible apostasy, and we must not hide our heads in the sand. Individual believers must wake up and be informed and alert. Christian mothers and fathers must protect their families. Pastors and teachers must protect the flock.

It is for this purpose that we are publishing this apologetics course. It is not just for young people. It is for every age group from youth to "senior citizens."

4. The evidence for God's existence is irrefutable and only willful blindness accounts for its rejection.

The Bible does not argue for God's existence, and I believe that we should follow this example. The Bible simply begins with a statement of God's existence as the Almighty Creator (Genesis 1:1).

The Bible twice says the atheist is a fool (Psalm 14:1; 53:1). This is because the evidence for God is written in nature and in man's own heart. See Romans 1:19-20; 2:14-16.

The only thing that we should do with the atheist is point him to creation. If he doesn't believe the evidence that God has put before his very eyes, nothing but prayer will help him. He cannot be reasoned into belief in God through human philosophy. It won't work and it is a waste of time.

5. Some things that are necessary for effective apologetics.

Salvation

Salvation is the helmet that protects the believer's mind and heart as he stands against the devil. "And take the helmet of salvation...' (Eph. 6:17).

Knowledge alone won't protect the individual from satanic lies. Knowledge is important, but many knowledgeable people have fallen. Judas knew everything the other disciples knew, but he fell away. Many professing believers have set out to defend the Bible only to fall to Satan's lies, because they were not grounded in a saving relationship with Christ. When the crowds turned away from Christ and believed the lies of their religious leaders, Peter and the apostles remained because they knew Him personally and were *sure* that He was the only Lord and Saviour (John 6:66-70).

Many today have prayed a sinner's prayer without repentance and without casting themselves upon Christ from the heart. They have joined the church, but they don't have a real personal relationship with Christ.

Obedience

It is the love for unrighteousness that blinds men's minds to the truth (John 3:19; 2 Th. 2:12). Apostates who turn their ears away from the truth do so because they walk after their own lusts (2 Ti. 4:3-4). End-time scoffers are scoffers because they walk after their own lusts (2 Pe. 3:3). The individual who stands in the way of sinners will eventually sit in the seat of the scornful (Ps. 1:1).

This is what happened to me as a young person growing up in a Baptist church. I heard the truth and knew the truth from my earliest memories and I had no intention or desire to disown Christ and the Bible, but I did not receive the truth into my heart and I did not embrace the truth in repentance and faith and I did not have a personal walk with Christ. Instead I loved the world and the evil things of the world and that idolatrous love of sin blinded my mind to the truth. I became so blind that I rejected the Bible as God's Word, believed in reincarnation rather than resurrection, accepted universalism rather than salvation, and ultimately joined a Hindu society.

Taking an apologetics course like this will not protect you if you do not separate from evil and guard your heart from meditating upon those things that displease the Lord. See Proverbs 4:13-14, 20-27.

Knowledge of God's Word

"Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take ... the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:16-17).

The Word of God is both the shield of faith (see Romans 10:17) and the sword of the Spirit; it is both defensive and offensive, and

it is the chief weapon in the believer's arsenal against Satan.

Each believer should become a teacher by being skilled in the Word of God (Hebrews 5:12-14).

The pursuit of Bible knowledge should be a major objective of every believer's life. Without this, he cannot know God's will or defend himself properly against the wiles of the devil. It is not necessary to go off to a Bible College. What one needs is a good church, a habit of daily Bible study, and the judicious use of study tools. Some churches offer Bible classes in the evenings, and there are many courses that can be used for private study, such as Way of Life's *Advanced Bible Studies Series* (ABSS). The ABSS titles "How to Study the Bible" and "Give Attendance to Doctrine" are good starting places in this pursuit.

I recall with great fondness the man who led me to Jesus Christ in the summer of 1973. His name was Ron Walker, and he knew his Bible. That was the thing that first impressed me about him and that is the reason I was willing to travel with him and hear more.

I told him my religious and philosophical views, and he replied with Scripture.

I said, "I believe in reincarnation."

He replied, "In Hebrews 9:27 the Bible says, 'And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.' Since the Bible says we die one time and then the judgment, I don't believe in reincarnation."

I said, "I believe a man should follow his heart."

He replied, "The Bible says in Jeremiah 17:9, 'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?' We cannot trust in our own hearts."

I said, "I believe that as long as a man is sincere in his beliefs God will accept him."

He replied, "Proverbs 14:12 says, 'There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the

end thereof are the ways of death.' According to the Bible, a man can be sincerely wrong and be judged by God."

I said, "If a man can't trust his own heart and sincerity, how is it possible, then, to know the truth?"

He replied, "Jesus Christ said, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.' Also God has given us His revelation in the Bible. It is the divinely inspired Word of God."

I got so interested in the conversation and so impressed with his knowledge of Scripture that I traveled with him for about four days and on our last night together I repented and cast myself upon Christ and His Word.

Faith

Hebrews 11:6 says that without faith it is impossible to please God. We must practice evangelism and apologetics from a position of convinced faith and not be moved by the doubt of those to whom we minister. We must have the testimony of Peter in John 6:69: "And we believe and are SURE that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."

When we show an unbeliever the argument of design from nature, how that the incredible complexity of the 11 major systems of the human body, for example, point to an Almighty God, we must not be moved by a skeptical response. Richard Dawkins can mock the "design theory" and claim that life could come about by chance, but I know in my heart of hearts that this is nonsense. My heart resonates with the truth of Romans 1:20 -- "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." And all of the mocking and scoffing in the world will not discourage me from my faith in God and His Word. Without this unshakeable faith in God's Word, the apologist is in danger of being

The Bible

The Bible's Nature

MEMORY VERSES: Deuteronomy 29:29; Psalm 119:89; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21

A Christian apologetics course needs to begin with the Bible, because without a proper understanding of the Bible as the infallible Word of God we don't have an absolute authority. Without an infalliblyinspired Revelation from God, we are adrift on the seas of life without a sure anchor, a perfect chart, a divine compass. We are left with a human opinion rather than a "Thus saith the Lord." We will not be able to refute philosophy and science falsely so-called in an effectual manner. Without faith in the Bible as the infallible Word of God, we are susceptible to the wiles of the devil and the hurricane force winds of false doctrine that are blowing in these last times.

1. THE BIBLE WAS GIVEN BY DIVINE INSPIRATION.

The foundational doctrine that we need to deal with is that pertaining to the Bible itself. If it is only another religious book, then the New Ager and others have every right to pick and choose, but if the Bible is God's revelation to mankind then it must be accepted as the sole authority for faith and practice. Believing that the Bible is the sole divine revelation changed my life in 1973 and put me on the path of truth and life. It is the Bible that teaches me about Christ and salvation and enables me to discern truth from error.

The following is what the Bible says about itself, what it claims to be:

The Bible was predetermined in heaven (Psalm 119:89).

The Scripture is not a man-made collection of religious writings. It is an eternal, supernatural book from beginning to end. God chose the words in heaven before they were given to holy men on earth. John Wycliffe, who translated the first English Bible in the fourteenth century, believed that the Scripture is "a divine exemplar conceived in the mind of God before creation, and before the material Scriptures were written down" (quoted from Malcolm Lambert, *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation*, 1998, p. 230).

The Bible was written by divine inspiration through men chosen by God.

This was the teaching of Christ and His apostles. Consider four key passages:

2 TIMOTHY 3:13-17 — "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 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 perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."

This is the foundational passage on the inspiration of the Scriptures, and it teaches many important truths. Note that the apostle Paul wrote these verses. Paul was utterly dedicated to the Lord Jesus Christ and suffered great persecution and hardship because of his faith. He was personally called by Christ to be an apostle and he had the signs of an apostle as evidence (2 Corinthians 12:12). Let us see what the apostle Paul taught concerning the nature of the Bible.

a. The Bible is holy (2 Timothy 3:15). The term "holy Bible" means it is "set apart by God," different in character from other writings. According to Paul's teaching, the Bible cannot be compared with other books because it is the divinely inspired Word of God. Other books might contain the truth, but the Bible *is* the truth.

b. The Bible was given by divine inspiration (2 Timothy 3:16). This verse literally says the Scriptures are God-breathed. Though written by men, the Bible is a product of God. This is the biblical doctrine of divine inspiration. When discussing its own inspiration the Scripture does not focus on the mechanics of inspiration but on the product. God spoke in many diverse ways (dreams, visions, angels, directly as on Mount Sinai and on the Mount of Transfiguration, etc.) but the result in all cases was that the writings were God breathed. L. Gaussen rightly said of 2 Timothy 3:16: "This statement admits of no exception and of no restriction ... All Scripture is in such wise a work of God, that it is represented to us as uttered by the divine breathing, just as human speech is uttered by the breathing of a man's mouth. The prophet is the mouth of the Lord" (Theopneustia: The Plenary Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, 1850).

c. The Bible is from God in its entirety (2 Timothy 3:16). All Scripture is said to have come from God. The word for Scripture here, *graphe*, means "writing" or "book." This is referred to as "plenary inspiration." Plenary means full, complete, entire.

d. The Bible is from God in its smallest detail (2 Timothy 3:15). The word for Scripture here is *gramma*, referring to a letter. This teaches us that even the smallest details of the Bible are from God. This is called "verbal inspiration." Jesus taught that even the jots and tittles of the Old Testament Hebrew words are authoritative and preserved by God (Mt. 5:18).

e. The Bible is one book with an allencompassing theme: Salvation in Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 3:15). The Bible is not just a group of disconnected religious writings. It is a unified Book that was planned and delivered by God to teach God's plan of the ages and to show man the way of salvation through Jesus Christ. (Compare Luke 24:44-45; John 1:45; 5:39; Ephesians 3:11.)

f. The Bible can protect the believer from error (2 Timothy 3:13-15). If the Bible contains myths, mistakes, and untrue claims concerning authorship, miracles, and prophecies, it certainly is not a book that can give sure protection from false teachings!

g. The Bible is sufficient to make the believer perfect (2 Timothy 3:17). This is explained in the verse itself. It means "throughly furnished unto all good works." The Bible is able to equip God's people in all aspects of God's will and service. An imperfect book could not produce perfection, and since the Bible is able to make the man of God perfect it is obvious that nothing else is needed. The Scripture is thus the sole authority for faith and practice.

2 PETER 1:19-21 — "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

This is another key passage that describes the divine inspiration of the Bible.

a. Scripture is a light shining in a dark place (2 Peter 1:19). The dark place is the world. Though containing some truth mixed with the error, the world is described as dark because man is not able to know spiritual truth in any absolute sense without a sure revelation from God. The Bible is that infallible revelation which is shining in the midst of the darkness.

b. God selected certain men as prophets and He gave them His words. The expression "holy men" refers to men who are chosen and set apart for God and His business.

c. The Bible is not a product of man's will (2 Peter 1:21). Other books are products of the will of the human author, but not the Bible. God chose certain men and moved in them to deliver His message. As the Holy Spirit moved them, the things they wrote were the words of God.

This passage explains the method by which the Bible was given. God used men, but He used them in such a way that what they wrote was God's Word. When the Bible touches on inspiration and revelation, it says very little about the actual mechanism of how God accomplished this miracle. It was accomplished mysteriously by the Holy Spirit.

The phrase "private interpretation" refers to the writers of the Bible. In the context this is referring to the giving of revelation, rather than to the understanding of it. The Bible writers did not personally interpret God's revelation to mankind; they were given God's revelation by the Holy Spirit. They did not always understand what they were writing (1 Peter 1:10-12).

1 CORINTHIANS 2:9-13 — "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom

teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

In this passage we see what Scripture is according to apostolic doctrine:

It is God's revelation (v. 10). Revelation concerns those things which man cannot know by his own investigation and intellect (v. 9). God, by His Spirit, has chosen to reveal things about Himself, salvation, and His plans (vv. 10-12).

It is the deep things of God (v. 10). Theological modernists claim that the Bible is merely man's attempt to write his thoughts and impressions about God, but Paul says the Bible contains the deep things of God that were revealed supernaturally to men and is not bound by man's natural limitations.

It is the very words of God (v. 13). In verse 13 we are told that this revelation extends to the very choice of the words used to relate it. God did not merely give the Bible writers the general thoughts they were to write; He gave them the very words. Paul claimed this verbal inspiration for his own writings.

It is the mind of Christ (v. 16). We cannot know Christ or His will apart from the Scriptures.

1 THESSALONIANS 2:13 -- "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."

The first churches knew that the apostolic teaching was the Word of God and not just the word of men. A plainer testimony of the divine inspiration of the apostolic epistles could not be made.

The Word of God is effectual. It has the power to sanctify the believer and to fully equip him for God's service.

2. THE BIBLE WAS CANONIZED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The canon of the Bible refers to the authoritative list of the 66 books that comprise the Old and New Testaments. The word *canon* means "a reed," referring to a measuring stick, and describes the process of testing something by a rule or standard.

The Canonization of the Old Testament

It was to the Jews that God assigned the task of collecting and preserving the Hebrew Old Testament (Romans 3:1-2). In Romans 3 Paul describes the Old Testament as the very "oracles of God," and these oracles were committed to the Jews. Even though they did not always obey the Scriptures, the Jews held them in reverence and believed that each jot and tittle was the inspired Word of God.

In particular, it was the Jewish priests who were responsible to care for the Scriptures (Deuteronomy 31:24-26; 17:18).

Though there were periods of spiritual backsliding in which the Scripture was almost unknown among the Jews (2 Chronicles 15:3), God preserved His Word in spite of man's failure (2 Kings 22:8).

After the Babylonian captivity there was a revival within the Jewish priesthood (Ezra 7:10) and the Old Testament Scriptures continued to be preserved. "By Ezra and his successors, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, all the Old Testament books were gathered together into one Old Testament canon, and their texts were purged of errors and preserved until the days of our Lord's earthly ministry. By that time the Old Testament text was so firmly established that even the Jews' rejection of Christ could not disturb it" (Edward Hills, *The King James Bible Defended*, 4th edition, p. 93).

The Canonization of the New Testament

The canonization of the New Testament is the process of preservation that is the responsibility of the churches. The church is the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Ti. 3:15). The Scriptures were canonized and preserved through the church age by congregations that have fulfilled the Lord's Great Commission to teach all things by His power and abiding presence (Mt. 28:18-20). This process has been led by the Spirit of God (Joh. 16:13; 1 Jo. 2:20). The New Testament believers knew they were receiving God's Words from the Lord and His apostles and prophets (Joh. 17:8; 1 Th. 2:13).

Canonization was not the haphazard process that is described in most books on the history of the Bible. Though the details of this history are largely hidden behind the mists of time, we know by faith that the Spirit of God guided the believers unfailingly in this matter because this is what the Lord Jesus promised.

Theological modernists, beginning in the 19th century, claimed that the New Testament writings were not penned until long after the time of Christ, but this has been debunked.

In his book *Redating the New Testament*, John A.T. Robinson concluded that the whole of the New Testament was written before the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

We also have the testimony of two of the foremost archaeologists:

"We can already say emphatically that there is no longer any solid basis for dating any book of the New Testament after about A.D. 80, two full generations before the date between 130 and 150 given by the more radical New Testament critics of today" (William Ramsay, *Recent Discoveries in Bible Lands*, 1955, p. 136).

"In my opinion, every book of the New Testament was written by a baptized Jew between the forties and the eighties of the

Jesus Christ

Historical Evidence for Jesus

A few of the more radical skeptics deny that Jesus was an historical person. This is called "the Jesus myth." In 2012, for example, Timothy Freke published *The Jesus Mysteries: Was the 'Original Jesus' a Pagan God?*

Following is a refutation of the Jesus myth:

1. The historicity of Jesus was not disputed until recent times.

Had there been any question whatsoever about the actual existence of Jesus, the opponents of Christianity in the early centuries would have used this to refute Christianity's legitimacy, but this was never done.

The Encyclopedia Britannica says:

"These independent accounts prove that in ancient times even the opponents of Christianity never doubted the historicity of Jesus, which was disputed for the first time and on inadequate grounds by several authors at the end of the 18th, during the 19th, and at the beginning of the 20th centuries" ("Jesus Christ," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1974).

Historian Jaroslav Pelikan observes:

"Regardless of what anyone may personally think or believe about him, Jesus of Nazareth has been the dominant figure in the history of Western culture for almost twenty centuries" (*Jesus Through the Centuries*, p. 1).

2. The New Testament, which is the major witness of Jesus, is an historical record of the highest authority, even from a secular standpoint. The evidence that the New Testament was written soon after Christ's death is irrefutable. We have already examined this evidence in the section on "The Bible's Nature."

In his book *Redating the New Testament*, John A.T. Robinson concluded that the whole of the New Testament was written before the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

William Ramsay, one of the most renowned archaeologists, wrote:

"We can already say emphatically that there is no longer any solid basis for dating any book of the New Testament after about A.D. 80, two full generations before the date between 130 and 150 given by the more radical New Testament critics of today" (*Recent Discoveries in Bible Lands*, 1955, p. 136).

"In my opinion, every book of the New Testament was written by a baptized Jew between the forties and the eighties of the first century A.D." (*Christianity Today*, Jan. 18, 1963).

William Albright, another influential archaeologist, stated:

"Thanks to the Qumran discoveries, the New Testament proves to be in fact what it was formerly believed to be: the teaching of Christ and his immediate followers between cir. 25 and cir. 80 A.D." (*From Stone Age to Christianity*, p. 23).

Beginning with the first century itself, we have solid historical evidence that the New Testament existed and was commonly recognized as Scripture by the believers. We have the extant writings of men who knew the apostles personally. These include Clement of Rome, Ignatius, and Polycarp. Thus there is no gap between the writing of the New Testament and the historical record that exists of it. Portions of the New Testament exist dating to the late first and early second centuries, only a few decades after the books were written. No other ancient book comes close to having such clear manuscript authority.

Consider some of the early historical evidences witnessing to the authenticity of the New Testament:

Clement of Rome was taught directly by some of the apostles. He was an elder in the church at Rome beginning in AD 88, only 30 years after Paul wrote his epistle to Rome. "Clement of Rome, whose first letter to the Corinthians is usually dated about A.D. 96, made liberal use of Scripture, appealing to its authority, and used New Testament material right alongside Old Testament material. He clearly quotes from Hebrews, 1 Corinthians and Romans and possibly from Matthew, Acts, Titus, James and 1 Peter. Here is the bishop [pastor] of Rome, before the close of the first century, writing an official letter to the church at Corinth wherein a selection of New Testament books are recognized and declared by episcopal authority to be Scripture, including Hebrews" (Wilbur Pickering, The Identity of the New Testament Text).

Ignatius (c. A.D. 110) referred to "all the epistles of Paul."

Polycarp personally knew the apostle John and other believers who were eyewitnesses of Jesus' resurrection. In his letter to the Philippian church in about 115 A.D., Polycarp "weaves an almost continuous string of clear quotations and allusions to New Testament writings. ... There are perhaps fifty clear quotations taken from Matthew, Luke, Acts, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, 1 and 2 Peter, and 1 John, and many allusions including to Mark, Hebrews, James, and 2 and 3 John. (The only NT writer not included is Jude!)" (Pickering).

Justin Martyr (died 165 A.D.) testified that the churches of his day met on Sundays and "read the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets" (*Apology*, I, 67).

Irenaeus (died in 202 A.D.) left many works which are still extant. Their translation into English covers between 600-700 pages in the Ante-Nicene Library. "Irenaeus stated that the apostles taught that God is the Author of both Testaments (Against Heretics IV, 32.2) and evidently considered the New Testament writings to form a second Canon. He quoted from every chapter of Matthew, 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians and Philippians, from all but one or two chapters of Luke, John, Romans, 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus, from most chapters of Mark (including the last twelve verses), Acts, 2 Corinthians, and Revelation, and from every other book except Philemon and 3 John. These two books are so short that Irenaeus may not have had occasion to refer to them in his extant works--it does not necessarily follow that he was ignorant of them or rejected them. Evidently the dimensions of the New Testament Canon recognized by Irenaeus are very close to what we hold today" (Pickering).

Irenaeus heard Polycarp preach and relate accounts from his time with John and other first century Christians. In his letter to Florinus, Irenaeus wrote the following: "I could tell you the place where the blessed Polycarp sat to preach the Word of God. It is yet present to my mind with what gravity he everywhere came in and went out; what was the sanctity of his deportment, the majesty of his countenance; and what were his holy exhortations to the people. I seem to hear him now relate how he conversed with John and many others who had seen Jesus Christ, the words he had heard from their mouths."

Thus we have the extant writings of men who knew the apostles and first century Christians personally and who quoted from the New Testament books.

This is irrefutable evidence that the New Testament existed then and that it was the same as the New Testament that we have today.

Even some naturalistic textual critics have concluded that the New Testament in its current 27-book canon existed in Greek no later than the middle of the 2nd century. See David Trobisch, *The First Edition of the New Testament*, Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

From the second century we have evidence that it was customary for each church to have its own copy of the writings of the apostles that they might read and preach from them. "And on the day called Sunday there is a meeting in one place of those who live in cities or the country, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read as long as time permits. When the reader has finished, the president in a discourse urges and invites us to the imitation of these noble things" (Justin Martyr, *Apology*).

Dr. Wilbur Pickering observes: "Both Justin Martyr and Irenaeus claimed that the Church was spread throughout the whole earth, in their day ... IT BECOMES CLEAR THAT THERE MUST HAVE BEEN THOUSANDS OF COPIES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITINGS IN USE BY 200 A.D." (The Identity of the New Testament Text).

In about the year 208, Tertullian mentioned churches founded by the apostles and indicated that the "authentic writings" were still extant and were the absolute standard by which the truth was measured in

the believing churches. He urged heretics to "run to the apostolic churches, in which the very thrones of the apostles are still preeminent in their places, IN WHICH THEIR OWN AUTHENTIC WRITINGS ARE READ, UTTERING THE VOICE AND REPRESENTING THE FACE OF EACH OF THEM SEVERALLY. Achaia is very near you, (in which) you find CORINTH. Since you are not far from Macedonia, you have PHILIPPI; (and there too) you have the THESSALONIANS. Since you are able to cross to Asia, you get EPHESUS. Since, moreover, you are close upon Italy, you have ROME, from which there comes even into our own hands the very authority (of the apostles themselves)" (Tertullian, Prescription against Heretics, 36, cited from Pickering).

Pickering observes: "Some have thought that Tertullian was claiming that Paul's Autographs were still being read in his day (208), but at the very least he must mean they were using faithful copies. Was anything else to be expected? for example, when the Ephesian Christians saw the Autograph of Paul's letter to them getting tattered, would they not carefully execute an identical copy for their continued use? Would they let the Autograph perish without making such a copy? (There must have been a constant stream of people coming either to make copies of their letter or to verify the correct reading.) I believe we are obliged to conclude that in the year 200 the Ephesian Church was still in a position to attest the original wording of her letter (and so for the others)..."

Compare this wealth of ancient evidence for the Bible with that of other famous books of antiquity:

	date written	earliest copy	time span
Plato	350 B.C.	900 A.D.	1250 yrs
Herodotus	450 B.C.	900 A.D.	1350 yrs
Euripedes	450 B.C.	1100 A.D.	1500 yrs
Caesar	50 B.C.	900 A.D.	950 yrs
Tacitus	100 A.D.	1100 A.D.	1000 yrs
Aristotle	350 B.C.	1100 A.D.	1450 yrs

Israel in Prophecy

► A PowerPoint presentation of this material on Israel in Prophecy is included in the *Unshakeable Faith* apologetics course package. See "Suggestions for Teachers and Private Study" at the beginning of the course for tips on using this material. The syllabus, review questions, and tests, plus answer keys are available from Way of Life Literature with the purchase of the textbook. https://www.wayoflife.org/bc/course.php

The Bible's amazing prophecies are evidence of its divine inspiration. They are clear and detailed and unfailing.

This is in contrast to extra-biblical prophecies, which are typically vague and inaccurate.

Consider the Sibyl prophetesses in the fourth century. When Maxentius consulted these before meeting Constantine in the battle on the banks of the Tiber, he was told, "On that day the enemy of Rome will perish" This prophecy is so vague that it would apply to whoever won!

The prophecies of Nostradamus were "cryptic" and "obscure." Consider the following prophecy that is alleged to describe Hitler: "Beasts ferocious from hunger will swim across rivers: The greater part of the region will be against the Hister. The great one will cause it to be dragged in an iron cage, when the German child will observe nothing" (centuries #2, quatrain #24). This is so vague that it is meaningless.

Consider astrology. The forecasts are usually very vague, such as, "Some friends may have the feeling that you've been ignoring them." And when the astrological forecasts are more precise, they are usually wrong. Two famous astrologers in Britain predicted that Hitler would not start World War II. Edward Lyndoe said, "The Nazis attacking Britain? Don't make me laugh! Not a sign in my charts" (June 25, 1939). Consider Jean Dixon. She prophesied that the Soviets would beat the U.S. to the moon, that World War III would begin in 1958, and that a cure would be found for cancer in 1967.

Consider Edgar Cayce. He prophesied that China would be converted to Christianity in 1968 and that Armageddon would occur in 1999.

Consider Islamic prophecy. The following refers to the "Dajjal" or the Islamic messiah. "The Dajjal will come forth having with him water and fire, and what mankind see as water will be fire which burns and what they see as fire will be cold, sweet water" (Hadiths of Bukhari).

Consider Hindu prophecy. The following describes the Age of Kali: "When deceit, falsehood, lethargy, sleepiness, violence, despondency, grief, delusion, fear, and poverty prevail, that is the Kali Yuga." This is so vague that it could describe any time since the fall of man.

In contrast, Bible prophecy is clear and detailed, and it has never failed. For example, the prophecies about Christ's first coming described the exact time of His coming, the exact place of His birth, the piercing of His hands and feet on the cross, the words that He spoke from the cross, the soldiers gambling for His garments, and His burial in a rich man's tomb, among many other details. The prophecies about Israel are equally precise.

It is said that Frederick the Great once demanded proof in one word that the Bible is divinely inspired. The answer provided by his chaplain was "the JEW, your majesty" (Robert Newman, "Israel's History Written in Advance," *Evidence for Faith*, edited by John Montgomery, pp. 193-201).

At the dawn of Israel's experience as a nation, before she entered the Promised Land, Moses prophesied her complete history. God warned that if Israel turned from His Law, He would judge her.

See Deuteronomy 28:25-32, 36-37, 63-67; 30:1-6.

This prophecy was written in about 1450 B.C., or nearly 3,500 years ago.

The prophecy describes Israel's defeat at the hands of foreign powers, her eviction from the land and dispersion to the ends of the earth, and her return.

1. Desertification of the Land

Moses said Israel would become a desert. The rain would be powder and dust (De. 28:23-24), and the land would become "brimstone, salt, and burning" (De. 29:23).

When Israel entered the land in the 15th century B.C. it was fruitful like a garden, and God gave the land the early and latter rains. In Abraham's day, 400 years earlier, the plain of Jordan in southern Israel was "well watered every where ... even as the garden of the LORD" (Ge. 13:10). God described it as a land "flowing with milk and honey," which speaks of a well-watered land full of cattle and flowering plants (De. 31:20). The tribes of Reuben and Gad stayed on the eastern side of the Jordan because they "had a very great multitude of cattle" and they saw that "the place was a place for cattle" (Num. 32:1).

They were describing a place in the southern part of the modern nation of Jordan

that is harsh desert today. Obviously it was not a desert then, but because of Israel's sin and idolatry, God stopped the rains and the land became a barren desert, and most of it remains that today. Crops can be grown in most parts of Israel only through irrigation. You can eke out a living with a few sheep today (apart from irrigated ranches), but not with multitudes of them.

Israel's very land is a powerful witness to the accuracy of ancient Bible prophecy. Modern Israel has performed an agricultural wonder through technology, but she has not been able to change the fact that 80% of the land remains arid or semi-arid. And this was God's judgment in fulfillment of Bible prophecy.

2. Dispersion and Persecution

Moses prophesied that Israel would "be plucked from off the land" and scattered "among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other," and there she would "find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind; and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life" (De. 28:63-67).

The prophecy began to be fulfilled with the destruction of Israel's First Temple and her 70-year captivity to Babylon in 586 B.C., but that was only the beginning. Moses said that the Deuteronomy prophecy would be fulfilled "in the latter days" (De. 31:29), which did not begin until the first coming of Christ.

In 70 A.D. Israel's Second Temple was destroyed by Roman armies and 65 years later Jerusalem was razed after Rome put down the Bar Kokhba revolt. A pagan city was built on the site, dedicated to Jupiter. The Emperor Hadrian changed Judea's name to Syria Palestina. Multitudes of Jews were slaughtered and most of the rest were carried

Archaeology

■ NOTE TO TEACHERS

We recommend that you first go through the introduction to archaeology with the class then use the PowerPoint/Keynote presentations for the section on Archaeological Treasures Confirming the Bible.

After each PowerPoint presentation, use the review questions to prepare for the tests. The syllabus, review questions, and tests, plus answer keys are available from Way of Life Literature with the purchase of the textbook. https://www.wayoflife.org/bc/course.php

Introduction to Archaeology

(The teacher is encouraged to review the general introduction to this apologetics course, *An Unshakeable Faith*, for possible review of other important points relevant to the use of archaeology as an apologetics and evangelism tool.)

1. The explosion of archaeological research in the last 150 years

In 1784, German philosopher Johann Gottfried von Herder wrote:

"In the Near East and neighboring Egypt everything from the ancient times appears to us as ruins or as a dream which has disappeared ... The archives of Babylon, Phoenicia and Carthage are no more; Egypt had withered practically before the Greeks saw its interior; thus, everything shrinks to a few faded leaves which contain stories about stories, fragments of history, a dream of the world before us" (Johann Gottfried von Herder, *Ideas for the Philosophy of History of Humanity*, 1784-91, cited from M. Larsen, "Orientalism and the Ancient Near East," *Culture and History* 2, 1987, p. 96).

As we will see, this is no longer the case. Today we know a great deal about ancient nations and kingdoms described in the Bible's earliest pages. We don't have just "a few faded leaves" or mere stories about stories; we have museums and libraries full of historical information. We have entire ancient cities that have been earthed.

2. The major benefits of archaeology for the Christian

First, archaeology confirms the historical accuracy of the Bible and thus encourages faith in everything the Bible states.

Beware of archaeologists who want to separate *historical* from *theological* evidence. For example, consider the following statement by Alfred Hoerth, retired director of archaeology at Wheaton College, where he taught for almost 30 years:

"Some people mistakenly use archaeology to confirm, authenticate, or prove the Bible. ... Even if every historical statement in the Bible could be proven true--confirmed--this would still not prove the theological message of the Bible. There is a tendency by some Christians to assume too much from archaeology. Sometimes the words confirm, prove, authenticate, and substantiate can be employed. ... It must be recognized that there is a clear separation between historical and theological proof" (Hoerth, *Archaeology and the Old Testament*, pp. 18, 20). This is actually a sop toward liberalism. It is a half-truth that tends to be a smokescreen for the fact that the author does not believe in the infallible inspiration of Scripture and holds to theistic evolution.

While it is true that historical evidence does not absolutely prove the theological message of the Bible, the Bible itself leads us to expect historical evidence. The Bible claims to be an historical record. It claims to be founded upon infallible historical proofs (Acts 1:3). Thus, history and theology are friends. Every historical evidence for the Bible confirms its theology.

It is true that archaeology cannot prove that Christ was born of a virgin or that He walked on the water, but it can demonstrate that the Bible's history is accurate and can thus give us confidence that whatever the Bible says is true.

The Bible is like a very old friend with vast knowledge and experience. Since he has proven to be honest and faithful in all of his dealings with us and accurate in all of the statements that he has made, we have no reason to suspect him of fabricating things or creating myths. To the contrary, we have every reason to believe whatever he tells us.

Second, archaeology provides background information to better understand the Bible.

For example, archaeology has thrown great light on the ancient civilizations such as Egypt, Babylon, and Assyria. Knowledge of these discoveries is a great aid to understanding the background of Old Testament times and events.

Consider the excavations of Ur. Today we know a lot about the city that Abraham grew up in, the education he received, perhaps even the type of house that he lived in. In fact, at the archaeological site of Ur in Iraq, we can see the very streets on which he might have strolled and doorways through which he walked and the temples upon which he gazed. Consider the excavations of Shushan (Susa). At the Louvre in Paris we can see actual artifacts from the throne room of the Palace of Shushan, articles that would have been seen by Esther and Nehemiah. We can much better understand the environment in which the events of the biblical book of Esther transpired.

3. The sufficiency of evidence

God gives enough evidence to prove that the Bible is true for the unbiased, but enough is left unproven and enough questions are left unanswered to give the willful unbeliever rope to hang himself. As the renowned Harvard law professor Simon Greenleaf stated:

"Christianity does not profess to convince the perverse and head-strong, to bring irresistible evidence to the daring and profane, to vanquish the proud scorner, and afford evidences from which the careless and perverse cannot possibly escape. This might go to destroy man's responsibility. All that Christianity professes, is to propose such evidences as may satisfy the meek, the tractable, the candid, the serious inquirer" (*The Testimony of the Evangelists Examined by the Rules of Evidence*).

In His story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16, Jesus warned that no amount of evidence will convince a committed skeptic. The Word of God itself is the ultimate evidence, and men are required to believe it (Luke 16:27-31).

A committed skeptic would not be convinced if he saw Noah's ark with his own eyes and if Noah himself rose from the dead to tell the story.

4. The limitations of archaeology

Archaeology is a friend to the Bible so long as its evidence is not misinterpreted through skeptical, evolutionary bias and so long as its limitations are clearly understood. Kaveh Farrokh, a historian of ancient Persia, has likened archaeological findings to "shadows in the desert." This is an apt description. We can learn something from a shadow, but we cannot learn everything. The archaeological shadow of ancient times should never be used to overthrow the sharp details of reality found in Scripture!

In discussing the evidence for Herod's Tomb, Dudi Mevorah, co-curator of the Israel Museum, said, "Archaeology is never about 100 percent. The circumstantial evidence points to one man" ("Israel Museum to Exhibit Reconstructed Tomb," *Fox News*, Jan. 16, 2013). But the Bible is definitely about 100%!!!!

Alexander the Great built one of the greatest ancient empires and left his name everywhere, but only a few archaeological documents have survived that actually contain his name. If this is so for someone like Alexander, how much more is it true for someone like Abraham, Moses, or David.

Speaking of the ancient Egyptian empire, the 20th century Egyptologist Alan Gardiner, late in life, wrote, "It must never be forgotten that we are dealing with a civilization thousands of years old and one of which only tiny remnants have survived. What is proudly advertised as Egyptian history is merely a collection of rags and tatters" (quoted by Timothy Mahoney, *Patterns of Evidence: The Exodus*, chapter 11).

It is ridiculous to allow such an inexact science to correct the Bible, which has been proven true countless times and shows every evidence of being what it claims to be, the infallible Word of God!

Consider some of the specific limitations of archaeology:

a. Only the minutest fraction of the historical record has survived.

"... the deposition of silt from the rivers, which has been going on for thousands of years, has wiped some sites, particularly the smaller ones, completely off the map, and covered them with a heavy overburden of redeposited material. Sites like this are only discovered by accident, usually in the course of construction or drainage works. ...

"... survey work suffers not only from silt deposition but from the opposite problem as well. Once the soil dries, it becomes extremely friable and wind erosion poses more problems. Whole sites seem to have been blown away in some places and the areas of others drastically altered.

"Redeposition in secondary contexts can further confuse the record, whether the agents are wind and water, or people.

"Further destruction has certainly been caused by people as many ancient sites have been used as sources of fertiliser for fields, or of ballast for construction work. More recently, illicit excavations have also been a problem. ...

"A further important destructive force is the salt which permeates the soil over most of the plain and which is capable of destroying all but the toughest materials. At Abu Salabikh, for instance, almost the only evidence for post-Early Dynastic settlement is found in the sherds packed round drains which were sunk from higher levels, now totally destroyed by erosion and the action of salts" (Harriet Crawford, Sumer and the Sumerians, pp. 38, 39).

"The marvel was that any ancient Egyptian monuments were left at all, for such destruction and dispersion had been practiced both by the ancient Egyptians themselves and for several thousand years thereafter by the Greeks, Romans, Copts, Turks and Arabs, not to mention frequent European vandals" (Charles Breasted, *Pioneer to the East*, p. 191).

"The ancient written documents we read today survive by accident. Often they are not ones which modern scholars would have chosen if they had had any say. ... Even when a wide variety of documents is available, as in Egypt or Babylonia, they are still a selection, and they give incomplete and unbalanced pictures" (Alan Millard, *Treasures from Bible Times*, p. 25).

Consider that of the millions of documents written on parchment, papyrus, and wax boards in ancient times, only a few fragments have survived. Even those that survived in the dry caves of the Dead Sea were mostly a jumble of scraps by the time they were discovered in the 1940s.

We see a glimpse of what was lost in Ezra 6.

"Then Darius the king made a decree, and search was made in THE HOUSE OF THE ROLLS, where the treasures were laid up in Babylon. And there was found at Achmetha, in the palace that is in the province of the Medes, A ROLL, and therein was a record thus written: In the first year of Cyrus the king the same Cyrus the king made a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem, Let the house be builded, the place where they offered sacrifices, and let the foundations thereof be strongly laid; the height thereof threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof threescore cubits; With three rows of great stones, and a row of new timber: and let the expences be given out of the king's house: And also let the golden and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took forth out of the temple which is at Jerusalem, and brought unto Babylon, be restored, and brought again unto the temple which is at Jerusalem, every one to his place, and place them in the house of God" (Ezra 6:1-5).

Cyrus' decree was written on a parchment or papyrus roll and stored in the palace library in Achmetha, and it was recovered by Darius about 30 years later. The vast majority of the countless thousands of such scrolls have perished from the earth. The only thing that has survived from these ancient royal libraries are some of the documents written on clay tablets, and the vast majority of those have also perished.

Normally the clay writing tablets were not baked or fired (Joan and David Oates, Nimrud, p. 195), though there were exceptions, such as those at the palace in Ebla. They were brittle and easily crushed and when they were covered with earth and compacted into the ground over hundreds and thousands of years, with moisture permeating down through the soil from annual rains, they could not be recovered from the surrounding earth by archaeologists. For the most part the tablets that have survived are those that were hardened when a building was burned. This is what happened at the Persian palace at Persepolis when Alexander the Great burned it. The fire destroyed all perishable materials, such as papyrus and parchment rolls and writing boards, but it hardened the clay tablets and thus preserved them. The same thing happened at Nineveh and Calah (Nimrud).

Consider that though Hammurabi is one of the best known rulers of the ancient Mesopotamian world, actually little is known about him. Van De Mieroop says, "the material on Hammurabi is so fragmentary that it leaves much of his life in the dark" (*King Hammurabi of Babylon*).

Consider the Stele of Ur-Nammu. Dating to about 2100 B.C. it is the oldest known tablet containing a law code. Originally 10 feet high, only fragments remain. Yet countless reports and some entire books have been written about this fragmented item, and the reason is that as pathetic as it is as a solid historical document, it is one of the best witnesses we have of that era.

Consider that hundreds of years of ancient Egyptian records are missing entirely.

Consider that though Phoenician (Punic) was used for 1,000 years, only a few scraps of

16. The historicity of Jesus was not disputed until recent times and is attested by many extra-biblical sources, including Tacitus, Suetonius, Josephus, and the Jewish Talmud.

17. Three great evidences for Christ's resurrection are the prophecies that were written down before His birth, the empty tomb which can only be explained by the fact that Jesus actually rose from the dead, and the changed lives of the disciples.

18. The great prophecy of Deuteronomy 28 described the entire history of Israel before she even entered the land of Canaan.

19. The great prophecy of Ezekiel 37 described the two-staged return of Israel to the land: first in a condition of unbelief and spiritual blindness followed by conversion at the return of Christ.

20. Archaeological research at Ur confirms the Bible in four ways. It shows that ancient Ur was an advanced literate society, that it was devoted to pagan idolatry, that it was a powerful city state, and that it was all of this at the exact time that the Bible describes in the early chapters of Genesis.

21. The pagan accounts of the Flood, such as the Gilgamesh Epic, are legendary on their very face, with their stories of foolish gods and goddesses and an ark with the wrong dimensions for ocean travel.

22. Archaeology confirms the Bible's account of Israel being in the land of Canaan as a significant nation in the 13th century B.C. (the Merneptah Stele), David's Palace, Solomon's city at Megiddo, Israel's kings, Babylon's tower, the rise of powerful rulers and city states in Shinar following the Flood, Nebuchadnezzar's conquering of Jerusalem, Jehoiachin's captivity in Babylon, Belshazzar, Assyria's military might and cruelty, the tribute of King Menahem to the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser, the assassination of king

Pekah, the enthronement of Hoshea, Ahaz's tribute to Tiglath-pileser, the slaying of Rezin of Syria, the fall of Samaria and the captivity of the northern tribes, the destruction of Lachish by Sennacherib, the siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib, the destruction of Assyria and her capital at Nineveh, the military might of Medo-Persia, the Persian king Cyrus and his custom of granting religious liberty, the glory of the Shushan Palace, people mentioned in the book of Jeremiah, the building of Nehemiah's Wall, the pavement in Pilate's court, the destruction of the Second Temple, and the historical accuracy of Luke and Acts.

23. Peter prophesied of scoffers at the end of the age who would deny the global Flood (2 Peter 3:3-7).

24. Two major evidences for the global Flood are the worldwide sedimentary rocks and the fossil graveyards.

25. Noah's ark described in Genesis was the correct dimensions for stable ocean travel and was large enough to contain all of the different "kinds" of animals. Most of the now-extinct dinosaurs were small, and the large ones could have been transported as juveniles or in eggs.

26. Many scientists believe the Bible's account of a six-day creation and a global flood.

27. Jesus promised that a man can know the truth if he is willing to obey (John 7:17) and continue in God's Word (John 8:31-32).

28. Those who want faith must read and hear God's Word (Romans 10:17; John 20:30-31).

The evidence against evolution is summarized at the end of that section of the course just before the section on Noah's Ark and the Flood.