

Finding Light in Darkness – Session 2

Why Trust the Bible

By Sonny Bowman

Basis for a Biblical Worldview

The Role of faith

Bible claims about itself

Bible Authority

Bible validated by Jesus

Evidence supporting the Bible

Worldview

Your worldview determines your attitudes, beliefs, values, opinions, and actions. Your way of viewing the world is your basis for decision making. As Christians, we would expect to have a biblical worldview—including belief that the Bible is the accurate Word of God and it must be followed.

The Role of Faith

- Never have 100% of the evidence
- God designed it that way
- Since a level of faith is required, need to briefly look at what faith is and what it is not

Some things were purposefully left out of the Bible. God purposely built in a requirement for some degree of faith

Faith is not:

- A blind or unreasonable leap without supporting evidence
- Wishful Thinking or “hope so”
- Denial of what exists or a current situation
- A feeling

Faith is not a “hope so” or wishful thinking – “I hope to get a raise.”
Hope is good, but it is not faith.

Faith is not denial of what exists or a current situation. Do not deny the situation, but deny its right to defy the name of Jesus.

Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to Him, and begged Him to touch him. So He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town. And when He had spit on his eyes and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything. And he looked up and said, "I see men like trees, walking." Then He put *His* hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly. *Mark 8:22-25*

Faith is not a feeling – feelings will go up and down while faith remains steady

For indeed, when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside *were* conflicts, inside *were* fears.
2 Corinthians 7:5

Faith is:

- Choosing to believe what God says

"Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD! And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." *Joshua 24:14-15*

- Trusting God more than your own abilities or judgments

Faith is trusting God more than your own abilities or judgments. Like sitting on a chair. Trust it to hold you. If the chair fails, you will end up on the floor. If you have a plan B, it is not faith.

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. *Proverbs 3:5-6*

- Evidence of things not seen

Faith is evidence of things not seen. It is not knowing without any questions or issues.

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. *Hebrews 11:1*

- Faith is believing what is currently unseen, but well supported.
- There is a difference between opinion, faith, and knowing

We often want to *know* when God wants us to have *faith*.

What the Bible Claims About Itself

1. History in the making

- Record of the history of creation and mankind. Includes record of God's interaction with man.
- "In the beginning..." Gen 1.1, John 1.1

2. Keys to successful living

You shall therefore keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong *your* days in the land which the LORD your God is giving you for all time.” — Deuteronomy 4:40

3. Love letters from God

God’s explanation of His nature and character—His acts and ways. An invitation to know the Creator of all things.

For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, And the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. — Hosea 6:6

See how very much our Father loves us.... — 1 John 3:1 (NLT)

4. Coming attractions

God’s revelation of future events – see Ezekiel, the Book of Revelation, Matthew 24, and others

5. Through the looking glass

Insights and instructions about the spirit realm. A world connected to, but different from the world we interact with each day using our five senses.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. — Ephesians 6:10-13

Bible Authority

The Bible claims to be the Word of God. That carries an inherent authority. If there is a God and He inspired the Bible, that gives the Bible a huge weight of authority in any matter it addresses. Over 2,000 instances in OT alone where it uses phrases such as “God said....” (*Many Infallible Proofs*, by Henry Morris, pg 156-157)

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

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

Bible Accepted by Jesus

Jesus accepted as factual even the most controversial statements in the Hebrew Bible.

- Creation of Adam and Eve — Matthew 19:4-6
- Noah's ark and the great Flood. — Matthew 24:37-39, Luke 17:26-30
- Israelites fed with manna for 40 years in the wilderness — John 6.49
- The story of Jonah, the big fish, and repentance of Nineveh. — Matthew 12:40-41

Jesus Believed the Bible

- We do not believe the Bible is God's Word because it has no mistakes.
- The main reason we believe it is because Jesus believe it and taught His disciples to believe it.
- If you have made Jesus your Lord and Saviour, it is inconsistent to take a stand that opposes His!
- Still, there is good evidence for believing the Bible as we will see later.

Jesus Quoted the Bible

Jesus quoted the Hebrew Bible on matters of authority

But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" — Matthew 4:4

You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Honor your father and your mother.' " — Luke 18:20

Jesus' Actions Validated

Jesus quoted from the Bible to validate His actions and life.

Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. — Luke 24:25-27

You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. — John 5:39

Jesus Elevated New Testament

Jesus elevated New Testament writings to the same level of God inspiration as the Old Testament.

And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. ... But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the

Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. — John 14:16-17, 26

Jesus Conquered Death

Finally, Jesus conquered death to prove that He knew what He was talking about.

But He answered and said to them, “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

Questions & Answers

Many skeptics only hear the questions and believe that there are no valid answers. Fortunately, Christian thinkers have been answering these questions ever since Paul's time. There are good answers to many of the questions if you will take the time to read up on them.

How We Got the NT

- Canon

--“The word canon comes from the root word reed (English word cane, Hebrew form ganeh, and Greek form kanon). The reed was used as a measuring rod, and came to mean ‘standard.’ As applied to Scripture, canon means ‘an officially accepted list of books.’ (Earle, HWGOB, 32)” *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, Josh McDowell, p 21

- Collection of authorized books, not an authorized list of books.
- No one person or group imposed list
- Recognized by the Church over time

--“The recognition of the canonical status of the several books of the New Testament was the result of a long and gradual process, in the course of which certain writings, regarded as authoritative, were separated from a much larger body of early Christian literature.” *The Canon of the New Testament*, by Bruce M. Metzger, p 1

- Formalization needed as competing views wrote their own works

--“All in all, the role played by Gnostics in the development of the canon was chiefly that of provoking a reaction among members of the Great Church so as to ascertain still more clearly which books and epistles conveyed the true teaching of the Gospel.” *The Canon of the New Testament*, by Bruce M. Metzger, p 90

Tests for Canoncity

- Orthodoxy – Rule of faith
 - Agrees with basic Christianity recognized by the Church (2 Thes 2:15, Gal 1:6-9)

- Apostolicity
 - By or connected to early apostles
- Consensus
 - Continuous use and acceptance by Church at large
- Not Inspiration!
 - Inspiration not unique to canonical books

Taken from *The Canon of the New Testament*, by Bruce M. Metzger, p 251-4

“Thus, the Fathers do not hesitate to refer to non-Scriptural documents as ‘inspired’, a circumstance showing that they did not consider inspiration to be a unique characteristic of canonical writings.” *The Canon of the New Testament*, by Bruce M. Metzger, p 256

Paul wrote other letters that were not included in the Bible, and they surely were inspired by God. Cere’s Sunday messages hopefully are inspired by God. But that doesn’t mean they should be included in the Bible!

Many Books Failed the Test

- *Acts of Paul* – A.D. 170
 - Preached to, saved, & baptized a lion
- *Acts of Peter* – A.D. 150-200
 - Women urged to leave husbands
 - Re-crippled daughter
- *Gospel of Thomas* – Gnostic, A.D. 140
 - Women need to become men

[Acts of Paul] “... containing a detailed account of Paul’s encounter with a lion in the amphitheatre at Ephesus. ... some time earlier in the wilds of the countryside Paul had preached to that very lion and, on its profession of faith, had baptized the beast.” *The Canon of the New Testament*, by Bruce M. Metzger, pp 175-6

[Acts of Peter] “... how Simon Magus comes to Rome and embarrasses believers with his apparent miracles, and how Peter travels to Rome and, with the assistance of a speaking dog, overcome the magician”

“The same [Gnostic] sectarian influence can be seen in Peter’s preaching against matrimony, and his prevailing upon wives to leave their husbands.”

“... describes Peter’s miraculous treatment of his paralytic daughter. At the behest of the crowds, Peter causes his crippled daughter to rise up and walk, but after the crowds had given praise to God for this, he commands his daughter to lie down again, saying to her, ‘return to your infirmity, for this is profitable for you and for me’. The crowd laments this turn of circumstances, whereupon Peter explains that when his daughter was born a vision from God disclosed that she ‘will do harm to many souls if her body remains healthy’ (i.e. sexually active). And therefore Peter accepts as God’s will his daughter’s infirmity.” *The Canon of the New Testament*, by Bruce M. Metzger, p 178-9

[**Gospel of Thomas**] “Simon Peter said to them: Let Mary go away from us, because women are not worthy of life.

Jesus said: Lo, I shall lead her in order to make her a male, so that she too may become a living spirit, resembling you males. For every woman who makes herself male will enter into the kingdom of Heaven.” *Gospel of Thomas*, Logion 114 as quoted in *The Canon of the New Testament*, by Bruce M. Metzger, p 86

Not Everything Included

And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name. — Jn 20:30-31

But there is enough to do the job!

Ultimately...

- We trust God Who...
 - Created ALL things (Col 1:16-18)
 - Overcame death (Rom 1:4)
 - And is Truth (John 14:6, 1 John 5:6)
- To insure we have a true and accurate representation of His Word to us
- That said, there is good evidence to support our faith!

CSI: Bible

While I don't endorse the television series centered on crime scene investigation, there are some things that we can learn from such shows that deal with legal evidence. Some of the guidelines they use can also serve us as we investigate the claims of the Bible.

Evidence Guidelines:

1. Be fully persuaded an explanation exists
Don't assume explanation doesn't exist just because you haven't found it yet.
2. Wear gloves – don't contaminate the evidence
Bias and assumptions can contaminate the evidence. Remember--others often have bias & assumptions, too.
3. Evaluate all evidence in context
Context includes the surrounding objects, orientation of shell casing, blood splatter, etc. It includes over Bible verses, chapters, and books when talking about the Bible.
4. Accept witnesses unless proven to lie
Don't assume every witness is covering something up.

5. If seems confusing or contradictory, collect more information — often an important key to truth!

Often, seemingly contradictory evidence leads to important insights. It's often the puzzling or seemingly contradictory evidence that leads to important evidence. Bible questions are often cleared up with further research.

6. Keep open mind until have enough evidence

Don't stop short. Some claimed the Israelites crossed the Reed Sea rather than the Red Sea, and is only ankle deep. That would mean that God drowned the Egyptian army in ankle-deep water.

7. Will never find all the evidence, but usually enough for reasonable judgment

Some specific issues may never be fully resolved. But should be able to come to an overall conclusion.

These guidelines are similar for all evidence research.

Be fully persuaded that an adequate explanation exists, even though you have not yet

Good Questions—Good Answers

Most questions raised about the Bible and Christianity are reasonable and deserve reasonable answers. Most skeptics have only heard the questions and believed that there are no valid answers. But we have great answers to their questions. Fortunately, Christian thinkers have been answering these questions ever since Paul's time, and we can draw on their knowledge to help us find the answers we need. (Taken from *When Skeptics Ask*, p. 11).

While we won't be able to adequately cover the abundance of good answers to skeptics questions, I hope to at least help you see that good answers are available to anyone who will take a little time to read up on them.

Typical Allegations

Many allegations are made against the trustworthiness of the Bible, for example:

“The Bible has been changed deliberately or accidentally”

“We don't have an accurate record of what was originally written. Therefore, it cannot be trusted.”

“The Bible is full of contradictions”

“The Bible cannot be inspired by God because of all the contradictions.”
Generally, only a few if any alleged contradictions are given.

“The Bible is full of errors”

“The Bible cannot be inspired by God because it is full in inaccuracies in areas of history, geography, archeology, and science.”

“The Bible is only myths and moral stories”

Myths and moral stories do not require a submission to authority! If the Bible is God’s Word to man, then an appropriate response from man is expected!

Full of Changes?

Science of Textual Criticism

- Can determine the original text
- 5,500 manuscript copies/portions of NT
- 18,000 more manuscript translations
- Nothing remotely compares
- If all manuscripts lost, still rebuild from quotes in early writings
- Similarly, text of Old Testament also validated

The original biblical text as originally written is inspired by God and without error. However, we no longer have those actual, original documents—just copies. Some of those copies have relatively minor differences between them. Is it possible to accurately determine what the original documents actually said?

This question has been fully addressed by the science of textual criticism. This is a literary science that determines the text of original manuscripts using established principles. It applies to all ancient writings, including the Bible. (A **manuscript** is a **hand-written document** as opposed to a printed document.)

Nothing remotely comparable to this abundance of manuscripts exists for any other ancient writing. This abundance permits us to **trace the origin of variant readings** and **accurately determine the original text** as written by the authors. Many of the variations are simply spelling differences, word order, and similar changes.

Even if all the manuscripts from the New Testament had been lost, we could reconstruct the entire New Testament from quotes in the writings of early Christians. This provides further evidence of the original text of the New Testament.

The original text of the Old Testament has also been clearly established by similar means.

CSI Rule #7 – **Not have all** the evidence, but **enough** to make judgment

Full of Changes?

According to Sir Frederic Kenyon, one of the foremost experts on ancient manuscripts...

“The interval between the dates of original composition (of the New Testament) and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established.”

quoted in *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, © 1999, p. 35

Full of Contradictions?

- What is a contradiction?
- Statements can differ without contradicting
- Example: Angels at the tomb of Jesus
 - Matthew & Mark mention one angel
 - Luke & John mention two angels

What constitutes a contradiction? Has to be something that is **impossible**. For example, for the Bible to say that Jesus was crucified and died in Jerusalem and then in another place say that He died a natural death in Bethlehem would be a contradiction.

Two statements may differ from one another without being a contradiction. For example: Elton may tell Randy that he saw me talking with Cere. Then he may tell Judy that he saw me talking with Cere and Ann. That is not a contradiction. Detail of Ann could be left out because not important to the conversation with Randy. It is **dangerous to argue from silence!**

In most cases, people claim the Bible is full of contradictions without giving examples of the alleged contradictions. When they do list some “contradictions,” they are **typically areas of difference** rather than actual contradictions. For example, they may point out differences in the accounts of the resurrection of Jesus. Matthew and Mark mention one angel at the tomb while Luke and John mention two angels. Matthew and Mark say that one angel spoke, but they do not say that there was only one angel at the tomb. This is not a valid contradiction.

If two witness in a court of law say **exactly the same thing**, their testimony becomes suspect. It appears that they have conspired ahead to say the same thing to cover up something. However, when two witnesses appear to contradict, then additional information demonstrates that their testimony is complimentary rather than contradictory, it becomes very strong evidence to the events in question.

Alleged Contradiction

Some apparent contradictions are due difficulties encountered in translation of the Bible. A classical allegation of contradiction is Acts 9:7 and 22:9 in the KJV when Saul (Paul) was approaching Damascus and Jesus appeared to him.

And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. — Acts 9:7 (KJV)

And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. — Acts 22:9 (KJV)

The first says that those with Paul heard a voice without seeing the speaker. The second passage says they did not hear the voice of the one speaking. Looks like a contradiction! However, a knowledge of Greek solves the problem. The construction of the verb “to hear” in the first account indicates that certain sounds are reaching the ear without indication of whether or not the person understands what he hears. The second construction of the verb describes a hearing with understanding. So they heard a sound, but did not understand what being said. Rather than a contradiction, the passages clarify our

understanding of what happened. The Amplified Bible expands the passage to include the additional information from the Greek verb.

Now the men who were with me saw the light, but they did not hear [the sound of the uttered words of] the voice of the One Who was speaking to me — so that they could understand it. — Acts 22.9 (Amplified Bible)

When you find what seems to be a contradiction, research to see if a valid explanation is available.

CSI Rule #5 – Collect more information.

Full of Errors?

- Errors in Geography?
- Errors in History?
- Errors in Archaeology?
- Errors in Prophecy?
- Errors in Science

People often claim that the Bible is “full of errors,” but they seldom specify what errors there are. The Bible does claim to be a book of history and God’s word to man. Therefore, it is readily evaluated in the areas where it speaks about history and where it contains predictive prophecy. While the Bible does not claim to be a book of geography, archeology, or science, it does contain some information related to each of those disciplines.

CSI Rule # 3 – evaluate all evidence in context

Geographical Accuracy

- Luke is precise
“In all, Luke names thirty-two countries, fifty-four cities and nine islands without an error.”
- “Thus, thanks to the many archaeological finds, most of the ancient cities mentioned in the Book of Acts have been identified. The journeys of Paul can now be accurately traced as a result of these finds.”

Both quotes from *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, by Josh McDowell, 1999, pg 64

The 67th “Book” of the Bible

- Book of maps
- Detailed maps in many Bibles showing actual places mentioned.
- Vacationing in the Holy Land
- Compare *Book of Mormon*. No maps in any BOM showing actual places mentioned.

You can vacation in the Holy Land because the countries, cities, rivers, mountains, and lakes described in the Bible really existed. We tend to take the Bible's geographical accuracy for granted.

Many Bibles include maps of places related to Bible events. Compare the *Book of Mormon* that does not contain maps of *Book of Mormon* times because nothing really fits the existing geography.

Historical Accuracy

Many people, places and events once thought mythical have been confirmed, including...

- Hittites (and their vast empire)
- King Sargon of Assyria
- Belshazzar, ruler of Babylon
- Sodom and Gomorrah

In 19th Century, all these were considered errors in the Bible! Have since found evidence consistent with the Bible for all of them.

Hittites, Sargon, and Belshazzar discussed in *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, p. 93

Critics once believed the Bible wrong about the Hittites since they were totally unknown to historians. Now we know of their existence from a Hittite library in Turkey.

Sodom and Gomorrah mentioned in some of the 15,000 tablets uncovered recently at Tell Mardikh, now known to be the site of Ebla. (*Answers to Tough Questions*, p. 34)

Gives us confidence that biblical **difficulties not yet explained** do have an explanation. We **need not assume that there is a mistake** in the Bible.

(from *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, p. 47)

Luke's Historical Accuracy:

- Lysanias, Tetrarch of Abilene, ruled in A.D. 27
 - Historians used to claim Lysanias died in 36 B.C. and that Luke was wrong. Later discovered that a second Lysanias ruled precisely when Luke said. (NEDV, 64)
- Accurately used unusual titles for authorities
 - Praetors, Politarchs, Proconsuls
- Per A.N. Sherwin-White, Roman Historian
For Acts the confirmation of historicity is overwhelming... Any attempt to reject its basic historicity must now appear absurd. Roman historians have long taken it for granted. (NEDV, 64)

NEDV = *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, by Josh McDowell, 1999.

Archaeological Accuracy:

As a matter of fact, however, it may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted [argued against] a Biblical reference. Scores of archaeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or in exact detail historical statements in the Bible. And, by the same token, proper evaluation of Biblical descriptions has often led to amazing discoveries. (Dr. Nelson Glueck)

From: *Many Infallible Proofs*, by Henry M. Morris, Ph.D., 1974, pg 49.

Dr. Nelson Glueck is widely recognized as the dean of Palestinian archaeologists, president of the Hebrew Union College and the Jewish Institute of Religion. *MIF*, pg 47

Four Anchors Abandoned

... we were being driven across the Sea of Adria, ... they measured again and found it was only 90 feet deep. At this rate they were afraid we would soon be driven against the rocks along the shore, so they threw out four anchors from the back of the ship When morning dawned, ... wondered if they could get to shore by running the ship aground. So they cut off the anchors and left them in the sea. — Ac 27:27-41

Four Anchors Found

The precision of these numbers enabled researchers to recover three of these anchors, with the fourth recovered in the form of modern diving weights, into which the anchor had been melted. Archaeological findings like these affirm the integrity of the Bible.

(notes for Acts 27:27-32 on page 2016 of *Discover God Study Bible*, NLT, 2007)

Archaeological Accuracy:

Coins of the United States



The American Numismatic Society
Brasher's Doubloon
(1787)



New York State Cent
(1787)



Indian Head Cent
(1882)



Booker T. Washington
Commemorative Half Dollar (1946)

Coins of Other Countries



Macedonian Tetradrachm
(336 to 323 B.C.)



Roman Coin
(A.D. 54 to 68)



Judean Shekel
(A.D. 66 to 70)



The American Numismatic Society
Persian Dinar
(A.D. 303 to 309)

From *The World Book Encyclopedia* (1977 edition, volume 4, pg 614) showing a Jewish shekel along with other rare coins from the United States and other countries. The shekel is mentioned throughout the Old Testament. Macedonia, Rome, and Persia are also mentioned in the Bible. Many other biblical coins have also been found.

Comparison: None of the coins mentioned in the *Book of Mormon* have ever been found. There is no secular evidence of their existence.

Score One for the Bible

***Fresh clues support the story of Joshua at the walls of Jericho* by Michael D. Lemonick**

... Except for the disputed dating, Kenyon's discoveries at Jericho were largely consistent with the Bible story. For one thing, she found that the city's walls had fallen in a way suggestive of sudden collapse. Many scholars think the destruction was caused by an earthquake, which could also account for a temporary damming of the Jordan River described in the Bible. Moreover, Kenyon found bushels of grain on the site. That is consistent with the Bible's assertions that Jericho was conquered quickly. ... Says Wood: "It looks to me as though the biblical stories are correct."

(Time, March 5, 1990, p. 59)

Even *Time* magazine includes records of archaeological support for the Bible.

Later research by archaeologist Bryant Wood determined a different date than British archaeologist Kathleen Kenyon. Wood's date coincides with the Bible record.

A thick layer of soot at the site, which according to radioactive carbon-14 dating was laid down about 1400 B.C., supports the biblical idea that the city was burned, not simply conquered. Finally, Egyptian amulets found in Jericho graves can be dated to around 1400 B.C. as well. Says Wood: "It looks to me as though the biblical stories are correct." Other experts find little fault with Wood's archaeology, but they are more skeptical about his linking of the evidence with biblical events. [additional quote from the article in *Time*, by Michael D. Lemonick, March 5, 1990, p. 59]

The search for proof of the Bible in stones

by David Briggs, Associated Press.

From the Northern Hills of Israel to the desert of Yemen, a string of recent archaeological discoveries have provided the first hard evidence for a number of Biblical figures and events, many of which had been widely dismissed as myths and moral tales.

Individually, the discoveries are important. Together, they are shaking the field of biblical archaeology and buttressing words believers have taken on faith.

(The Brazosport Facts, Sunday, December 15, 1996, p 12D)

Archaeology is a friend to Bible-believing Christians.

Prophetic Accuracy

Jesus fulfilled Prophecies

- At least 61 major prophecies
- when He would come

Scientific Accuracy

- Bible is not a science book
- Often uses poetry, allegory, parables, and figurative literary devices
Your teeth are like a flock of sheep which have come up from the washing.... (Song of Solomon 6:6)
- Apply CSI rule 3 – evidence in context
- When it speaks of science, the Bible is accurate

Good thing the Bible is not a science book! We would have to revise it every few years like our high school and college textbooks.

No one would claim that the Bible teaches that someone had wooly teeth... Weathermen talk about the sun rising at a certain time. But no one claims they teach that the sun revolves around the earth.

Shape and Location of Earth

- Earth is round
 - It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in. Isaiah 40:22 (NKJV)
 - When He prepared the heavens, I was there, When He drew a circle on the face of the deep,.... Proverbs 8:27 (NKJV)
- Earth is suspended in space
 - He stretches out the north over empty space; He hangs the earth on nothing. Job 26:7 (NKJV)

Earth is round!

It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.

Isaiah 40:22 (NKJV)

When He prepared the heavens, I was there, When He drew a circle on the face of the deep,....

Proverbs 8:27 (NKJV)

Earth is suspended in space

He stretches out the north over empty space; He hangs the earth on nothing.

Job 26:7 (NKJV)



Imagine the view of earth from space – a pretty nice circle!

Job was possibly written over 3500 years ago. Of course, every book in the OT was written at least 2400 years ago.

Stars and Universe

- Stars cannot be numbered
 - As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, nor the sand of the sea measured, so will I multiply the descendants of David My servant and the Levites who minister to Me.” Jeremiah 33:22 (NKJV)
- Universe cannot be measured
 - Thus says the LORD: “If heaven above can be measured, And the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel For all that they have done, says the LORD. Jeremiah 31:37 (NKJV)



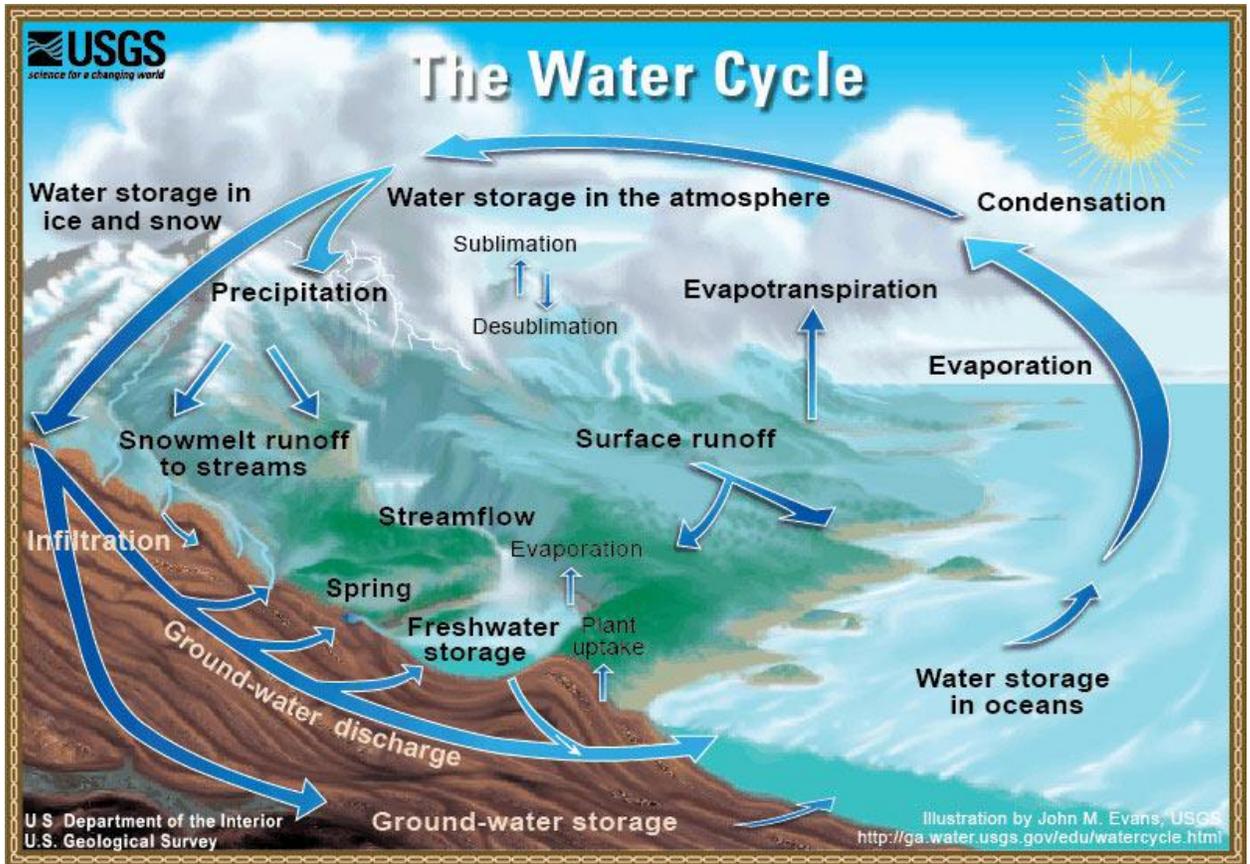
According to NASA...

Deep in the heart of Andromeda... Short exposure on bright central region of M31 reveals faint dust lanes threading an aggregation [group] of innumerable stars, one seemingly indistinguishable from the other. (Official U.S. Naval Observatory photograph)

[<http://history.nasa.gov/EP-177/ch4-7.html> (January, 2010)]

The Water Cycle

- Water evaporates and returns as rain
- He who builds His layers in the sky, And has founded His strata in the earth; Who calls for the waters of the sea, And pours them out on the face of the earth—The LORD is His name. Amos 9:6
- All the rivers run into the sea, Yet the sea is not full; To the place from which the rivers come, There they return again. Ecclesiastes 1:7



From US Geological Survey <http://ga.water.usgs.gov/edu/watercycle.html>

Path for the Thunderbolt

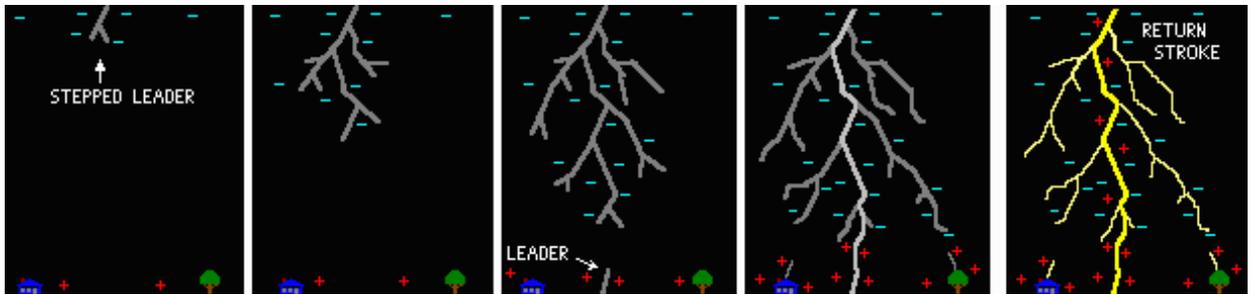
- When He made a law for the rain, And a path for the thunderbolt, Job 28:26

Step Leader

A lightning bolt happens in a series of stages. First, a faint *step leader* emerges from the base of the cloud. It moves toward the ground in steps of 50 meters or so, pausing very briefly between steps. Often it branches as it goes down, which is why so many lightning bolts "fork". When the step leader nears the ground, it attracts "streamers" of positive charge from the ground. When it finally connects with one of these streamers, a brilliant *return stroke* occurs as the charge drains out of the ionized channel left by the step leader. The charge nearest the ground goes first, causing the return stroke to propagate upward. Often this is followed by another relatively faint cloud-to-ground *dart leader*, which is rapidly followed by another return stroke. This process can take place up to 40 times, which is why many lightning bolts are seen to flicker.

(*Lightning!* By Mark McEuen, www.owl.net.rice.edu/~geol108/mceuen/lightning/)

He even provided a crude sequence drawing of what the processed looks like. (next page)



Doesn't Evolution Disprove?

- Theory of Evolution contradicts the Bible
- However, Evolution is not a proven scientific fact like we've been told

Evolution and the Bible are not compatible. People have tried to reconcile them, but that is not necessary or desirable.

Evolution Violates Laws of Science

- 1st Law of Thermodynamics
 - Law of Energy Conservation
 - Energy can be converted from one form into another, but not created or destroyed
- 2nd Law of Thermodynamics
 - Law of Energy Decay
 - Every system left to its own devices tends to move from order to disorder
- Law of Biogenesis
 - Life only comes from pre-existing life
 - No spontaneous generation

Evolutionary Fantasies

Not only has paleontology failed to come up with the fossil “missing links” which Darwin anticipated, but hypothetical reconstructions of major evolutionary developments—such as that linking birds to reptiles—are beginning to look more like fantasies than serious conjectures.

(*Evolution: A Theory in Crisis* by Dr. Michael Denton, inside jacket cover)

Contaminated evidence! Remember CSI Rule #2!

No Evolution of DNA!

The genetic code ... is now known to be a unique and invariant system of rules which is identical in every cell on earth. ... the genetic code is not led up to gradually through a sequence of transitional forms.

... The capacity of DNA to store information vastly exceeds that of any other known system....

(*Evolution: A Theory in Crisis* by Dr. Michael Denton, pp. 108-109, 334)

"...[DNA] is so efficient that all the information needed to specify an organism as complex as man weighs less than a few thousand millionths of a gram." Denton, p. 334)

Information: Evidence of intelligence. SETI project (search for intelligent life in the universe).

Intelligent Design

- Many scientist are being compelled by the evidence to switch from the theory of Evolution to the theory of Intelligent Design.
- Example: Complexity of single life cell
- Acceptance is growing rapidly
- Not Christian or biblical, but does not exclude the possibility of creation as described in the Bible.

"By irreducibly complex I mean a single system composed of several well-matched, interacting parts that contribute to the basic function, wherein the removal of any one of the parts causes the system to effectively cease functioning. An irreducibly complex system cannot be produced directly (that is, by continuously improving the initial function, which continues to work by the same mechanism) by slight, successive modifications of a precursor system, because any precursor to an irreducibly complex system that is missing a part is by definition nonfunctional." Michael Behe, Associate Professor of Biochemistry at Lehigh University, 1996

Darwin said, "if it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down." (*Origin of Species*, 6th ed. (1988), p. 154)

Evolution → Intelligent Design → Christianity (Move them toward Christianity)

Outside the Realm of Science

- Evolution and Creation theories are both outside the realm of science in its real sense.
- No one there to observe it happening (other than God).
- Cannot reproduce it.
- Therefore, must theorize based on observable evidence.
- Both require an element of faith

No Witnesses!

By its very nature, evolution cannot be substantiated in the way that is usual in science by experiment and direct observation. Neither Darwin nor any subsequent biologist has ever witnessed the evolution of one new species as it actually occurs.

(*Evolution: A Theory in Crisis* by Dr. Michael Denton, p. 55)

Scientific Method?

The concept of the continuity of nature [evolution] has existed in the mind of man, *never* in the facts of nature. In a very real sense, therefore, advocacy of the doctrine of continuity has always necessitated a retreat from pure empiricism [experimentation], and contrary to what is widely assumed by evolutionary biologists today, it has always been the anti-evolutionists, not the evolutionists, in the scientific community who have stuck rigidly to the facts and adhered to a more strictly empirical approach.

(*Evolution: A Theory in Crisis* by Dr. Michael Denton, emphasis in original, pp. 353-354)

Empirical: Pertaining to, or founded upon, experiment or experience; depending upon the observation of phenomena; versed in experiments

Per Michael Denton (quoting T.S. Kuhn): "...a scientific theory is declared invalid only if an alternative candidate is available to take its place." ... The lack of any scientifically acceptable competitor leaves evolutionary biology in a state of crisis.... [*Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*, p. 356-7]

In his book, Dr. Michael Denton demonstrates that evolution is impossible using just about every approach possible. Dr. Denton is still an evolutionist because he does not have what he considers an acceptable replacement for evolution. That is the "crisis" in his book.

Evolution's Influence

The influence of evolutionary theory on fields far removed from biology is one of the most spectacular examples in history of how a highly speculative idea for which there is no really hard scientific evidence can come to fashion the thinking of a whole society and dominate the outlook of an age.

(*Evolution: A Theory in Crisis* by Dr. Michael Denton, p. 358)

This is an incredible acknowledgment from an evolutionist!

The Evolutionary Myth

Ultimately the Darwinian theory of evolution is no more nor less than the great cosmogenic myth of the twentieth century.

The truth is that despite the prestige of evolutionary theory and the tremendous intellectual effort directed towards reducing living systems to the confines of Darwinian thought, nature refuses to be imprisoned. In the final analysis we still know very little about how new forms of life arise. The "mystery of mysteries" – the origin of new beings on earth – is still as enigmatic as when Darwin set sail on the *Beagle*.

[*Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*, Michael Denton, pp. 358-9]

We Can Trust the Bible!

"There is a good and sufficient answer in Scripture itself to refute every charge that has ever been leveled against it. But this is only to be expected from the kind of book the Bible asserts itself to be, the inscripturation of the infallible, inerrant Word of the Living God."

Dr. Gleason Archer, from *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*

Dr. Archer taught for over thirty years at the graduate seminary level in the field of biblical criticism. He had learned over 30 languages, most of them languages of Old Testament times in the Middle Eastern world. (*The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, p. 45)

Conclusion

Most alleged problems disappear upon closer examination or as more information is discovered. Some issues may remain unresolved. Even though the majority of evidence strongly supports the Bible's claims, there will always be room for faith.

This is true even in our legal system—there is always a point of faith where a judgment is made. That is why we have judges and juries—to evaluate the evidence and make the best decision. If the evidence was the last word, there would be no need for judges or juries. We would simply collect the evidence and assign the appropriate punishment based on the crime. But evidence, even in the legal world, is never 100% complete.

If a specific issue is troubling you, please research it in the following books or in other reputable sources. If you cannot resolve an issue continue to keep an open mind as you continue to look for more information (CSI Rules # 1, 5, & 6). But don't assume there are not adequate answers if you are not willing to spend the time necessary to properly research the evidence.

Evidence Resources

There are many scholars who have extensively investigated the Bible evidence. Some started out believing that the Bible could not be trusted (Josh McDowell, Lee Strobel), but changed their minds after reviewing the evidence. Following are some resources that I have found useful. There are also many other good ones available.

McDowell, Josh, *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999 (ISBN: 0-7852-4219-8)

Morris, Henry M. Ph.D., *Many Infallible Proofs*, El Cajon, CA: Master Books, 1974 (ISBN: 0-89051-005-9)

McDowell, Josh and Don Stewart, *Answers to Tough Questions*, Wheaton, IL: Living Books, 1980 (ISBN: 0-8423-0021-X)

Strobel, Lee, *The Case for Faith*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000 (ISBN: 0-310-23469-7)

Strobel, Lee, *The Case for Christ*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998 (ISBN: 0-310-222655-4)

Geisler, Norman L., and Ronald M. Brooks, *When Skeptics Ask*, Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1990 (ISBN: 0-89693-766-6)

Bruce, F.F., *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* Rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977 (ISBN: 978-0-8028-2219-2)

Metzger, Bruce M., *The Canon of the New Testament, Its Origin, Development, and Significance*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1987 (ISBN: 0-19-826954-4)

Denton, Michael, *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*, Bethesda, MD: Adler & Adler, 1985 (ISBN: 0-917561-05-8)

Illustra Media, *Unlocking the Mystery of Life*, DVD, 2002

Coldwater Media, LLC, *Icons of Evolution*, DVD, 2002

Morris, Henry & Gary Parker, *What is Creation Science?*, El Cajon, CA, Master Books, 1982 (ISBN: 0-89051-081-4)