

Introducing the Bible

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Basic Questions

1. What is the Bible?
2. How was it written?
3. How is it organized?
4. How is it translated?
5. How is it interpreted?

Why it's special

1. The Bible is a collection of sacred texts.
2. It is written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.
3. It is divided into the Old Testament and the New Testament.
4. It contains the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.
5. It is the foundation of Christianity.

Brief Outline

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Finally!

Return of
The Bible is special!

Basic Questions

By asking six questions, let's find out a little about this remarkable book.

If you found a book that told you:

- where you came from;
- why you are here;
- what the future holds;
- how to find eternal life, satisfaction and security;

Would you read it?

There is such a book!
Most people "swirl, stir"
when told it's the Bible.
Not a bad idea to be sceptical.

1 - What is the Bible?

- a unique and special compilation;
- contains sixty-six books;
- handed down over thousands of years;
- transcribed by hand before printing;
- translated into at least 450 languages.

1 - What is the Bible?

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness..."

2 Timothy 3 v 16 NKJ

2 - Who wrote the Bible?

- Some books bear the authors' names: Isaiah, Malachi, Matthew.
- Others identify themselves in the text: Luke (Acts) John (Revelation).
- Other authors include Moses, David and Paul.
- These are men who were inspired to write by the divine author - God.
- The Bible is the Word of God!

2 - Who wrote the Bible?

"...holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

2 Peter 1 v 21 NKJ

3 - When was the Bible written?

- Some books (Genesis, Job) - before 500 BC.
- Other OT books (500 - 400 BC).
- NT books written in Roman era - around the time of Christ.

3 - When was the Bible written?

"God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son..."

Hebrews 1 v 1-2 NKJ

4 - Where was it written?

- OT written in Middle East by descendants of Abraham who settled in Canaan but was from Mesopotamia (Iraq).
- NT written in Canaan and other provinces of the Roman Empire.
- Paul wrote letters from prison in Rome and John from exile in Patmos.

4 - Where was it written?

"Their sound has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the end of the world."

Romans 10 v 18 NKJ

5 - How was it preserved?

- Miraculously many early manuscripts have been preserved.
- Manuscripts from different areas compare well with no significant variation.
- God is not only the author, but the preserver of His great book.

5 - How was it preserved?

"...I am watching to see that my word is fulfilled"

Jeremiah 1 v 12 NKJ

6 - Why does the Bible exist?

- to tell us about God;
- to tell us about ourselves;
- to tell us of His purpose;
- to tell us how we can be part of His plan for planet earth.

6 - Why does the Bible exist?

"... these [gospel records] are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that you may have life in His name."

John 20 v 31 NKJ

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Brief Outline

Old Testament

Genesis

- creation
- the flood
- Abraham and his descendants
- Abraham in Egypt
- Exodus
- Israel leaves Egypt for the promised land

Old Testament

- Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles
- Israel settles in the land, ruled by judges
- King kings

Psalms

- songs of praise looking forward to Jesus
- David, David, Asaph and Zechariah
- forecast specific events - some yet to be fulfilled

New Testament

- Israel under Roman occupation
- Jesus born to Mary
- Jesus preaches the gospel
- Good news for Jews and Gentiles about salvation from sin and death

New Testament

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John

- Christ's birth, life, ministry, miracles, death, resurrection and ascension to heaven

Acts

- Experiences of Christ's followers after His ascension to heaven and formation of Mediterranean ecclesiae (churches)

New Testament

Romans, Corinthians, Galatians

- letters from Paul to followers of Christ
- Paul, Peter, James, John and Jude
- letters to the early churches

Revelation

- final message of Jesus given in a vision to John
- the final prophecy of world events that will lead up to His return to earth



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1 - The Bible is true

History and archeology prove the Bible.
Isaiah refers to a King Sargon - until relatively recently an unknown ruler.
In 1842 archeologists discovered his palace near Nineveh.

“In the year that Tartan came to Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him, and he fought against Ashdod and took it...”

Isaiah 20 v 1 NKJ



In 1961 in Caesarea archeologists discovered a plaque bearing the names of Pontius Pilate and the Emperor Tiberias.

Both men are mentioned in Luke's gospel record.

“Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.”

Luke 3 v 1 NKJ

STIBERIEVM
TIVSPILATVS
ECTVSIVD...E

TIBERIEVM
PILATVS
ECTVSIVD...E

PONTIVSPILATVS
PRAEFECTVSIVD...E

2 - The Bible is reliable

- Meticulously copied over thousands of years.
- Content remains substantially unchanged.
- Manuscripts from different eras and areas all-but identical.
- Oldest known manuscripts - Dead Sea Scrolls 150BC-70AD (discovered 1947).





3 - The Bible is ancient

- Magna Carta - 800 years old.
- Shakespeare - 400 years ago.
- The record is still lively, readable and credible.
- See these quotes from circa 1700BC and AD 60.

“Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, Thus says your son Joseph, ‘God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not tarry. You shall live I the land of Goshen ...’”

Genesis 45 v 9-10 NKJ

“Paul stood in the midst of them and said, ‘Men you should have listened to me, and not sailed from Crete and incurred this disaster and loss ... There stood by me this night an angel of God to whom I belong and whom I serve, saying, Do not be afraid Paul; you must be brought before Caesar ...’”

Acts 27 v 21-24

4 - The Bible is beautiful

The language of early translations as well as the original Hebrew and Greek are beautiful literature.

“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.”

Psalm 23 v 1-4 NKJ

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

John 3 v 16 NKJ

5 - The Bible is down to earth

- It neither glamourises nor sanitises events.
- It tells its stories with common sense - "warts and all".
- It is credible, understandable and convincing.
- It reveals true human nature.

“What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying? And if he should find it, assuredly, I say to you, he rejoices more over that sheep than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray.

Matthew 18 v 12-13 NKJ

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.”

Matthew 13 v 45-46 NKJ

Also look at Matthew 20 v 1-25
All stories taken from real life

6 - The Bible is coherent

- 66 books written by 30 authors speak with a single voice.
- No fundamental contradictions or disparities.
- Apparent contradictions can always be reconciled by studying the biblical records.
- Each book can be regarded as a witness statement, written from a slightly different perspective.

7 - The Old and New Testaments contain consistent language, themes and ideas

God is God in Old and New Testaments.

“For I am the LORD, I do not change ...”

Malachi 3 v 6 NKJ

“... for in Him (God) we live and move and have our being...”

Acts 17 v 28 NKJ

7 - The Old and New Testaments contain consistent language, themes and ideas.

God is a God of goodness and severity.

“And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children to the third and the fourth generation.”

Exodus 34 v 6-7 NKJ

“Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.”

Romans 11 v 22 NKJ

7 - The Old and New Testaments contain consistent language, themes and ideas.

God's standards don't change.

“You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am the LORD.”

Leviticus 19 v 18 NKJ

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

Mark 12 v 31 NKJ

7 - The Old and New Testaments contain consistent language, themes and ideas.

God's purpose doesn't change.

“He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.”

2 Samuel 7 v 13 NKJ

“He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”

Luke 1 v 32-33 NKJ

8 - The Bible is accurate in detail.

Within the Roman Empire officials had different titles on a regional basis:

- In Phillipi there were magistrates and officers.

“... they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities. And they brought them to the magistrates ...”

Acts 16 v 19-20 NKJ

“And when it was day, the magistrates sent the officers, saying, “Let those men go.”

v 35 NKJ

8 - The Bible is accurate in detail.

- In Thessalonica there were rulers.

“... they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city ...”

Acts 17 v 6 NKJ

- In Paphos and Corinth there were proconsuls.

“Now when they had gone through the island to Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar-Jesus, who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man.”

Acts 13 v 6-7 NKJ

“When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him to the judgment seat.”

Acts 18 v 12 NKJ



9 - Fulfilled prophecies

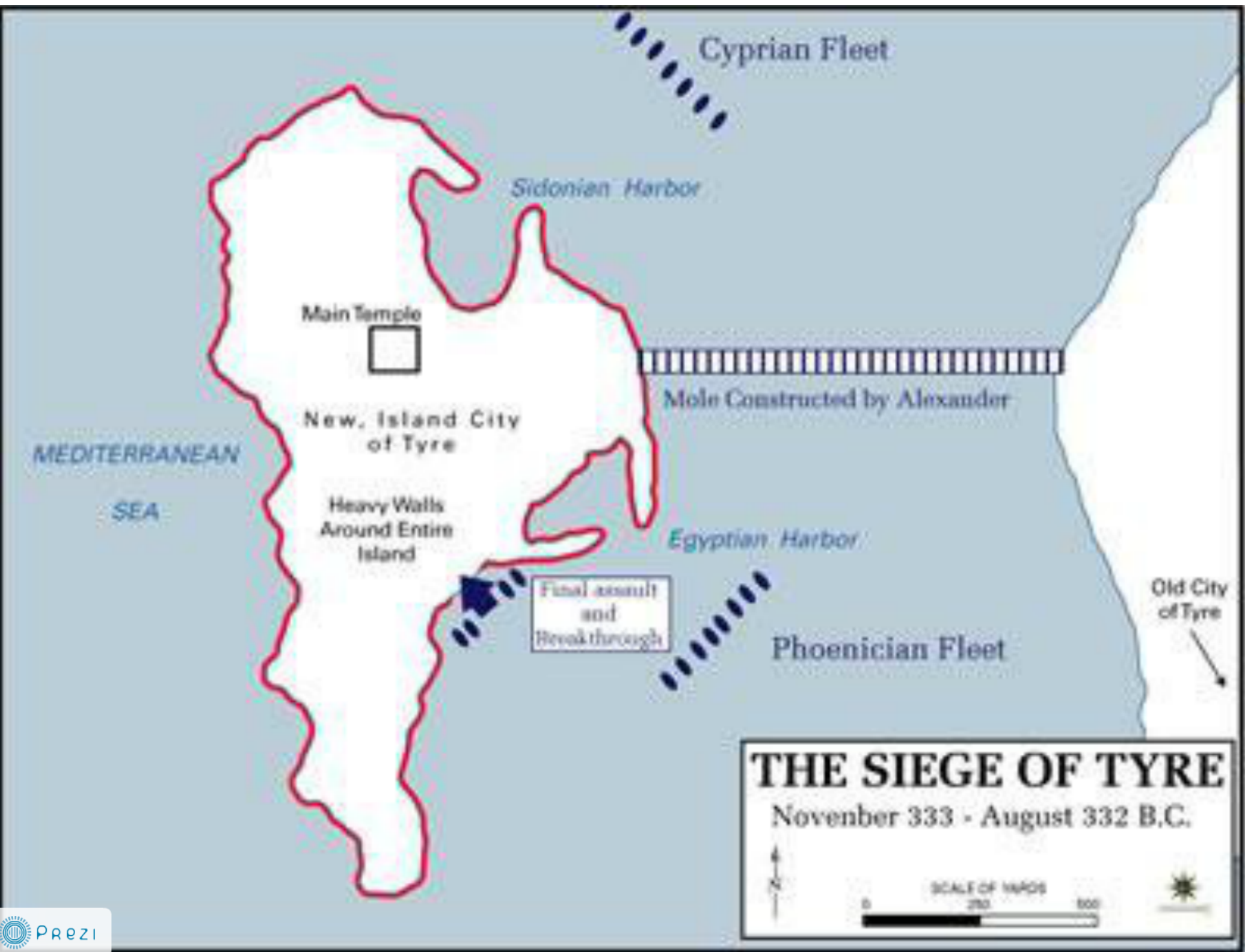
- Bible prophecies come true with unerring accuracy.
- Some have yet to be fulfilled.

Tyre - a Phoenician port (Sur in today's Lebanon)

- c580 BC Nebuchadnezzar besieged it for 13 years.
- by the time he flattened the city, the residents had built a refuge on a nearby island.
- This destruction of Tyre was foretold.

“Behold, I will bring against Tyre from the north Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, king of kings, with horses, with chariots, and with horsemen, and an army with many people. He will slay with the sword your daughter villages in the fields; he will heap up a siege mound against you, build a wall against you, and raise a defense against you. He will direct his battering rams against your walls, and with his axes he will break down your towers.”

Ezekiel 26 v 7-9 NKJ



Cyprian Fleet

Sidonian Harbor

Main Temple



New, Island City of Tyre

Mole Constructed by Alexander

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Heavy Walls Around Entire Island

Egyptian Harbor

Final assault and Breakthrough

Old City of Tyre

Phoenician Fleet

THE SIEGE OF TYRE

November 333 - August 332 B.C.



SCALE OF YARDS



9 - Fulfilled prophecies

Over 200 years later, Alexander the Great used the rubble of the old city to build a causeway and take the island fortress.

“They will plunder your riches and pillage your merchandise; they will break down your walls and destroy your pleasant houses; they will lay your stones, your timber, and your soil in the midst of the water. I will put an end to the sound of your songs, and the sound of your harps shall be heard no more. I will make you like the top of a rock; you shall be a place for spreading nets, and you shall never be rebuilt, for I the LORD have spoken,’ says the Lord GOD.”

Ezekiel 26 v 12-14 NKJ

9 - Fulfilled prophecies

Jesus to be born in Bethlehem.

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.”

Micah 5 v 2 NKJ

“But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not the least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you shall come a Ruler who will shepherd My people Israel.”

Matthew 2 v 6 NKJ

9 - Fulfilled prophecies

Israel's King to arrive in Jerusalem on a donkey.

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

Zechariah 9 v 9 NKJ



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Israel's King to arrive in Jerusalem on a donkey.

“Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, “Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to Me. And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord has need of them,’ and immediately he will send them. All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: ‘Tell the daughter of Zion, Behold, your King is coming to you, lowly, and sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.’”

Matthew 21 v 1-45 NKJ

9 - Fulfilled prophecies

- Other prophecies, including the Jews return to live in the land of Israel have been fulfilled.
- We can trust the Bible.
- Prophecies yet to be fulfilled will happen.
- Jesus will return to our planet earth to set up God's kingdom.



9 - Prophecies yet to come

“And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.”

Luke 21 v 25-28 NKJ

10 - The Bible is divine

- How can a book have all these qualities?
- It's no ordinary human book.
- For centuries everyone (including scientists) accepted this.
- Newton and Einstein believed in God.
- Many scientists still have a religious faith.
- Generally speaking: science is supreme; faith old-fashioned.
- Believers accept: creation, virgin birth of Jesus, his resurrection and ability to save mankind from sin and death.
- Christianity demands: belief, trust, faith.
- Faith in the Bible - a marvelous, miraculous, divine book.

10 - The Bible is divine

The poet John Dryden (1631-1700)

Whence, but from heaven, could men unskilled in arts,
In several ages born, in several parts,
Weave such agreeing truths? Or how, or why,
Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie?
Then for the style; majestic and divine,
It speaks no less than God in every line:
Commanding words; whose force is still the same
As the first fiat that produced our frame

11 - The Bible is challenging

- It explains human nature.
- Sin is the reason for our mortality.
- God hates sin and offers an escape plan.
- His son Jesus committed no sins and didn't deserve to die.
- He died as a sacrifice for our sins.
- God raised him from death to everlasting life.
- Jesus is coming back to establish God's kingdom.
- The challenge: Do we want a part in this future?

12 - The Bible is life changing

- Books can move you to tears.
- They can delight you over and over again.
- They can inspire you to do great things.
- To emulate a character we admire.
- In the Bible there are many characters - especially Jesus - on whom we could usefully model our lives.
- The Bible is a guide for life - everlasting life in God's kingdom here on earth.
- It is the key to living forever.

Finally!

- We encourage you to read the Bible.
- It will help you to understand the meaning of life and your part in God's plan for the world.
- Our beliefs - the Truth - are drawn only from this wonderful book.
- We will be only too pleased to help you to understand it.
- We hope and pray that God will bless your study.

"For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe."

1 Thessalonians 2 v 13 NKJ

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