



SO... HOW DO WE KNOW THE BIBLE IS REALLY GOD'S WORD, ANYWAY?

Examining the Evidence



**HARVEST
BIBLE
CHAPEL**

PITTSBURGH NORTH

DISCIPLESHIP SERIES

Harvest Bible Chapel

Discipleship Series

According to recent surveys, Bible readership is on a steady decline. It is a disturbing trend, especially among younger respondents. As people distance themselves from the Bible we see the devastating effects in our culture. Wickedness is running rampant: traditional marriage is under assault, people are experiencing gender identity crisis, violence is escalating at an alarming rate, abortion is being celebrated as a virtue, and on and on...

There is a direct relationship between how our culture views the Bible and the societal decay that we're experiencing. If people really believed that the Bible was God's direct message to them... if they really believed that the Bible was God's way of revealing Himself, exposing our sinful human nature, and what God's requirements of humans are... then there would be massive revival in our land. This is the heart of the issue: for whatever the reasons may be, many people (self-proclaimed Christians included) simply do not believe the Bible is God's way of communicating to us. They have a hard time with the fact of the Bible being God's book. Our sincere hope is that they might be convinced, however, if presented with the facts.

The evidence for the Bible being the very Word of God is both overwhelming and undeniable. The purpose of this course is present a convincing body of evidence so that Christians will know why they believe what they believe concerning the Bible. After all, Christians are called upon to give a reasonable explanation for the hope that lies within them (1 Peter 3:15). For the skeptics, this course will hopefully provide enough truth to break through any doubt they may have.

Disclaimers

Some of the content of this course has been the result of study and data collection over a number of years from different places and the sources may not have been cited at the time. However, throughout the course, attempts were made to cite sources where possible.

The basic outline of the class and some of the information is based off of sections in Josh McDowell's book: "The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict".

Scripture quotations taken from the New American Standard Bible® (NASB),
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Discipleship Series



- 1). To honor the divine Author of scripture by having a higher and loftier view of His Word, trembling with holy reverence each time we open the Bible.
- 2). To obtain an increased confidence that the Bible really is what God said it is in 1 Thessalonians 2:13, 'the Word of God' which is sufficient for all matters of faith and conduct. We want to have an increased trust in the veracity and accuracy of the Scriptures.
- 3). To be better equipped to give, to those ask us, a reason for the hope that lies within us (1 Peter 3:15).
- 4). To meditate upon, memorize and believe what the Apostle Paul told his son in the faith, Timothy, regarding the Word of God:

"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

- 2 Timothy 3:16-17



A Unique Book!

The Bible was written over a 1,500 year period of time.

The Bible was written by 40 different human authors.

The Bible was written mainly in three different languages.

The Bible was written from different moods.

The Bible was written in various different places.

The Bible was written in different social and political times.

The Bible was written with different literary styles.

The Bible was written on different kinds of material.

Yet with all this variety, the Bible has ONE central message:

For His own glory, God has chosen to create and gather to Himself a group of people, who will live in His eternal kingdom, to praise, honor, and serve Him forever, and through whom He will display His wisdom, power, mercy, grace and glory.

The Bible tells us about God and His holiness. It tells us about our own sinful condition and how we got that way. It explains the vast gulf between God and mankind because of sin and how we can be restored to a right relationship with Him.



HOW does the Bible achieve **UNITY** despite so much **VARIETY**?



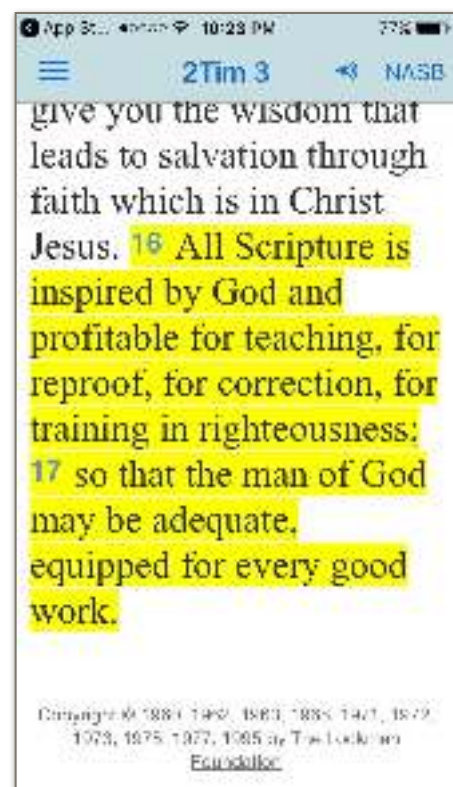
Consider the Bible's Divine Author (Who)

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture comes from God Himself.

**“Inspired” means
“God-breathed”**

God used the personalities, intellect, vocabulary, experiences and various writing styles of His chosen human authors to convey what He wanted to communicate.



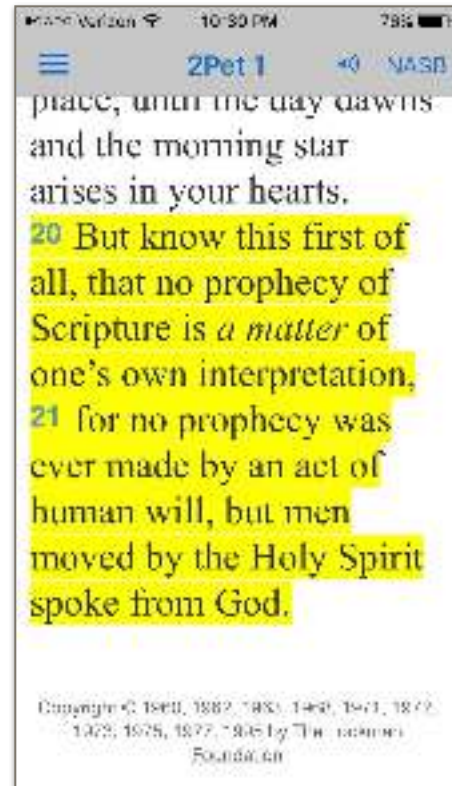
Plenary and Verbal

Two words are sometimes used to explain the extent of biblical inerrancy: **plenary** and **verbal**. “Plenary” comes from the Latin *plenus*, which means “full,” and refers to the fact that the whole of Scripture in every part is God-given. “Verbal” comes from the Latin *verbum*, which means “word,” and emphasizes that even the words of Scripture are God-given. Plenary and verbal inspiration means the Bible is God-given (and therefore without error) in every part (doctrine, history, geography, dates, names) and in every single word¹.

Consider the Means of Inspiration (How)

The making of the Bible was **NOT** left to merely human skills of communication:

The Holy Spirit himself carried the process to completion.



¹<https://answersingenesis.org/is-the-bible-true/why-should-we-believe-in-the-inerrancy-of-scripture/>

What Bible Scholars Say Regarding Inspiration

“To assure verbal precision God, in communicating his revelation, must be verbally precise, and inspiration must extend to the very words. This does not mean that God dictated every word. Rather his Spirit so pervaded the mind of the human writer that he chose out of his own vocabulary and experience precisely those words, thoughts and expressions that conveyed God’s message with precision. In this sense the words of the human authors of Scripture can be viewed as the word of God”.²

“The Bible has the power and authority to shape our lives because it comes from God Himself. We hold to the authority of the Scriptures because they are inspired (God-breathed). We should not allow personal experience, religious tradition or community consensus to stand above the Spirit-inspired Word of God”.³

Process from Divine Author to Modern Readers

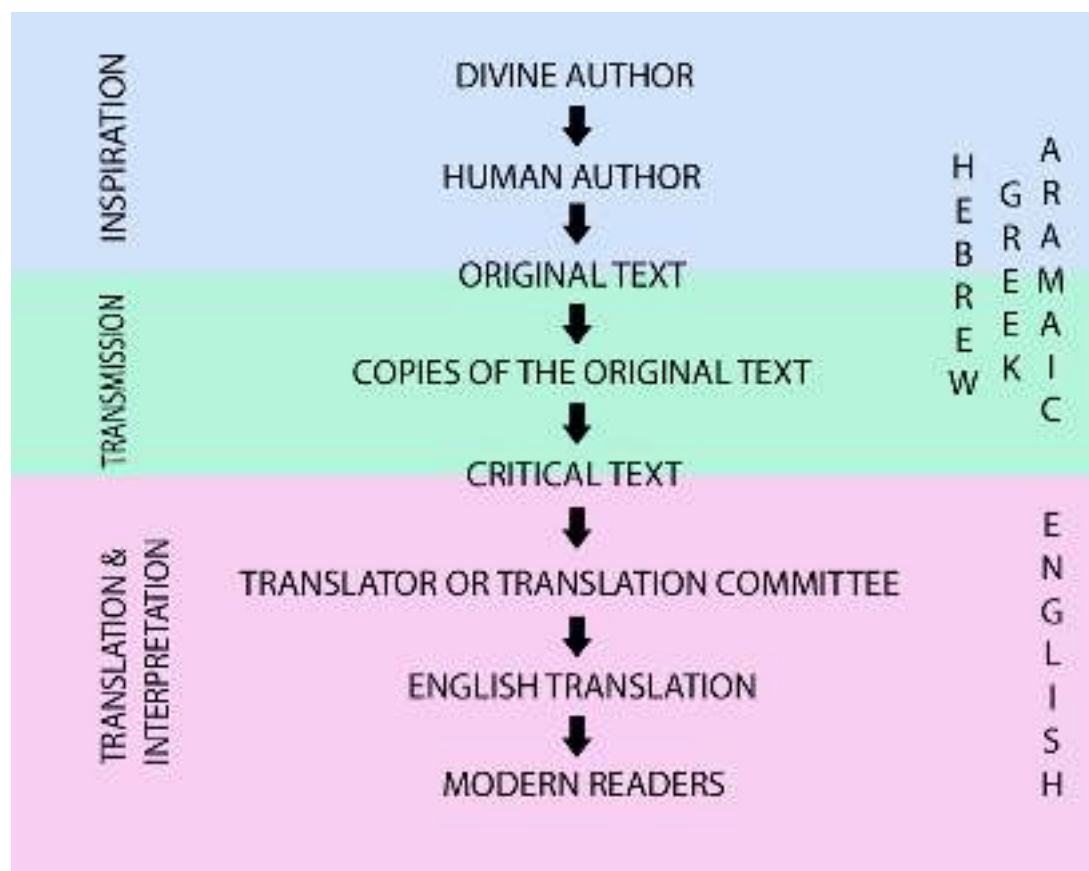


Chart adapted from J. Scott Duvall, J. Daniel Hays, *Grasping God’s Word*, p. 24

² LaSor, Hubbard, and Bush, *Old Testament Survey*, p. 15

³ John Piper, *Reading the Bible Supernaturally: Seeing and Savoring the Glory of God in Scripture*, Desiring God Foundation, (Wheaton: Crossway, 2017), 33.

Infallibility

To confess that the Bible is **infallible** is to confess that the Scriptures are incapable of teaching any error. Taken in itself, this is a term that strongly presents the perfection of Scripture. The prophets and apostles not only did not err—**they could not err** when writing Scripture.⁴

John Piper on the Bible as the infallible, verbally-inspired Word of God: it “*implies that the Scriptures are the supreme and final authority in testing all claims about what is true and right and beautiful. It implies, in matters not explicitly addressed by the Bible, that what is true and right and beautiful is to be assessed by criteria consistent with the teachings of Scripture. All of this implies that **the Bible has final authority over every area of our lives**, that we should, therefore, try to bring all our thinking and feelings and acting into line with what the Bible teaches. [The Bible] is a total claim on the whole world. God, the creator, owner and governor of the world, has spoken. His words are valid and binding on all people everywhere*”.⁵

Inerrancy

Inerrancy is a natural outflow of infallibility in the traditional, orthodox sense. Since the authors could not err when writing Scripture, the bible contains no affirmations of anything that is contrary to fact⁶.

Inerrancy does NOT mean:

- No grammatical irregularities.
- No strange spellings.
- Copyists made no mistakes.

Inerrancy DOES mean:

- The scriptures are reliable.
- The scriptures are telling the truth.
- The scriptures are accurate and without error in the message it is conveying.

⁴ <http://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/inspiration-infallibility-inerrancy/>

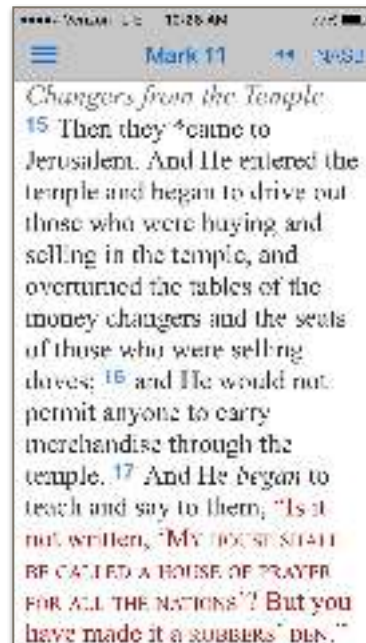
⁵ John Piper, *Reading the Bible Supernaturally: Seeing and Savoring the Glory of God in Scripture*, Desiring God Foundation, (Wheaton: Crossway, 2017), 33.

⁶ <http://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/inspiration-infallibility-inerrancy/>

Claims of Contradictions?

Apparent Contradiction:

When did Jesus cleanse the temple? Was it early in His ministry (John 2) or was it at the end of His ministry (Mark 11)?



Resolution:

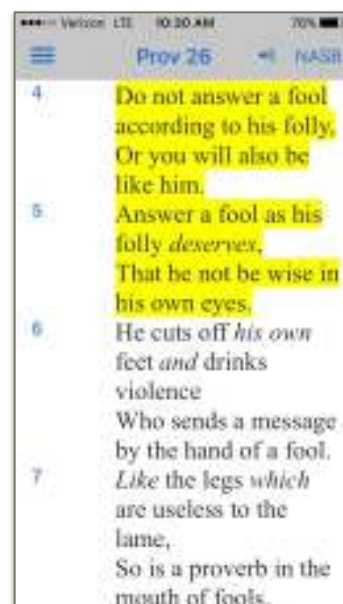
The two accounts are not contradictory at all. The cleansing of the temple happened at the beginning of His ministry AND at the end.

Apparent Contradiction:

In reference to how to respond to a fool, Proverbs says in back-to-back verses, 'do not answer a fool' and then, 'answer a fool'. So which one is it?

Resolution:

Sometimes it's appropriate to address foolishness and sometimes it is not. Every circumstance is different. This is a call to wisdom to know when to speak and when to remain silent. (Ecclesiastes 3:7b)

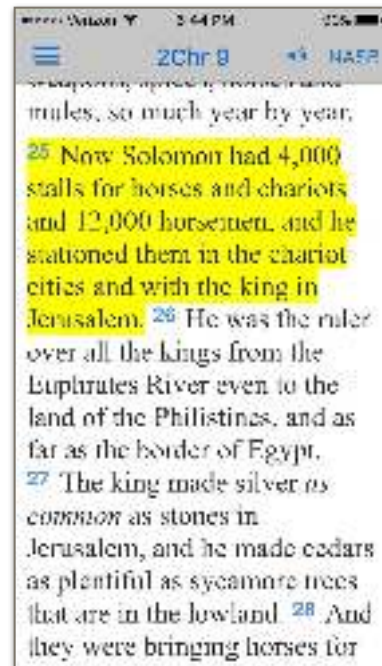


Apparent Contradiction:

Did Solomon have 40,000 stalls for horses as mentioned in 1 Kings, or did he only have 4,000 as mentioned in 2 Chronicles?

Resolution:

Matt Slick of the Christian Apologetics & Research Ministry says: *“Our copies of the original documents are not perfect, but they are very close to being so. The critics often mistakenly assume that even the copies are supposed to be perfect. But when I point out that God never said the copies would be perfect, they then ask how can the Bible be trusted at all? Quite simply, it is redundant in its facts and information sufficiently to guarantee accuracy”*⁷.



Summary on Inerrancy by Al Mohler:

Inerrancy must be understood as necessary and integral to the life of the church, the authority of preaching and the integrity of the Christian life. Without a total commitment to the trustworthiness and truthfulness of the Bible, the church is left without its defining authority, lacking confidence in its ability to hear God's voice⁸.

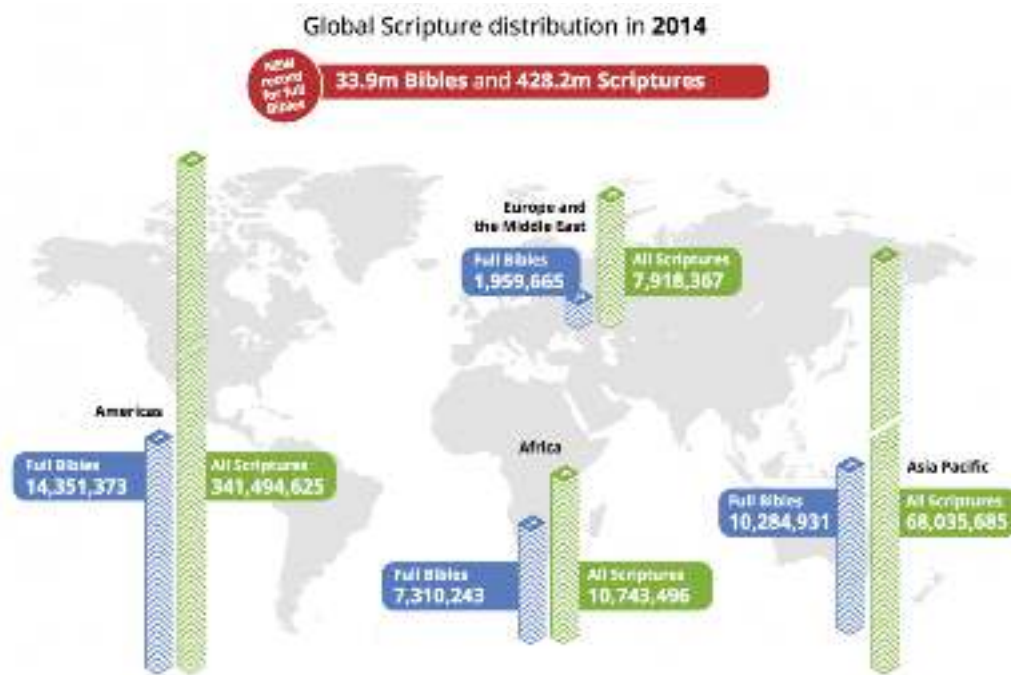
⁷<https://carm.org/inerrancy-and-inspiration-bible>

⁸ Al Mohler, *Five Views on Biblical Inerrancy*. Copyright © 2013 by Zondervan.

The Bible is Unique in the Following Ways

Unique in Circulation

- In 2014, Bible Societies reported the highest number of bibles distributed around the world: 33.9 million full bibles and 428.2 million scriptures (New Testaments, Gospels, etc).⁹



- The Guinness Book of World Records website reports: “there is little doubt that the Bible is the world's best-selling and most widely distributed book. A survey by the Bible Society concluded that around 2.5 billion copies were printed between 1815 and 1975, but more recent estimates put the number at more than 5 billion”.¹⁰
- About 50 Bible are sold every minute.
- The Bible is the most shop-lifted book in the world.

⁹ Source: www.unitedbiblesocieties.org

¹⁰ <http://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/best-selling-book-of-non-fiction/>

In 2017, the Voice of the Martyrs ministry sent over **39,000** Bibles to North Korea using large hydrogen balloon launches.

“Through multiple launch points, we are able to drop materials on areas that are largely unpenetrated by the Gospel”.

Advanced GPS technology to track the balloons once they are inside North Korea.



Unique in Translation

The worldwide status of Bible Translation as of 2017¹¹:

- More than 1,400 languages have access to the New Testament and some portions of Scripture in their language.
- More than 600 languages have the complete translated Bible.
- About 7,000 languages are known to be in use today.

A General Note About Principles of Translation

Over the centuries, the Bible has been translated into many languages. There often isn't a one-to-one equivalence when translating a Hebrew or Greek Word into English.

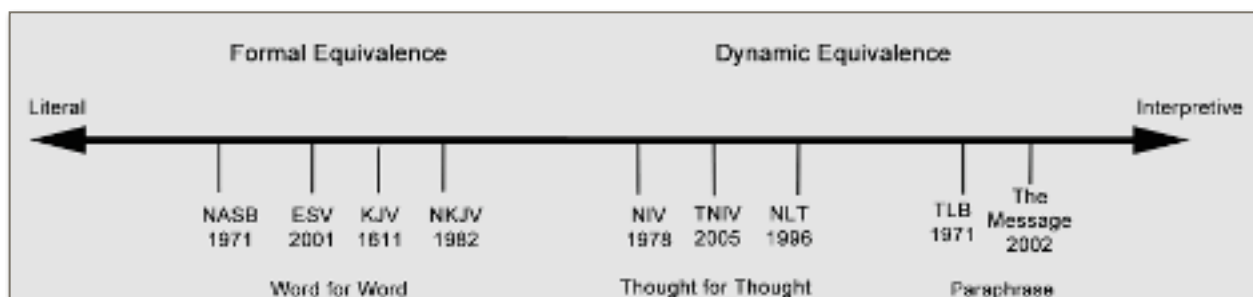
Bible translating committees had to agree on what philosophy they would use to get the words from one language to another, while still maintaining the integrity of the original authors intent. While some Bible translators claim a literal translation and others claim to be more interpretive, any translation of the Bible will have some degree of interpretation from the original text.

Formal Equivalence

- A literal approach to translation that seeks to transmit the WORDS and STRUCTURE of the original language.
- Word for word.
- A LOW degree of interpretation.
- Readability sacrificed for accuracy.

Dynamic Equivalence

- An interpretive approach to translation that seeks to transmit the MEANINGS and CONCEPTS of the original language.
- A HIGH degree of interpretation.
- Idea for idea; thought for thought.
- Accuracy may be sacrificed for readability.



¹¹ www.wycliffe.org

A Comparison of Ephesians 2:8-9

NASB

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;
9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

NIV

8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God
9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

TLB

8 Because of his kindness, you have been saved through trusting Christ. And even trusting is not of yourselves; it too is a gift from God.
9 Salvation is not a reward for the good we have done, so none of us can take any credit for it.

Unique in Persecution

Antiochus Ephiphanes

Greek king of the Seleucid Empire
(Reign 175-164 B.C.)

Any Bibles found were destroyed by fire.
Anyone caught with a Bible was sentenced to death.



Thomas Paine

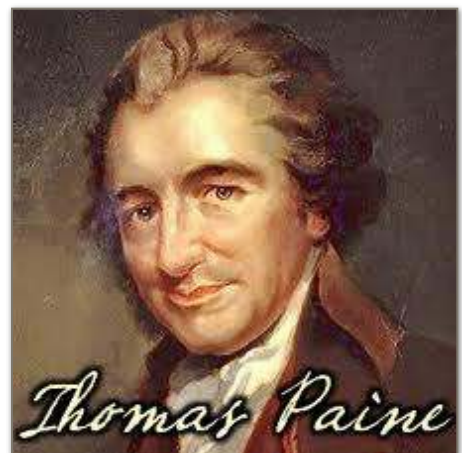
A Quaker that led the battle against the Bible in America in the 1700's, railing against it in his book '*The Age of Reason*':

"God exists, but the Bible is largely myth and that miracles are impossible".

This book is largely ignored today.

www.christiancourier.com

Butler Public Library
Last checkout: 2015
Checked out 12 times since added in 2004.



Unique in Indestructibility

Roman Emperor Diocletian - 303 A.D.¹²

Issued an edict to destroy the Christian Scriptures.

“An imperial letter was everywhere promulgated, ordering the razing of churches to the ground and the destruction by fire of the scriptures.”

Twenty five years after Diocletian’s edict, the Roman Emperor Constantine issued an edict that fifty copies of the Scriptures should be prepared at the government’s expense.

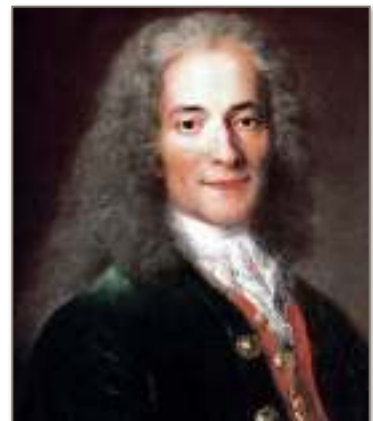


Voltaire (1694 - 1778)¹³

Declared that in one hundred years from his time Christianity would be swept from existence and passed into history.

But what has happened? Voltaire has passed into history, while the circulation of the Bible continues to increase in almost all parts of the world.

Only 50 years after his death, the Geneva Bible Society used HIS press and house to produce stacks of Bibles!



King Jehoiakim

What did the King do with the scrolls of The Prophet Jeremiah?

Cut them up into pieces with a knife
Burned them in the fire until they were consumed

Did the Words of the Lord disappear forever because the paper copy was destroyed?



Answer: **Jeremiah 36:27-28; 32**

¹² Josh McDowell, *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict* (Campus Crusade for Christ, Inc: Here's Life Publishers, Inc, 1999), 10.

¹³ Ibid.

“If this book had not been the book of God, men would have destroyed it long ago”.¹⁴



¹⁴ Josh McDowell, *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict* (Campus Crusade for Christ, Inc: Here's Life Publishers, Inc, 1999), 11.