



Seek The Old Paths

“Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths. . . and walk therein”
(Jeremiah 6:16)

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IS THE BOOK OF MORMON FROM GOD?

Jason Patrick Hilburn

The Bible teaches that it is noble and necessary to question the teachings of men to find out whether they are true (Matt. 7:15-20; Acts 17:11; Eph. 5:11; 1 Thess. 5:21; 1 John 4:1). When one turns his attention to the Mormon religion and puts it to the test, what does he discover? The basis for the Mormon religion goes back to the early 1800s when **Joseph Smith** claimed he received plates with ancient writings on them. These plates were said to have been translated into English, which became the Book of Mormon. For the purpose of helping precious souls go to Heaven, the question is now asked, “Is the Book of Mormon from God?”

IT CONTRADICTS THE BIBLE

Mormons believe that the Bible is “a volume of holy scripture,” but they also believe that “The Book of Mormon is a volume of holy scripture comparable to the Bible.”¹ It should first of all be stated that God gave us “all things pertaining to life and godliness” in the first century A.D., when the Holy Spirit guided those men into ALL Truth (2 Peter 1:3; John 16:13; cf. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Zech. 13:1-5; 1 Cor. 13:8-12; Eph. 4:11-16; Jude 3). Since the Holy Spirit gave us All Truth in the first century, there is no more Truth to be revealed than what was revealed in the first century A.D.!

Smith claimed that an angel told him of “another testament of Jesus Christ.” But notice the warning Paul gave in the first century to the churches of Galatia about such

things. *“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed”* (Gal. 1:6-9).

If it were the case that both the Bible and the Book of Mormon came from God, the two books would not contradict one another. However, Joseph Smith’s alleged revelations in the nineteenth century contain a plethora of unequivocal contradictions to the true Holy Scriptures (which were delivered some 1800 years before his writings). For example...

- Because Joseph Smith obviously did not know his Bible very well, his writings state that *Jesus was born in Jerusalem* instead of Bethlehem (Alma 7:10). Some have pitifully tried to cover up this error by claiming that Bethlehem is a suburb of Jerusalem, but how do they explain another passage where Joseph Smith taught that Jesus was born in *Nazareth* (1 Nephi 11:13-20)?
- The Book of Mormon states that the “church of Christ” existed 147 years before Christ came to earth (Mosiah 18:17)! However, when

Christ was on earth, He stated that His church had not yet been built. He said, *“upon this rock I will build my church”* (Matt. 16:18). The Bible teaches that the church of Christ was not built until after Jesus shed His blood to purchase it (Acts 20:28).

- Joseph Smith wrote that people were called “Christians” in 73 B.C. (Alma 46:13; 48:10); yet the Bible tells us that *“the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch”* in the first century A.D. (Acts 11:26).
- The Book of Mormon teaches there were three days of darkness upon Christ’s crucifixion, rather than three hours, which was obviously another blunder by someone who seemed to know just enough about the Bible to be dangerous (1 Nephi 19:10; cf. Matt. 27:45).
- The Book of Mormon teaches that “a seer is greater than a prophet” (Mosiah 8:15), yet the Bible teaches that the words “seer” and “prophet” are synonymous (1 Samuel 9:9).

More contradictions could be listed, but these are sufficient to show that the Book of Mormon is not in harmony with the Bible — the true Holy Scriptures.

IT CONTRADICTS ITSELF

Not only does the Book of Mor-

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Editorial...

PREVENTING WEAKNESS #2

Garland M. Robinson

The number one process through which we eliminate weakness is to dig deep and stay long in the well of God's Holy Divine Word.

The Weak Must Study the Bible in order to become strong. Hebrews 11:6 presents a great Truth, **“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”** The weak therefore have their own obligation according to the Scriptures. They must seek to please God. But, they cannot please him without FAITH — a living, active, vibrant faith, trust, confidence in God. They should and must be strong in faith. The most basic primary avenue through which this is done is *Bible study*. When someone says “I wish I were stronger in faith,” there is a simple solution, **STUDY THE WORD OF GOD!** *“...Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”* (Rom. 10:17).

Bible study and spiritual growth are uniquely tied together. One cannot be separated from the other. One cannot grow without study and one cannot study without growing (unless you don't heed what you study). Paul's simple but profound proclamation of this is found in Romans 10:13-17: *“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* It stands to reason that the more one is involved in studying the Bible the more he/she will grow in faith.

How may we prevent weakness? **GROW IN FAITH!** Faith comes by hearing the Word of God. Three basic but simple rules of spiritual growth is: study, Study, STUDY. The number one process through which we eliminate weakness is to dig deep and stay long in the well of God's Holy Divine Word.

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).

- “Study” means to make an effort, give diligence, endeavor, labor, exert one's self (cf. Eph. 4:3; Heb. 4:11; 2 Peter 3:14).
- “Shew” means to exhibit, stand ready, to provide (cf. Acts 1:3; Rom. 12:1-2; 14:10).
- “Approved” means to be acceptable, tried, pleasing (cf. 1 Cor. 11:19; James 1:12; Psalm 19:14).
- “Workman” means to toil, labor, work (cf. Matt. 9:37-38; 20:1).
- Not be “ashamed” means that we have no cause to be ashamed (cf. Eccl. 11:9; Luke 12:20).
- “Rightly divide” means that we handle correctly (cf. Luke 10:28; 20:21).
- The “word of truth” is God's divine expression, communication, teaching, doctrine (cf. Matt. 7:28; Mark 2:2; 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:2; John 8:32; 17:17).

Many passages speak of the necessity of growing and its connection with the Word of God. The apostle John wrote, *“And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name”* (John 20:30-31). Jesus said, *“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I*

will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me” (John 6:44-45). *“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned”* (Mark 16:15-16). Peter wrote, *“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever”* (2 Peter 3:18).

The Weak Must Take Heed to God's Word. *“And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good”* (Deut. 10:12-22)? To fear the Lord means we reverence and respect him. The weak need to be taught to **fear God**.

We fear God **because of who He is.** *“For the LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward”* (Deut. 10:17). *“Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. ... God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him”* (Psalm 33:8; 89:7).

We fear God **because of His great power.** *“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth”* (Gen. 1:1). *“For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring”* (Acts 17:28). *“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell”* (Matt. 10:28).

We fear God **because He is not a respecter of persons.** *“For there is no respect of persons with God”* (Rom. 2:11). *“And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear”* (1 Peter 1:17). *“And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that*

your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him” (Eph. 6:9).

We fear God **because of what He has done for us.** *“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”* (Rom. 5:8). *“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s”* (1 Cor. 6:20).

The weak must learn to **walk in the ways of God.** That requires effort and determination. It is a different walk than the way of the world. After baptism, converts “walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4). They walk after the spirit and not after the flesh (Rom. 8:1). They walk honestly, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying (Rom. 13:13). It is a walk in the Spirit’s will (Gal. 5:16). We must walk by faith (2 Cor. 5:7), walk worthy (Col. 1:10) and walk in the light (1 John 1:7).

The weak must learn to **love God.** God is love (1 John 4:8; 2 Cor. 13:11). We, therefore, must love him (1 John 4:19). God demonstrated his love for us. *“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not”* (1 John 3:1). *“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us”* (Eph. 2:4). Jesus made it clear we are to love God, *“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind”* (Matt. 22:37).

The weak must learn to **serve God.** *“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon”* (Matt. 6:24). Service to God involves turning from our sins and obeying his will. The Thessalonians, *“...turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God”* (1 Thess. 1:9). We serve God when we serve one another (Gal. 5:13). Service implies selling, giving and following. *“Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me”* (Mark 10:21).

Book of Mormon From God?...

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mon contradict the Bible, it also contradicts itself! It has already been mentioned that the Book of Mormon contradicts itself regarding where Jesus was born, but there are many other contradictions. For example, in the original Book of Mormon, Mosiah 21:28 stated that “king Benjamin” was still alive, however the writer had apparently forgotten that fifteen chapters earlier in his story king Benjamin had died! The second edition of the Book of Mormon had this blatant error removed, but by making that change, the Mormons admitted the error.²

IT DIRECTLY QUOTES FROM THE KING JAMES TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE

Why would plates, which were supposedly created hundreds of years before King James was even born, contain direct quotes from the King James translation of the Bible? Yet the Book of Mormon is replete with direct quotes from the King James translation. One example is Mosiah chapter 14. The whole chapter is a direct quote of Isaiah 53:1-12 from the KJV! Even all eleven of the italicized words from the KJV (which were not supplied in the original Hebrew text) are directly quoted in Smith’s book! It has been estimated that as much as 4% of the Book of Mormon can be traced to the King James translation of the Holy Scriptures.³

IT IS LITERALLY FULL OF ERRORS

Joseph Smith proudly boasted that the Book of Mormon was “the most accurate book on earth,” yet some 3,913 errors have had to be corrected!⁴ “There are literally thousands of grammatical errors in the original edition of the Book of Mormon, errors that have been gradually changed in later editions. These take the form of such things as double negatives, incorrect adverbs and adjectives, and especially incorrect tenses.”⁵ Here are a few examples:

- “I would cite your minds forward to the time when the Lord gave these commandments” (Alma 13:1; this error is still in recent

editions!);

- “They did not fight against God no more” (Alma 23:7);
- “Adam and Eve, which was our first parents” (1 Nephi 5:11);
- “Behold, for none of those things I cannot hope” (2 Nephi 33:9). Joseph Smith even made up his own words, such as:
 - “preparator” (for preparer, 1 Nephi 15:35, still found in later versions);
 - “arriven” (for arrived, Alma 20:30);
 - “numerority” (for a vast number, Alma 56:10);
 - “enormity” (for a vast number, Alma 52:5); and
 - “cimeter” (for sword, Enos 1:20).

Not only did the Book of Mormon contain fabricated words, it also had common words misspelled, such as:

- “bellowses” (for bellows, 1 Nephi 17:11);
- “phrensied” (for frenzied, Alma 30:16);
- “eatheth” (for eateth, 3 Nephi 20:8);
- “tempels” (for temples, Alma 16:13), etc.

Perhaps one might try to explain away such errors as those mentioned above by saying that Joseph Smith was not given the actual words to record, but merely the ideas, which he had to translate into English. However, that is not what Joseph Smith and the early “witnesses” of the plates claimed! They claimed that the actual process of translation was overseen and guided by God: “the plates...have been translated by the gift and power of God.”⁶ As a matter of fact, the Mormons have stated that EVERY LETTER OF EVERY WORD was revealed to Smith, and the words had to be copied down correctly before the next part of the text would even be revealed by God! David Whitmer, one of the original “three witnesses,” stated the following:

Joseph Smith would put the seer stone into a hat, and put his face in the hat, drawing it closely around his face to exclude the light; and in the darkness the spiritual light would shine. A piece of something resembling a parchment would appear, and on that appeared the writing. **One character at a time would appear and under it was the interpretation in English.**

Brother Joseph would read off the English to Oliver Cowdery, who was his principal scribe, and when it was written down and repeated to brother Joseph to see if it was correct, then it would disappear, and another character with the interpretation would appear.⁷

Martin Harris, another of the three witnesses, wrote, “The translation of the characters appeared on the Urim and Thummim, sentence by sentence, and as soon as one was **correctly translated** the next appeared.”⁸ Mormon historian Brigham H. Roberts wrote that “the interpretation...was reflected in the sacred instrument, there to remain **until correctly written** by the scribe.”⁹ Joseph Smith stated that “the translation of them (the plates — JPH) which you have seen is correct.”¹⁰ The Mormons claim that the Book of Mormon is from God, and the actual letter by letter translation was overseen by God Himself, but how can anyone believe that God would have made even one mistake, let alone thousands of mistakes?

IT REFUTES ITS OWN CLAIMS OF INSPIRATION

The very characters of Smith’s fanciful story admit that the book is not inspired by God! In the first chapter of the Book of Mormon, Nephi says about his writing: “...I make it with mine own hand; and I make it according to **my knowledge**” (1 Nephi 1:3). Later, Nephi writes, “Nevertheless, I do not write anything upon plates save it be that **I think** it be sacred. And now, **if I do err**, even did they err of old...” (1 Nephi 19:3-10). “...I have written according to **the best of my knowledge**...” (Jacob 7:26). “And now it came to pass, **if there was no mistake made by this man** in the reckoning of time...” (3 Nephi 8:2). Perhaps this admission is the most surprising: “And whoso receiveth this record, and shall not condemn it because of **the imperfections which are in it**, the same shall know of greater things than these...” (Mormon 8:12).

It is evident that Joseph Smith anticipated that his errors would be quickly detected!

IT HAS NO HISTORICAL OR ARCHAEOLOGICAL VALUE

Regarding the Bible, the late Nelson Glueck, a famous archaeologist, said, “It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference. Scores of archaeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or exact detail historical statements in the Bible.”¹¹

However, the same cannot be said about the Book of Mormon. “It records hundreds of people and places that have never been authenticated! In fact, when questioned about its historical and archaeological reliability, major institutions such as the Smithsonian institute have clearly said that it has **none**.”¹²

IT CONTAINS ABSURDITIES

One may merely read the account of football-shaped barges with plugs in the top and bottom to see a clear example of the absurdities of the Book of Mormon (Ether 2:16-25). In God’s plan for the barges, He had supposedly failed to provide a means of air and light for the boats. When God was asked about the lack of such, he apparently realized His error, and told them to make holes in the top and bottom of the boats, and they were to plug and unplug them as needed. Since the boat was shaped like a football, they would be rolling around in the sea, and the top of the boat would soon become the bottom! Can you imagine the battering and seasickness they would have experienced? Compare such silliness to the scientifically accurate dimensions and specifications of Noah’s ark (Gen. 6:14ff), which dimensions have been used even in modern ships for carrying large amounts of cargo.

Another absurdity can be found in the account of Shiz, the decapitated man who “raised up on his hands and fell; and after that he had struggled for breath, he died” (Ether 15:31). One also wonders how people in 73 B.C. were using a compass, since the compass was not invented until about A.D. 1100! (Alma 37:38)

CONCLUSION

Entire books have been written exposing the falsehoods of the Book of Mormon, but hopefully the information presented here is sufficient to

convince the objective reader that the Book of Mormon is not from God.

It is interesting that the first purported witnesses of the plates later apostatized from the Mormon church.¹³ John H. Gilbert, printer of the first edition of the Book of Mormon, stated in a legal affidavit that he had asked one of those “witnesses,” Martin Harris, the following question: “Martin, did you see those plates with your naked eyes?” Martin looked down for an instant, raised his eyes up, and said, ‘No. I saw them with a spiritual eye.’¹⁴

Many wonder why Mormons are willing to risk their souls on something that is so clearly false. May the Mormons and everyone else do what the Holy Spirit commanded in the Bible, the **true** Holy Scriptures: “*Prove all things; hold fast that which is good*” (1 Thess. 5:21).

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HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE #3 CONFIRMATION

Randy Kea

God commands us to believe His Word but has always provided the conclusive proof and evidence needed to create and undergird the faith He requires.

God not only *revealed* and *inspired* His Word, but He *authenticated* it with miraculous confirmation. Some try to make the Bible simply a book of wonders and miracles. Although there are many accounts of divine miraculous manifestations in the Bible, they essentially cluster around four critical and transitional periods of recorded Bible history: 1) the miracles connected to the Exodus; 2) during a period of apostasy in Israel — the miracles connected with the prophets Elijah and Elisha; 3) the miracles during Captivity (Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego) and 4) the miracles of Christ and the apostles.

When one considers the Bible covers many centuries of sacred history, it is clear that miracles are special, not general or common. They had a specific and divine purpose. The word translated “confirming” in Mark 16:20 means, “to make firm, establish, make secure...stable, fast, firm” (Vine’s). When God performs a miracle, He establishes His Word to be true.

There are many examples in the Bible of God providing His inspired spokesmen with miraculous credentials which would certify them to be the mouthpiece of God. One example is the mediator and lawgiver, Moses. The Lord commissioned Moses to go to pharaoh and demand that he release his people (the children of Israel) out of Egyptian bondage. Moses would not only have to convince pharaoh, but also the children of Israel, that he was sent by God to deliver them. How would this be demonstrated and authenticated? The Lord spoke to Moses and said, “and thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs” (Exodus 4:17; signs are miracles, Num. 14:22; Deut. 11:3). As the events of the Exodus unfold, notice the repetition of the purpose of these signs: “that thou mayest know there is none like unto the Lord our God” Ex-

odus (8:10); “to the end thou mayest know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth” (8:22); “that thou mayest know how that the earth is the Lord’s” (9:29); “what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; that ye may know how that I am the Lord” (10:2). These statements clearly show they could “know” (not guess or speculate) that Moses represented the one true God and His word.

Another Old Testament example demonstrating the same principle is the great prophet Elijah. God sends Elijah to Zarephath to dwell there. He tells Elijah that He has commanded a widow woman there to sustain him. While abiding with the woman, her son falls sick and dies. Elijah prays to the Lord. The child is raised from the dead. At the end of this account, please note the recorded statement of the woman: “And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth” (1 Kings 17:24). Signs, wonders and miracles have always testified to the authenticity of God’s inspired spokesmen.

Moving to the New Testament, these same principles would apply to the wide range of miracles that Jesus the Son of God performed. The various miracles Jesus performed certified/verified His deity. Note here what the Lord Himself said about the purpose of His miracles: “...whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house” (Mark 2:9-11). Since only God can forgive sins, Jesus confirms His divine nature by a miracle, thus proving He has power (authority) to forgive sins. Consider also

the correct conclusion Nicodemus draws from the miraculous evidence presented by Jesus: “There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him” (John 3:1-2).

The apostle Peter, in the first recorded Gospel sermon on the day the church began, recognizes the same evidence as Nicodemus concerning Jesus: “Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know” (Acts 2:22).

In connection with Jesus, miraculous manifestation certified him as deity (John 20:30-31). However, the purpose of miracles with reference to the apostles and other inspired men of the New Testament was to provide them with credentials, confirming they were speaking God’s Word and not their own. We here itemize a few verses: “And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, confirming the Word with signs following” (Mark 16:20); “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?” (Heb. 2:3-4); “Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds” (2 Cor. 12:12); “And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power” (1 Cor. 2:4); “For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power; and in the Holy Ghost,

and in much assurance” (1 Thess. 1:5).

Many claim miraculous abilities today. However, all of these charlatans are in the same category. The Pope claims that he is the voice of God, Joseph Smith of Mormonism claimed additional revelation from God, and modern denominational preachers assert that God is speaking through them. These all come to us “in word only” and with no power at all. They contradict each other and the Bible. In spite of their erroneous and deceptive claims, no one today can perform miracles like Jesus, the apostles, and the other inspired men of the New Testament. These gifts, having served their purpose to reveal and confirm the New Testament Gospel, ceased and passed away (Eph. 4:7-15; 1 Cor. 13:8-13). They are no longer needed. The inspired word has been confirmed.

I will elaborate on the canon (39 books) of the Old Testament and its confirmation under the topic of “Preservation” later in this series of articles. At this point, however, let us consider the canon (27 books) of the New Testament.

The idea that the canon of the New Testament was established over a lengthy period of time is a false concept and does not fit Bible claims for authentication. Further, the notion that some group of men (council) who lived after the apostolic period convened and determined which books should be included in the New Testament canon is also erroneous and not in harmony with the Bible position on canonicity. Even in the Lord’s church, some have not held to the Bible view of canonicity. F. W. Mattox in his book on church history entitled *The Eternal Kingdom* (in the chapter on the canon of the New Testament), makes two or three statements that are simply not in harmony with New Testament affirmations. On pages 102-103 he writes, “There is no historical evidence in regard to the distribution of inspired letters...all the church could do was to apply tests to ascertain whether or not a letter was from God...the churches faced a real problem, however, in determining just what letters were inspired.” These statements are incorrect. Through the years I have rarely heard this subject addressed from the pulpit or in classes. There is a great deal of misinformation or lack of information on

the subject of canonicity among the Lord’s people. If we are going to deal with unbelievers, we must arm ourselves with the truth on this matter of confirmation and canonicity (1 Peter 3:15).

There is inspired evidence concerning canonicity and the distribution of New Testament books. Consider the following Scriptures: “And when this epistle is read among you (the church at Colosse), cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea” (Col. 4:16); “I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren” (1 Thess. 5:27). Further, the book of Revelation was specifically addressed to seven churches in Asia (Rev. 1:4). The book of Galatians was addressed to all the churches throughout the region (Gal. 1:2). These inspired books were to be distributed among all the churches everywhere. Paul made the point of inspiration very clear when he wrote: “If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that **the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord**” (1 Cor. 14:37).

Upon careful study, the Bible position on canonicity (which books are Scripture) is clear. The books of the New Testament were authenticated by miraculous gifts of the first-century church. Congregations of the Lord’s people possessed miraculous gifts distributed to them by the apostles (Acts 8:14-18; Rom. 1:11). These inspired men, possessing the gifts of “prophecy” and “discerning of spirits” (1 Cor. 12:8-10) were miraculously endowed to detect true/false prophets and true/false doctrine. Many passages indicate this. “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). “I know they works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil; and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars” (Rev. 2:2). “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” (1 Thess. 2:13). “Therefore brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been

taught, whether by word, or our epistle. ... And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed” (2 Thess. 2:15; 3:14). So, if a letter was received by a church of Christ, it could be immediately and miraculously authenticated. There would be no problem in doing this. There would be no waiting. There would be no subjective tests applied. It would be miraculously and immediately confirmed and accepted as Scripture. All twenty-seven books of the New Testament canon were revealed, inspired, and confirmed miraculously by the end of the apostolic period through four apostles (Matthew, John, Paul, Peter) and four prophets (Mark Luke, James, Jude). Paul wrote, “How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ). Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit” (Eph. 3:3-5).

The Bible is self-authenticating, based on the internal qualities it possesses — predictive prophecy, supernatural unity, scientific foreknowledge, etc. — and needs no further confirmation. These objective qualities establish it to be what it claims to be. We need to constantly emphasize that mere human productions (the **Koran**, the **Book of Mormon**, **Watchtower** writings, etc.) possess no such qualities and thus are not in the same category as the Bible.

God commands us to believe His Word but has always provided the conclusive proof and evidence needed to create and undergird the faith He requires.

In this series so far, on the question of How We Got the Bible, we have established: 1) God has always revealed His will in words that man can understand; 2) God has always inspired the words His prophets spoke and/or wrote; 3) God has always miraculously confirmed His will so as to remove all doubt concerning its divine origin.

In our next installment we will consider the universal dissemination of the New Testament message in the first century.

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INFLUENCE OF CHARLES DARWIN

Doug Couch

Charles Darwin was born on Feb. 12, 1809. His father and grandfather were medical doctors. His grandfather Erasmus, was King George’s personal physician, and was known for his atheistic views.

A medical school dropout, Darwin entered Cambridge University at the age of 18 to study for the ministry. He would graduate with a degree in theology four years later. When Darwin was 30, he married his first cousin, Emma, daughter to a wealthy potter, Josiah Wedgwood.

For the next twenty years, Darwin would study, explore, write and conduct studies with animals. Despite his education in theology, Charles had serious doubts about Christianity. When his daughter Annie died at the age of ten in 1851, Darwin became an agnostic. He said that a God who permitted suffering could not exist and was not worthy of being served.

In 1859, he published the *Origin of the Species* where he proposed natural explanations for the existence of all living things. Although it provoked outrage among religious leaders, Darwin’s book was readily embraced by the scientific communities in Britain, Europe, and the United States.

One of Darwin’s Cambridge professors, Adam Sedgewick, warned Darwin that his book would damage a lot of people. Sedgewick’s words have proven to be true.

In 1991, British historian Paul Johnson claimed that the 20th century was the bloodiest in human history and it can be laid at the doorstep of Darwinian biology (quoted by professor David Campbell in *Dehumanization: A Product of Darwinism* 32, ISBN: 978-1-304-42445-7).

Dr. Campbell shows how Darwinism laid the foundations for political movements like Nazism and Communism, and the liberal, progressive movement in the USA. Campbell is now a retired biology professor from the University of Missouri (St. Louis) and serves as an elder in the Lord’s church in St. Louis.

Campbell, along with other scholars estimate that Nazism and Communism were responsible for millions of deaths in the 20th century. Prof. J. R. Rummel concluded that 178 million were killed by dictatorial governments in that time period. He wrote: “Stalin exceeded Hitler in monstrous evil, and Mao beat out Stalin” (Source: <http://www.orthodoxytoday.org/articles5/RummelDemocide.php>).

It is well documented that Stalin (Russia) and Hitler (Germany) were influenced by Charles Darwin. Although raised as a Buddhist, Chairman Mao Zedong (China) embraced the views of Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin while in college. Marx enjoyed Darwin’s *Origin of the Species*, although he thought it was not well-written. Stalin, Hitler, Mao, Marx and Lenin were atheists who denied special creation by God.

It has been claimed that it does not matter what one believes about God. However, Jesus said “*by their fruits ye shall know them*” (Matt. 7:16). Where are the hospitals and orphanages built by atheists? The fruit of atheism is bitter, leading to declines in moral behavior, respect for human life and to an increase in the despair and hopelessness of men.

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SEEK THE OLD PATHS

“My dad, L. Douglas LaCourse, who was a preacher from Canada for years, received your paper. He was a student at Harding College, Searcy AR. He died while attending church where he loved to be at age 96. I have read many of the old back issues and passed them on to the West Virginia School of preaching. Now I would like very much to receive your magazine. I would be more than happy to send you a check for this good work” ...**James & Blye Grove, Friendly, WV.** [Editor’s note: Yes, I knew brother LaCourse and have very fond memories of him. I preached a meeting in Elliott Lake, Ontario in the early 80s and spent the week with him. He showed me around his property with all the huge beaver dams! He was a great man and a faithful soldier of the cross. We shared a mutual friendship with James & Grace New of Ft. Wayne, Indiana. -gmr, Editor.] “Just wanted to say thank you. The regular publication of *Seek the Old Paths*, and the available archive of the website, has been an encouragement and a source of education for me. My Granddad, Lloyd Gale, has written for you all a number of times. If possible, I also would like to sign up a lady I worship with for a subscription. She very much enjoys sources of Bible-based articles and studies. I think she will really appreciate the series on ‘How We Got the Bible.’ Thank you again so much” ...**Keith Gale.** “We that proclaim the truth need to keep brother Garland Robinson, the elders of the Leoni Church of Christ in Woodbury, Tennessee and each of the writers of this publication in our prayers and support. They dedicate their time and talent to a morally and spiritually bankrupt world. Our world is inundated with false doctrines, but never underestimate the power of the written word! May God receive the glory. Enclosed is my contribution to *Seek The Old Paths* in support of the truth. Please send me the Dec/17 issue and extras for the church foyer. Thanks so much. God bless” ...**Bert A. Kramer, Modesto, CA.** “Please remove me from your mailing list” ...**Jerry Phillips, Woodbury, TN.** “Tom Thomas has passed away” ...**Louisville, KY.** “Please send hard copy of STOP. Thanks, I say, THANKS!” ...**Glenn Pritchett, Murfreesboro, TN.** “Please include me on your mailing list for the *Seek The Old Paths* monthly publication. Thank you” ...**Lesla Thurlby, Cherry Valley, IL.** “Thank you for your continued work in educating and directing your readers to ‘seek the old paths.’ It is indeed troubling to see so many who are turning away from God’s truth so readily and turning aside to fables. I am thankful that you used a recent issue to address the subject of marriage, divorce and remarriage (Jan/18). However, I have a question concerning your comments about David and Bathsheba. While I agree that such was theft, 2 Samuel 12:24 and the first two chapters of 1 Kings, indicate that David was permitted to keep her as his wife and to continue in a sexual relationship with her, resulting in her becoming the mother of Solomon. Could you please address this at your earliest convenience? Thank you, and God bless” ...**Justin Johnston.** [EDITOR’S NOTE: Thank you for your good words. The Old Testament reveals numerous occasions of individuals having multiples wives. How shall we view this? In Matthew 19:8 Jesus said, “*Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.*” Though this passage is dealing with “putting away”, it also shows there was a period of time in which God “suffered” (allowed, tolerated, Acts 17:30) some things that were never his intention from the beginning. At one time, God “suffered” men to

have multiple wives. In the NT, God does not allow multiple wives (husbands), nor adulterous marriages. Though David is said to be a “man after God’s own heart,” there were numerous occasions in his life where he sinned greatly. David’s heart, at least during the period of time described by 1 Samuel 14:13 and Acts 13:22, was one that turned toward God’s way. When he sinned, he acknowledged it, saying “*I have sinned*” (2 Sam. 12:13). Also, since Uriah (Bathsheba’s husband) was dead, Bathsheba was free to marry according to Romans 7:2-3 —gmr]. “Thank you for all the years I was able to read your articles from your monthly publication. Now I can seek you out on the internet. Please cancel my paper subscription to save you money and allow you to use your resources better. Please withhold my name” ...**AL.** “Brother Robinson, I can’t say thank you enough! *Seek The Old Paths* is so helpful and encouraging. I love it. I’m so thankful for it. You do a great job. Please keep up the good work. I’m praying you will. God bless you. Please add these names to the mailing list. Thank you” ...**Carol Shadell, Beebe, AR.** “Thank you for loving the Lord and his word. I read about the church falling away which broke my heart. Did they ever love God and his truth? I don’t think so. Could they turn so far from the truth? God will judge. Thank you for your wonderful publication, the Truth of God’s word. I enjoy reading and reading it again. Keep up the work and keep telling the world that needs God and his truth. May God bless you and all concerned in the writing” ...**Bobbie Wheeler, Baxter, TN.**

Seek The Old Paths is a monthly publication of the **Leoni Church of Christ** and is under the oversight of its elders. It is FREE, being supported by the contributions of both individuals and congregations. Its primary purpose and goal in publication can be found in Jude 3, 2 Tim. 4:2, Titus 1:13, Titus 2:1 and 2 Peter 1:12. All mail received may be published unless it is marked “not for publication.” The church building is located at: 6818 McMinnville Hwy, Woodbury, TN 37190.

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