

## "I Believe the Bible"

The most important book you'll ever read is the Bible, because it comes from God. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today we're exploring reasons to believe the Bible.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. No other book in the world compares to the Bible! It contains a wealth of information that you need to know to live your life successfully and to have eternal life once this life is over. It gives hope when you're uncertain, peace when you're troubled, comfort when you're hurting, advice when you don't know what to do, and the truth when you're in doubt. The Bible nourishes the soul with the love and grace of God. Make the Bible your daily resource for an abundant life; it has the words of eternal life. Ah, I'm grateful you're taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

The prophet, speaking from God, said in Jeremiah 10:23, "I know, O LORD, that a man's way is not in himself, Nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps." God wanted to bless all humanity by giving them in written form His words that would teach them the truth about every spiritual matter. They could learn about the God who created them, what He expected of them, and how to live a godly and loving life.

Trusting God's wisdom is better than trusting feelings, which are fickle or trusting your own intelligence. Sadly, many trust in themselves and ignore what God says. Proverbs 14:12 says, "There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death." People tend to fool themselves, believing what they wish about life and morals; but God's word is tested and proved. Psalm 12:6 says, that "The words of the LORD are pure words; As silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times." God's holy word, the Bible, will lead you to salvation and eternal life.

Now, we're offering this month this free little booklet on why we believe. It gives you reasons to believe in the Bible, in God and in Christ. If you'd like a printed copy or a CD of our study and you live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Hebrews 2:1 through 4, and explore some reasons to believe the Bible.

Our reading today comes from the letter to the Hebrews chapter 2 verses 1 through 4. And in this he gives us reasons to believe that the Word of God comes from God and how we ought to pay close attention to it.

For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it. For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

Ah, yes we need to pay close attention to the Word of God. Let's pray together. Father help us to look deep in Your heart, into Your way, by studying Your word found in the scriptures. Give us strength and help in every way to be pleasing in Your sight. This is our prayer in Jesus name, Amen.

Since the Bible is the word of God, we ought to see something in it that reveals the divine, the supernatural. Many books claim to be sacred; how do we know whether the Bible is truly from God?

God revealed to Moses the signs of a truly inspired prophet. He said in Deuteronomy 18:20 to 22, that “the prophet who speaks a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. You may say in your heart, ‘How will we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?’ “When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.”

Predictive prophecy is truly a sign that God is involved. Kenny Barfield, in his excellent book, *The Prophet Motive*, provided six reasonable criteria for assessing the claims of predictive prophecy. Predictive prophecy should occur well in advance of the fulfillment and should be accurate and conform to historical fact. The fulfillment should occur in an impartial manner and have no evidence of collusion or manipulation; it should be obvious to the reasonable person. Predictive prophecy should be dynamic. It must be ongoing, repetitive, and consistent. The prediction should also suggest supernatural guidance; prediction based on human reasoning or genius is not sufficient.

It was J. Barton Payne who calculated that 27 percent of the entire Bible contains predictive prophecy. Norman Geisler, a scholar, observed that, “This is true of no other book in the world. And it is a sure sign of its divine origin. He added that, “The Bible is the only book in the world that has precise, specific predictions that were made hundreds of years in advance and that were literally fulfilled.”

The God of the Bible sets himself apart from all the man-made idols. He is the Creator not created. God can do what no one else can do. In Isaiah 41, God sends a challenge to those who believed in a false religion. He says, “Set forth your case, says the LORD; bring your proofs, says the King of Jacob. Let them bring them, and tell us what is to happen. Tell us the former things, what they are, that we may consider them, that we may know their outcome; or declare to us the things to come. Tell us what is to come hereafter, that we may know that you are gods; do good, or do harm, that we may be dismayed and terrified. Behold, (he speaks to the idols) you are nothing, and your work is less than nothing; an abomination is he who chooses you” (Isaiah 41 verses 21 to 24). God, unlike the false gods of ancient times, could tell the future and so prove He was truly God.

When we compare the Bible with other holy books and the writings of the pagan religions, we see a stark difference. Randolph S. Foster, a religious scholar, said, “No well accredited prophecy is found in any other book or even oral tradition now extant, or that has ever been in existence in the world. The oracles of heathenism are not to be classed as exceptions. There is not a single one of them that meets the tests required to prove supernatural agency, which every Scripture prophecy evinces.” D. James Kennedy agreed and wrote, “In all the writings of Buddha, Confucius, and Lao-tse, you will not find a single example of predicted prophecy. In the Koran (the writings of Muhammad) there is one instance of a specific prophecy—a self-fulfilling prophecy that he, Muhammad himself, would return to Mecca. Well, this is quite different from the prophecy of Jesus who said that He would return from the grave. One is easily fulfilled, and the other is impossible to any human being.”

We examined several prophecies about Jesus the Messiah last week. Let’s look at some other prophecies. The Lord Jesus predicted the temple in Jerusalem would be destroyed. He said in Matthew 24 and verse 2, “Do you not see all these things? (Speaking of Jerusalem and the temple) Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down.” On August the 30th, 70 AD, the Roman army led by the future Emperor Titus marched into Jerusalem, burning the city and destroying the temple. The Arch of Titus, which celebrates the sack of Jerusalem and the temple, still stands in Rome. Talking about the fulfillment of that prophecy. Josephus, the Jewish historian, was

present at the burning of Jerusalem. Though he was not a believer in Jesus, he reveals the things spoken by Jesus and written in Matthew, Mark, and Luke that they are true.

The Old Testament provides numerous examples of proven prophecy. After the fall of Jericho, Joshua about 1400 B.C. prophesied the city would be rebuilt but at great cost. Josh. 6:26 says, "Then Joshua made them take an oath at that time, saying, 'Cursed before the Lord is the man who rises up and builds this city Jericho; with the loss of his first-born he shall lay its foundation, and with the loss of his youngest son he shall set up its gates.'" Well, the fulfillment of this prophecy comes to pass in 870 B.C. 1 Kings 16:34 says that, "Hiel the Bethelite built Jericho; he laid its foundation with the loss of Abiram his first-born, and set up its gates with the loss of his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which He spoke by Joshua the son of Nun." Because God is divine, He's not restricted by time. He can see the future as clearly as He sees the present. God's omniscience, His all-knowing character, is clearly seen in Scripture.

One of the most specific Old Testament predictions identifies Cyrus of Persia long before he was born. Isaiah 44:28 to 45:1: It talks about "The Lord ... who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please; he will say of Jerusalem, "Let it be rebuilt," and of the temple, "Let its foundations be laid." ' This is what the Lord says to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their armor, to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut."

Well, Isaiah made this prediction 150 years before Cyrus was born. Since Isaiah lived between 740 to 690. He lived about that time according to 2 Kings 21 to 25 and Cyrus didn't make his proclamation for Israel to return from exile until 536 according to Ezra 1, there would have been no human way for Isaiah to know the name of Cyrus or what he would do, unless God revealed it to him.

Daniel, who lived in the sixth century, predicted a succession of four great kingdoms in Daniel chapter 2 from 38 to 44. So precise and accurate is this prophecy that even critics agree Daniel spoke in order of Babylon, the order of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. Daniel identified the first kingdom as Babylon in chapter 2 and gets even more specific about Medo-Persia and Greece in Daniel 8:20 to 21. Critics try to avoid the supernatural nature of this prophecy by claiming these words were written after the fact, in about 165 B.C. But there is no real substantiation for this claim. Jesus in the days of Rome, the fourth kingdom, set up a kingdom that would never be destroyed, the church! Jesus fulfilled a prophecy made 600 years before. Only God can do that.

Sometimes people claim there are contradictions in Scripture. A classmate of mine in high school suggested this 50 years ago. He gave me a list of 17 alleged contradictions. Well, in those days I had few resources, but, you know what, I found answers to these claims, these false claims, by searching deeper into the language and context of each passage. Through the years I've collected books that deal with discrepancies and difficulties, studied languages and historical backgrounds of passages. And to this day I have never found one proven contradiction in Scripture. After dealing with biblical difficulties for more than forty years, Dr. Gleason Archer, a biblical scholar, said in the foreword of his New International Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties: "There is a good and sufficient answer in Scripture, 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, he says, that the Bible asserts itself to be, the inscripturation of the infallible, inerrant Word of the Living God." Archer is right; scripture will validate itself! I also highly recommend my friend Eric Lyon's two volumes, The Anvil Rings, published by Apologetics Press. Now, don't fall for the idea that there are no answers to the charges that people make against the Bible.

Through the ages critics have made all kinds of charges, but the Bible stands and remains the best seller of all time, translated into more than 2,000 languages.

God has given us a great gift in Scripture. He shares in Scripture His wisdom and promises of forgiveness and eternal life. The Scriptures call people to live lovingly, morally, and kindly. The story of the cross calls us to give ourselves and serve with love. Christ calls us to follow His example, and the Scriptures teach us how He lived and what He taught. Scripture teaches us right and wrong and how to live the best life. The Lord through Scripture calls us to an abundant life filled with grace and truth. Nothing could be nobler or higher.

David described what the teachings of God's word are like in Psalm 19 verses 10 to 11, "They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward." Did you know that Jesus challenges us to test His words to see if they are from God? The Lord Jesus said in John 7:16 to 17, "My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me. (Speaking of God) "If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is (from God or) of God or whether I speak from Myself." When people truly follow the teaching of Jesus, they find peace in their souls, joy in His promises, hope of eternal life, and grace to live each day.

The person who hasn't studied the word of God has missed a precious treasure. Proverbs 2:4 to 12 speaks of the value of God's wisdom: "If you seek her as silver And search for her as for hidden treasures; Then you will discern the fear of the LORD And discover the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding. He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk in integrity, Guarding the paths of justice, And He preserves the way of His godly ones. Then you will discern righteousness and justice and equity and every good course. For wisdom will enter your heart And knowledge will be pleasant to your soul; Discretion will guard you, Understanding will watch over you, To deliver you from the way of evil, From the man who speaks perverse things."

Ah, how wonderful it is to be able to go to the Word of God. Oh, how I love Thy words. Let's pray together. Father we're thankful that in Your wisdom You gave us Your word. To provide for all of our spiritual needs and to guide us, to give us hope, and to give us life. Help us to be followers of You in every way. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus our Lord, Amen.

Some think the Bible is so old that it no longer matters, but the Bible is still relevant for many reasons. First, "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16 to 17). Second, just because it's old doesn't mean it's not for our time. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 24:35, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away."

The Bible addresses the most relevant questions: Where did we come from? Why we are here? What is important in life? And what will happen when life is over? What is right and wrong? And how do I treat my neighbor? How does God save us from sin? Well, the Bible addresses everything that pertains to life and godliness. It provides rules to live by and examples of righteous living. The Bible introduces us to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who loves us and taught us how to love. The Bible is the most relevant and the wisest book you'll ever read. And you'll cheat yourself out of great treasure by failing to read the Word of God.

God wants you not only to read His word He also wants you to obey it. Place your faith in Jesus Christ and confess Him, repent of your sins, and be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins

(Acts 2 and verse 38). And when you're baptized God will add you to His church and make you His child. And then keep on studying and remaining faithful to the Lord all your days. Get involved in church and serve the Lord. Ah, get started today!

Well we hope you've enjoyed today's reasons to believe the Bible. We're offering this free little book "Why I Believe" this month. And if you'd like a free printed copy or a CD of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now you can download these lessons or a newsletter online at our website: [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches that are in your area. You can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! We do ask that you subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry." That's one word. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. And if you write to us or call us don't worry, we're not gonna put you on a list or try to get your money. We're here to help you get to heaven.

There is no better day than today to get your life back on track by going to church and getting involved. There's probably a church of Christ in your area. Why not worship with them today? And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about this program. Let em know that you watch and encourage them to. And as always we say, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.