

THE BIBLE ALWAYS PASSES THE TEST

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The Bible contains two kinds of information. Some of it can be checked; some of it cannot. For example, it is not possible to “check” scientifically the accuracy of Genesis 1:1—“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” While the affirmation is not inconsistent in any way with available scientific data, at the same time the statement is one of prehuman history, and thus does not lend itself to empirical investigation.

On the other hand, the Scriptures contain hundreds of references that arise out of the background of human history. These may be tested for accuracy. If it is the case that the Bible is demonstrated to be precise in its thousands of historical details, it is not unreasonable to conclude that its information in other matters is equally correct.

In fact, one of the most amazing features of the Bible is its uncanny reliability in the smallest of details. Let us note a few examples of biblical precision.

On one occasion during His personal ministry, Jesus passed through the region of Samaria. Near Sychar, the Lord stopped for a brief rest at Jacob’s well. While there, He engaged a Samaritan woman in a conversation, during which He suggested that He could provide the woman with water that could quench her thirst perpetually. Misunderstanding the nature of the Master’s instruction, the woman, alluding to Jacob’s well, declared: “Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep” (John 4:11). Her statement was quite correct, for even now, some twenty centuries later, Jacob’s well is approximately 80 feet deep—the equivalent of an eight-story building!

Reflect upon another example. In Acts 10 there is the account of Peter’s visit to the city of Joppa. Luke declared that Peter was staying in the home of Simon, a tanner of animal hides. Then the historian said, almost as an afterthought, “whose house is by the seaside” (Acts 10:6). Hugh J. Schonfield, author of the infamous book, *The Passover Plot* (and certainly no friend of Christianity), has commented as follows on this passage: “This is an interesting factual detail, because the tanners used sea water in the process of converting hides into leather. The skins were soaked in the sea and then treated with lime before the hair was scraped off.”

Consider another interesting case of Bible precision. When Paul was en route to Rome for trial, the ship upon which he sailed became involved in a terrible storm. When it eventually became apparent that the vessel was in a very dangerous circumstance, the crew cast the ship’s anchors into the water. At the same time, they “loosed the rudder bands, hoisted up the foresail, and aimed the ship towards the beach” (Acts 27:40). There is an interesting and subtle point in the Greek text that is not apparent in the King James Version. The original language actually says that they “loosed the bands of the **rudders**” (plural). This is amazingly precise, for in ancient times ships actually possessed two paddle-rudders, not a single rudder as with modern vessels. In 1969, a submerged ancient ship was discovered in the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Cyprus. An examination of the ruins gave evidence of dual rudder-oars by which the boat was steered (see *National Geographic*, November 1974, pp. 618-625), thus demonstrating the remarkable accuracy of Luke’s record.

The Bible can be tested—historically, geographically, scientifically, etc. And it always passes the test. Its incredible accuracy can be explained only in light of its divine inspiration.

Originally Published In
Reasoning from Revelation
September 1991, 3[9]:17

ARTICLE REPRINT

Distributed by
Apologetics Press, Inc.
230 Landmark Drive
Montgomery, AL 36117-2752
(334) 272-8558