

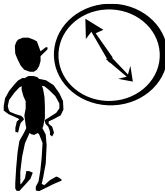
THE BATTLE CREEK BULLETIN

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Time of Assembly



Sunday:

Bible Study 9:00 a.m.

Worship 10:00 a.m.

Every other Sunday night:

Worship 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 p. m.

Does it Really Matter About the Bible?

By Jefferson David Tant

Sometimes in talking with people, I ask if they believe the Bible is true. I then give three options:

1. It is inspired by God, and all true;
2. It is just a collection of writings by men through the centuries; or
3. The original writings were God-inspired, but men have added and changed things through the years.

The response is often #3. My next question is, “How do we know which part is true, and which we don’t have to pay any attention to?” I sometimes get the “deer in headlights” look, signifying they don’t know, and never thought about it. Then the question, “Does it matter? Does it make any difference?” It matters a great deal. It is a question of significant importance.

Suppose I have a serious illness, and I see a doctor. Since the illness is rare, the doctor consults scientific research on this disease. He takes a book and says, “This book deals with this disease, but I am not sure how much of it is true. I have confidence in some of it, but I am not sure which part is really correct. Do you want to proceed with treatment?” How would you respond? I am quite confident that you would want a better solution.

Now, back to the question about the Bible. There is overwhelming evidence that it is inspired by God, and that it is all true. This evidence includes science, history, archaeology, and prophecy. Consider a few examples.

Medical science has made great discoveries in recent centuries. One treatment for illness centuries ago was to take a person’s blood, as the thought was it was poisoned, so it needed to be drained. My understanding is that when George Washington was sick, they took his blood four times one day. “Bleeding” was done either by cutting a wrist vein or putting

leeches on the arm to suck the blood. No wonder the poor man died. We understand the vital role blood has in supplying oxygen and nutrients, as well as in combating infections. But this was not known in medical science in Washington's day.

It is interesting that [Genesis 9:4](#) prohibits the eating of blood: "*Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.*" Then in [Leviticus 17:11](#): "*For the life of the flesh is in the blood.*" Moses wrote this 4,500 years ago. How did Moses know this eons before medical science understood this? Could it be that our Creator revealed this to him?

Archaeology is a fascinating study and has significantly contributed to confirming the Bible's accuracy. In 37 Old Testament passages, the Hittite people are mentioned. Bible critics cited this as an example of the inaccuracy of the Bible since there was no record of Hittites. But in the early 1900s, the German archaeologist Hugo Winckler was digging in Turkey and found the Hittite capital along with clay tablets in the Hittite language. Further proof was found in Egyptian clay tablets telling of a battle between Egypt's Ramses II and the Hittites around 1287 B.C. There are pictures of Hittites drawn by Egyptian artists. Once again God's Word was proven true, and the critics proven wrong.

Historical accuracy is important to understanding the past. Obviously, the Bible's record is history, but it is more than simply a record. There are historical records that contribute to understanding the Bible's accuracy. In [Acts 18:12](#), Luke writes that "*Gallio was proconsul of Achaia.*" Discoveries have shown the amazing accuracy of this. Gallio was proconsul only one year, about 52 AD. The discovered Delphi inscription reads "*As Lucius Junius Gallio, my friend, and the proconsul of Achaia...*" Critics claim Luke's gospel is second-century writing, not the first, but a second-century writer would have been unaware of the recently discovered Delphi inscription.

Prophecy and fulfillment present evidence that cannot be denied by open minds. There are prophecies about nations, cities, and people. There is not one prophecy that has not been fulfilled in its appropriate time, and some prophecies were made hundreds of years before their fulfillment.

The Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy lists 23,274 separate predictions — 10,127 in the Old Testament and 13,274 in the New Testament. Some studies have shown 365 prophecies about Jesus Christ, including his genealogy, the time and city of his birth, his manner of life, his trial, his crucifixion, and his resurrection.

Today, the Bible and Christianity are vigorously attacked. Many educators have declared their aim to destroy the faith of their students. Therefore it behooves us to know the evidence that we might be able to defend our faith. Jesus said, "*You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free*" ([John 8:32](#)). If the Bible is not completely true, then we have no hope. That's why we need to know. "*Now faith is a well-grounded assurance of that for which we hope, and a conviction of the reality of things which we do not see*" ([Hebrews 11:1 WNT](#)). True faith is not blind, but a faith based on evidence.

By Grace Through Faith with the Washing of Water

By Terry Wane Benton

Notice the prepositions: **by**, **through**, and **with**. The Book of Ephesians uses all three to describe what is involved with our salvation. It teaches we are saved **by** grace. It teaches we are saved **through** faith. It teaches we are saved **with** the washing of water by the word. It is not grace alone, else faith and washing of water would not be required. It is not faith alone, else grace and washing of water would not be involved. It is not by washing of water alone, else grace and faith would not be involved. But, it is all three involved together.

By Grace

By grace you have been saved ([Ephesians 2:5,8](#)). God did not owe us anything, and we did not deserve His grace. But, receiving the benefits of His grace was conditional. If it was grace **alone** (a common denominational codeword), then everyone would be saved, because He is not willing that **any** should perish ([II Peter 3:9](#)) and He died for the sins of the **whole** world ([I John 2:2](#)). So, if we are saved by grace **alone**, there are no conditions, and everyone will be saved (universal salvation).

Through Faith

“Through faith” tells us there is a channel “through” which grace connects us to the gracious salvation provided for all men. ([Ephesians 1:12-13](#); [2:8](#)). The text does not say there has to be a certain **content** of faith in order for the channel to work. Everybody believes, has faith, in something. So, if I believed in chickens, Buddha, Muhammed, and science would this “faith” be a proper channel for salvation? No? Now, you would have to branch out from [Ephesians 2:8](#) to discuss what the proper **content** of faith must be. If we just stayed with [Ephesians 2:8](#) then everybody with any content of faith would be saved. But, bringing in other verses we know the **content** is a crucial element of saving faith. So, the right **content** of faith must be in place before we can be saved.

The text does not tell us if there has to be a certain level or depth of faith. On this point, would the men in [John 12:42](#) who “believed” in Jesus but wouldn’t “confess” Him have the kind of faith that saves? No? If not, then [Ephesians 2:8](#) cannot be talking about just any level of faith. It must have the right content and it must be willing to confess Jesus. So, if the content and characteristic of “faith” are important, then follow me to the next point.

With the Washing of Water by the Word

Paul says that our cleansing (which we already know happens “by grace through faith”) is **with** the washing of water by the word ([Ephesians 5:26](#)). It does not say that we are cleansed, sanctified, and washed **without** the washing of water by the word. It

says that it is **with** the washing of water by the word. It does not say we are saved by grace through faith alone **without** the washing of water by the word, but we are saved by grace through faith ... **with** the washing of water by the word.

Now, let us connect the dots. The 3,000 on Pentecost were instructed to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ **for** the remission of sins ([Acts 2:38](#)). They were further encouraged to “be saved” from this perverse generation ([Acts 2:40](#)). They were then baptized because they “gladly received his **word**.” Thus, they were saved by grace through faith **with** the washing of water by the word. Saul was instructed to “*arise, and be baptized, washing away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord*” ([Acts 22:16](#)). Again, he was saved by grace through faith **with** the washing of water by the word.

There is no way around it, and an honest person would not try to get around it. An honest person of faith will simply do as the 3,000, Saul, and the Ephesians. We will surrender to God and seek to be “saved by grace through faith **with** the washing of water by the word.” Be sure you are being honest with God and His word!

Mental Incinerators

By F. Yater Tant

The whole world is aware of the accumulating mountains of waste and garbage threatening our planet. Air pollution, water pollution, land pollution are all becoming familiar terms. Every major city seems to be having problems with garbage disposal. We must find some way to handle the garbage, or it will finally overwhelm us.

The human body, like any well-ordered house, also has its garbage disposal equipment. Every time you expel a lung full of air you are throwing off poisonous elements that would very quickly destroy you if they were not discharged from the body. The pores of your skin open up to emit from your system waste material which is deadly if allowed to accumulate. The digestive and urinary systems daily discharge waste materials which ordinarily would bring death to any human being if allowed to accumulate for only one short week.

But the mind of man has no such safeguard! Nature has provided us with "garbage disposal" equipment for the physical organism. What a pity that we do not come also equipped with some sort of mental incinerator where we could forever destroy the mental and emotional "garbage" which keeps on piling up, year after year, destroying our happiness, our effectiveness, and even perhaps destroying our chance of heaven! It is quite as important to keep the mind and heart in good condition as it is the house or the physical organism.

The physical body disposes of its poisonous waste materials quite automatically and as a matter of course. To remove the harmful garbage from the mind requires deliberate and specific effort toward that end. The Bible points the way:

1. "*Thinketh no evil*" is Paul's characterization of a loving heart. Does someone slight you at church? Are some of your 'friends' saying hateful, spiteful things about you? Does your employer over-burden you with work? In short, are you abused, mistreated, unappreciated? What a sad and dreary spectacle is the man who is filled with self-pity! The easiest and best way to eliminate such from your life is to refuse its entrance in the first place! Put the best possible construction (instead of the worst) on the statement another may make concerning you. But suppose the evil is there, open, glaring, and unmistakable. What then? The answer is simple: refuse to cherish or nourish the "hurt" you have received. Hatred in the heart is far more destructive and corrosive in its effects on the one who harbors it, more hurtful to the one who hates than it is to the object of the hatred.
2. "*Forgetting those things that are past.*" Every spring it used to be the custom of most housewives to have a "house-cleaning." Closets were cleaned out; rugs taken outside and beaten (how we used to hate that job!), blankets and quilts were washed and stored for the summer. It would be a most healthful practice if at regular intervals each person could make a list of all the things he needs to forget! Pull out the old grudges, harsh words, mistakes, and failures (and a lot of the successes, too!) and put them behind you. Put your fears and anxieties in the mental incinerator, and turn up the burners. Get rid of your old prejudices and childish animosities.
3. "*Think on these things*" are the words that follow the long catalog of healthful and productive items that should occupy the mind. The list ([Philippians 4:8](#)) is 'positive thinking' at its best. If the mind is filled with this kind of "whatsoever things" the very presence of such thoughts will tend to nullify and cast out hurtful, lustful, fearful, sinful thoughts that otherwise might accumulate. Consider Paul's encouraging words. "*In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things*" ([Philippians 4:6-8](#))

So-o-o-o, maybe, after all, man **does** have that "mental incinerator," that device by which the poisonous and evil things that might contaminate the heart are destroyed and rendered innocuous.

At least, it is worth giving a try.