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## Creation Answers

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### Who does this newsletter?

This newsletter is produced by Wayne Spencer on a Quarterly basis. Its purpose is to bring creation research within the reach of Christians and provide up-to-date reliable information on creation issues. Wayne Spencer is a creation author and former teacher who has presented papers at the International Conference on Creationism and has published in various creation publications, such as the Creation Research Society Quarterly, Creation magazine, the Journal of Creation, and Origins (from the Biblical Creation Society, UK).

This newsletter is meant to help people plug into creation resources and get informed about creation and evolution. It is provided free of charge on request. Using the free Adobe Acrobat Reader is necessary for viewing the newsletter. There are no restrictions in copying this newsletter or passing it on to others. To request to be placed on the e-mail list, send a request to [wspencer@creationanswers.net](mailto:wspencer@creationanswers.net).

More information on Wayne Spencer's education and publications can be found on the [creationanswers.net](http://creationanswers.net) web site. You'll also find many other resources. <http://creationanswers.net>

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### A Personal Note from Wayne Spencer

Greetings,

This issue of Creation Answers begins the twelfth year of the newsletter. I would like to know what you think about it and if you have suggestions for topics.

I am continuing my series on Why Believe the Bible. Part 2 focuses on the Old Testament, its historicity and preservation. These are things that have been meaningful to me. I hope they are an encouragement to you. Ultimately God uses experiences in our life to "convince" us to trust his word, as well as knowledge and facts. But in times of doubt or questioning we need to know there is more behind our faith than just our feelings and perceptions. I think God's supernatural hand has been at work through history to bring his word to us. We should not lose sight of the value of His word.

I have included a list of points to address the question of why are there natural disasters from a Biblical point of view. No matter how well we understand God's truth such events are painful for people, and we should not minimize the suffering of those who are affected by such events. The earthquake and tsunami in Japan has been a great tragedy. We should not forget the Japanese people in our prayers and gifts.

Wayne Spencer, M.S., Physics

## ***Why Believe the Bible? Part 2***

The Bible is rooted in actual history. God has acted into history to bring about his purposes for mankind and for his plan of redemption. In this article I will address briefly a number of facts that to me argue persuasively for the truth of the Bible and the divine inspiration of the Bible. I will generally address two types of issues, historical evidence which supports biblical information and textual matters about how the Bible was preserved. I will address both of these types of issues for the Old Testament. In Part 3 I will address the same for the New Testament. However, keep in mind I am only picking out highlights here. There is much written on these matters that gives Christians reason to have confidence in the reliability of the Bible. There is also much misinformation from some scholarly sources that has misled people and sometimes confused Christians, as well as many pastors.

The historicity of the Old Testament is an important issue today. Many scholars do not believe the Old Testament is historically accurate. There are many issues where we simply do not have enough reliable information to explain all the historical details in the Bible and relate it to modern knowledge. Some issues have never been researched seriously. Sometimes issues have never been seriously looked into by scholars who allow for the Bible to be accurate. But though I am not an expert in this area I would say there is very good archeological evidence for the historical accuracy of the Bible, from the time of Abraham to the first century A.D. But there are still many mysteries not fully unravelled. Such "mysteries" are not really reasons to doubt the Bible. We should realize the significance of all the evidence we do have. It is information such as on people groups and cultural practices, city locations, kings or other leaders, wars, and catastrophic events that can often give

historical clues that confirm somehow what the historical narratives in the Bible say.

### **Abraham**

Let us begin with the time of Abraham. Archeologist Clifford Wilson makes the point that many of Abraham's practices correspond with known practices and laws from the land of Canaan and from especially Hittite laws and practices. There is much mention of the Hittites in Genesis and other Old Testament passages. Many years ago scholars knew nothing of there being any such people as the Hittites and some questioned the Bible about it. But now there is much known about the ancient Hittites. Apparently where Abraham moved to in Canaan was an area South of actual Hittite territory but under their legal control. Archeologists have found written laws from this time from the Hittites, Sumerians, and others in and around Canaan. The laws contain similarities to each other and to the practices of Abraham and the other Biblical patriarchs. Thus the accounts of Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael, and others in Genesis all have a realistic context that fits what is known from history. Example practices would be walking between the halves of a sacrificed animal to make an agreement with someone, dealing with revolts and crimes by military action, and having a child by a slave. There are details in these practices where the Bible matches known laws and practices of the time in that area. For more on Abraham, I'd recommend this article about the [wealth of the Biblical patriarchs](#), it has fascinating information about Abraham and people of the ancient near East.

Another very significant example of evidence supporting the Bible from the time of Abraham is about the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Archeologists have identified the location of what was Sodom as a site now known as Bab edh-Dhra, in a plain South of the Dead Sea. Bab edh-Dhra was found to have been a well fortified city with evidence of two

events that threatened the city. One was that the city gate was apparently destroyed and then rebuilt in another location. This likely corresponds to the Genesis 14 attack on the city in which Lot and others in Sodom were taken captive. But the city was not destroyed then. Some time after this, there is much evidence for destruction of walls and buildings being burnt. Evidence suggests a strong earthquake. Evidence from the site also shows that buildings started burning from the roofs, not the floors. This supports Genesis nicely regarding "burning sulfur" falling on the cities. There is geological evidence of a fault structure in the region; the area is right along what is known to Geologists as the Great Rift Valley. There was apparently an eruption of bitumen from this fault structure during an earthquake, causing material similar to hot tar or asphalt to erupt and fall onto buildings. Bitumen often contains sulfur, so it is plausible that bitumen would be what the Bible describes as "burning sulfur" falling on Sodom.

An earthquake could force the bitumen out of the ground, causing an eruption of the hot flammable thick liquid. For God to time a natural process to happen at a particular time and manner like this is supernatural. Some might object to trying to use a natural process to explain a miracle in the Bible. I would not rule out something that was not a natural geological process for something mentioned in the Bible like this, but the evidence from the site seems very good for an earthquake causing a bitumen or crude oil eruption. Such events are not considered uncommon by geologists. Note that some sources have also argued that an impact from space was responsible for the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. I seriously doubt that an impact had anything to do with the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. For more on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah [click here](#) and [here](#).

## **Egypt and the Israelites**

Next we move forward from the time of Abraham to the times of Joseph and Moses. A major piece of history in the Bible often not accepted by modern scholars is about the Exodus and the conquest of Canaan. There has also been much debate about the date of the Exodus among scholars. There is a view prevalent in some circles today that says the Israelites were never in Egypt, but were actually Canaanites, and that the conquest of Canaan did not happen as the Old Testament says. But here are some things we have archeological confirmation of: First, we have evidence of Hebrews in structures built in Egypt that would plausibly be from the time of Joseph. This evidence suggests the possibility there are remains of a Hebrew house that may have actually belonged to Joseph. There may also be evidence of Joseph's tomb (from which the mummy was removed), though it is impossible to prove for sure. Then, we have I think very strong evidence of the Israelite conquest of Jericho, the first city taken in Canaan. The way the walls collapsed, the evidence of burning in the city of Jericho, and other facts fit the Biblical account. The evidence at the sites of the ancient cities of Jericho and Ai approximately dates the beginning of the conquest of Canaan and agrees with the Bible. Jericho and Ai were the first and second cities conquered by the the Israelites under Joshua's leadership. I believe the date of the Exodus to be near 1446 B.C. and this puts the conquest of Canaan beginning about 1400 B.C.

There are other questions about the Exodus that are not definitively answered, including exactly where the Israelites crossed the Red Sea and the location of Mt. Sinai. There has been much debate on these two questions without a clear resolution. But there are possible sites. There is no definitive evidence against the Biblical account of the Exodus. There is evidence the Israelites were in Egypt and that they later were in Canaan and conquered cities

there, as the Bible describes. See these two interesting articles about [Joseph in Egypt](#) and about the walls of the [city of Jericho](#).

The history of ancient Israel under the Israelite kings is also a historical controversy. From some time in the 1990's scholars have argued that there is no historical evidence for a united kingdom under David or Solomon. There were no inscriptions on Israelite buildings as for other kingdoms of the time and so scholars came to doubt many details about the reigns of David and Solomon. Scholars do not usually deny David or Solomon's existence or them being kings but they claim that they were not as the Bible describes them to be. However, though David may not have made any inscriptions about his reign, apparently other kings from other nations did. There is an inscription on a stone tablet from the Arameans, apparently from Hazael or one of his sons, that mentions David. This tablet is known as the Tel Dan Stela. The description says "House of David" in Aramaic as part of descriptions of the victories of the Aramean kingdom of Damascus. The Dan Stela has been dated to the 8th or 9th century B.C.E. but there is controversy about this date as well. This may put it after David's lifetime but its not implausible that something about Jerusalem or the ruling family there could be referred to using "House of David."

There are a few other archeological finds that confirm things regarding other Israelite kings. The most extraordinary is an obelisk belonging to Assyrian king Shalmaneser III. This obelisk has the only known example of artwork done of an Israelite king. It shows drawings with a written inscription depicting kings that were giving tribute to Shalmaneser. Jehu was a king of the Northern Israelite kingdom immediately after the time of Ahab and Jezebel. Jehu is one of the kings depicted on the obelisk. [Click here to see pictures of the obelisk](#). The obelisk comes from a time

well dated by Assyrian history at 825 B.C. The inscription mentions "The tribute of Jehu, son of Omri . . ." The inscription goes on to describe various gifts of gold to Shalmaneser. There is also a stone tablet (called the Kurkh Monolith) mentioning Ahab from about 22 years earlier. Ahab fought against Shalmaneser, and Jehu killed Ahab's family after Ahab died. So after Ahab's family and supporters were gone Jehu allied himself with Shalmaneser. Thus the Biblical accounts fit the historical findings perfectly.

### **Predicted History**

Not only is the Old Testament accurate about its history, it was accurate about events now history even before they happened! Old Testament prophets from near the time of the beginning Israel's exiles predicted events that would happen in nations outside Israel. This was done to communicate to the Jews that God had a plan for what was going to happen to them and the time would come when Jerusalem would be rebuilt. So the rebuilding of Jerusalem was predicted even before it was destroyed by the Babylonians. Then later, in Babylon, the prophet Daniel was given visions detailing a number of things that would happen after the fall of Persia. Daniel's prophesies describe in some detail some events that happened in the time of Alexander the Great and several generations of the Greek kings who followed him.

This kind of prediction of history is an idea met with skepticism by many scholars today. To deal with it, many scholars have charged that the Old Testament books of Isaiah and Daniel, among others, were actually written in the period of the exile or even during the time of the Greeks after Alexander. But I think a good case can be made for Isaiah being written about 700 to 680 B.C. The Fall of Samaria, Israel's Northern kingdom, was in 722 B.C. to the Assyrians; later Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians in 586 B.C. The book of Daniel was written during lifetime of Daniel, around

536 to 530 B.C. Then the exiles began returning to Jerusalem to rebuild it in 538 B.C. (see the Archeological Study Bible for these dates). One of the good arguments for the book of Daniel being written at the time of Daniel and not later is that some of it was written in Aramaic. By the time of the Greeks, the third and fourth centuries B.C., Greek would have been the language spoken in the formerly Persian cities. But during the Persian empire, in the later years of Daniel's life, Aramaic was widely used.

What are some examples of predicted history in the Old Testament? One example is in the book of Isaiah. Isaiah's ministry started before the Assyrian's conquered Samaria and continued after that for some years. Jeremiah's ministry began some years after the time of Isaiah but apparently ended before the Babylonian exile. After the Assyrian exile but still about 150 years before the Babylonians destroyed the walls and the temple in Jerusalem, Isaiah was telling the Jews that there would be a king named Cyrus who would give an order to rebuild Jerusalem. You can read this in Isaiah 44:28-45:4. Isaiah 44:28 has God speaking, *"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.'"* Thus Cyrus was spoken of by name by Isaiah approximately 80 to 100 years before Cyrus was born. Cyrus was formally Cyrus II, also called Cyrus the Great. Jeremiah 25 also contains the prediction that the Babylonian exile would be 70 years. In Persian history Cyrus the Great was well regarded by many he ruled over. He was known for allowing religious freedom in his kingdom. You can read the decree of Cyrus for Jews to go back to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple in Ezra chapter 1. The book of Ezra was written after Jerusalem was rebuilt, around 440 B.C. Historical written sources from Persia confirm that Cyrus had these policies

about religious freedom. So, again, Scripture is historically accurate and the dates of these events are well known.

The prophet Daniel recorded a number of outstanding visions in the book of Daniel. Daniel's visions outline events pertaining to the histories of Persia, the Greeks, and the Romans. I will only briefly mention a few of the details but Daniel's prophecies give information about events that occurred years after his lifetime. Cyrus the Great was still king during Daniel's prophecy in Daniel 11. The prophecy indicated there would be three other kings of Persia then the fourth king of Persia would stir people up against Greece. This was accurate about Persian history and the "fourth" king mentioned was clearly Xerxes I, who carried out a very large invasion of Greece in 480 B.C. This invasion is related to the famous battles of Thermopylae and Salamis. The battle of Thermopylae was where the 300 Spartans and other Greeks fought to the death to hold off the Persian land forces. That same year was when Esther the Jew was made Queen of Persia.

Alexander the Great came to power and united the Greeks for the first time. After Xerxes was eventually defeated and returned home, Alexander attacked Persia and conquered them. Daniel 11 describes "a powerful king" that will have great authority and do as he pleases. He rises to power then his kingdom is divided among others. This is what happened to Alexander the Great, after he died of an illness (or possibly poison) in 323 B.C. Daniel also says his kingdom will not go to his descendants. Alexander apparently only had two children. One was a son who was retarded or had some other mental handicap. He was briefly put in power but then killed. Alexander had a Persian wife, Roxana, who also had a son. She was from Bactria, in Eastern Persia. That son (known as Alexander IV Aegus) was born after Alexander died and Roxana was looked down on by most Greeks because she was Persian. Alexander had



another wife, Stateira II, who was Greek. Roxana killed Stateira after Alexander's death. For a while Roxana was protected by Alexander's mother, Olympias in Macedon, then by Cassander. Alexander IV was apparently put in power for a few months while still young but his grandmother Olympias was the Regent and was the one truly in power until Cassander came to Macedon. Cassander killed Roxana and Alexander IV (in 309 BC) so he could take power. Thus, Scripture was right that Alexander was not succeeded by an heir.

About the same time Perdicas, the one Alexander the Great had given power to, was also killed. This began a period of Alexander's officers jockeying for power. Thus began the period of what is known as the Ptolemies and the Selucids. Ptolemy was one of Alexander's generals; he ruled over Egypt, thus his is the kingdom of the South in Daniel 11. Selucid I Nicator was another general who ruled over Persia, Syria, and other areas Northeast of Israel. Israel lied right between the territories of the Ptolemies and the Selucids, thus who had power over Israel changed over the years following Alexander's death as these two kingdoms vied for control. There is amazing accurate detail in Daniel 11 about the Ptolmaic and Selucid kingdoms. Thus Scripture gave accurate history before it was history. Now our knowledge of history confirms its accuracy. To read more about the Daniel prophecies, [see this website](#).

### **Preservation of the Old Testament**

Many nonchristians do not believe that the Old Testament could have been accurately preserved after so many years of copying. I would say the main reason we can believe the Old Testament has been well-preserved is in the extreme measures taken by the Jews to copy it correctly. The Jews revered the Scriptures so that they went to great lengths to copy it correctly. We don't have as many manuscripts of the Old Testament as we do of the New

Testament, but we do have manuscripts from different times that can be compared to each other. The Dead Sea Scrolls are very significant. They were found in 1940 and the documents in them date from between 150 A.D. and 70 A.D. Before they were found, the oldest manuscripts were from about 900 A.D. Thus, the Dead Sea Scrolls provided manuscripts that allowed scholars to compare to the later manuscripts to see how accurate the copying process had been. The result was that there was astounding accuracy. The only discrepancies are very minor things such as spelling mistakes, nothing that really changes the meaning or calls any concepts into question. This is not like other ancient literature. For example, well known Bible scholar Dr. Gleason Archer writes that in the Egyptian Book of the Dead, a very ancient book about the afterlife in ancient Egyptian religion, has major discrepancies where one copy will have whole clauses and sections left out. The differences also significantly change the meaning. But in the Old Testament manuscripts there are no problems that serious.

At different times there were different Jewish groups responsible for the copying and transmission of the Old Testament. From 100 to 500 A.D. the Talmudists were responsible for the text; then from about 500 to 950 A.D. the Masorettes were responsible. The Talmudists had many rules about how their scribes had to copy the text. For example the skins used to write on had to be properly prepared by Jews, no Gentile could touch them. The skins also had to be from clean animals. Lines were drawn on the scroll to guide the writing of the text. If so much as three words were written without the guide of the line, the whole scroll was considered worthless. There had to be a space of the thickness of one hair or a thread between consonants. Also, not so much as one letter could be copied by memory! Thus they had to visually compare a good copy to their new scroll, write one letter, then look

back to the original, then copy the next letter. They could not copy an entire word at a time, but only one letter at a time. The Old Testament as we use it today is translated from the Masoretic text, from the Masoretes. The Masoretes were known for their counting. They counted many different things about the text as a check to verify they had an accurate copy. For instance, they would count how many times each letter of the alphabet occurred in each book. They knew the middle letter of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament) and the middle letter of the entire Hebrew Old Testament. They kept many statistics from their counting so that if one word or letter was left out somewhere they could detect that error. Thus from the various Hebrew manuscripts from different times, it has been shown the Jews did a phenomenal job of preserving the Old Testament.

There is one small bit of the Old Testament found in Israel in 1979 on a Silver Amulet. How it was found is an interesting story you can [read here](#). Archeologist Gabriel Barkay was taking some middle school kids with him to help with a dig outside Jerusalem. He gave a thirteen year old boy the task of cleaning one area for taking pictures of it. The boy cleaned it off and was getting bored. So the boy picked up a hammer and just started pounding. (A 13 year old boy with a hammer can be a dangerous thing!) The boy hit an area that broke through, thus they found a hidden chamber that contained many very valuable items. The article above explains about the valuables found but one of them was a rolled up amulet made of silver that had Scripture on it. It took a few years for the archeologists to figure out a safe way to unroll the amulet. The amulet has text on it from Numbers 6 and Deuteronomy 7; it is the well known priestly blessing, "The Lord bless you and protect you . . . ." The significance of this is that this amulet dates from the 7th century

B.C. That means the amulet is about 400 years older than the Dead Sea Scrolls. It was made before the Babylonian exile, while Solomon's temple was still standing. This clearly demonstrates that the Old Testament books were not written late in history as many liberal scholars have argued. They were being used before the exile. Thus it is not irrational to believe the Old Testament. The fidelity to history and the predictions of the actions of kings of the ancient world means we can believe the Old Testament really did come from God.

### ***Why are there natural disasters?***

If there is a good God, why are there natural disasters that cause suffering? This question comes to mind in the light of the recent tragic earthquake and tsunami that has devastated Northern Japan. Below is an effort to think the question through logically from what the Bible teaches.

- 1) God initially made the world good, with no suffering and no natural disasters.
- 2) God made men and women with choice. If God did not allow people to choose to sin there would not be true choice. Life constantly presents people with moral and spiritual choices.
- 3) Mankind could have lived forever without experiencing death, if they had not sinned.
- 4) Adam and Eve, the first human beings, sinned. This affected them, their descendants, and nature itself.
- 5) From creation to the Flood (1656 yrs) God gave mankind the chance to live in the original Earth in spite of sin. Mankind became more evil in spite of living in a very good environment. Less suffering did not make men and women better.

6) Just as Adam and Eve lost the provision of the Garden of Eden after they sinned, mankind lost the provision of the beautiful pre-flood Earth as a result of sin and the global Flood.

7) Suffering helps motivate men to seek their Maker, though some choose to react against God. Thus suffering presents people with a spiritual choice.

8) God's attributes are revealed in the personal ways He helps people through suffering. Thus Christians have found suffering in natural disasters helps people learn healthy attitudes and learn about God.

9) All people are sinners and thus do not truly "deserve" to live. The Bible says "the wages of sin is death." Therefore no one is wronged by God if they die in a natural disaster, even a newborn baby. God allows people to live out of goodness and mercy, and for his purposes for each person's life, not because we deserve it.

10) God, as Creator and Judge of mankind, has the right to decide who lives and who dies. He can also choose when and where natural disasters occur and control how they happen.

11) The Noachic Flood caused planet-wide changes in the Earth that led to continued natural disasters on an occasional basis. Thus, mankind must live with a less pleasant environment than the original pre-flood Earth due to mankind's collective sin.

12) Though God is sovereign over the timing and devastation of natural disasters, we should not assume that particular disasters happen because of certain sins of the people who were victims. These events should be reminders of what mankind collectively has lost. They should also motivate people to work together to help

with human needs when disasters happen. Natural disasters affect Christian and non-Christian alike.

13) Jesus came into our suffering world as one of us to redeem us. This gives people power to overcome sin in their life and enter a restored relationship with God. This helps people deal with suffering now in this life.

14) God has a plan to do away with the fallen corrupted world we live in and create a new heavens and a New Earth in the future, where there will be no more suffering. It will be the home of God's people.

### ***"The Genesis Code" Movie***

I am going to write about a movie I have not seen, something I would not normally do. There is a movie called "The Genesis Code" that was recently released February 18 but only in some parts of the country. It was not released in Texas, thus I have not seen it. From what I can find out it was apparently released in Detroit, Cincinnati, Denver, Peoria, Des Moines, and Columbia in South Carolina. But from the comments of creationist organizations I am concerned about this movie. It deals with the issue of resolving the conflict between faith and science. The story revolves around two college students, one a woman who is a Christian and a young man who becomes one. But the trouble is that the story promotes the idea that the Bible agrees with the Big Bang. The movie takes the wrong side in the debate and seems to suggest incorrect ideas about the Bible. The thing that concerns me the most is that some Christian organizations such as Focus on the Family and the Dove Foundation have recommended the movie for Christian families. Click [here for the movie website](#). Or here for a [creationist review](#) of it.