



An undenominational publication devoted to the teachings of Jesus and His apostles and dedicated to those who ask, seek and knock so they will receive, find and the door opened for them.

Are There Myths In the Bible?

Scripture claims to be the very words of God. If that is true, there can be no mistakes, blunders, errors or myths. The apostle Paul expressed it like this: “All scripture is breathed out by God” (2 Timothy 3:16). God “cannot lie” (Titus 1:2). On the other hand, a “myth” is “*a story that was told in an ancient culture to explain a practice, belief, or natural occurrence*” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). Although there are many miraculous events recorded in the Bible, none was mythological; each and every miracle really happened. If God exists there is sufficient power to do anything! The Bible says: “nothing is impossible with God” (Luke 1:37).

Those who deny the reality of biblical miracles serve a god who is too small to be the God of the Bible. If one starts with an impotent God he will end up with a powerless faith. The Bible teaches there was a real Creation, a real Adam and Eve, a real Noah, a real Jonah, a real virgin birth, Jesus’ resurrection actually happened and Christians look forward to a real second coming. One of the writers of the Scripture declared: “*We did not follow cleverly devised myths*” (2 Peter 1:16). God’s word is truth (John 17:17).

A “myth” is “*a widely held but false belief or idea.*” Some “Christian” beliefs passed from one generation to the next, are not supported by Scripture, and cannot be helpful in one’s spiritual journey. Whatever is not contained in the Bible is false. Read your Bible for yourself. Build your faith on things that will pass the test of investigation. Men may be mistaken, but God’s word is always right.

David Tarbet, editor
New Milford, Connecticut

Myth #1

“THE BIBLE CAN ONLY BE UNDERSTOOD BY CLERGY”



When God entered into the Old Covenant with the Hebrew people, He commanded that they remain familiar with the words that defined that relationship: *“And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise”* (Deuteronomy 6:6-7). Under the New Covenant the need to remain familiar with the history and terms of the covenant is vital to one’s relationship with God.

“Faith comes from hearing ... the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17). *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly”* (Colossians 3:16). *“Blessed are those who hear and keep what is written”* (Revelation 1:3). Isn’t that a beautiful arrangement?

Unfortunately, this principle has been obscured through the traditions of men that have separated believers into laity and clergy. Even now, when personal independence is valued so highly, many trust the “clergy” to do their spiritual thinking for them. They “leave it to the pros” when it comes to their personal salvation.

However, we do not need to commit Bible study to others! We can understand the Bible for ourselves! The apostle Paul said: *“We are not writing to you anything other than what you read and understand and I hope you will fully understand”* (2 Corinthians 1:13). We should not be surprised at this encouragement to read the Bible for ourselves, for Jesus promised each and everyone of His disciples: *“If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free”* (John 8:31-32). God wants us to read the scriptures, to think and pray about what we are reading and put His words into our daily life. God has great confidence in our ability to understand the truth.

I was amazed when I met members of the church of Christ who encouraged me to read the Bible for myself and proved to me, from the Bible, that God wants it that way. They knew I would have many questions, and I did, but I was always able to find my answers in the Bible. I am a Christian today, not because an ordained clergyman told me what to believe, but because of the organic life of God’s Word which I continue to read for myself!

—Arthur Barry, Minister
Valley Cities Church of Christ.
Sayre, Pennsylvania



Myth

#2

"YOU CAN PROVE ANYTHING BY THE BIBLE"

The Bible has been twisted to justify all sorts of actions and doctrines. Let me illustrate this point.

Philippians 4:13 reads: "*I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.*" Some take this verse to mean that one can accomplish anything his heart desires if he has a relationship with Christ. For instance, if he wants a million dollars, a relationship with Christ will guarantee he gets the money! However, in this scripture Paul is talking about contentment, not achievements. God gave him the strength to be content in difficult circumstances.

It is popular to believe that all one needs to do to be saved is believe the gospel. Some refer to Mark 1:15, "*Jesus came ... saying, 'The kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.'*" When Jesus called people to "*believe in the gospel*" he connected it with "*repentance*" and the "*kingdom of God.*"

What is the "*gospel*"? The core of the "*gospel*" is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). The "*gospel*" contains commandments to be "*obeyed*" (Romans 10:16). To "*repent*" means to change one's attitude and behavior. The "*king-*

dom" is the reign of God over His obedient sons and daughters, and is sometimes used interchangeably with the "*church*" (Matthew 16:18-19).

Considering other verses on the same subject, we learn that when one truly "*believes*" the gospel, his faith will include "*repentance*". He will become *obedient* to the commandments of Christ. He will serve the Lord in His "*kingdom/church*".

A failure to consider all Bible passages on the same topic will lead us astray. Attempting to "*prove*" doctrines and practices while ignoring the rest of what the Bible teaches on the same subject results in confusion. "*Twisting*" the scriptures leads to destruction (2 Peter 3:16).

Scripture says: "For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching...but will accumulate...teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths" (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

We need to follow *the truth*, the *whole truth* and *nothing but the truth*.

— Zachary Dayton, Minister
Church of Christ
Montpelier, Vermont

Myth
#3

"SALVATION COMES BY THE 'SINNERS PRAYER'"

Tele-evangelists invite people to recite the "Sinner's Prayer" in order to be saved. "*Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner. I believe you are the Son of God who died on the cross for my sins. Come into my heart, Lord Jesus, and be my Savior. Amen.*" But does the Bible teach sinners to recite the "Sinner's Prayer" ?

The story is told that a seeker of truth heard about the "Sinner's Prayer," purchased a Bible, and searched to find the prayer in it. After a diligent search it was not found. He went back to the bookstore and asked the manager where he could find this prayer in his Bible. The manager examined several versions of the Bible but could not find it. The seeker and the store manager concluded there must be terrible mistake, and contacted the company that published the Bible to inform them the "Sinner's Prayer" had been left out. They hoped a correction would be made in future editions. However, the publisher made no changes because the "Sinner's Prayer" simply is not in the Bible.

The scriptures teach that faith in Jesus Christ is necessary to have our sins forgiven. Those who "*believe in Him should not perish but have eternal life*" (John 3:16). The faith that saves is *active* and *obedient trust* in Jesus. Sinners cannot save themselves by their own good works, but saving faith includes obedience to the commandments of Jesus. To "*believe*" in Jesus and to "*obey*" Him go together: "*Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life*" (John 3:36).

The scriptures teach that we must repent of our sins. Repentance is not merely an emotional experience, but requires a "change" of attitudes and a "change" of actions. "*Repent and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out*" (Acts 3:9).

The scriptures teach that we must be baptized (immersed) for the forgiveness of our sins. "*Repent and be baptized every one of you...for the forgiveness of your sins*" (Acts 2:38). Both men and women "*believed and were baptized*" (Acts 8:12-13). When they were baptized they "*went on their way rejoicing*" (Acts 8:35-39). When the jailer was told to *believe on Jesus*, he *listened* to the word of God and was *baptized* immediately. After being baptized he *rejoiced* in his salvation (Acts 16:30-34). Paul was *baptized* to "*wash away*" his sins (Acts 22:16).

There is no Bible record of anyone being told to pray a "sinner's prayer" to be saved.

— George Hajali, Associate Minister
Church of Christ, Lawrence, Massachusetts

Myth #4

"THE BIBLE IS CONFUSING"

Seeing so many churches which claim to follow the Bible unable to agree among themselves may cause you to think "If those who claim to follow the Bible can't agree on what it says, how can I understand it?" It may come as a surprise, but I believe the Bible is fairly simple to understand. So, why the confusion?

There are times **language** has the ability to confuse us. Some translations of the Bible contain language difficult to be understood. They contain words we don't use in conversation today. Unfamiliar words add to our confusion. I've been reading the Bible for more than 30 years and I have learned there are good, reliable translations that use modern language. These are easier to understand.

Another reason some people get confused is failing to appreciate the **context** of scripture. Some open the Bible, read a passage where ever the page falls, and conclude that is what they need to do. This way of reading the Bible does not consider passages in context. Here is an illustration:

A man decided to do whatever the Bible told him to do. He opened his Bible, closed his eyes and put his finger down on Matthew 27:5 which reads, "*So Judas went away and hanged himself.*" He decided to flip a few pages and let his finger fall on Luke 10:37 where he read: "*Go and do likewise.*" Once again, the man was shaken by what he read and decided to try again. He again closes his eyes, flipped a few pages and his eyes fell on John 13:27: "*What you are about to do, do quickly.*" By haphazardly taking verses out of context this man concluded that God wanted him to go kill himself immediately!

When we read the Scripture in contemporary English, we need to study verses in context — with consideration of verses that go before and those that follow. When we study God's Word in this way, we will find it illuminating. God is not a God of confusion. The Bible is a coherent collection of 66 books which harmonize with one another. They tell the story of God's love for His creation and His plan for our redemption through Jesus Christ. When we approach the Bible with the right attitude, eager to learn, the Bible becomes clear. We can understand what God expects us to do and to become.



—Jay Repecko Minister
Church of Christ
Concord, New Hampshire

"THE BIBLE HAS HISTORICAL BLUNDERS"

Some religions are not concerned with historical accuracies, but base their teachings on things "mystical" and ritualistic. Christianity, however, is built on verifiable facts of history, because the God of the Bible is the God of history. It is remarkable how the science of archaeology continues to confirm the Bible's historical trustworthiness!

HITTITES: For centuries the Bible spoke about the Hittite nation. However, until the 20th century there was no evidence outside the Bible that such a powerful nation ever existed. No historical trace of the Hittites had been found. Critics were bold in their charge that this was a Bible blunder. Then clay tablets found in Assyria and Egypt gave the world a picture of the mighty Hittite nation. A battle between Ramses II (Egypt) and the Hittites occurred in 1287 BC. In 2020 [National Geographic](#) highlighted an excellent documentary on the Hittite chariots. Archaeologists have proven that Hittites were in contact with Bible characters as early as Abraham; the nation rivaled Egyptian dynasties and Mesopotamia kingdoms. Today no one doubts that the Bible was right all along!



NAMES OF ANCIENT KINGS: The Bible lists names of 47 kings of nations in Egypt, Babylon, Syria and Greece. No other historical record mentions every one of these kings, and skeptics denied they existed. But now archaeologists have found the names of every one of these 47 kings exactly in the places the Bible said they ruled.

GEOGRAPHICAL BOUNDARIES:

One of the world's leading archaeologists, Sir William Ramsey, set out to prove that the book of Acts was full of geographical blunders, including the reference to the cities of Lystra and Derbe being in the province of Lyconia (Acts 14:6). He discovered the geographical boundary marker that showed these cities were indeed part of Lyconia in 37-72 AD -- the years the apostle Paul was there!. He did not expect to find that the Bible was accurate in its geographical descriptions. Ramsey became a believer and strong defender of the historical accuracy of the Bible. He concluded that Luke (author of the book of Acts) was "a historian of the first rank."

"Many of the archaeological discoveries made in recent years by those who have been digging in the ruins of biblical cities coincide exactly with the biblical narratives. Piece by piece, the Old Testament is being confirmed, supplemented and illustrated. Even things that once seemed most like a myth are being shown to have been factual."

—[Halley's Bible Handbook](#), (2000), p 1101.

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