

## The Reliability of the Bible

As Christians, we depend on the Bible as our source for doctrine and inspiration. Therefore, our first task is to determine the reliability of the Bible.

1. List three reasons why the Bible should be considered to be reliable.
2. The Bible is intended to lead us to God. What characteristics does God indicate belong to Himself alone (6)? (Is 44:6, 45:5-6: Is 44:24, 45:12: Is 43:13: Is 41:22-23, 46:10: Is 43:1-3; 11: Is 43:25)
3. How does God show that He is God? (Is 41:22-23, Amos 3:7, John 13:19, 14:29, Rom 1:20, Psalm 19:1-3)
4. In the days of Nebuchadnezzar (601 BC), what facts about the future did God reveal? (Dan 2:31-45)
5. What was the first kingdom? (Dan 2:38; 7:4,17)
6. What was the second kingdom? (Dan 2:39, 7:5, 8:20)
7. What was the third kingdom? (Dan 2:39, 7:6, 8:21)
8. What was the fourth kingdom? (Dan 2:40, 7:7, Matt 27:27)
9. What happened to the fourth kingdom? (Dan 2:41-43)
10. What will be the final outcome? (Dan 2:44-45)

A number of critics say that the Bible contains contradictions, and therefore cannot be trusted. A great deal of effort has been spent trying to show that God's word is therefore nonsense. One classic example of this is the chronology of the kings of Judah and Israel. For literally centuries, critics declared that it was impossible to reconcile the biblical statements with the calendar. It fell to Dr. Edwin Thiele in the 1950's to show how the Jews tracked "accession" and "regnal" years. His work led to our current understanding of the absolute precision with which the Bible records history.

11. What does God say about the truth of the Bible? (2 Tim 3:16-17, Titus 1:2)

Read the story of the healing of the centurion's servant in Matthew 8:5-13. Then read the same story as recorded in Luke 7:1-10.

12. Who actually spoke to Jesus?

13. Is there a contradiction between the two passages? If so, can it be resolved?
14. How should we handle challenges to our faith when presented as "contradictions" in the Bible?
15. Is it necessary for each Christian to resolve every apparent Bible contradiction before accepting the truth of the Bible? Why?

Resources:

Difficult Passages in the New Testament, Robert H. Stein, Baker Book House, 1990  
Hard Sayings of the Bible, Walter C. Kaiser, et al, InterVarsity Press, 1992  
Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible, John W. Haley, Whitaker House, 1992

Web Resources:

Answers in Action, <http://www.answers.org/Apologetics/contradictions.html>  
The World Wide Christian Web, <http://www.superb.com/wwwc>