

Is the Bible *Really* From God?

By Norm R. Allen Jr.

The title of this column comes from the title of a pamphlet (*Awake!*) from the Jehovah's Witnesses (JWs). On page 3 of the pamphlet, it is pointed out that the Bible is composed of 66 books, "which were written by some 40 writers over a period of about 1,600 years." The JWs, though, believe that these writers were inspired by God. However, why would God not write the Bible himself, considering its supposed importance to all of humanity? In any case, the JWs say "This can be likened to a businessman dictating a letter to his secretary." (Note the quaint sexism in the analogy.) The problem is that businessmen and secretaries (or administrative assistants) actually exist. More importantly, both are *fallible*.

What is more baffling is that the pamphlet states: "While God at times allowed the writers to use their own words to record his message, at other times he gave them precise wording." Here, the problem of fallibility becomes clear. Why would fallible human beings ever be trusted to use their own words where the Bible is concerned? And how can we tell when God is actually speaking and when human beings are using their own words?

The tract goes on to state that some biblical writers "saw visions from God." Yet how can we be sure that these supposed visions were not hallucinations? Moreover, today about 3 percent of the U.S. population is fantasy prone. One can only imagine how much larger the fantasy prone percentage of grossly superstitious people must have been during biblical times. Finally, one simply cannot rule out the possibility that these supposed visionaries were just lying.

It is always fun when Bible believers try to get scientific. On page 4 of the tract the reader is told that God is "the Source of solar heat." That is odd! Most people would say that the *sun* is the source of solar heat. Moreover, contrary to what the biblical writers believed, the sun is a star, and like all stars, is the result of cosmic clouds of gas and dust, gravity, intense heat, and so forth. We have known for years – and now have photographic evidence from the Hubble telescope and other high-powered telescopes – that stars are formed naturally. No God is necessary for their explanation.

On the same page, the reader also learns that “it was not until the mid-1800’s that Austrian botanist Gregor Mendel discovered the basic principles of genetics.” Why so long? Why did not God clearly spell this out in the Bible, letting it be known that it would not be understood by human beings until the mid-1800’s?

This is a great segue into the topic of biblical prophecy. On page 5, it is related that Isaiah prophesied “that a conqueror by the name of Cyrus would overthrow Babylon....”

The late Farrell Till was an expert on supposed biblical prophecies. He has a lengthy piece titled “Prophecies: Imaginary and Unfulfilled,” at https://infidels.org/library/modern/farrell_till/prophecy.html.

Till says: “As a prophet...Isaiah seems to have struck out all the way around.” For example, the noted skeptic points out that the apologist must prove “that those statements were unquestionably made before the times of those kings whose reigns were allegedly predicted in terms so specific that even their names were used. And how can he do that?”

Till continues: “Only the most brazen-faced inerrantists will deny that anachronisms occur throughout the Bible.” The fact of the matter is that many noted biblical scholars maintain “that the references to Cyrus were redacted into the text of Isaiah *after* the reign of Cyrus had become a fact.”

According to page 6 of the tract, “The Bible Answers Life’s Big Questions.” The Bible might provide answers, but they are not the *correct* answers. In response to the problem of evil, the Bible blames “man.” However, “man” does not create natural disasters or acts of God that harm humans and innocent animals alike.

The Bible also blames Adam and Eve for sin entering the world. But why should everyone have to suffer because two knuckleheads could not follow God’s instructions? Then again, if this myth turns out to be true, we should all thank Eve for teaching us how to think and challenge the notion of blind obedience to anyone.

The tract also includes a section on how “A Software Designer Explains His Faith.” Dr. Fan Yu, born in China, says, “I tried to calculate the probability of a protein originating by an unguided process.” (p. 13) He concluded that “it is essentially impossible.” (ibid)

This is just the God of the gaps. We do know that proteins are formed from amino acids, the basic building blocks of life. Furthermore, we know that amino acids organize themselves, and that they do so selectively. However, we cannot definitively say how life came to be. One thing is certain: Life is a part of nature and nature appears to be self-contained. There is no reason to believe that we must go outside nature to explain the origins of anything that exists *within* nature.

As for the odds, how can anyone say it is “essentially impossible” for proteins to have originated by an unguided process? Where is this man getting his numbers for the supposed calculations? And what is the probability of a possibly existent mystery *God* coming to be without a creator? Why don’t theists ever do *those* calculations? And where would they get the numbers?

To paraphrase one of my all-time favorite tweets: Just because science can’t explain something, that’s not your cue to shove God in there like some well-lubed penis. (In other words, just admit that you do not know.)

As usual, the JWs have failed to prove their case. But, of course, that won’t stop them from trying.