

## ***Donkeys, Diseases and Diamonds!*** ***(proof of the authenticity of Scriptures)***

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A little while ago, I suggested that if we all read about three chapters that we would be able to complete the entire Bible in slightly more than one year (396 days to be more precise). The week after that Bijoy encouraged us to be marinated (his words) with readings from the Bible. The question that I want to consider here today is whether or not Scripture is really a *bona fide* lamp unto our feet and light unto our path (Psalm 119:105). If Scripture is indeed the word of God, then we must read it daily and to allow Scripture to guide, build, encourage, search and correct us. But if Scripture is NOT the word of God, then why bother?

I remember this happening to me when I was about 18 years old. I woke up one morning thinking that I would no longer believe in God or in the Bible. It was not an overnight thing, and although I was living with a group of Christians, in the premises known as the Glasgow Chinese Christian Fellowship Center, where services were held, I had become quite disillusioned about the whole matter of my faith. So that morning, I said to a God, whom I no longer quite believed in, I told Him that I no longer wanted to follow Him or to believe in His word. Just as I said that, I felt compelled to read Luke chapters 1 and 2. Luke chapter 1 was (at that time for me) just some boring stuff and tales about two women getting pregnant. Then I turned to Luke chapter 2, fully expecting that this would be the last chapter that I was ever going to read from the Bible for the rest of my life. And these were the words that I read:

*In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. <sup>2</sup> (This was the first census that took place while<sup>[a]</sup> Quirinius was governor of Syria.) <sup>3</sup> And everyone went to their own town to register.*

*<sup>4</sup> So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. <sup>5</sup> He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, <sup>7</sup> and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.*

You might look at this and say, so what? What does any of this have to do with whether we can trust the Bible as the word of God? As I was reading these verses, I kept hearing the word 'map' in my head. So, I looked up the map and to my astonishment, I realized something. You see, Publius Sulpicius Quirinius, governor of Roman Syria had decreed a census and for that census to be done, everyone had to go back home. Joseph had to travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem, all because of this census. This was a distance of some 150 km and Mary, heavily pregnant, would have to travel on donkey back to get from Nazareth to Bethlehem. What woman, heavily pregnant, would want to make that trip in a car, today, let alone on a donkey back.

And then I remembered a verse from Micah 5:2 which states: "*But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me, one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times*". Now, you might not know this but during those times there were two Bethlehems and yet, 400 years before Jesus was born, Micah 5:2 made it very clear where He would be born in!

I sat in my room in Glasgow, stunned by what I was looking at. 400 years earlier, a prophecy was written about the Messiah being born in Bethlehem Ephrathah. 400 years later, a Roman governor decrees a census which compelled Joseph and Mary to go to Bethlehem Ephrathah. And then this gentle voice inside me said, 'Still doubt me?' I got down on my knees and cried and declared my total belief in the Lord.

But that was only the beginning of a journey of discovery of the veracity of the Bible and why we should indeed marinate ourselves in Scripture. And today, I want to share a few of these with you, from the lenses of science, especially from biochemistry and microbiology.

Why do this – again I say. If the Bible is true and authentic, then we need to read it and let the words of Scripture permeate into our lives and lead us. If the Bible is not true, then why bother indeed. Let's look at a few examples that shows us that the Bible is no ordinary book, no ordinary fable, filled with superstitions and myths, but that there is an Almighty intelligence backing it.

### **(1) Not day 7, day 8**

We will start from the first few books of the Bible – for you see, there actually is a lot of biochemistry and microbiology embedded in these first five books. What is important is also that you remember that what was given to the Israelites in the book of Deuteronomy was after the Israelites had spent about 430 years in Egypt. During that time the Jews would have picked up some of the medical practices of the Egyptians – but more about this later.

Let's take a look at one of the early places where the matter of biochemistry appeared in the Bible. Let's read Genesis 17:10 – 14.

What do you think might be the most important phrase here in this short passage?

Well, that is found in verse 12 – every male among you at eight days old is to be circumcised. Why eight days? Why not at birth? Why not on day 12 or much later? There are two important blood clotting elements. One is Vitamin K. Vitamin K is not formed in the body until between day 5 and day 7 post birth. The second factor which is essential is prothrombin. The level of prothrombin reaches 30% on day 3, peaks at 110% on day 8 and then levels off to remain at 100%.

In other words, the best time to circumcise a male infant is (generally speaking) on the eighth day. Now, how did Abraham and Moses know this given that they did not have the scientific knowledge then that we have today? Well, one could argue that perhaps this was something that they derived through trial and error – but if you look at the Bible, the command is simple and straightforward – circumcise on the 8<sup>th</sup> day. As I read this, I began to get excited, for surely, this was evidence that there is an almighty, all-knowing Creator who is leading the people in the Bible.

Now let's move on to the time after the Israelites had spent some 430 years in Egypt. During that period of time, the Egyptians had their own form of practice of medicine, and these can be seen in the writings that are found in their medical text such as the Brugsch Papyrus (dated to the early New Kingdom of Egypt), the Carlsberg Papyrus, the Papyrus Chester Beatty VI, the very famous Ebers Papyrus, the Edwin Smith Papyrus and so on. The Ebers Papyrus is the longest and most complete ancient Egyptian medical text and has over 700 prescriptions and spells. While there were a lot of quite admirable practices, included in these papyri were cures which required the Egyptians to use things like lizard blood, pelican dung, dead mice, urine, moldy bread human and animal dung. For instance, raw meat was used to treat wounds, presumably because it was flesh on flesh! Remember that the Israelites had lived for 430 years in this sort of an environment. Yet, when we look at how they dealt with medical practice, it was a world of difference!

Perhaps this is what was meant by the words of Deuteronomy 7:15 where it says: *The Lord will remove all sickness from you; He will not put on you all the terrible diseases of Egypt that you know about, but He will*

*inflict them on all who hate you.* And the reason that they would be afflicted is because of their own lack of hygiene and their use of spells and incantations.

## **(2) Why were the Israelites told not to pig out?**

Deut 14:8 says *'The pig is also unclean...you are not to eat their meat or touch their carcasses'.*

The *Trichinella nematode* is found in meat like pork. If you get infected by this you may get the following problems, diarrhea, stomach pain, severe tiredness and weakness, nausea and vomiting.

Moses was told to inform his people that there were not to eat a number of things – among them pork. I believe that this is because pork needs to be properly and thoroughly cooked. But that is something that is not always possible during a mass exodus. Can you imagine the sort of inconvenience that might be caused if the Israelites had to take diarrhea breaks every so often. The better thing to do is to avoid these sorts of foods altogether. (Perhaps that is why now that they are no longer nomadic that Peter in a vision was told 'get up, kill and eat' – Acts 10)

## **(3) Dig, Do and Cover**

Deut 23: 12 – 14

We now know that human excrement contains bacteria of various sorts including *Salmonella*, *Shigella*, *Campylobacter* and *E.coli*. If these get into water sources and then you drink such contaminated water, you are going to be sick. That is why, the Lord told the Israelites who were leaving ancient Egypt with all its medical spells and magic, to engage in basic hygiene. If you want to relieve yourself do not just turn around, squat and do it (as they still do in many parts of Cambodia). Instead, you are to (1) pick up your tools (like a spade), get outside the camp and keep away from the waterways, (2) dig a hole, (3) relieve yourself and then (4) cover the whole thing up.

## **(4) Wash in running water**

In Leviticus 15:13 the Israelites are told to wash in running water (wash your clothes and bathe your body in running water). Why running water?

In 1846 Dr Ignaz Semmelweis noted that many women in the hospital's maternity ward were dying from puerperal fever (childbed fever). This was before the era of microbiology. He discovered that five times more women in the clinics staffed by doctors and medical students died of childbed fever than did those who were in clinics staffed by midwives. Over time, one of his colleagues, a pathologist also died of childbed fever, but the pathologist was not pregnant! He was not even a woman. The pathologist had pricked his finger during an autopsy of someone who had died of childbed fever. Semmelweis hypothesized that there were cadaverous particles, little piece of corpse, that were being transmitted. So, he ordered everyone to wash their hands. Childbed fever deaths reduced dramatically but in some places after the first reduction, rates went up. And that was because in some places they washed with running water, while in others they used basins of water. If Semmelweis had read his Bible, maybe he might have noted that the God of all Science knew a thing or two about running water! Unfortunately, Semmelweis died discredited and penniless – at 47 years of age he was committed to a mental asylum.

Perhaps it is time for us to move to other realms of science and see the wonders of science in the Bible. We will do this looking at the Mount of Olives, Artificial Intelligence and why there might be no diamonds in heaven.

## **(5) The Olive Split**

**4** On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south. (Zechariah 14:4)

In 1964 a fault line was discovered running down the middle of the Mount of Olives – this is something that has been confirmed by geologists. It is just waiting for something to trigger an earthquake and when that happens, the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west. Could it be that the Mount of Olives is just waiting for the Lord to return to split into two? The point is that this is actually recorded in the Bible, in the Old Testament. What a wonderful time that will be when it happens.

## **6. And all eyes shall see Him return**

“Look, he is coming with the clouds,” and “every eye will see him, even those who pierced him”; and all peoples on earth “will mourn because of him.” So shall it be! Amen. (Rev 1:7)

It is interesting that Scriptures say that EVERY EYE shall see Him. I have often wondered how this is possible given that (a) when He returns, His feet will touch the Mount of Olives (i.e., it will be at a specific place) and that (b) when it is morning in Israel, it will be night in some other parts of the world. So, surely it would not be that every eye will see His return. Or perhaps it might be that what would happen is that every eye will see but that there would be a time delay.

But look at what is happening today. StarLink, OneWeb and a consortium of other companies are surrounding the globe to provide complete global Internet coverage. You have to ask how then does all of this lend itself to the prophecy that EVERY EYE shall see Him.?

OneWeb, hopes to offer its clients worldwide coverage by the end of the year.

“This means that we will be able to provide what has been missing for a long period of time: high-speed, low latency broadband connectivity onto every ocean-going vessel — yachts, maritime industry, oil rigs offshore — every aircraft will now be connected with a high speed, low latency connectivity,” OneWeb Chairman Sunil Bharti Mittal said on a call with reporters Monday morning.

“Desert, forest, mountain, Himalayas — hard-to-reach areas will all start to get covered.”

This, plus telecommunication advances like LightRadio have made it possible to achieve a high rate of Internet penetration. We are fast approaching the time when indeed, Every Eye shall see His return.

## **7. Artificial Intelligence and world domination**

And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause all who do not worship the image of the beast to be killed. (Revelation 13:15)

Could this be about Artificial Intelligence? In fact, in Australia they are working on merging human brain cells with AI.

On July 18, 2023, Worldcoin's CEO Sam Altram admitted that the global elite will soon rollout a mandatory global ID for all citizens – whether they like it or not.

## **8. No diamonds in heaven?**

Now we get to the Diamonds part of this morning's considerations. While some might argue that points 6 and 7 are speculative, there is something that is really interesting in the Bible. Let's turn to Revelation 21:18 – 20

Remember that the words above were written a few thousand years ago. But only in the past century has it been discovered that gems can either be anisotropic or isotropic. And cross polarizing light was only discovered in 1669 by the Danish physicist and mathematician, Erasmus Bartholinus, although he was actually not aware of his own discovery. So what does this have to do with Revelation 21?

The 12 gemstones in Rev 21 are what we call anisotropic gems. These gems can show off colorful patterns under pure light (or cross-polarizing light).

Diamonds, rubies and garnets on the other hand are isotropic and when pure light passes through them there is no beauty at all. The result is dull and drab.

In heaven, the Lord God Almighty is the one pure light. Revelation 22:5 states that in heaven we will need no source of light because the Lord will be the source of light.

How did the authors of Revelation know about cross polarizing light (or pure light) and its relationship with these gemstones? Normal light bounces off surfaces whereas pure or cross polarized light oscillates in a single plane. When this pure light hits these gemstones, which make up the foundations of heaven, the whole place is a wonderment of color.

This one fact alone should tell you that Scripture is totally trustworthy.

### **How then should we view Scripture?**

We need to immerse ourselves in Scripture. We can Read, Study, Memorize scripture. We should really read whole chapters, and wherever possible, whole biblical books and understand the text holistically.

Might I recommend this dosage: 3 times a day, each time 2 chapters? This will help you get through the Bible in less than a year (about 200 days).

Study the books of the Bible, perhaps even enrol for an online Bible Course.

Memorize passages – even better whole passages. And reading and re-reading can help you here.

We need to be saturated by the word of the Lord. Remember John 15, where it says:

**15** “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. <sup>2</sup>He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes<sup>[a]</sup> so that it will be even more fruitful. <sup>3</sup>You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup>Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.”

Becoming clean and remaining in the vine requires us to read and read and read the Bible.

Open my eyes that I may see  
Glimpses of truth Thou hast for me  
Place in my hands the wonderful key  
That shall unclasp and set me free  
Silently now I wait for Thee  
Ready, my God, Thy will to see  
Open my eyes, illumine me  
Spirit divine