### To Mark Fackler, who is a friend of the Bible and who understands laughter

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#### INTRODUCTION

Can we speak of *the Bible* and trivia in the same breath? Can this inspired document that is pored over with great seriousness by pastors, seminarians, and laypeople provide material for leisure and even laughter?

I think it can, and as I began writing this book, I became more and more convinced that the Bible, that divine book through which God's Truth shines, is an earthy, human collection of people and incidents that cannot help but amuse (as well as enlighten) a reader. I believe, as most Christians do, that the Bible has come down to us through God's initiative. I also believe that God chose to present his truth through stories, oracles, and letters that not only inspire us but also captivate us as any good stories do. Even unbelievers have recognized for centuries that the Bible is a veritable treasure trove of stories, as attested to by the many poems, plays, novels, films, paintings, and sculptures that are based on the Scriptures.

The Bible throbs with human life. It is full of sublime teaching—and sometimes pathetic, sometimes amusing pictures of human failings. It evokes tears and laughter, repulsion and admiration. To probe its many characters and stories cannot be wrong. To ask questions about its content can, at the very least, provide innocent amusement. Even better, asking questions can lead us deeper into the content and make us appreciate and (it is hoped) study more deeply this fascinating treasure of stories.

This is not the first collection of questions and answers about the Bible, and it probably will not be the last. However, most previous books seem to have focused on the seriousness of the text, neglecting the possibilities of finding things to chuckle over and cry over. Too many of these volumes have been painfully dry, with questions arranged in neat Genesis-to-Revelation sequence.

I have tried to avoid dryness at all costs. The arrangement here is topical, with such topics as "Strange Ways to Die," "Hairy and Hairless" (yes, really), "All Kinds of Villains," "Women on the Throne," and so on. I hope the choice of topics will itself provide some chuckles. The category "Not to Be Taken Seriously" is just for laughs, and so is "Curious Quotations." (One can't include *every* subject in the book, of course, but the range is wide—supernatural fires, prostitutes, creepy animals, priests, violent men, earthquakes, prisoners, hugs and kisses, warriors, miracles, and many, many others.)

The topics are arranged under fourteen sections. However, despite the attempt at organization, the book is for browsing. It was made to fill up your time commuting on the train, the hour you spend waiting at the dentist's office, the few minutes before dinner is on the table, the hour on the freeway when you and the other two people in the backseat are in the mood for a game of "quiz me." In other words, the book is designed to be read randomly, anywhere, and with no preparation of any kind. It is designed to entertain the person who unashamedly likes to be entertained—and challenged. By the way, to avoid the hassle of having all the answers in one section at the back of the book, we've placed the answers in the most logical place—on the backs of the pages, behind the questions.

I would like to hear from any person who is able to correctly (and without peeking at the answers on the back of each page) answer every question in this book. In doing the research for this book, I learned quite a bit, but not enough to answer every question correctly—at least, not yet.

Happy reading! I hope you enjoy getting better acquainted with the divine—and very human—Book of books.

# PART ONE

# A CAST OF THOUSANDS



#### **SEE** THE NAKED TRUTH

- 1. What prophet walked around naked for three years?
- 2. Who went naked as a way of wailing over the fate of Jerusalem?
- 3. What king of Israel, struck with the power to prophesy, stripped off his clothes and lay naked for a whole day and night?
- 4. What father lay naked and intoxicated in his tent, which so disturbed his sons that they came and covered him?
- 5. In war, what persons were often humiliated by being stripped?
- 6. What prophet threatened to take away the flax that covered his wife's nakedness?
- 7. What disciple, busy at his daily work, was caught naked by Jesus?
- 8. Who embarrassed his wife by shamelessly exposing himself while dancing for joy?
- 9. Where did a follower of Jesus escape an angry mob by running away naked?
- 10. What prophet spoke of a woman (merely a symbol) who committed sexual sins while naked?

#### **⋙** LAUGHERS AND DANCERS

- 1. Whose entrancing dance proved fatal for John the Baptist?
- 2. Who held a feast with dancing when his son returned?
- 3. Who laughed at Nehemiah's plans to rebuild Jerusalem?
- 4. Who danced with all his might when the ark of the covenant was brought to Jerusalem?
- 5. Who laughed when she heard she would bear a son in her old age?

#### The Naked Truth (Answers)

- 1. Isaiah (20:3)
- 2. The prophet Micah (1:8)
- 3. Saul (1 Samuel 19:24)
- 4. Noah (Genesis 9:21-23)
- 5. Captives (2 Chronicles 28:15)
- 6. Hosea (2:3, 9)
- 7. Simon Peter (John 21:7)
- 8. King David (2 Samuel 6:20)
- 9. Gethsemane (Mark 14:51-52)
- 10. Ezekiel (23:10, 29)

#### Laughers and Dancers (Answers)

- 1. The daughter of Herodias (Matthew 14:6-8)
- 2. The father of the prodigal son (Luke 15:25)
- 3. Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem (Nehemiah 2:19)
- 4. David (2 Samuel 6:14)
- 5. Sarah (Genesis 18:10-12)

- 6. Who was snickered at for claiming that a dead girl was only asleep?
- 7. What prophetess led the women of Israel in a victory dance?
- 8. Whose ill-fated daughter came out dancing after his victory over the Ammonites?
- 9. Who had his decree for a Passover celebration laughed at by the men of Israel?
- 10. What tribe took wives from among the dancers at Shiloh?
- 11. Who came out dancing after David killed Goliath?
- 12. What is the only book in the Bible to mention God laughing?
- 13. What epistle tells Christians to turn their laughter to mourning?
- 14. What old woman said, "God hath made me to laugh so that all who hear will laugh with me"?
- 15. Who told Job that God would certainly fill a righteous man with laughter?
- 16. According to Psalm 126, what caused laughter among the Jews?
- 17. What old man laughed at God's promise that he would father a child in his old age?
- 18. What group of people were busy dancing and partying when David caught up with them?
- 19. What graven image did the Israelites dance in front of?
- 20. What book says there is a time to weep and a time to laugh?
- 21. Who, in the Beatitudes, does Jesus promise laughter to?
- 22. What book says that laughter is foolishness?
- 23. What book says that even in laughter the heart is sorrowful?
- 24. Whom did Jesus speak of as dancing in the streets?
- 25. Who danced around the altar of their false god?
- 26. Whose wife despised him for dancing in the streets?
- 27. What instrument is usually associated with dance in the Bible?
- 28. What book says, "Our dance is turned into mourning"?

- 6. Jesus (Matthew 9:23-24)
- 7. Miriam (Exodus 15:20)
- 8. Jephthah's (Judges 11:34)
- 9. Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 30:5, 10)
- 10. Benjamin (Judges 21:20, 23)
- 11. The women of Israel (1 Samuel 18:6-7)
- 12. Psalms (2:4; 37:13; 59:8)
- 13. James (4:9)
- 14. Sarah (Genesis 21:6)
- 15. Bildad (Job 8:21)
- 16. Bringing the captives back to Jerusalem (Psalm 126:2)
- 17. Abraham (Genesis 17:17)
- 18. The Amalekites (1 Samuel 30:16-18)
- 19. The golden calf made by Aaron (Exodus 32:19)
- 20. Ecclesiastes (3:4)
- 21. Those who weep (Luke 6:21)
- 22. Ecclesiastes (2:2)
- 23. Proverbs (14:13)
- 24. Children (Luke 7:32)
- 25. The priests of Baal (1 Kings 18:26)
- 26. David's wife, Michal (1 Chronicles 15:29)
- 27. The timbrel, or tambourine (Exodus 15:20; Judges 11:34; Job 21:12; Psalm 150:4)
- 28. Lamentations (5:15)

- 29. According to Job, whose children dance around and make music?
- 30. What Old Testament character's name means "laughter"?

#### **SEE THEY DID IT FIRST**

- 1. What king had the first birthday party in the Bible?
- 2. Where was the first beauty contest in the Bible, and who won?
- 3. Who was the first Christian martyr?
- 4. What is the first dream mentioned in the Bible?
- 5. What is the first war mentioned in the Bible?
- 6. Who was the first drunk?
- 7. Where was the first piggy bank?
- 8. Who was the first person to fall asleep during a sermon?
- 9. What is the first commandment in the Bible?
- 10. What is the first purchase of land in the Bible?
- 11. What was the first instance of book burning?
- 12. What was the first military coup in Israel?
- 13. Who used the first pseudonym?
- 14. Who built the first city?
- 15. Who was the first hunter?
- 16. Who was the first murderer?
- 17. What is the first book of the Bible named after a woman?
- 18. Who is the first prophet mentioned in the Bible?
- 19. Where did Jesus work his first miracle?
- 20. What was the first of the ten plagues of Egypt?

- 29. The children of the wicked (Job 21:7-12)
- 30. Isaac (Genesis 21:3-6)

#### They Did It First (Answers)

- 1. Pharaoh, at the time Joseph was in Egypt (Genesis 40:20)
- 2. The one at the court of Persian ruler Ahasuerus; the winner was Esther (Esther 2).
- 3. Stephen (Acts 6:7–8:2)
- 4. The dream of Abimelech, in which he was told to return Sarah to Abraham (Genesis 20:3-8)
- 5. The war of the kings of the north, led by Chedorlaomer, king of Elam (Genesis 14)
- 6. Noah, who planted a vineyard after leaving the ark (Genesis 9:21)
- 7. In the temple at Jerusalem; it was a chest, ordered by King Joash, who had a hole bored in the lid to keep priests from stealing funds (2 Kings 12).
- 8. Eutychus, who dozed off and fell out of a window during Paul's sermon (Acts 20:9)
- 9. "Be fruitful and multiply" (Genesis 1:28).
- 10. Abraham bought the Cave of Machpelah as a tomb for Sarah (Genesis 23:3-20).
- 11. Jeremiah's scroll, sent to King Jehoiakim, was burnt piece by piece as it was being read to the king (Jeremiah 36:21-23).
- 12. Absalom led an attempt to overthrow his father, David (2 Samuel 15–18).
- 13. Esther, whose real name was Hadassah (Esther 2:7)
- 14. Cain (Genesis 4:17)
- 15. Nimrod (Genesis 10:9)
- 16. Cain (Genesis 4:8)
- 17. Ruth
- 18. Abraham (Genesis 20:7)
- 19. Cana (John 2:1-11)
- 20. The river turns to blood (Exodus 7:14-24).

- 21. Who was the first king of Israel?
- 22. Who were the first foreign missionaries?
- 23. Who was the first shepherdess?
- 24. Who was the first single man to be exiled?
- 25. Who was the first judge of Israel?
- 26. Who was the first disciple chosen by Jesus?
- 27. Who wore the first bridal veil?
- 28. Who told the first lie?
- 29. Who was the first priest mentioned in Scripture?
- 30. Who wore the first ring?
- 31. What was the first city called?
- 32. What was the first animal out of the ark?
- 33. Where were the disciples first called Christians?
- 34. Who took the first census of the Hebrews?
- 35. Who was the first shepherd?
- 36. Who were the first exiles?
- 37. Who were the first twins?
- 38. Who constructed the first altar?
- 39. Who built the first Jerusalem temple?
- 40. Who planted the first garden?
- 41. Who was the first metal craftsman?
- 42. Who was the first farmer?
- 43. Who was the first polygamist?
- 44. What is the first commandment with a promise attached to it?
- 45. Who was the first apostle to be martyred?
- 46. Who was the first child mentioned in the Bible?
- 47. Who was the first daughter mentioned by name?
- 48. What is the first color mentioned in the Bible?
- 49. Who planted the first vineyard?

- 21. Saul (1 Samuel 10:1)
- 22. Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13)
- 23. Rachel (Genesis 29:9)
- 24. Cain (Genesis 4:12)
- 25. Othniel (Judges 3:9)
- 26. Simon Peter (John 1:42)
- 27. Rebekah (Genesis 24:65)
- 28. The serpent (Genesis 3:4)
- 29. Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18)
- 30. Pharaoh (Genesis 41:42)
- 31. Enoch, named after Cain's son (Genesis 4:17)
- 32. The raven (Genesis 8:7)
- 33. Antioch (Acts II:26)
- 34. The priest Eleazar (Numbers 26:1-2)
- 35. Abel (Genesis 4:2)
- 36. Adam and Eve, driven from the garden (Genesis 3:24)
- 37. Jacob and Esau (Genesis 24:23-26)
- 38. Noah (Genesis 8:20)
- 39. Solomon (1 Kings 6)
- 40. God (Genesis 2:8)
- 41. Tubal-cain (Genesis 4:22)
- 42. Cain (Genesis 4:2)
- 43. Lamech (Genesis 4:19)
- 44. "Honor your father and mother" (Deuteronomy 5:16; Ephesians 6:2-3). The promise is that the person will have a long life if he honors his parents.
- 45. James (Acts 12:1-2)
- 46. Cain (Genesis 4:1)
- 47. Naamah, daughter of Lamech (Genesis 4:22)
- 48. Green; "I have given every green herb" (Genesis 1:30).
- 49. Noah (Genesis 9:20)

#### **⋙** SECOND IN LINE

- 1. At 969 years, Methuselah was the longest-lived man. Who came in second at 962 years?
- 2. Saul was the first king of Israel. Who was the second? (Hint: It wasn't David.)
- 3. The first covenant God made with man was his covenant with Noah. With whom did he make the second covenant?
- 4. In John's Gospel, Jesus' first miracle is turning water into wine. What is the second miracle?
- 5. Stephen was the first Christian martyr. What apostle was the second?
- 6. Paul's first traveling companion was Barnabas. Who was the second?
- 7. The first plague in Egypt was the turning of the Nile waters to blood. What was the second plague?
- 8. Othniel was the first judge of Israel. Who was the second?
- 9. Jacob's firstborn was Reuben. Who was his second son?
- 10. David's first capital city was Hebron. What was his second, and more famous, capital?
- 11. The serpent in Eden was the first talking animal in the Bible. What was the second?
- 12. Eve is the first woman in the Bible. Who is the second?
- 13. Solomon led the way in constructing the first temple in Jerusalem. Who led in the building of the second temple?
- 14. Esther is the first book in the Bible not to mention the name of God. What is the second book with this omission?

# KINGS, PHARAOHS, AND OTHER RULERS

- 1. What king hosted a banquet where a phantom hand left a message on the palace wall?
- 2. What king of Israel was murdered while he was drunk?
- 3. What king of Salem was also a priest of the Most High God?

#### Second in Line (Answers)

- I. Jared (Genesis 5:20)
- 2. Ishbosheth (2 Samuel 2:8-10)
- 3. Abraham (Genesis 15–17)
- 4. Healing an official's son in Cana (John 4:43-54)
- 5. James, brother of John (Acts 12:1-2)
- 6. Silas (Acts 15:36-41)
- 7. Frogs (Exodus 8:1-8)
- 8. Ehud (Judges 3:15)
- 9. Simeon (Genesis 29:33)
- 10. Jerusalem (2 Samuel 5:6-10)
- II. Balaam's donkey (Numbers 22:28-30)
- 12. Cain's wife, who is not named (Genesis 4:17)
- 13. Zerubbabel and Joshua (Ezra 3)
- 14. Song of Solomon

## Kings, Pharaohs, and Other Rulers (Answers)

- I. Balshazzar (Daniel 5:1-9)
- 2. Elah (1 Kings 16:8-10)
- 3. Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18)

- 4. What king of Gerar took Sarah away from Abraham?
- 5. What Hebrew captive interpreted the dreams of the Egyptian pharaoh?
- 6. What three kings listened to the prophet Elisha as he prophesied to the accompaniment of a harp?
- 7. What king attacked the Israelites on their way into Canaan, only to be completely destroyed later?
- 8. What king of Sidon gave his daughter Jezebel as a wife to Ahab?
- 9. What king of Bashan was famous for having an enormous iron bed?
- 10. Who was the last king of Judah?
- 11. What king of Hazor organized an alliance against Joshua?
- 12. What military man captured 31 kings?
- 13. What king of Moab sent the prophet Balaam to curse Israel?
- 14. What king of Mesopotamia was sent by God to conquer the faithless Israelites?
- 15. What Canaanite king of the time of the judges was noted for having nine hundred iron chariots?
- 16. What son of Gideon was proclaimed king in Shechem?
- 17. What king of the Amalekites was captured by Saul and cut into pieces by Samuel?
- 18. What much-married king is considered the author of the Song of Songs?
- 19. What Philistine king did David seek refuge with when he fled from Saul?
- 20. What shepherd boy, the youngest of eight sons, was anointed by Samuel in front of his brothers?
- 21. What king wanted to see miracles when the arrested Jesus was sent to him?
- 22. What king of Tyre sent cedar logs and craftsmen to King David?
- 23. What prophet had a vision of a time when the Lord would gather the kings of the earth together and put them all in a pit?

- 4. Abimelech (Genesis 20:2)
- 5. Joseph (Genesis 41:1-36)
- 6. Joram of Israel, Jehoshaphat of Judah, and the king of Edom (2 Kings 3:11-19)
- 7. The king of Arad (Numbers 21:1-3)
- 8. Ethbaal (1 Kings 16:31)
- 9. Og (Deuteronomy 3:11)
- 10. Zedekiah (2 Kings 25:1-7)
- 11. Jabin (Joshua 11:1-5)
- 12. Joshua (12:9-24)
- 13. Balak (Numbers 22:2-6)
- 14. Cushan-Rishathaim (Judges 3:8)
- 15. Jabin (Judges 4:2-3)
- 16. Abimelech (Judges 9:6)
- 17. Agag (1 Samuel 15:8, 32)
- 18. Solomon (Song of Solomon 1:1)
- 19. Achish of Gath (1 Samuel 21:10)
- 20. David (1 Samuel 16:6-13)
- 21. Herod (Luke 23:8)
- 22. Hiram (2 Samuel 5:11)
- 23. Isaiah (24:21-22)

- 24. What man, David's oldest son, tried to make himself king of Israel?
- 25. What wise king made an alliance with Egypt when he married the pharaoh's daughter?
- 26. What Egyptian king gave refuge to Jeroboam when he fled from Solomon?
- 27. What king had a strange dream about an enormous, fruitful tree that was suddenly chopped down with only a dry stump left?
- 28. What man, one of Solomon's officials, had his reign over Israel foretold by the prophet Ahijah?
- 29. What king of Judah was constantly at war with King Jeroboam of Israel?
- 30. What king was confronted by the prophet Nathan because of his adulterous affair?
- 31. What king of Israel reigned only two years and was murdered while he was fighting against the Philistines?
- 32. What man violently protested having a king in Israel, though he himself anointed the first two kings?
- 33. What city did King Jeroboam use as his capital when the northern tribes split from the southern tribes?
- 34. What king of Israel reigned only seven days and killed himself by burning down his palace around him?
- 35. What king of Ethiopia was supposed to aid Hezekiah in breaking the power of the Assyrians?
- 36. What king led Israel into sin by allowing his evil wife to introduce Baal worship into the country?
- 37. Who was the last king of Israel?
- 38. What king of the Amorites refused to let the Israelites pass through his kingdom?
- 39. What king called Elijah the worst troublemaker in Israel?
- 40. What king of Syria was Elijah told to anoint?
- 41. What evil king of Judah was humbled and repentant after being taken to Babylon in chains?

- 24. Adonijah (1 Kings 1:5-53)
- 25. Solomon (1 Kings 3:1)
- 26. Shishak (1 Kings 11:40)
- 27. Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4:10-18)
- 28. Jeroboam (1 Kings 11:26-40)
- 29. Abijam, or Abijah (1 Kings 15:6)
- 30. David (2 Samuel 12:1-15)
- 31. Nadab (1 Kings 15:26-27)
- 32. Samuel (1 Samuel 8-10)
- 33. Tirzah (1 Kings 14:17)
- 34. Zimri (1 Kings 16:15, 18)
- 35. Tirhakah (2 Kings 19:9)
- 36. Ahab (1 Kings 16:29-33)
- 37. Hoshea (2 Kings 17:4)
- 38. Sihon (Numbers 21:21-26)
- 39. Ahab (1 Kings 18:17)
- 40. Hazael (1 Kings 19:15)
- 41. Manasseh (2 Chronicles 33:10-13)