

THE COMPLETE **BOOK** OF



BIBLE SECRETS

AND MYSTERIES



J. STEPHEN LANG



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The Complete Book of Bible Secrets and Mysteries

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Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are taken from the *Holy Bible*, King James Version. In many instances, the author has chosen to modernize an archaic word or phrase.

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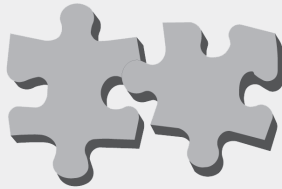
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PART 1

SOME TRULY PUZZLING THINGS





BIBLE MYSTERIES: THE TOP TEN

The book you are now reading explores the Bible’s mysteries and secrets—and tests your knowledge of them. To begin, let’s see how familiar you are with ten of the most puzzling things in the Bible, things that leave even the best-read Bible scholars scratching their heads in bewilderment.

1. One of the great puzzles of Genesis is this: Where did _____ get his wife?
2. In Revelation, what is the number of the “beast” who persecutes the saints?
3. What heroic Old Testament saint did God almost kill—just after calling him into service?
4. What book of the Bible refers to a mysterious race known as the Nephilim?
5. According to 1 Peter, where did Jesus go between his burial and resurrection?
6. According to Paul, women will be saved through what?
7. In Genesis 6, who do the “daughters of men” marry and bear children by?
8. What were the “sacred dice” used by Israel’s leaders in decision making?
9. According to Jesus, what is the one sin that can never be forgiven?
10. What organ, according to Jesus, is the “lamp of the body”?

BIBLE MYSTERIES: THE TOP TEN (ANSWERS)

1. *Cain, son of Adam and Eve, murderer of his only brother, Abel. Genesis 4:17 refers to Cain’s wife, but readers wonder where she came from, seeing that the only people on earth (or at least the only ones mentioned in Genesis) were Adam, Eve, Cain, and Abel. The usual explanation—not that it satisfies everyone—is that Cain’s wife was also his sister, a daughter (whose name is not disclosed) of Adam and Eve.*
2. *The number 666, of course. Revelation 13:18 invites readers to “calculate” the number—meaning (we think) decipher the number so as to connect it with a particular person. No one has ever done this satisfactorily. See pages 78–80 for much more about the Beast and his number.*
3. *Moses (Exodus 4:24–26). God has just called Moses to lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt, and suddenly, for reasons that are not immediately apparent, the Lord “was about to kill him.” Exodus 4:25–26 reveals that God was angry with Moses for not circumcising his son in accordance with God’s covenant with Abraham.*

4. Genesis 6:4. Some translations refer to giants instead of Nephilim. They are called “heroes of old, men of renown,” but who or what they were still puzzles readers.
5. He “preached to the spirits in prison” (1 Peter 3:19), a phrase that gives Bible interpreters fits. Who were these “spirits,” and what “prison” is meant? First Peter 3:20 connects the “spirits” to the time of Noah and the Flood, but this only serves to deepen the mystery for Bible scholars.
6. Childbearing, as recorded in 1 Timothy 2:15. This occurs in a passage that says women should be submissive and not have authority over a man, but we really aren’t sure what Paul meant by “women will be saved through childbearing,” since Christian women, like Christian men, are saved by faith.
7. The “sons of God” (Genesis 6:1-2). The identity of these “sons” is as puzzling as the identity of the Nephilim (see question 4). Some Bible scholars say that the passage refers to angels fathering children by human women, although this explanation doesn’t satisfy everyone.
8. The Urim and Thummim, mysterious objects that were in (or on) the breastplate of Israel’s high priest and involved (we don’t know how) in decision making (Exodus 28:30). Their use is mentioned in Ezra 2:63 and Nehemiah 7:65, but these verses shed no clear light on what Urim and Thummim looked like or how they were used.
9. Blaspheming against the Holy Spirit (Matthew 12:31; Luke 12:10), though no one is absolutely certain what this means. One reasonable guess is that it means attributing the work of God to the work of Satan and demons.
10. The eye (Matthew 6:22), and after many centuries, no one is still quite sure what he meant by the phrase.



LEVIATHAN, UNICORNS, AND SUCH

Be glad the Old Testament has been translated into English, because the original language, Hebrew, is notoriously difficult to learn and translate. Even after centuries of study, there are certain Hebrew words that puzzle scholars. This is particularly true of words referring to plants and animals. In some cases, translating is made even more of a mystery by the fact that the words may be referring to mythical animals, not real ones. See how much you know about these real—but possibly *unreal*—beasts of the Bible.

1. What beast, mentioned in Job 40:15, lives in the water and feeds on grass?
2. What sea beast is described in fearsome detail in Job 41?

3. What shaggy creatures of Greek mythology are mentioned by the prophet Isaiah?
4. What mythical horned creature, popular in art, may be referred to in Job 39:9 and Isaiah 34:7?
5. According to Psalm 104, what sea creature was formed to frolic in the sea?
6. What mythical beasts, mentioned many times in Psalms, are called “serpents” or “jackals” in most modern translations?

LEVIATHAN, UNICORNS, AND SUCH (ANSWERS)

1. *The Behemoth—which may refer to a mythical water beast, or to a real beast such as a hippo or elephant*
2. *The leviathan, which, like the Behemoth, may be mythical or may be a real creature (possibly a crocodile or whale)*
3. *Satyrs, usually thought to be half-goat, half-man. Mentioned in Isaiah 13:21 and 34:14, they were probably (as modern versions have it) wild goats.*
4. *The unicorn. Translators struggle over a Hebrew word that refers to some type of horned beast. Many modern versions have “wild ox” instead of “unicorn.”*
5. *The leviathan, again. This may be referring to a whale, but since translators aren’t sure, many versions just use the word leviathan, which is a direct transliteration from the original Hebrew.*
6. *Dragons (as in the King James Version). Because there are no real dragons, modern versions do their best to connect the Hebrew words with an actual living creature.*



“INSPIRED,” YES, BUT HOW?

For hundreds of years people have agreed that the Bible was “inspired.” But just what does that mean? The theory that God actually dictated the words doesn’t hold water because it is obvious in the different books that the personalities of the authors show through clearly. They weren’t just channeling God’s words; and yet, in some mysterious way, the Bible’s words really are “God’s words.” Somehow, rather beyond our comprehension, God “moved” the prophets, poets, apostles, and wise men to write, just as he “moved” kings and military leaders to act. Incidentally, the word *inspire* comes from the Latin *inspiratio*, meaning “to breathe into”—the “breath” coming from God, of course.

1. Which apostle stated that all Scripture is “inspired by God”?
2. According to 2 Peter, prophecy came because men were moved by what?
3. In the Gospels, which nuclear family was filled with the Holy Spirit?
4. What reluctant prophet was told by God, “Go, and I will be with thy mouth”?
5. Which prophet claimed that God “carries out the words of his servants and fulfills the predictions of his messengers”?
6. What pagan prophet assured his employer that he could only speak what God put into his mouth?
7. Which aide and successor of Moses was “full of the spirit of wisdom”?
8. What military man had the Spirit of the Lord come upon him before battling the pagan Ammonites?
9. Which king of Israel was told he would be “changed into a different person” when the Spirit came upon him?
10. What ritual marked the time when the Spirit came upon David?
11. Which prophet in David’s court received a message from God, saying that David’s dynasty would last forever?
12. What blind prophet was inspired by God to see through the disguise of a woman?
13. What fiery prophet, empowered by God, outran the horses of King Ahab?
14. Which prophet was moved by the power of God while listening to a harpist?
15. To whom did God give the plans for building the Temple in Jerusalem?
16. Where were the people gathered when the Spirit moved the prophet Jahaziel to speak?
17. Which king was considered evil for not recognizing that Jeremiah the prophet was inspired by God?
18. Which of Job’s friends told him that the Spirit of God gives man understanding?
19. Which prophet foretold a leader who would bring justice to the nations with the power of the Spirit?
20. What young (and reluctant) prophet had his mouth touched by God, with the assurance he would speak on God’s behalf?
21. What later prophet claimed the Lord’s power enabled him to interpret the words of Jeremiah?

22. Which prophet stated he was filled with the Spirit and “with justice and might”?
23. In Genesis, who attributed his dream-interpreting ability to the Spirit of God?
24. What was the vocation of Bezalel, said to be filled with the Spirit of God?
25. What man had learned through the Holy Spirit that he would see the Christ before he died?
26. In chapter 1 of John’s Gospel, who is the “man sent from God”?
27. What man, “full of the Holy Spirit,” had a vision of Jesus standing at the right hand of God?
28. What man was led by the Spirit to preach the gospel to an Ethiopian eunuch?
29. What Christian, inspired by the Spirit, predicted a famine over the Roman Empire?
30. Which of Paul’s letters begins with an announcement that the gospel had been promised long ago in the Holy Scriptures?
31. According to the Letter to the Hebrews, God in the past spoke through his prophets but has now spoken through whom?
32. In which New Testament book is the author continually given the command “Write”?

“INSPIRED,” YES, BUT HOW? (ANSWERS)

1. *Paul, in 2 Timothy 3:16. Some modern versions have “God-breathed” (which is really more accurate) instead of “inspired.”*
2. *The Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21). This passage emphasizes that God, not man, took the initiative in prophecy.*
3. *John the Baptist (Luke 1:15) and his parents, Elizabeth (1:41) and Zechariah (1:67)*
4. *Moses (Exodus 4:12)*
5. *Isaiah (44:26)*
6. *Balaam, the Moabite prophet that had been sent to curse Israel (Numbers 22:38; 23:26)*
7. *Joshua (Deuteronomy 34:9)*
8. *The judge Gideon (Judges 11:29)*
9. *Saul (1 Samuel 10:6)*
10. *His anointing by the prophet Samuel (1 Samuel 16:13)*
11. *Nathan (2 Samuel 7:4)*
12. *Ahijah (1 Kings 14), who was visited by the wife of King Jeroboam*

13. *Elijah (1 Kings 18:46)*
14. *Elisha (2 Kings 3:15)*
15. *David (1 Chronicles 28:19). The task of actually building the Temple fell to his son Solomon.*
16. *The Temple courts (2 Chronicles 20:14)*
17. *Zedekiah (2 Chronicles 36:12)*
18. *Elihu (Job 32:8)*
19. *Isaiah (42:1), in a passage that is known as one of the “Servant Songs,” prophecies of a divine servant. Christians believe that Jesus fulfilled those prophecies.*
20. *Jeremiah (1:9)*
21. *Daniel (9:2)*
22. *Micah (3:8)*
23. *Joseph (Genesis 40:8; 41:16)*
24. *An artist involved in making the Tabernacle and its worship furnishings (Exodus 35:30-31). This is the rare case in Scripture of an “inspired artist.”*
25. *Simeon, who did indeed see the infant Jesus (Luke 2:25)*
26. *John—not the author of the Gospel, but John the Baptist*
27. *Stephen, the first martyr (Acts 7:55)*
28. *Philip (Acts 8:29)*
29. *Agabus (Acts 11:28). Acts notes that the famine did indeed occur in the reign of Emperor Claudius.*
30. *Romans (1:2). By “scriptures,” Paul was referring to what we now call the Old Testament.*
31. *His Son—that is, Christ*
32. *Revelation, where John is repeatedly told by Christ or an angel to write (1:11, 19; 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14; 14:13; 19:9; 21:5). In no other book of the Bible are we so aware of the author being divinely compelled to write.*



“CONTRADICTIONS,” YOU SAY?

Does the Bible ever contradict itself? For centuries, readers have been mystified by what seem to be discrepancies in the biblical narratives. Most of these differences can be easily explained by a close reading of the text. Others may be due to errors that occurred in centuries of copying manuscripts. None reflect on the inspiration of the Scriptures. More important, none of these apparent contradictions in any way

affects Christian belief and morality. I include these questions here, not to cast doubt on the Bible, but merely to test the reader's knowledge of some of these so-called contradictions.

1. In 1 Samuel 16:19-21, David comes to know Saul by being employed as his harpist. In 1 Samuel 17, how does David come to know Saul?
2. Matthew 27:6-8 says the priests bought the potter's field, but Acts 1:18-19 says someone else bought it. Who?
3. In Exodus 33:20, God tells Moses that no man can see God's face. According to Exodus 33:11, what man saw God face-to-face?
4. The Levites entered the service of the sanctuary at age 30—according to Numbers 4:3. At what age, according to Numbers 8:24, did they enter the service?
5. The mission of the 12 Israelite spies started at Paran—according to Numbers 13:3. In Numbers 20:1, where does the mission start?
6. According to Deuteronomy 10:6, Aaron died at Moserah. Where, according to Numbers 20:28, did he die?
7. Deuteronomy 15:4 says "There shall be no poor among you." What does Deuteronomy 15:11 say?
8. According to 1 Samuel 16:10-11, David had eight brothers. How many, according to 1 Chronicles 2:13-15, did he have?
9. According to Genesis 25:1, Abraham's second wife was Keturah. According to 1 Chronicles 1:32, who was Keturah?
10. In 1 Samuel 17, David is the slayer of Goliath. According to 2 Samuel 21:19, who killed the giant?
11. In 1 Samuel 31:3-4, Saul takes his own life after being wounded. In 2 Samuel 1, who claims he actually killed Saul?
12. According to 2 Samuel 14:27, Absalom had three sons. How many did he have according to 2 Samuel 18:8?
13. The Lord moved David to number the people of Israel according to 2 Samuel 24:1. In the story in 1 Chronicles 21, who moved David to do this?
14. According to 2 Kings 24:8, King Jehoiachin was 18 years old when he began to reign. How old was he in the account in 2 Chronicles 36?
15. Samuel was an Ephraimite, according to 1 Samuel 1. What tribe was he from in the account in 1 Chronicles 6?

16. According to 2 Chronicles 33:13-16, evil King Manasseh repented of his sins after being held captive in Babylon. What does the parallel account in 2 Kings 21 say about this repentance?
17. In Matthew's genealogy of the Messiah, Jesus is descended from David's son Solomon. What son of David is Jesus' ancestor in Luke's account?
18. In Luke's account of the temptation of Jesus, the last temptation is to jump from the pinnacle of the Temple. What is the last temptation in Matthew's version?
19. According to Matthew 8:5-13, a centurion asks that his servant be healed. In Luke 7:2-11, who does the asking?
20. In Matthew 8, the maniac lives in Gadara. In Luke 8 and Mark 5, where does he live?
21. Matthew 20:20 states that the mother of James and John requested that her sons be appointed to high office in the coming Kingdom. In Mark 10:35, who made the request?
22. In Matthew 26:34, Jesus predicts that Peter will betray him before the rooster crows once. In Mark 14:30, how many times is the rooster supposed to crow?
23. According to Matthew 27:3-10, Judas hanged himself. How did he kill himself according to Acts 1:18?
24. In John 19:19, we are told that the inscription on the cross read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." According to Matthew 27:37, what was the inscription?
25. According to John's account of the post-Resurrection appearances, what two disciples ran to Jesus' tomb?
26. In Mark 2:26, Jesus says that Abiathar was priest during David's reign. According to 1 Samuel 21, who was priest at that time?
27. Matthew 5:3 has Jesus saying, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." What does he say in Luke 6:20?
28. James 1:13 says God does not tempt men. But Genesis 22:1 says God tempted a certain man. Who?
29. Solomon had 40,000 horses according to 1 Kings 4:26. How many did he have according to 2 Chronicles 9:25?
30. Matthew 27:9-10 attributes the prophecy about the potter's field to Jeremiah. Where is the prophecy found?
31. Mark 15:26 says the inscription on Jesus' cross read "The King of the Jews." What is it in Luke's account (23:38)?
32. Matthew's genealogy of Jesus says that Joseph's father was Jacob (1:16). According to Luke 3:23, who was it?

33. In which Epistle does Paul say, "Bear ye one another's burdens" and "Every man shall bear his own burden"?
34. What book of the Bible says, in the same chapter, "Answer not a fool according to his folly" and "Answer a fool according to his folly"?
35. According to 2 Samuel 6:23, David's wife Michal had no children. But according to 2 Samuel 21:8, she had children. How many?
36. Solomon stated in Proverbs 18:22, "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing." Who, in the New Testament, stated, "It is good for a man not to touch a woman"?
37. Acts 9:7 says that the people traveling with Paul heard the heavenly voice Paul heard. But, according to Acts 22:9, someone said that the people did not hear the voice. Who said that?
38. Mark 1:12-13 says that Jesus immediately went into the wilderness after his baptism and was there for 40 days. Which Gospel claims that the day after his baptism he called Andrew and Peter to be his disciples?
39. According to 1 Corinthians 15:5, Jesus appeared to the 12 disciples after his resurrection. According to Matthew and Acts, how many apostles were there after his resurrection?

"CONTRADICTIONS," YOU SAY? (ANSWERS)

1. *Through the killing of Goliath*
2. *Judas Iscariot*
3. *Moses*
4. *Twenty-five*
5. *Kadesh Barnea*
6. *Mount Hor*
7. *"The poor will never cease to be in the land."*
8. *Seven*
9. *His concubine*
10. *Elhanan*
11. *Saul's Amalekite bodyguard*
12. *None*
13. *Satan*
14. *Eight*

15. *Levi*
16. *Nothing*
17. *Nathan*
18. *The temptation to rule the world*
19. *The servant*
20. *Gerasa*
21. *James and John*
22. *Twice*
23. *He fell headlong and burst apart.*
24. *"This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."*
25. *Peter and John*
26. *Abimelech*
27. *"Blessed are the poor."*
28. *Abraham*
29. *Four thousand*
30. *Zechariah 11:12-13. Neither Jeremiah nor Zechariah words the prophecy as it is quoted in Matthew.*
31. *"This is the King of the Jews." Obviously this is a case of very minor discrepancy.*
32. *Heli*
33. *Galatians (6:2 and 6:5). This is a case of poor translation, since in the Greek original, two different words are used, while the older English versions used the same word, burden, for both.*
34. *Proverbs (26:4 and 26:5)*
35. *Five. This apparent scribal error is corrected in some translations, where Merab, not Michal, is the mother of the five children.*
36. *Paul (1 Corinthians 7)*
37. *Paul*
38. *John (1:35)*
39. *Only 11. Matthew 27:3-5 says that Judas Iscariot hanged himself before Jesus' resurrection, and Acts 1:9-26 says that the new apostle, Matthias, had not yet been chosen at the time of the Resurrection.*