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South Walton Church of Christ in Destin Florida sponsors the following presentation by Evangelist John Morris who serves under the Eldership of the Murray Road Church of Christ of Lee's Summit, Missouri.

### Here is the first lesson in the series: **The Bible: Can It Be Trusted?** Part Two of Six

By taking a look at the uniqueness of the Bible I think we can reasonably demonstrate that this book is different from any other and can reasonably be regarded as a work from God. Professor M. Montiero-Williams, former Boden professor of Sanskrit, spent 42 years studying Eastern books, and after doing so, and comparing them with the Bible he said the following in Josh McDowell's book "New Evidence that Demands a Verdict" quote: "Pile them, (those other books,) if you will, on the left side of your study table; but place your own Holy Bible on the right side--all by itself, all alone--and with a wide gap between them. For there is a gulf between it, (the Bible) and the so-called sacred books of the East which severs the one from the other utterly, hopelessly, and forever...a veritable gulf which cannot be bridged by any science of religious thought."

Here is a man who'd studied ancient works for 42 years and when he'd looked at them and he looked at the Bible, he said these two are completely different, the Bible's in a category all by itself. Well what makes the Bible in a category all by itself? Well firstly when we look at the Bible we can establish beyond the shadow of a doubt that it was written over a period of some 1500 years. That all by itself puts the Bible in a category all by itself, no other book in the world can claim that. But over this course of 1500 years the Bible was written by some 40 different authors, and it wasn't like these authors were from the same background or same language group.

We have men writing the Bible like Moses, who according to Acts 7:22 was mighty in words and in deeds, great secular achievements quite likely, educated in Egypt, the greatest empire of his day. We have men like David who though a King and a warrior, was also a poet, a shepherd, a musician, two great men. And then we have men like Amos who was a sheep breeder. Men like Peter, Andrew, James and John who were fishermen. We have Nehemiah a cup bearer to a pagan King. We have Nebuchadnezzar a former pagan King himself writing in the Bible. We have Luke a physician, Matthew a Roman tax collector, Paul a Jewish Rabbi, men from totally and completely different backgrounds, writing from totally different places. Moses is writing in the Egyptian wilderness, Daniel in the Persian palace, Paul in Roman prison walls, Luke traveling the Gentile world of his day and John while on the island of Patmos.

They're in totally different moods at the times they write, some are in the heights of joy, some in times of triumph, some in the depths of sorrow and despair and travesty. Sometimes we hear them in the times of certainty and conviction, others while in times of confusion and doubt. They write on 3 different continents; Asia, Africa and Europe, 3 Different languages; Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek and in very different literary styles. In the Bible we find poetry in the Hebrew in the books of Job and Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon, these books are clearly poetic books. We have historical narrative. We have songs. We have romance.

We can go to the book of Ruth or the Song of Solomon and read some of the best romance ever written. We find in the Bible instructive treatise like in 1 Corinthians. We see personal correspondence like in 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon. We see the personal memoirs of Solomon written for us in the book of Ecclesiastes and some of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4. We see satire in Job 38 through 40. We see biography, autobiography, law, predictive prophecy, parable, allegory. 1500 years, 40 different authors, 3 languages, 3 continents, different literary styles and then thrown into that diverse mix: extremely controversial subjects. The Bible discusses subjects on which very few people can agree today; homosexuality, marriage, divorce, re-marriage, adultery, the nature and revelation of God. Let us choose just 10 people from a given city, in the same age group, in the same career branch, in the same background and see what they say on just 1 subject such as the nature and revelation of God. What will they say?

We can be certain they would say very different things, and yet in the Bible which is far more diverse, we see uniformity on these subjects. Josh McDowell tells a story of how a man came to his door selling a compilation of books entitled "*Great Books of the Western World*." This was a book that contained selections from more than 450 works by close to a hundred authors spanning a period of some 2500 years. McDowell said that he said to the man, quote "Take just 10 of the authors from the Great Book Series, all from 1 walk of life, 1 generation, 1 place, 1 time, 1 mood, 1 continent, 1 language, (in other words, find as much uniformity as you can among these authors, find them all addressing just 1 controversial subject) McDowell said; "I then asked him, 'Would the authors agree with one another?' 'He paused and then replied; No." "What would you have then?" I retorted. Immediately he answered; "A conglomeration."

Two days later after Josh McDowell spoke with this man about just how different the Bible is from that, this man committed his life to Christ as he understood it. This story may seem a bit overdone but it does illustrate an interesting and compelling point: the Bible's continuity and uniformity in the midst of such diversity defies natural law. This is not the way human beings work. Give any group of people a mission and give it to the next generation and that next generation will change it and the next generation after that will tweak it and before you know it you'll have something altogether different from the original. All we have to do is look at the American political system to see that and yet in the Bible, in far greater diversity we see uniformity. From start to finish we see in the Bible memorable connections. We have Adam and Eve in the garden and they are told not to eat of the *Tree of knowledge of Good and Evil* but because they do so Jesus goes to the *Tree of Calvary* and because of what He does there we can some day take of the *Tree of Life*, Revelation tells us. Adam and Eve were put in the Garden of Eden but because of their sin, Jesus found Himself in the Garden of Gethsemane, praying that God's will be done and because of what He was praying about and agonizing over, we can someday go to the Garden or Paradise of God says Revelation.

In the Bible we have Paradise lost all the way to Paradise regained. From start to finish the Bible is *Christocentric*. In the law we have a *Foundation* being laid for Christ. In the books of history we have *Preparation* for Christ. In the books of prophecy an *Expectation* of Christ. When we come to the New Testament we see in the Gospels the *Manifestation* of Christ, in the Acts the *Propagation* of Christ, in the Epistles the *Interpretation* of Christ, in the Revelation the *Consummation* of Christ. If this is a book written by men of totally different backgrounds, totally different language groups, totally different social echelons, over such a vast expanse of time, how did this book come to contain such uniformity? How is it we find when we compare the Old and New Testament such subtle and nuanced connections, such as what we find in Genesis 22?

In *Genesis 22* the man Abraham is told by God: "Take your son Isaac, your only son, the son whom you love and go and sacrifice him in the mountains of Moriah. Abraham does as the Lord tells him. He takes Isaac and when they come there, they leave the servants behind and for a time they walk alone, Isaac carrying the very wood on his back on which he is to be sacrificed.

We come all the way 2000 years ahead into the New Testament and what do we find? We find God the Father sending Jesus, His only begotten Son, His beloved Son, Jesus is taken to the mountains of Moriah where Jerusalem now stands and there He is sacrificed, and the very wood He was sacrificed on He carried on His back. And interestingly in *Genesis 22*, when Abraham returns from Moriah, even though Isaac was not sacrificed, it does not mention Isaac returning. There was a symbolic sacrifice made.

**End of Lesson One Part Two**

