



# SEVEN THINGS

# I WISH CHRISTIANS KNEW ABOUT THE BIBLE

**MICHAEL F. BIRD**

**A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK**

## ZONDERVAN REFLECTIVE

*Seven Things I Wish Christians Knew about the Bible*

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Requests for information should be addressed to:

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# 1

## THE BIBLE DIDN'T FALL OUT OF THE SKY

### DIVISIONS WITHIN THE OLD TESTAMENT/HEBREW BIBLE

| Law                                                      | Prophets                                                                                                       | Writings                                                                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Genesis<br>Exodus<br>Leviticus<br>Numbers<br>Deuteronomy | Joshua<br>Judges<br>1-2 Samuel<br>1-2 Kings<br>Isaiah<br>Jeremiah<br>Ezekiel<br>Book of the Twelve<br>Prophets | Psalms<br>Proverbs<br>Job<br>Ruth<br>Ecclesiastes<br>Song of Solomon<br>Lamentations<br>Daniel<br>Esther<br>Ezra-Nehemiah<br>1-2 Chronicles |

### APOCRYPHAL BOOKS IN THEIR MANY CANONS

|                        | Roman<br>Catholic Bible<br>(Vulgate) | Greek<br>Orthodox<br>Bible | Slavonic<br>Bible |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| The Prayer of Manasseh |                                      | •                          | •                 |
| 1 Esdras <sup>†</sup>  |                                      | •                          | •                 |
| 2 Esdras               | *                                    |                            |                   |
| Additions to Esther    | •                                    | •                          | •                 |
| Tobit                  | •                                    | •                          | •                 |
| Judith                 | •                                    | •                          | •                 |
| 1 Maccabees            | •                                    | •                          | •                 |
| 2 Maccabees            | •                                    | •                          | •                 |
| 3 Maccabees            |                                      | •                          | •                 |
| 4 Maccabees            |                                      | *                          |                   |
| Psalms 151             |                                      | •                          | •                 |
| Wisdom of Solomon      | •                                    | •                          | •                 |

|                       |   |   |   |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|
| Ecclesiasticus/Sirach | • | • | • |
| Baruch                | • | • | • |
| Letter of Jeremiah    | • | • | • |
| Additions to Daniel   | • | • | • |
| Susanna               | • | • | • |

## RECOMMENDED READING

### Old Testament

Beckwith, Roger T. *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church and Its Background in Early Judaism*.

Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008.

Longman III, Tremper, and Raymond B. Dillard. *An Introduction to the Old Testament*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009.

### Apocrypha

deSilva, David A. *Introducing the Apocrypha: Message, Context, Significance*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004.

Harrington, Daniel J. *Invitation to the Apocrypha*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.

### New Testament

Burge, Gary M., and Gene L. Green. *The New Testament in Antiquity*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020.

Patzia, Arthur G. *The Making of the New Testament: Origin, Collection, Text and Canon*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995.

### English Bible

Bobrick, Benson. *The Making of the English Bible*. London: Phoenix, 2003.

Bruce, F. F. *The Books and the Parchments: How We Got Our English Bible*. Old Tappan, NJ: Revell, 1984.

# 2

## THE BIBLE IS DIVINELY GIVEN AND HUMANLY COMPOSED

### JESUS'S HEALING OF THE BLIND MAN/MEN IN JERICO

|                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Matthew 20:29-34 | <p><sup>29</sup>As Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him.<sup>30</sup>Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!"</p> <p><sup>31</sup>The crowd rebuked them and told them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!"</p> <p><sup>32</sup>Jesus stopped and called them. "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked.</p> <p><sup>33</sup>"Lord," they answered, "we want our sight."</p> <p><sup>34</sup>Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Mark 10:46-52    | <p><sup>46</sup>Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means "son of Timaeus"), was sitting by the roadside begging. <sup>47</sup>When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"</p> <p><sup>48</sup>Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"</p> <p><sup>49</sup>Jesus stopped and said, "Call him."</p> <p>So they called to the blind man, "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you." <sup>50</sup>Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.</p> <p><sup>51</sup>"What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him. The blind man said, "Rabbi, I want to see."</p> <p><sup>52</sup>"Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.</p> |

|                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Luke 18:35-43</p> | <p><sup>35</sup>As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. <sup>36</sup>When he heard the crowd going by, he asked what was happening. <sup>37</sup>They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by."<br/> <sup>38</sup>He called out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"<br/> <sup>39</sup>Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"<br/> <sup>40</sup>Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him. When he came near, Jesus asked him, <sup>41</sup>"What do you want me to do for you?"<br/> "Lord, I want to see," he replied.<br/> <sup>42</sup>Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has healed you."<br/> <sup>43</sup>Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God. When all the people saw it, they also praised God.</p> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## RECOMMENDED READING

### Inspiration

Marshall, I. Howard. *Biblical Inspiration*. Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2005.

McGowan, Andrew. *The Divine Authenticity of Scripture: Retrieving Evangelical Heritage*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008.

Ward, Timothy. *Words of Life: Scripture as the Living and Active Word of God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014.

### Inerrancy

Carson, D. A., ed. *The Enduring Authority of the Christian Scriptures*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016.

Garrett, Stephen M., and James Merrick, eds. *Five Views of Biblical Inerrancy*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013.

# 3

## SCRIPTURE IS NORMATIVE, NOT NEGOTIABLE

### RECOMMENDED READING

Enns, Peter. *How the Bible Actually Works: In Which I Explain How an Ancient, Ambiguous, and Diverse Book Leads Us to Wisdom Rather Than Answers—and Why That's Great News*. New York: HarperOne, 2019.

Marshall, I. Howard. *Beyond the Bible: Moving from Scripture to Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004.

Stott, John R. W. *Understanding the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999.

Witherington, Ben. *Reading and Understanding the Bible*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

# 4

## THE BIBLE IS *FOR* OUR TIME, BUT NOT *ABOUT* OUR TIME

### RECOMMENDED READING

- Arnold, Clinton. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*. 5 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016.
- Beers, Holly. *A Week in the Life of a Greco-Roman Woman*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019.
- Bock, Darrell L., and Gregory J. Herrick. *Jesus in Context: Background Readings for Gospel Study*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005.
- Dodson, Derek, and Katherine E. Smith. *Exploring Biblical Backgrounds: A Reader in History and Literary Contexts*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2018.
- Evans, Craig A., and Stanley E. Porter, eds. *Dictionary of New Testament Background*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.
- Keener, Craig S. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014.
- Walton, John H., Victor H. Matthews, and Mark Chavalas. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.

# 5

## WE SHOULD TAKE THE BIBLE SERIOUSLY, BUT NOT ALWAYS LITERALLY

### RECOMMENDED READING

Fee, Gordon D., and Douglas K. Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014.

Harvey, Angela Lou. *Spiritual Reading: A Study of the Christian Practice of Reading Scripture*. United Kingdom: James Clarke, 2016.

Strauss, Mark. *How to Read the Bible in Changing Times: Understanding and Applying God's Word Today*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011.

Wright, N. T. *Scripture and the Authority of God: How to Read the Bible Today*. New York: HarperOne, 2011.

# 6

## THE PURPOSE OF SCRIPTURE IS KNOWLEDGE, FAITH, LOVE, AND HOPE

### RECOMMENDED READING

Johnson, Luke Timothy. *Living the Gospel*. London: Continuum, 2005.

McKnight, Scot. *The Jesus Creed: Loving God, Loving Others*. Brewster, MA: Paraclete, 2019.

Packer, J. I. *Knowing God*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2013.

# 7

## CHRIST IS THE CENTRE OF THE CHRISTIAN BIBLE

### RECOMMENDED READING

Davis, Ellen F. *Wondrous Depth: Preaching the Old Testament*.  
Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005.

Greidanus, Sidney. *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*.  
Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.

Smith, Brandon, and Everett Berry. *They Spoke of Me: How  
Jesus Unlocks the Old Testament*. Spring Hill, TN: Rainer,  
2018.

Williams, Michael. *How to Read the Bible through a Jesus Lens:  
A Guide to Christ-Focused Reading of Scripture*. Grand  
Rapids: Zondervan, 2012.

Wright, Christopher J. H. *Knowing Jesus through the Old  
Testament*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992.