

SCIENTIFIC FOREKNOWLEDGE & BIBLICAL ACCURACY

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One of the most arresting evidences of the Bible's inspiration is the unique scientific foreknowledge it contains. From anthropology to zoology, the Bible presents accurate scientific information, and provides rules, regulations, or prohibitions based on that information. Examples abound, only two of which I would like to examine here.

While the Old Testament placed no restrictions on the eating of fruits and vegetables, severe limitations were given for the eating of certain meats. Among land animals, only those that had a split hoof and chewed the cud were approved as edible (Leviticus 11:3). Of those water-living animals, only those with fins and scales were acceptable (Leviticus 11:9; of interest is the fact that poisonous fish have no scales). Birds of prey were prohibited, as were almost all insects. But perhaps the best known among these biblical prohibitions was eating the meat of the pig; to the Jew, pork was considered unclean, and thus inedible.

There is good reason for such a prohibition. Pigs are scavengers, and as such eat almost anything. In so doing, on occasion they ingest the parasite *Trichinella spiralis*, which is the cause of trichinosis in humans. Pigs also are known carriers (as intermediate hosts) of the tapeworm, *Taenia solium*, and of the parasite *Echinococcus granulosus*, which causes tumors in the liver, lungs, and other parts of the body. Raw or undercooked pork can be very dangerous when consumed by humans. Pigs can provide safe meat, if they are fed properly and if the muscle tissue is well cooked. But such conditions often did not prevail in ancient times. [Even today, in some countries, raw pork is considered a delicacy.]

Were the Israelites "ahead of the times" in regard to their public health and personal hygiene laws? Archaeologists admit that they have yet to find civilizations as ancient as the Israelites with rules and regulations that could rival those of the Jewish people in regard to complexity and scientific accuracy. In fact, none of the people around the Israelites possessed this kind of advanced public health knowledge. Yet the Jews possessed this, and much more. How can this be explained—apart from the special revelation from God for which they have become so renowned?

Consider an additional case of scientific foreknowledge. For many centuries, man considered the seashore as little more than a shallow, sandy extension that went from one continent to another. Then, in 1873 a group of British scientists carrying out research in the Pacific Ocean discovered a "recess" (trench) 35,800 feet deep. A trench is a long, narrow depression in the ocean floor that looks like an enormous gash with extremely steep sides. The topography and depth of these trenches are used to distinguish them from other valleys and depressions in the oceans. Three

major oceans have trenches in them, but the Pacific is most renowned for such. Extensive studies have been carried out on the Marianas Trench off the coast of Guam. In fact, several years ago a research team, using the bathyscaph *Trieste*, traveled almost seven miles down into one trench.

The Bible, however, once again contained such knowledge long before mankind discovered it. Biblical scholars acknowledge that the use of the Hebrew word *tehom* ("abyssal depth"—see Genesis 7:11) may well be a reference to such trenches. Job was asked by God, "Hast thou walked in the recesses of the deep?" (38:16). Psalm 145:6 speaks of God as being even in "the deep." We now know—thanks to years of intense, successful scientific investigations—that such "recesses" actually do occur in the oceans of our planet. Admittedly, our knowledge of these matters resulted from impressive technological achievements covering many generations. But where did the writer of the book of Job obtain his information? And how did the psalmist know to use a word that depicted oceanic depths?

Can these instances of scientific foreknowledge, and the numerous others that the Bible contains, be counted as mere "lucky guesses"? Hardly! The simple fact of the matter is that the Bible's awareness of, and accuracy in, scientific matters is indeed one of the most impressive evidences available to document the truthfulness of its claim of divine inspiration.

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