

IS THE BIBLE FICTION?

Or Is It A Living, Life-giving Book?

In November, 2013 a major national discount retailer displayed Bibles with a sticker that said “**fiction**”. It was noticed by an evangelical pastor who was disturbed and challenged management all the way to the headquarter office. He also notified his church members and minister friends on face book; and eventually the retailer apologized and promised to remove the “fiction” stickers. This incident highlights how far America has turned away from spiritual reality since the U.S. has banned the Bible, prayer and the mention of Jesus from the classroom and public arena. A recent article mentioned that the banning of Christian freedom in our schools occurred the year major disasters began, including the assassination of President Kennedy. I can't prove this statement, but actions have consequences.

I don't have to defend the case for the consequences of anti-Christian bias, because after 50 years society's problems make it obvious to clear-thinking people. I will remind you that the increasing attacks against anything Christian: prayer, the Bible, the name of Jesus, the cross—even Christian themes at Christmas and Easter—indicate the growing power of minorities in defiance of God and Jesus. At the same time other religions and anti-Christian ideologies, particularly Islam, appear to be welcome and the media is silent on the implications. Is it any wonder that more young people are adrift and don't realize that life is short, and after death eternal judgement. How do we respond to those who don't believe there is a living God, that Jesus was both God and Man for 33 years on earth for the purpose of offering forgiveness for sins against God; and that He is the only door into God's eternal kingdom? And how do we respond to anyone who believes that the Bible is “fiction”, therefore irrelevant?

Endeavoring to answer these questions I want to share how the Bible has been both a “**living**” book and a “**life-giving**” book to me in the 67 years since my conversion. Several times the Lord has forcibly put in my mind **Bible truth** to save and/or guide me. Another time I randomly opened the Bible to a passage that sent me to West Africa and launched a 53 year Christian/missionary career. In another case the breeze turned pages in my Bible to just the right passage that eventually helped me understand a problem and work out the solution in a loving and lasting way. While these experiences were different in application, they all confirm that **God is alive**, He cares about people, **and the Bible is a living, life-giving Book**. It is a true history of creation and God's dealing with early humanity.

Let me share additional personal experiences. I think one of the first, and one of several most impacting on my life, was when a log rolled on me and God spared my life. I could not breath and was unconscious for a few minutes until two men rolled the log off and I began to breath again. When I came out of the tunnel and my mind began to function I knew someone was injured, but who? Then my nervous system came slowly back to life and I began to feel a red-hot burning in my chest, then muscles began to ache. I heard one man say: “Look at his eyes”? At that moment I realized I could not open my eyes; then I realized I could not move a finger or a toe and wondered if my neck or back was broken. As I pondered my condition a Bible verse from Sunday school came to mind: “*whoever confesses me before men, him I will confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, Him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven*”.

I didn't know if I would live or die, but I knew I wasn't saved, and therefore not ready to meet God, so I tried to muster the courage to tell my co-workers about Jesus—but I could not even whisper. Therefore I silently vowed that if I lived, I would serve the Lord the rest of my life. I kept that vow—and God has kept many Bible promises to me! **Matthew 10:32** was not fiction, it was a **life-saving Bible** verse on that mountain side—and many times since the Bible has played a prominent role in my life. One more important detail to that experience. I am one of twelve children and at the moment of the injury God impressed my mother, some twenty miles away as the crow flies, to pray for me and used my name. It was her prayer that moved God to give two co-workers supernatural strength to roll the log off of me. The following day the five member crew was at the accident scene trying to figure out how the accident happened—and all five of those men could not rock or budge that log. That was further proof that **the Bible is not fiction**.

The logging accident occurred when I was 20 years old. Since then I finished college; was married to the

girl of my dreams; taught H.S. and coached a couple of years; and then God supernaturally directed me to Wings of Healing and a fifty year global ministry. As you continue to read you will realize that if **the Bible God** can so interact in someone's life—**there is no way the Bible is fiction**. This next experience was not a Bible verse, but it was a Bible experience. As I drove past a church in Portland, OR I noticed it was the church whose pastor's prayer of faith healed my mother when she was dying—another proof the Bible is not fiction—He answers prayer and He heals the sick. I knew nothing else about the church and drove on. After several blocks the thought came: “*stop, and go back.*” I had no reason to stop and was on an urgent errand, so I drove on. The second time the thought came: “*stop and go back.*” I thought to myself: “*what is this stopping all about?*” and drove on. The third time the thought came: **Stop! And go back!**—I was literally afraid **not** to stop, so I drove around the block and returned to the church.

I entered the church and looked around in the darkened auditorium. When I turned to leave and resume my errand—I saw the poster on the inside of the door and something was quickened in my spirit. The lure was training for world evangelism. Then I saw the sign leading to offices in the basement where I was given more information about the missionary training. Now I was faced with a major decision: shall I get a teaching job and put missions on the shelf, or shall I enroll for mission training and find a job to pay for family expenses. I pursued several teaching opportunities and picked pears in the valley until the missions training was to begin with a big mission conference. I did not hear from any of the schools so I attended the mission conference where I heard great inspirational preaching and worship that was out of this world.

With no one leading worship it would continue with heavenly voices over the heads of the jam-packed congregation mixing in with the voices of the people. I heard prophecy and words of knowledge; I was greatly impacted by the experience and wanted to make mission training my first priority; but I had a family of three to care for, no job, and only a few dollars in my pocket. Kneeling at the altar I put it before the Lord—if I got a teaching offer I would take it. If I didn't get a job I would start missionary training and trust the Lord to provide for my family. This began a series of mind boggling events which confirmed that God is alive, the Bible is true, and when He calls us He will also provide—just like Bible days, which proved to me the **Bible is not fiction**.

When the first day of training came I had not heard from the three schools. With my wife and fifteen month old son, Gregory, I drove to Portland. While I was in class Dolores and Gregory were on their own in the area where the car was parked; then I checked the papers for an offer of a bedroom for house work, child care, or whatever. I thought I had one located on a berry farm, but the mission secretary didn't know who I was when my call was returned and sent a single woman to the farm. When I heard that I was so angry—I had found the farm and I needed a place to sleep that night—I went to the office to vent my anger. As I stepped into the office the secretary looked up and I opened my mouth—but no words came out—at that very moment God put a thought in my mind: “*if this door closes, I will open a better one*”. I turned sharply around and marched out again thinking: “*okay God, let's find that better place to live!*”

I bought a newspaper and checked the want ads. There was only one add, and it had not been there the day before. I made a phone call and went to see this “better” place. It was not one bedroom on a berry farm, it was a three room apartment in a Doctor's home with a fifteen mile view of a lovely valley. We moved in that night. The next day I received a letter from my brother, David, a cadet at Annapolis. It had been sent to my mother's address 80 miles away and she had forwarded it to the Bible School. It contained a \$20 bill which I was to give to mom when I saw her again—so this was food money until I had a job and could afford gas to visit mom. A couple of days later I got a job making roofing paper, working from 11p.m. until 7a.m. Monday through Friday. These hours allowed me to attend mission training from 8a.m. until noon and attend church every night. **Could a fictional god plan all of this in detail?** The living God of the Bible answered my prayer in four ways—He closed three teaching jobs; He took us off of the streets (we slept one night in our car) and provided a lovely home for us including rent and utilities; He orchestrated my brother's visit with mom, his sending me a letter with money via my mother's address (which she didn't open—or she would have taken the \$20 which was for her) and the letter arrived the exact time I needed it; and finally, God provided a job that fit in with my training schedule. Wow! I am convinced **that God is alive and the Bible is real!**

(to be continued)

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