

*Biblical Heritage Center's*  
**FACTS & BELIEFS**  
**REPORT**

2011 • NUMBER 2

## The Bible<sup>M</sup>

By Jim Myers

**The Bible<sup>M</sup>** is a **MEME** that is linked with many other MEMES, FACTS and BELIEFS. It is a MEME because it is an internal representation of knowledge whose existence influences the actions of the host and gets passed on to other minds. I don't think anyone would disagree with the statement that "the Bible" influences the actions of people and that they pass it on to others.

### **BELIEFS: The Bible<sup>M</sup>**

**93,353,386 Americans** (31%) believe **The Bible<sup>M</sup>** is the actual word of **God<sup>M</sup>**. They believe **The Bible<sup>M</sup>** is absolutely accurate and should be taken literally word for word.

**141,535,775 Americans** (47%) believe **The Bible<sup>M</sup>** is the inspired word of **God<sup>M</sup>**, but should not be taken literally word for word.

**57,216,590 Americans** (19%) believe **The Bible<sup>M</sup>** is a book, recorded by man, of ancient fables, legends, and history.

The beliefs of **234,889,161 Americans** about **The Bible<sup>M</sup>** are linked to their beliefs about another MEME - **God<sup>M</sup>**. We will discuss it in a

future issue. Think about the number of Americans that believe **The Bible<sup>M</sup>** is either "the literal or inspired word of God" - **234,889,161** (78%). This means that 3 of every 4 Americans hold those beliefs. This makes it a very important MEME for those who want to influence the decisions that those Americans make concerning their money, time, votes, etc.

### **FACTS: The Bible<sup>M</sup>**

The first **FACT** is that people who hold BELIEFS about **The Bible<sup>M</sup>** link it to a sensory perceivable object - a book.

The second **FACT** is that people who hold BELIEFS about **The Bible<sup>M</sup>** do not link it to the same book.

The third **FACT** is that there are different books that are called "The Bible."

### **Different Books Called "The Bible."**

When Americans are asked what they believe about the Bible, the Bibles they have in mind may be different and not the same. The obvious question that immediately comes to mind is - "What makes them different?"

**FACT: They Contain Different Books**

The Greek Orthodox Bible contains **78 books**; Roman Catholic Bible has **73 books**; Protestant Bible has **66 books** and the Jewish Bible has **24 books**.

**FACT: No original text exists.**

No original text of any book of any Bible is known to exist.

**FACT: Thousands of ancient manuscripts and fragments of biblical books exist.**

The Institute for New Testament Textual Research has catalogued **5752 manuscripts**, which contain writings found in different Bibles. In addition, scholars working with the Dead Sea Scrolls have identified the remains of about **825 to 870 separate scrolls**, of which at least fragments from every book in the Jewish Bible (except Esther) have been identified.

**FACT: Ancient manuscripts of the same book are not identical.**

The ancient manuscripts are **copies of copies** of biblical books. When scholars compare manuscripts of the same books they find a number of differences in the texts.

**FACT: Modern translations are based on selected manuscripts.**

The first decision a translator must make is **which ancient manuscript will be translated**. In order to make that decision he or she must also decide which manuscripts will not be used. Many translators use artificial texts created by scholars, in which the words that they conclude to be the original words have been recorded. These texts note the textual variations.

**FACT: Translators choose different words to translate the same word of an ancient manuscript.**

We have listed over 100 **different English translations** on our website. A translator's choice for even a very small common word can have major theological implications. For example, salvation comes by faith in Jesus or the faith of Jesus.

**FACT: Every translation was made for a reason and required funding.**

A great deal of time and effort must be expended to produce a translation of any Bible. Why was the translation of your Bible made? Who translated it? Who paid for the work? What was the agenda of the one paying for it?



**BHC's Primary Guideline**

"Our belief systems must be large enough to include all of the facts; open enough to be tested; and flexible enough to change when we become aware of errors or new facts."



I have presented a number of **FACTS** and **BELIEFS** about **The Bible<sup>M</sup>**. The BELIEFS came from a Gallup Poll and there are numerous sources for the FACTS on the internet, including the BHC website. Will you make the commitment to be an **Informed Believer** by following the BHC Primary Guideline? I do not know what you believe and will not tell you what to believe - that's completely up to you. ◇