

# Peace Talks



Prince of Peace Lutheran Church

News for Our Community

Easter 2009

[www.poplcms.org](http://www.poplcms.org)

## Ready to Compromise

By Pastor Tom...



When I was a young boy in parochial school, I was taught, "You can't treat the Bible like any other book!" The Bible was special,

I was told. The inspired word of God. Things in the Bible were true, and that was that. Over the years, I've discovered many reasons why the Bible is unique and worth special consideration. Yet these days, I'm (almost) ready to say, "Please! At least treat the Bible like any other book."

That's what I thought when I read a recent National Geographic article about Herod the Great, King of the Jews at the time Jesus was born. A capable

leader and prodigious builder, Herod is most remembered by his infamous "Slaughter of the Innocents," when he put to death every boy under two in and around Bethlehem in an attempt to kill the baby Jesus. The article states, "Herod is almost certainly innocent of this crime," because the Gospel of Matthew is the only source of this story. I had to wonder how many other details of Herod's life reported in the article were found in only one source. (Don't many details of history come to us that way?)

But the Bible is considered suspect. It talks about world wide floods, and giants, and dragons, and water turning to blood, and a floating axe head, and miraculous feedings, and resurrections from the dead, and lots of other incredible things. So for people who are unfamiliar with supernatural events (i.e. miracles), the Bible is hard to believe. The fact that it's a religious book also calls it into question. Many say that the Bible's purpose is to promote faith in Jesus Christ, so to treat it as a book of history is to miss the point.

And yet the Bible reads like a book of history. It tells about the descendents of Noah, and how they spread out to

different places of the earth. Many of their names (in Genesis 10) can be connected with people groups today. The Bible has genealogies that trace the family line of Jesus all the way back to Abraham, and even back to Adam. It tells how the Promised Land was divided up among the 12 tribes of Israel, giving the boundaries in great detail. When Jesus was born, Quirinius was governor of Syria and Caesar Augustus was Emperor of Rome. Jesus' parents lived in Nazareth but had to journey to Bethlehem to register for a census instigated by Caesar. Nazareth and Bethlehem are around today. Caesar Augustus and Quirinius are mentioned in other histories, and census taking was a regular practice. Biblical writers almost always put events in historic and geographic contexts, as a history book would.

Those aren't all of the Bible's credentials. The New Testament is more thoroughly confirmed by manuscript evidence than any other ancient literature. And while it is true that there are a small percentage of discrepancies in those documents, other ancient sources have more. One would think that, at the very least, the Bible would

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A Member of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LCMS)



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be treated like a reliable history book.

Yet the National Geographic article disregards Matthew's account of Herod's evil act. Was it perhaps because Herod was good and kind, and to do this would have been completely out of character? Nope. After asserting Herod's innocence, the author goes on to say, "Children he certainly slew, including three of his sons, along with his wife, his mother-in-law, and numerous other members of His court." The article portrays Herod as a brilliant but paranoid and often cruel monarch. If the Bible were treated like any other history, there seems no reason to disbelieve Herod's brutal, defining act.

It's a slippery slope, however. Once you start to accept some stories in the Bible, where do you stop? If Matthew's account of that slaughter is reliable, then what about when Matthew told of Jesus who claimed to be the Promised One of God, and then backed it up by rising from the dead? What about other parts of the New Testament where Jesus is described as the way to eternal life? In the end, the Bible can't be treated like any other book, because behind every word, Jesus is asking, "Who do you say I am?"

## Ten Reasons the Bible is Special

As I've read about the Bible and read through the Bible itself over the years, I have become convinced of its truthfulness. The items below only prove the Bible is unique. There is no way of proving that it is the word of God. Only faith can verify that in each individual's heart.

1. Unified Theme - The Bible claims to be written under the inspiration of God by approximately 40 human authors over 1500 years' time. Yet the character of God and how human beings relate to Him remain consistent throughout.
2. Manuscript Evidence - Anyone who would disregard the New Testament because there aren't enough ancient manuscripts to support it would have to throw out all other ancient literature. In sheer volume of manuscript evidence, the New Testament stands alone with over 25,000 manuscripts or parts of manuscripts. Homer's Iliad stands a distant second, with almost 650.
3. Accuracy of Transmission - Those manuscripts had to be passed on from generation to generation. Religious orders usually took on this responsibility. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls (1947 - 1956) shed some light on the accuracy of this transmission process. Though 1,000 years older than other manuscripts available at the time, the Dead Sea Scrolls differed from the newer manuscripts in less than five words out of every 1,000. The vast majority of these are simple copying errors such as misspellings or word omissions.
4. Agreement with Geography and Archeology - Most towns and regions mentioned in the Bible are easily found today, though some have passed from our knowledge. Archeological discoveries, for the most part, verify the Biblical account. Those that don't are in dispute among archeologists.
5. Symbolic Foreshadowing and Prophecy - Many accounts of the Old Testament dramatically foreshadow God's action in the New Testament. The whole Exodus event speaks powerfully about the spiritual Exodus of believers in Jesus to their heavenly promised land. Abraham's near sacrifice of Isaac pointed to God's sacrifice of Jesus in Isaac's stead - and ours. Prophecies foretold that the Messiah would be a descendent of David, would come from Bethlehem, would die a shameful death, and come to life again, all of which happened in Jesus. There are too many other examples to share here.
6. Candor - The candor of the entire Bible is remarkable. We are told about the failings of faith heroes, such as King David's sins of adultery and murder, St. Paul's past as a persecutor of the church, and rivalries among Jesus' followers. There is no attempt to gloss over such flaws, showing the Bible to be a truthful account.
7. Difficulty of Teachings - Jesus didn't sugarcoat his teachings to gain followers. He promised His disciples would have trouble, said that anyone who followed him had to deny him/herself, and predicted that many of them would die for their faith in Him. Biblical writers were not willing to gain followers at the expense of what they believed was truth.

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## The POP Center is open for business!

Prince of Peace is delighted to open the doors of our renovated fellowship hall. Several community groups currently use the facility, and we welcome you as well!

Looking for a location for a party or a gym facility (or both!)? Check out the POP Center! Call 248.553.3380 to make arrangements for a visit, or drop in to say "Hi" Monday - Friday 9am - 4pm. Of course we are open Sunday mornings too...



Photos provided by Farmington Observer



*Prince of Peace welcomes Dunkell and other area middle school students in a brand new after school program offered in the POP Center on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays.*

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8. Dedication of Followers - The central event of Christianity was and remains Jesus' rising from the dead. If that event did not occur, the courage of Jesus' followers becomes difficult to explain. It's not unusual for people to be deceived and give their lives for a lie. But would the disciples have been willing to give their lives for a lie they helped create?
9. The Bible's Message is Unique - Every other world religion focuses on what people can do to earn the favor of a god or gods. The Bible tells us that we can do nothing to earn God's favor, but it is God who has done everything necessary for us to be saved. The concept of God's favor as a pure gift, and the good things we do as pure thankfulness, is unique to the Bible. A religion that puts man at the center and master of his destiny is most likely a product of man's imagination. But a religion that puts God at the center and man as the recipient of His kindness seems more likely to have its origin from God.
10. The Bible's Effect - Each morning I try to spend 15 minutes reading the Bible apart from my usual study for sermons and other things. If I miss that time, I can tell the difference. It doesn't matter if I remember what I read or if it comes into my thoughts at all during my day. When I spend that time in the Bible in the morning, I am a different person. I can only conclude that God works through it because it is His special book.

Want to learn more about the Bible? Go to our website ([www.POPlcms.org](http://www.POPlcms.org)) and click on the Personal Bible study, which includes daily readings and a sermon series that you can do at your own pace.

www.poplcms.org



Prince of Peace Lutheran Church

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Farmington Hills, MI 48334

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PERMIT #879



*Join us for our  
Easter Celebration!*

**SUNDAY, APRIL 12**

**Traditional Service: 8:15 am**

**Family Service: 10:45 am**

Go to [www.poplcms.org](http://www.poplcms.org)  
for more information about our church!

**Christ is Our Rock**

**ROCK MUSIC EVENT**  
May 31, 1-2pm

Call 248.553.3380 for more information. No admission fee.



### Sunday Worship Schedule

8:15 am: *Traditional Service* • 9:30 am: *Kingdom Quest* • 10:45 am: *Family Worship*

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