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# Can We Still Believe the Bible? An Evangelical Engagement with Contemporary Questions by Craig L. Blomberg

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**Can We Still Believe the Bible? An Evangelical Engagement with Contemporary Questions,**

by C. L. Blomberg, Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2014. 287 pp. \$19.99. ISBN 9781587433214

*Reviewed by Craighton Hippenhammer, Digital Initiatives Librarian, Olivet Nazarene University, Bourbonnais, IL.*

In the tradition of F. F. Bruce's ground-breaking *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* (1943), Blomberg updates biblical apologetics by dividing his study into six questions most often asked about the reliability of the Bible. Those questions are: Aren't the copies of the Bible hopelessly corrupt? Wasn't the selection of books for the canon just political? Can we trust any of our translations of the Bible? Don't these issues rule out biblical inerrancy? Aren't several narrative genres of the Bible unhistorical? And don't all the miracles make the Bible mythical?

Answering these questions is timely, especially the first one, which has to do with textual criticism. In 2005, Bart Ehrman, a professor of New Testament at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, published a best-selling book, *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why*, which misleads on a wide number of accounts, a strain of intent, according to Blomberg, that runs through his publications. The second issue has to do with the biblical canon, the third with the proliferation of English translations of scripture, the fourth with biblical inerrancy, the fifth with biblical genres (what might have once been thought of as history might be another genre like metaphorical narrative), and the sixth has to do with the miraculous.

The depth of examination of these issues will be welcome to many who want serious academic treatments, while other more average church-goers may be overwhelmed. For example, the intra-organization squabble within the Evangelical Theological Society over Robert

Gundry's interpretation of the Gospel of Matthew in the early 1980s as being similar to Jewish Midrash could be head-spinning for many Christians. But those who can understand Blomberg's in-depth arguments are likely to come to appreciate his balanced approach to mainstream evangelical biblical scholarship as he grapples with more liberal interpretations while warning as Paul Copan says, "well-meaning believers about drawing rigid lines in the wrong places – and damaging the church's witness" (rear cover). In fact, all readers will appreciate Blomberg's pastoral heart which breaks when he sees Christians with abusive interpretations of biblical passages beat up on nonbelievers. He especially mourns those who can't see that "God never compels belief; he always allows those who want to doubt to do so and does not coerce them into faith against their will" (p. 218). So the sensitive and careful treatment of this subject will lead this book to be most welcome in most evangelical and mainstream colleges, universities and seminaries. It includes extensive notes pages, a scripture index and a subject index.