12 Questions & Answers From the Author

Two Sure Ways to Increase Your Faith

(Chuck Bagby)

1. What is your background?

I worked fulltime as an evangelist for ten years, completing foreign assignments in both Honduras and Argentina. Following that, I worked as an international business executive. I dedicated two decades to the business world, during which I always continued to “do the work of an evangelist” (2 Timothy 4:5 NASB).

I continue to teach today through Burning Heart Bible Studies seminars and books. I conduct *The Jesus Story: What I Wish I Had Known* seminars and write books along that theme and others. I also serve as a Consulting Professor of Biblical Studies for NationsUniversity ([www.nationsu.edu](http://www.nationsu.edu)).

1. What Does Burning Heart Bible Studies do?
   * Burning Heart Bible Studies equips Christians to read God’s Scriptures with confident understanding.
   * We do this through the production of inspirational, fact-based literature and seminars.
2. What kind of people does Burning Heart Bible Studies hope to reach?
   * Burning Heart Bible Studies produces material for Christians who desire to increase their faith by gaining a functional understanding of the Scriptures through inspirational, fact-based literature and seminars.
3. What is your book, *Two Sure Ways to Increase Your Faith* about?

* *Two Sure Ways to Increase Your**Faith* reveals how spiritual heroes in the Scriptures cultivated strong faith and how you, too, can advance your faith beyond the ordinary.
* The book examines the nature of the faith God desires His followers to possess and explains how to develop the necessary fundamentals to increase your own faith.
* The two fundamentals of faith consist of knowledge of the Scriptures and trusting actions based on that knowledge.

1. What motivated you to write this book?
   * After discovering the nature of faith as God described it in the Scriptures, I realized that most Christians do not understand the nature of the faith God desires them to possess. I decided to clarify the topic of faith in writing for my grandchildren.
   * Anyone who reads Burning Heart Bible Studies material has the opportunity to search for truth with a head start, becoming aware of truths I wish I had known earlier in my life.
2. Why did you title the book *Two Sure Ways to Increase Your Faith*?

* The basis of the title comes from God’s definition of faith in Hebrews 11:1.

*Faith is the* ***substantiation*** *of things being hoped for,*

*the* ***conviction*** *of things not seen.*

(Hebrews 11:1 BT)

* “BT” abbreviates “Bagby Translation.”
  + *Substantiation* requires knowledge.
  + *Conviction* involves the implementation of trusting actions based on facts substantiated by knowledge.

1. What differentiates *Two Sure Ways to Increase Your Faith* from other books written about faith?
   * *Two Sure Ways to Increase Your Faith* explores God’s definition of the faith He desires us to possess, not theological definitions of human origin.
   * Conventional writings either employ a style too academic for mainstream Christians to digest or present material too shallow to nourish their faith.
     + In contrast, *Two Sure Ways to Increase Your Faith* digs deeply enough to cultivate a believer’s faith, yet it speaks clearly enough for a novice to understand.
   * Burning Heart Bible Studies draws information solely from the Scriptures and other ancient historical sources.
     + Those who attend our seminars and read our books experience a rational study of the Scriptures, untainted by man-made theologies, unverifiable religious legends, or superstitious myths.
   * Burning Heart Bible Studies promotes a critical-thinking approach to reading the Scriptures.
2. What do you mean by *critical thinking*?
   * Critical thinking requires three elements; reasoning, evidence, and integrity.
   * Critical thinking means to base one’s beliefs and behavior on the exercise of careful reasoning founded on
     + Sound evidence and
     + Intellectual integrity.
3. In *Two Sure Ways to Increase Your Faith*, what heroes of faith do you discuss?
   * Abraham
   * Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego
   * Daniel
   * David
   * The two blind men (Matthew 7:27-30).
   * The Roman centurion (Matthew 8:5-13).
   * The Canaanite women (Matthew 15:21-28).
   * The paralyzed man and his friends (Luke 5:18-25).
4. Why does sifting out erroneous religious traditions from God’s definition of faith matter?
   * If someone changes God’s definition of faith by teaching erroneous religious traditions, how can one trust that person not to alter other of God’s teachings as well?
   * Corruption of God’s teachings in the Scriptures contaminates Christian thought.
5. What translation of the Scriptures do you use?
   * For our studies we typically use the NASU (The New American Standard Bible Update) translation.
     + I have found the NASU to provide the most clear-cut translation offered by traditional publishers.
     + The Lockman Foundation ([www.Lockman.org](http://www.Lockman.org)) publishes it.
   * I translate a passage myself when traditional translations fall short.
     + At times, conventional translations fail to render a passage correctly or outright alter it to conform to man-made theologies.
     + In such cases, Burning Heart Bible Studies material translates the passage precisely as indicated by the original text and context.
6. What examples can you give of passages rendered incorrectly or outright altered by conventional translations?

A couple of excerpts from my book *Born to Die* provide examples.

* *Born to Die*, subheading “Joseph the Craftsman,” pages 36-38

“The majority of translators utilize the word “carpenter” to convey the occupation of Joseph. *Xulourgós* (zü-lŏür-gŏ́s),[[1]](#footnote-1) the Greek word properly translated carpenter, literally means “wood worker.” Yet, no writer used *xulourgós* anywhere in the New Testament.

Matthew employed the Greek word *téktonos* (tĕ́k-tŏn-ŏs)[[2]](#footnote-2) to describe Joseph’s trade. *Téktonos* forms the genitive[[3]](#footnote-3) case of the Greek noun *tékton* (tĕ́k-tōn),[[4]](#footnote-4) which means “craftsman.” Bystanders in Nazareth identified Jesus as a *tékton* (craftsman),[[5]](#footnote-5) not a *xulourgós* (wood worker).

The work performed by a *tékton* (craftsman) could involve stone, wood, metal, or any combination of those materials, depending on the context in which a writer employed the word. Luke referred to the silversmiths in Ephesus as craftsmen,[[6]](#footnote-6) calling them *teknítais* (tĕk-nĭ́-täĭs),[[7]](#footnote-7) the plural of *teknítas* (tĕk-nĭ́-tās),[[8]](#footnote-8) a close synonym of *tékton*. Since no biblical text mentions the exact material with which Joseph or Jesus worked, anyone who identifies them as carpenters has done so based on legend. Instead, consider the environmental and cultural contexts of their day.

In ancient Judea, a *tékton* (craftsman) utilized stone to fabricate buildings,[[9]](#footnote-9) city walls,[[10]](#footnote-10) houses,[[11]](#footnote-11) animal troughs,[[12]](#footnote-12) water pots,[[13]](#footnote-13) millstones,[[14]](#footnote-14) and numerous other commodities.[[15]](#footnote-15) They found stone readily available and inexpensive, while craft-quality wood remained a rare and expensive material. Considering these facts, Joseph and Jesus probably worked as common stone craftsmen, not as prosperous wood craftsmen skilled in fine artistic design.[[16]](#footnote-16)”

* *Born to Die*, subheading “The Animal Lot,” page 96

“Stone, abundant and inexpensive, served as the primary construction material in the region. Forests did not grow in the Bethlehem area. Thickets thrived far away along the Jordan River but did not supply material for production of goods. Only the wealthy could afford craft-quality lumber, an expensive luxury imported from distant lands such as the hills of Lebanon.[[17]](#footnote-17) Hence, craftsmen[[18]](#footnote-18) utilized stone to make everything from buildings,[[19]](#footnote-19) city walls,[[20]](#footnote-20) and houses,[[21]](#footnote-21) to water pots,[[22]](#footnote-22) millstones,[[23]](#footnote-23) and animal troughs.[[24]](#footnote-24)”

1. *Xulourgós* (zü-lŏür-gŏ́s), cu/luorgov$ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Téktonos* (tĕ́k-tŏn-ŏs), te/ktono$; Matthew 13:55 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The Greek genitive grammatical case denotes possession or a relation similar to possession as in “the son ***of***the craftsman” (Matthew 13:55 BT). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *Tékton* (tĕ́k-tōn), te/ktwn [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. “Is this not the *craftsman*” (Mark 6:3 BT). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Acts 19:24 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. *Teknítais* (tĕk-nĭ́-täĭs), texni/tai$ [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. *Teknítes* (tĕk-nĭ́-tās), texni/th$ [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Mark 13:1-2; Luke 21:5-6 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Luke 19:43-44 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. 1 Peter 2:4-5 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Luke 2:7,12,16; Ancient writers of English, 14th century A.D. and later, referred to an animal trough as a manger. For additional information regarding the animal troughs of ancient Israel, see *Chapter 5 – The Magi Meet Jesus, King of the Jews*, heading *The Star Stood above Where the Child Was (Matthew 2:9)*. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. John 2:6 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Matthew 18:6; Mark 9:42; Luke 17:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Matthew 27:60 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Joseph did not make a living as a wealthy craftsman. For more information regarding his financial resources, see *Chapter 4 – The Magi Meet Herod, King of Judea*, heading *His Star (Matthew 2:2)*, subheading *When Did the Magi Arrive in Bethlehem?*, subheading *Six-Week Time-Period*. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. 1 Kings 5:6; 2 Chronicles 2:9-11 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. For additional information about the craftsmen of that day, see *Chapter 3 – Birth of Jesus, Rescuer of His People*, heading *Joseph (Matthew 1:18)*, subheading *Joseph the Craftsman*. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Mark 13:1-2; Luke 21:5-6 [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Revelation 21:14,19; Luke 19:43-44 [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. 1 Peter 2:4-5 [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. John 2:6 [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Matthew 18:6; Mark 9:42; Luke 17:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Luke 2:7,12,16 [↑](#footnote-ref-24)