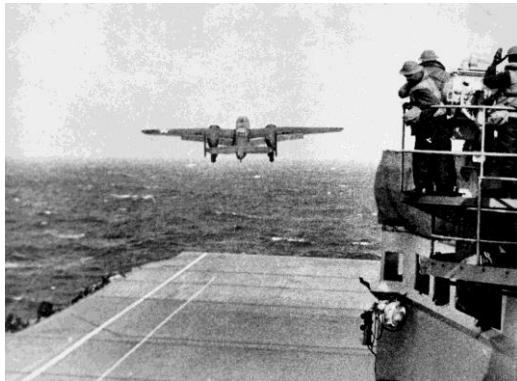


Supernatural Transformation via the Bible: A Story of the Doolittle Raiders of WWII

*An Excerpt from **The Bible: Divine or Human? Evidence of Biblical Infallibility and Support for Building Your Life and Nation on Biblical Truth***

By Stephen McDowell

Following the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, a group of American pilots known as the Doolittle Raiders were sent to bomb Japan. Some of them were shot down, captured, and put in prison, where they suffered greatly. They were given meager food, so little that some slowly starved to death. They were kept in dark, cold, small cells; they were yelled at, beaten, and kicked. Many became diseased and received little care. The anger and hatred toward the guards due to the tortuous conditions consumed many of the prisoners. This went on for two years.



One of the Doolittle Raiders' B-25 bombers taking off from the aircraft carrier USS Hornet, April 18, 1942.

After one prisoner died from starvation, Bob Hite wrote a letter to the prison governor complaining of their intolerable treatment, reminding him it was against all Geneva conference rules. Among other things, he wrote: "If you can't do anything useful, will you please give us the Holy Bible to read?"¹ He intermittently attended church growing up, though really knew little of the faith or the Bible. None of the other captives were true believers, and some were even put off by Christianity.

His letter may have done some good, as afterwards their rations improved and they were allowed to share a few books, one being the Bible. They decided to let each man read the Bible for three weeks before passing it on.

Bob Hite said: "it was the first time that I had ever – I think any of us – the first time any of us had really read the Bible from cover to cover. I was sort of like a man being in

the desert and finding a cool pool....Instead of hating this enemy that we had such hate for, we began to feel sorry for them....It was almost a miracle to realize the sort of thing that happened to us...we were no longer afraid to the extent that we had been...we no longer had the hatred."²

Just prior to having his turn with the Bible, one of the prisoners, Jake DeShazer, was yelled at by a guard. Rage had been growing within Jake over his two years of imprisonment, so without thought he yelled back. The guard hit him on the head with his fist. Jake kicked him back, with the guard responding by hitting him with his steel scabbard. Jake then threw a bucket of dirty mop water that he had been using to clean the floor on the guard. Oddly the guard only yelled back. "It is strange that he didn't cut off my head," Jake said.³

Just after this incident the Bible was passed on to Jake. This experience would turn his life upside-down. He began to read



Bob Hite being led to prison by Japanese captors. During his imprisonment Hite was transformed after reading the Bible.

the small print from the dim light coming through the small vent at the top of the cell. “The words of the page came to life. It seemed as though they were written just for him.” In the stories he read in the Old Testament and especially in “the story of Christ’s suffering in the New, he felt that God was indeed present, reaching out for someone abandoned, as mistreated, as hopeless as he was.”⁴ In his three weeks with the Bible, he spent every minute reading and memorizing all he could.

“On June 8, 1944, he read for a second time Romans 10:9: ‘That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.’ Jake prayed: ‘Lord, though I am far from home and though I am in prison, I must have forgiveness.’ As he prayed constantly, thinking deeply about the message of the Bible, he was overcome with a tremendous sensation: ‘My heart was filled with joy. I wouldn’t have traded places with anyone at that time. Oh, what a great joy it was to know that I was saved, that God had forgiven me my sins....Hunger, starvation, and a freezing cold prison cell no longer had horrors for me. They would only be for a passing moment. Even death could hold no threat when I knew that God had saved me. Death is just one more trial that I must go through before I can enjoy the pleasures of eternal life. There will be no pain, no suffering, no loneliness in heaven. Everything will be perfect with joy forever.’”⁵

The central message of the Scriptures became real and alive to him. In the midst of the worst of conditions, he experienced a supernatural contentment only possible in Christ. There is no worldly explanation for this supernatural transformation. It affirms the divine nature of the Bible.

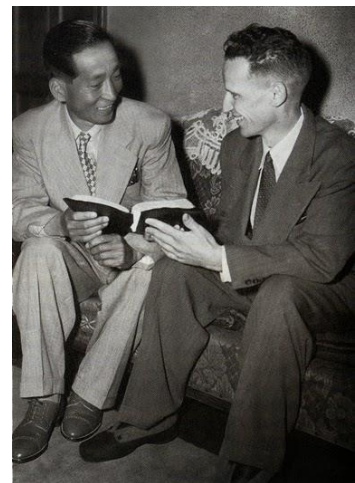
The more he read the more he realized he needed to change deep down inside. He especially needed Christian love. He felt that while his sins had been forgiven through Christ, he would need to forgive as well. A test soon came his way. One day while returning from exercise, the guard yelled at him to hurry, slapped him, pushed him into his cell and slammed the door on his bare foot breaking some bones. As he sat on the stool, anger beginning to rise, he thought God was testing him somehow in this.

The next morning when the guard was back, he first considered revenge but remembering the lesson, responded by saying “good morning.” The guard looked at him strangely since he had never heard Jake say this. Morning after morning Jake tried to be polite and friendly. Finally, the guard came over to him and spoke. Jake asked about his family. This was the beginning of a complete change of treatment from this one guard. From then on the guard treated Jake well, even bringing him food. “I knew then that God’s way will work if we really try, no matter what the circumstances.”⁶

DeShazer was held captive for about one more year, during which time God did other miracles to keep him alive. After the war, Jacob DeShazer and his wife would serve as missionaries to Japan for 30 years. Through their ministry many Japanese were converted, including two of the guards at his prison, and 23 new churches were started. He also worked closely with Mitsuo Fuchida, who had led the air attack on Pearl Harbor, and after the war became a Christian.⁷

Similar stories to that of Bob Hite and Jacob DeShazer have been repeated hundreds of millions of times since Jesus Christ, the living Word of God, came into the world. The supernatural transformation of men who hear its message shows us that the Bible is powerful. The Bible is unique among all books ever written. It is more than the mere words of men. It is in fact divine. The Bible is God’s Word and it is infallible.

To learn more, order a copy of *The Bible: Divine or Human? Evidence of Biblical Infallibility and Support for Building Your Life and Nation on Biblical Truth* from providencefoundation.com



Jake DeShazer (right) returned to Japan after the war and led many to Christ, including Mitsuo Fuchida (left) who had led the air attack on Pearl Harbor.

¹ Craig Nelson, *The First Heroes, the Extraordinary Story of the Doolittle Raid – America's First World War II Victory*, Penguin Book, 2003, p. 303.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., p. 304.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., p. 305.

⁷ See Nelson, pp. 342, 347 ff.