

# Is The Bible Made Up?

**Introduction.** We're here today because we have dedicated our lives to serving God and living by His will ... but what if it's all made up? That's a chilling, stomach-churning thought, isn't it?

Since the Bible has touched so many lives so profoundly, of course it's going to be scrutinized. And that is no problem for the Bible believer. We don't want to believe something wrong no more than the ardent skeptic wants to be deceived by it.

Everywhere you turn in scripture begs for confirmation through investigation. For instance, when Peter preached the first gospel sermon so people could turn from their sins, he appealed to "miracles and wonders and signs" which were done "in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know" (v. 22) and to the resurrection "whereof we all are witnesses" (v. 32). God is not interested in "blind leaps of faith;" He wants people to be assured of what they're believing and doing.

To that end, there are three excellent evidences that confirm that the Bible is not made up. Certainly, we all need to know these, but especially our young people need to be acquainted with the solid evidence God gave us to believe in this beautiful, life-changing book about redemption in Christ.

## ***I. The Bible Is Confirmed By Its Uniqueness***

- A. Compared to other "holy books," the Bible is unique in several respects.
  - 1. Although it is a library of 66 books, written over a period of 1,500 years, by about 40 different writers from all walks of life (kings, soldiers, shepherds, farmers, fishermen, a doctor, a cup bearer, a tax collector, a tent maker), living under different circumstances (the wilderness, a dungeon, a prison, a palace, in exile, on journeys), living on different continents (Europe, Asia, Africa), and speaking different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek), together they make a complete and harmonious whole. It is not what we would expect to find were it "made up."
  - 2. Contrast the Bible with the compilation of Western classics called the Great Books of the Western World. This book contains selections from over 450 works by almost 100 authors spanning a period of 2,500 years. It displays incredible diversity of views on virtually every subject. The different writers go out of their way to refute key ideas proposed by their predecessors.
- B. Moreover, the Bible's theme is quite unlike those found in other religions. Manmade religions teach either that man can do nothing toward his salvation (such as denominationalists), or that a man is judged on a strict scale of justice (Catholics and Muslims). The Bible, however, presents the perfect and scriptural blend of grace and faith (Ephesians 2:8-9).
  - 1. Manmade religions are about what man can do for his god, but the Bible is about what God has already done for man (John 3:16; Romans 5:6-11).
  - 2. Because of the great grace of God, man responds through his faith and obedience:
    - a) Noah, by faith, built an ark (Hebrews 11:7).
    - b) Abraham, by faith, left his homeland (Hebrews 11:8-9).

- c) Rahab, by faith, hid the spies (Hebrews 11:31).
- d) You and I, by faith, are baptized into Christ for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).

## **II. The Bible Is Confirmed by Its History**

- A. The Bible accurately reveals historical people, events, and places.
  - 1. Discovered in Israel, the Tel Dan Stele has been dated to the ninth century B.C. and mentions the “House of David,” shattering the long-held view of many skeptics that David was a mythical person.
  - 2. The Mesha Stele describes Moab’s subjection under Omri, the king of Israel. It also references the personal name of the God of the Bible (Yahweh), and very likely contains a reference to the “House of David” (this is debated due to an unreadable letter).
  - 3. The Pilate stone provides archaeological evidence for the existence of the man who sentenced Jesus to death on the cross. Skeptics frequently denied his existence until the discovery of this stone, which identifies Pontius Pilate as the Prefect of Judea.
- B. Dr. Nelson Glueck, a highly respected archaeologist, whose reliance on the historical accuracy of scripture led to the discovery of 1,500 ancient sites. Regarding the Bible and archaeology, said, “It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference. Scores of archaeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or exact detail historical statements in the Bible. And, by the same token, proper evaluation of biblical description has often led to amazing discoveries.”
- C. The distinguished archaeologist Dr. William F. Albright also asserted the accuracy of the Bible’s history when he wrote, “Thanks to modern research we now recognize its substantial historicity. The narratives of the Patriarchs, of Moses and the Exodus, of the Conquest of Canaan, of the Judges, the Monarchy, Exile, and Restoration, have all been confirmed and illustrated to an extent that I should have thought impossible forty years ago.”
- D. Glueck and Albright focused their attention on the Old Testament, but what about the New Testament? Does it enjoy a similar level of confirmation? Actually, perhaps because it is more recent, the evidence consistent with the New Testament is more abundant. Consider the following details in just a single chapter of the Bible that have been confirmed by historians and archaeologists:
  - 1. The proper location (Amphipolis and Apollonia) of where travelers would spend successive nights on this journey (Acts 17:1).
  - 2. The presence of a synagogue in Thessalonica (Acts 17:1).
  - 3. The proper title, “politarchs,” used of the magistrates there (Acts 17:6).
  - 4. The correct implication that sea travel is the most convenient way of reaching Athens with favoring east winds of summer sailing (Acts 17:14).
  - 5. The abundant presence of images in Athens (Acts 17:16).
  - 6. The reference to a synagogue in Athens (Acts 17:17).
  - 7. The depiction of the Athenian life of philosophical debate in the Agora (Acts 17:17).

8. The use of the correct Athenian slang word for Paul, a spermologos (Acts 17:18), as well as the court (areios pagos).
  9. The proper characterization of the Athenian character (Acts 17:21).
  10. An altar to an “unknown god” (Acts 17:23).
  11. The proper reaction of Greek philosophers who denied bodily resurrection (Acts 17:32).
  12. Areopagites as the correct title for a member of the court (Acts 17:34).
- E. This does not prove every word of scripture is true, but it reveals that the writer (Luke) had intimate knowledge of the people, customs, and places he wrote about. Also, we have no record of any ancient writer denying the historicity of the people and places described in scripture, but we do have a lot of first- and second-century sources outside the Bible confirming the existence of Jesus.
- F. Many more archaeologists could be cited who verify the accuracy of the biblical text. Of course we’ll never find archaeological or paleographic evidence to confirm every person, event, or place described in the Bible.
1. For example, historical research can provide corroborating evidence for the crucifixion of Jesus under Pontius Pilate (Tacitus mentions these details in Annals), but scientific disciplines cannot confirm that His death on the cross satisfied God’s wrath against sin.
  2. However, the abundance of finds matching scripture perfectly that have already been found show that the Bible was not just “made up.”
- G. Compare the Bible’s accuracy with the miserable archaeological record of the Mormon religion. The Mormon “holy books” teach that Native Americans are really Jews who fled Jerusalem, but DNA studies have falsified this claim. Moreover, despite millions of dollars spent on excavations in the Americas, archaeologists have not uncovered any evidence to support Mormon claims, and the early Americans did not wield scimitars or ride horses and elephants.
- H. Scientists from every discipline could be quoted whose work in their respective fields have either persuaded or further convinced them that the Bible is true. But we should not rely primarily on the conclusions of learned men and women of science. While their statements are helpful, we must recognize that they can err and change their minds. So is there anything we can look at to demonstrate the Bible was not just an invention of man? Indeed there is.

### ***III. The Bible Is Confirmed By Its Challenge***

- A. Throughout Isaiah 40-46, God, speaking through the prophet, repeatedly challenges the false gods to prove themselves. Specifically, He challenges them to tell the future and bring it to pass (Isaiah 41:21-23).
- B. So here is the test for the other religions of the world. Can they accurately foretell future events? After all, only the all-knowing, all-powerful Creator knows everything that will happen and has the ability to bring it to pass. And God has established His righteous character through this unique ability (Isaiah 41:26).
- C. Most of the founders of the world’s religions never attempted to tell the future. Outside of the Bible, the other “holy books” of the world do not really include prophecies. The vague predictions of Nostradamus and demonstrably false prognostications of Edgar Cayce do not meet the biblical standard of 100

percent accuracy for a prophet (Deuteronomy 18:22). Now consider what God says about His own ability in this area (Isaiah 42:8-9).

- D. What does prophecy have to do with whether the Bible was “made up”? Mere men cannot accurately tell the future, and yet more than one-fourth of the Bible was prophetic at the time of its writing, indicating that these men were not simply making up what they wrote — their writing was inspired by God. The biblical prophecies contain specific people, times, places, and events, and they are generally straightforward. Most of them were written centuries before the events described, and those that have already been fulfilled came to pass exactly as foretold (some prophecies await future fulfillment).
- E. Consider just seven of the hundreds of accurate prophecies in scripture:

The Messiah Would Be	Prophesied	Fulfilled
Born of a virgin	Isaiah 7:14	Matthew 1:25
Born in Bethlehem	Micah 5:2	Matthew 2:1, 6
Betrayed for 30 pieces of silver	Zechariah 11:12	Matthew 26:15, 49
Clothes divided at the cross	Psalms 22:18	John 19:24
Wounded for our sins	Isaiah 53:5	1 Peter 2:24
Killed for others	Daniel 9:26	2 Corinthians 5:21
Raised from the death	Psalms 16:10	Luke 24:6

- F. In addition to dozens of prophecies about Jesus, the Old Testament contains hundreds of detailed prophecies, often to announce judgment on Israel and the surrounding nations for their disobedience.
- G. When addressing Messianic prophecies, skeptics often assume that Jesus simply set out to fulfill certain predictions; but if Jesus were merely a man, how would He make sure that He would be born of a virgin in Bethlehem or that He would be raised from the dead?
- H. Many skeptics also assume these prophecies were written after the fact, but all of the prophecies mentioned in the chart above were written at least 400 years before the events occurred.
  1. Even if a person rejects the well-supported traditional dates assigned to the Old Testament books, he still needs to deal with the fact that the Greek translation of the Old Testament, known as the Septuagint, includes these prophecies and was translated well before Christ’s birth.
  2. Furthermore, portions of each of the Old Testament books in the chart were discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls, including the great Isaiah Scroll, which is dated to at least a century before Christ’s birth and contains multiple precise prophecies about the Messiah. How could the writers of the Old Testament possibly know what would come to pass with perfect accuracy? There is only one logical answer. God inspired their words; they did not make up what they wrote.

**Conclusion** The truth is that God has inspired the writing of His word in the collection of 66 books we call the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16). The notion that men just made it up is quite reasonably dispensed by scripture's uniqueness, its historical and archaeological accuracy, and its inclusion of fulfilled detailed prophecy. These facts do not necessarily prove that every word of the Bible is accurate, but they do provide verification for many portions of scripture, demonstrate its divine origin, and give us great confidence that the details not subject to scientific verification are also true.

Finally, in addition to the divine origin of the text, the Bible explains the most important message we could ever know. As people who have sinned against our perfectly holy Creator, we deserve His judgment, but God sent His Son to die a sacrificial death on the cross so that we can be forgiven. Three days later, He rose from the dead, demonstrating His power over sin and death and providing the guarantee of eternal life to all who trust in Him (Romans 10:9).

If you have not already done so, call on the God who inspired the writing of the Bible. Turn from your sins and ask for His forgiveness through obedience to Christ.

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