

# Can You Show That The Bible Is The Word Of God?

**Introduction.** Religion, unlike many other subjects, involves life's greatest values, both temporal and eternal. All our life philosophies must have a foundation of fact and truth. It is for this reason that in matters of religion, extraordinary care must be taken to guard against mere assumption, or credulity, or disguised superstition. We're here today because we have dedicated our lives to serving and living for God — but what if isn't true? That's a chilling, stomach-churning thought, isn't it? Religious faith must rest on evidence and on reasoned conviction (Hebrews 11:1).

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. Therefore, it is very commendable that someone ask questions about the authenticity of the Bible. The answers and reasons for these questions will in a hopeful manner be fair and honest (1 Peter 3:15).

Every place you turn to 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, we need to be equipped to help others see that the Bible is the God-inspired, beautiful, life-changing book about redemption in Christ. We'll do that today by investigating four important facts about the Bible.

## ***I. The Bible Has A Definite, Traceable History***

- A. The Bible has been examined more critically and searchingly than any other book in the world. Nothing of importance has been discovered to contradict its major claims, nor have its thousands of incidental allusions been found to oppose the known facts. Many scholarly people feel, therefore, that one can read the Bible with full confidence in its accuracy, authenticity, and authority.
- B. We know a lot about the origin of Bible writings. We know who wrote most of the books of the Bible, and when, and where. We also know a great deal about the circumstances and conditions under which these books were written. All the books of the Bible are, therefore, subject to historical examination, criticism, and comparison to contemporary writings and events. The countries, places, customs, conditions, and persons named in the Bible can be checked and verified. In fact, they have been thoroughly checked and found accurate. Thus the Bible lends itself to scholarly examination.
- C. 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.
- D. More than 25,000 sites showing some connection with the Old Testament period have been located in Bible lands. Keith Schoville said, “It is important to realize that archaeological excavations have produced ample evidence to prove unequivocally that the Bible is not a pious forgery. Thus far, no historical statement in the Bible has been proven false on the basis of evidence retrieved through archaeological research.”
- E. 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).
- F. 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.
- G. Compare the Bible’s accuracy with the miserable archaeological record of the Mormon religion.
1. The Mormon “holy books” teach that Native Americans are really Jews who fled Jerusalem, but DNA studies have falsified this claim.
  2. 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.

## **II. The Bible Is A Realistic, Truthful Book**

- A. The Bible is realistic in that it deals with the greatest, deepest questions of life, and with the universal problems of human existence. It deals with such problems as life and death, suffering, sorrow and sin; problems of right and wrong, of faith, of hope and of love, also with the desire for happiness, both temporal and eternal.
- B. On this point Dr. R. A. Millikan, a Noble Prize winner in experimental physics, has said that the Bible is of inestimable importance to the people of the modern world because “more than anything else, it satisfies the desire for truth.” This is a very significant because the desire for truth is one of the deepest and noblest that man can experience — it is the foundation of civilization.
- C. The conclusion is that a book so basic in viewpoint, so comprehensive in content, and so amazingly universal in appeal, must reflect the mind of God.
- D. 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 Protestants), or that a man is judged on a strict scale of justice (such as 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 God’s grace, 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).

## **III. The Bible Has Great Unity Of Content And Thought**

- A. Although it is a library of 66 books, written over a period of 1,600 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 harmonious whole. It is not what we would expect to find were it written by men.
- B. Now, in a book so strikingly composite, one would naturally expect variance and discrepancy, even contradiction and discord. It has long been noted that in basic thought every part of the Bible fits every other part. It is one in theme, spirit, and aim. Therefore, according to the belief of many eminent students of the Bible, its evident unity must have come from one controlling mind — the mind of God.
  - 1. If two or three people today were to witness a bank robbery, they probably would give conflicting accounts of the incident. Human perception is simply that flawed.
  - 2. Yet those forty or so contributors to scripture, most of who never even met each other, prepared separate books that fit together with perfect continuity

and symmetry. The entire Old Testament makes a single statement: “Jesus is coming.” The New Testament declares, “Jesus is here.”

- C. 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.
- D. The depth and superiority of Bible writings over all other writings of man are evidence of its inspiration. The Bible is a book that study does not exhaust or progress make obsolete — a quality which no uninspired book possesses.

#### **IV. The Bible Demonstrates Enormous Power**

- A. Christians don't believe that God exists simply because the Bible teaches that He does. Nor do Christians believe that the Bible is the word of God simply because the Bible claims to be inspired by God.
  - 1. Anyone can make claims about whatever they wish. Simply because a person claims to have revelation from a supernatural Creator does not make it so (e.g., the Book of Mormon).
  - 2. But if the Bible possesses attributes that are superhuman, then the Bible proves itself to be of supernatural origin, and has indirectly proven the existence of God. Atheists understand that if God spoke to man and gave him specific information about future events it would falsify atheism.
- B. One extremely valuable line of evidence that confirms that the Bible is the inspired word of God is the presence of accurate, predictive prophecy contained in its pages. Not only are the prophecies of the Bible fulfilled in minute detail with complete accuracy, but these fulfillments are often accomplished centuries after the prophecies were made. Even the skeptic understands that if this is the case, a supernatural agent must be responsible for the writing of the Bible. That is why the skeptic attempts to discredit the prophecies by claiming that they were written after the events, or by claiming that they were not fulfilled in detail. Completely accurate, fulfilled prophecy verifies the divine inspiration of the Bible (Jeremiah 28:9).
  - 1. In 1 Kings 13, God sent an unnamed man of God to prophesy against Jeroboam for his role in filling the hearts of the Israelites with idolatry (v. 2; cp. 1 Kings 12:25-33). The man of God called for King Josiah to cleanse the iniquity of Jeroboam which he very effectively did about 150 years in the future (2 Kings 23:15-18).
  - 2. Assyria was singled out by God in Isaiah 10:1-14. She had taken the northern kingdom of Israel captive (2 Kings 17:1-23), but because of her proud heart, she too would fall. In history, this took place at the battle of Carchemish (Jeremiah 46:2-12) in 606 B.C. This was the same battle in which Josiah, who tried to prevent Pharaoh Neco from joining forces with the Assyrians, lost his life (2 Chronicles 35:20-24). The victory gave Babylon authority over all of western Asia within the next few years; for this reason it ranks as one of the most decisive battles of all time. And it was prophesied by God about 135 years in the future.

3. In Daniel 2:31-45, Nebuchadnezzar had an interesting dream of a statue that was then destroyed by a stone cut out of a mountain without hands. Daniel went on to interpret, completely by the hand of God, the dream. It represented four great world kingdoms, the first being the Babylonian Empire. After it, the Medo-Persian Empire would dominate the world, followed by the Grecian Empire. Finally, the Roman Empire was represented by the iron feet mixed with clay. This astounding prophecy, repeated in Daniel 7, looked almost 600 years into the future to explain that God would control His Son's coming into the world.
4. Babylon was used by God to destroy the kingdom of Judah after she had been dragged down into extreme idolatry, most notably by Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah. In Habakkuk 2:2-20, after explaining to the prophet how God was using the Babylonians to punish the people of Judah, he adds that Babylon itself will then be destroyed. This took place in Daniel 5:1-39 when the Medo-Persian Empire suddenly overtook the Babylonian Empire.
5. Tyre was a world-class nation made rich by their commercial shipping trade. However, God was not pleased with them, and so in Ezekiel 26:1-21 God warned them that He would use the Babylonians to punish the nation. He even mentioned Nebuchadnezzar by name in v. 7. Nebuchadnezzar besieged the city from 586-573 B.C. but could not destroy it completely. A few hundred years after Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander the Great destroyed the city by building a causeway over which he was able to move his war machinery. He conquered and razed the city in 332 B.C.
6. Daniel 11:1-45 was revealed by God to the prophet to inform and encourage the Jews about their future as a people. There are approximately 130 prophecies in the chapter, and it begins by foretelling that the Persian Empire would be supplanted by the Grecian Empire. We know that Alexander's untimely death allowed his kingdom to be divided into four parts. Two of the rulers, Ptolemy and Seleucus, who ruled Egypt and Syria, respectively, and their descendants, are exquisitely detailed in this chapter, which ends by revealing an exhaustive prophecy about one of the Jews' greatest adversaries: Antiochus IV Epiphanes. It is truly amazing when one remembers that these prophecies were disclosed hundreds of years before they actually took place.
7. In one of the few true prophetic passages in the New Testament, Jesus foretold of the destruction of Jerusalem in Matthew 24:1-35. He gave several specific signs of the impending doom and encouraged His disciples to flee the city when they observed these signs. After the city was besieged for a few months, the Roman general Titus overtook it and Herod's temple was burned in A.D. 70. The prophecy was fulfilled only 40 years after He spoke it.

**Conclusion.** For all these reasons countless millions of people have believed that, while the Bible was penned by men, its real author was God. We want you to know how to defend this book as the word of God. You will not be putting your faith or encouraging others to put their faith in just another "book."

The notion that men just created it is quite reasonably dispensed by scripture's traceable history, its truthfulness, its unity of thought and content, and its inclusion of detailed, fulfilled 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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