

SHOULD THE BIBLE BE ACCEPTED AS TRUTH?

INTRODUCTION

What is the Bible?¹

“Any person who knows of the Bible and its claims cannot help but react one way or another to those claims. The Bible itself makes the astounding assertion that it is indeed the very Word of God.”²

Even a casual reader of the Bible soon discovers that he is reading a most unusual book. Although covering thousands of years of human history and recorded by more than forty human writers, it is one Book with amazing continuity.

Our view, approach, and attitude toward the Bible is foundational. If our view of the Bible is inadequate we will naturally handle the Bible accordingly. If I do not think it is God-breathed, I won't think it is profitable and vital. If I think it might contain errors, or that only some of it is inspired, say the thoughts, not the words, then I am left with a dilemma and I must approach it much like a cafeteria line, choosing according to my own likes or bias. What do I believe and not believe? If it is wrong in some places, then how can I be sure what it says about Jesus is true? On the other hand, if I believe it is God's infallible and inerrant Word, as the evidence supports, then I should accept it all and study it carefully.

What do we believe about the Bible?

I. THE BIBLE – The Written Word of God

A. Internal Evidence

In hundreds of passages, the Bible declares or takes the position explicitly or implicitly that it is nothing less than the very Word of God.

Some thirty-eight hundred times the Bible declares, “God said,” or “Thus says the Lord” (e.g. Ex. 14:1; 20:1; Lev. 4:1; Num. 4:1; Deut. 4:2; 32:48; Isa. 1:10, 24; Jer. 1:11; Ezek. 1:3; etc.). Paul also recognized that the things he was writing were the Lord's commandments (1 Cor. 14:37), and they were acknowledged as such by the believers (1 Thess. 2:13). Peter proclaimed the certainty of the Scriptures and the necessity of heeding the

¹ The majority of this Bible Study is from an undocumented source. We desire for credit to be given where it is due. The Facilitator added to and reworked the materials for the purpose of the Kitwe Bible Study.

² Dr. Joseph Stowell

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unalterable and certain Word of God (2 Pet. 1:16-21). John too recognized that his teaching was from God; to reject his teaching was to reject God (1 John 4:6).³

For other passages which either declare or assume the Bible as God's Word see Deuteronomy 6:6-9, 17-18; Joshua 1:8-9; 8:32-35; 2 Samuel 22:31; Ps. 1:2; 12:6; 19:7-11; 93:5; 119:9, 11, 18, 89-93, 130; Prov. 30:5-6; Matthew 5:17-19; 22:29; Mark 13:31; Luke 16:17; John 2:22; 5:24; 10:35; Acts 17:11; Romans 10:17; Colossians 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:15-17; 1 Peter 1:23-25; 2 Peter 3:15-16; Revelation 1:2; 22:18.

In response to those who would reject the above mentioned argument, it should be noted that the writers who made those claims for the Scripture were trustworthy men who defended the integrity of the Scripture at great personal sacrifice. Jeremiah received his message directly from the Lord (Jer. 11:13), yet because of his defense of the Scripture some attempted to kill him (Jer. 11:21); even his family rejected him (Jer. 12:6). Counterfeit prophets were readily recognized (Jer. 23:21, 32; 28:117). However, the Bible's claims should not be understood as arguing in a circle or by circular reasoning. The testimony of reliable witnesses—particularly of Jesus, but also of others such as Moses, Joshua, David, Daniel, and Nehemiah in the Old Testament, and John and Paul in the New Testament—affirmed the authority and verbal inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.⁴

The ever-present assumption of the writers of the Bible is that the Bible is the God-breathed Word of God. (Psalm 19:7-11)

B. External Evidence

1. **The continuity of the Bible.** One of the amazing facts about the Bible is that though it was written by a wide diversity of authors (as many as 40) over a period of 1500 years, from many different locations and under a wide variety of conditions, the Bible is uniquely one book, not merely a collection of sixty-six books. Its authors came from all walks of life. They lived in a variety of cultures, in different experiences and often were quite different in their make up.

Moses - Egyptian Prince

Joshua - Soldier

Samuel - Priest

David - King

Esther - queen

Ruth - housewife

³ Ryrie Electronic Media , p. 154.

⁴ Ibid.

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Job - rich farmer
Amos - poor farmer
Luke - physician
Peter - fisherman
Matthew - tax collector

Summing up the significance of the Bible's continuity, Enns writes,

It is apparent that many of the writers did not know of the other writers of Scripture and were unfamiliar with the other writings, inasmuch as the writers wrote over a period of more than fifteen hundred years, yet the Bible is a marvelous, unified whole. There are no contradictions or inconsistencies within its pages. The Holy Spirit is the unifier of the sixty-six books, determining its harmonious consistency. In unity these books teach the triunity of God, the deity of Jesus Christ, the personality of the Holy Spirit, the fall and depravity of man, as well as salvation by grace. It quickly becomes apparent that no human being(s) could have orchestrated the harmony of the teachings of the Scripture. The divine authorship of the Bible is the only answer.⁵

“It is not such a book as man would write if he *could*, or could write if he *would*.”⁶

2. **The Bible's revelation of God.** The Bible's revelation of God is unique among all the religious writings of either antiquity or of more modern times. While the Bible is a very ethical book, it never divorces its code of morality from a personal relationship with the God of the Bible, teaching that God's laws are not meant to hinder joy and pleasure, but to enhance man's capacity to know and love God and people. Morality is to be a product of knowing and loving the God of the Bible (Deut. 4:4-6; Matt. 22:36-40; Mark 12:28-31).

In addition, no other religious writing presents both the absolute holiness of God combined with God's love, mercy, and grace that reaches out to sinful man who has been separated from God not only because of man's sin, but because of God's absolute holiness. One of the great revelations and themes of the Bible is that which is expressed by Isaiah, “holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts” (Isa. 6:3; Hab. 1:13a).

While other contemporary writers were primarily polytheistic, the Bible is monotheistic. It presents a monotheistic concept of God rather than the

⁵ Enns, p. 155.

⁶ Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, Vol 1, Kregel, Grand Rapids, 1947-48, p. 22.

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polytheism which was so flagrant in the days when the Scriptures were written. Furthermore, when later holy books like the Koran and others presented a monotheistic concept of God, the Bible remained unique because it is the only book about God that presents God as one (monotheism) yet one in three persons, the Triunity or Trinity. Indeed, the Bible's revelation of God is one that is starkly different from the ones depicted in all other holy books whether of antiquity or of modern times.

3. **The Historical Accuracy**

“I take the view that Luke's history is unsurpassed in its trustworthiness... you may press the words of Luke in a degree beyond any other historian's and they stand the keenest scrutiny and the hardest treatment.” - Sir William Ramsey, Professor of Humanities, University of Aberdeen, Scotland.⁷

“The reader may rest assured: nothing has been found to disturb a reasonable faith, and nothing has been discovered which can disprove a single theological doctrine... we no longer trouble our selves with attempts to ‘harmonize’ religion and science, or to ‘prove’ the Bible. The Bible can stand for itself.” - William F. Albright, Oriental Scholar

4. **The Prophetic Accuracy**

Prophesy Against City of Tyre:

Example of Ezekiel's prophesy concerning the city of Tyre (Ezk. 26)

Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar was to capture the city

Other nations would later participate in Tyre's destruction

City was to be scrapped and made flat, like the top of a rock.

It was to become a place for the spreading of nets.

Its stones and timber were to be laid in these (Zech.9:3-4)

City was never to be rebuilt

All came to pass. Mathematicians have estimated the probability of all of these things happening by chance at 1/75,000,000

Is Jesus for Real? Proof of Jesus!⁸

The fact that Jesus was born and actually did live is not what this page is all about. What this page is attempting to answer is, "Was Jesus who He claimed He was? Was He really God's Son? Was He the Messiah?"

There are over 300 prophecies listed below that point directly to the Messiah. Here is an example of just 8 :

⁷ H.L. Wilmington, *Wilmington's Guide To The Bible*, Tyndale House, Wheaton, IL, 1987, p 813.

⁸ <http://www.bibletimelines.net/article/24/articles-brief-and-to-the-point/jesus-is-he-really-the-messiah>

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The time of His birth.

He would be born in Bethlehem.

He would be born of a virgin.

He would be betrayed.

He would be mocked.

He would be crucified.

He would be pierced.

He would die with the wicked, but He would be buried with the rich.

Mathematics & Astronomy Professor Peter W. Stoner has made the statement that the chances of just 8 prophecies like these coming true by sheer chance is 1 in 10¹⁷ (100,000,000,000,000,000). That would be equivalent to covering the whole state of Texas with silver dollars two feet deep and then asking a blind man to walk across the state and find the one coin you had marked.

And if we were to add only 8 more similar prophecies, for a total of 16, the odds would be 1 x 10²⁸ x 10¹⁷ or 1 in 10⁴⁵ (1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000)

Using the same type of illustration as above, if we were to press this many silver dollars (10⁴⁵) into a ball and place the center of this ball where the center of our Sun is, this silver ball's outer edge would be in approximately the same area as the orbit of Neptune. One man fulfilling all 16 prophecies would be like sending a blind-folded person out to find one specific silver dollar that has been marked and has been mixed up somewhere in this huge ball and actually finding it the first time! (Keep in mind that this is a BALL, not a disk like our Solar System.)

II. THE BIBLE: Is The Holy Scriptures

- A. *We believe* the Holy Scriptures to be the Old and New Testament to be the complete and final revelation to man. (Mt. 15.6, Jn. 10.35, Heb. 4.12, II Tim 3.16-17)
- B. *We believe* the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God and not just contain the Word of God.
- C. *We believe* the Holy Scriptures are:
 - 1. Verbal – The very words in Scripture were God-controlled
 - 2. Plenary - all Scripture is equally inspired
 - 3. Inspired Word of God
- D. *We believe* the Holy Scriptures are the Final Authority for faith and life.
- E. *We believe* the Holy Scriptures are inerrant in the original writings (Mt. 5.13, Mt. 22.32 – note insistence on the present tense), infallible and God-breathed. (2 Tim 3:16,17; II Pt 1:20,21; Mt. 5:18; Jn 16:12,13)

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Dr. Evans, in "Great Doctrine of the Bible" given some helpful definitions:

1. **Testament = Covenant.** This is the term God used to designate the relation that existed between Him and His people. By the end of the first century we find "Old Covenant" and "New Covenant" as established names of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. The Old Covenant deals with the record of the calling of the Jewish Nation. The New Covenant deals with the history and application of the redemption wrought by Jesus Christ.
2. **Inspiration = "God-breathed."** Inspiration may be defined as "God's superintendence of the human authors of Scripture so that using their own individual personalities, they composed and recorded without error His revelation to man in the words of the original autographs."

This is the word used in II Timothy 3:16-17. The Scriptures are the result of divine inbreathing, just as human speech is uttered by the breathing through a man's mouth. II Peter 1:21 supports this truth. "*...prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*"

- a. **Verbal inspiration** means that human writers were not just passive instruments, the Holy Spirit controlled the very words of Scripture. "God superintended the material of Scripture. He used human authors and their individual styles. Nevertheless, the product was, in its original manuscripts, without error." (Ryrie)
 - b. **Plenary, or Full, Inspiration** = All Scripture is equally inspired. Many writers in the Old Testament and in the New Testament give evidence to the fact that God gave them the words - Ex. 34:27; Num. 17:2,3; Is. 8:1,11,12; Jer. 1:7; I Cor. 14:37; Rev. 1:19
3. **Infallible** = Incapable of error; never wrong. (John 10:35)).
 4. **Authoritative** = reliable. (Matt. 26:54)
 5. **Inerrant** = Containing no mistakes. The word inerrancy means "freedom from error or untruths." Synonyms include "certainty, assuredness, objective certainty, infallibility." (Matt. 22:29; John 17:17)

These claims apply to the original writings.

III. THE BIBLE: It's Subject, Theme and Purpose

A. Jesus Christ is the Subject.

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1. **Jesus Christ as Creator** (Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:17,18)
2. **Christ as the Supreme Ruler of the world.**
It is the purpose of God that every knee bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. This will one day be a reality (Is. 45:23; Rom. 14:11; Phil. 2:9-11). But that does not indicate that everyone will be saved. (Ezek. 18:20; Rom. 6:23; Jn. 3:18,36; Mt. 7:21). Although the Bible records the history of man and his rebellion against God, it reveals that oneday sin will be judged and the sovereignty of Christ revealed (Psalm 110:1; Rev. 19:15,16).
3. **Jesus Christ as the Incarnate Word.** In Christ are revealed all the attributes that belong to God. He is the Word—the expression of what God is. (Heb. 1:3; Jn. 1:1-3,18)
4. **Jesus Christ as Savior.** He is the promised Seed who would conquer Satan (Gen. 3:15) and the Servant of Jehovah who would bear the sins of the whole world (Is. 53:4-6; Jn. 1:29).

B. Redemption of Man is the theme

From the fall of mankind in Genesis chapter 3 God has been working out His master plan of redemption whereby He would redeem and restore His fallen creation to fellowship with Himself. Man was put out of the garden and bore the pain of thorns and sickness and ultimately physical death = all a reminder of the curse of sin. God instituted animal sacrifices as reminder to man that “without shedding of blood there can be no remission of sin.” Atonement was made through the blood of lambs and goats yet that atonement only delayed the inevitable punishment of man’s sin - it could not remove it. God chose a nation through which He would preserve the knowledge of God when all men willingly and aggressively sought to forget God and pursue their own way. God gave man the law to show them that no matter how hard they try, sin made it impossible for them to meet God’s righteous standard, that in fact all men sin and therefore all men are justly condemned by God for that sin. The prophets were sent to foretell that a deliverer would come who would once and for all deliver His people from their sins. These prophets told when he would come, where he would come, and the specific circumstances of His birth so that the people would not miss it!

Then Messiah came! Jesus Christ of whom John proclaimed: Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world! Jesus Christ fulfilled all the OT prophecies of the coming Messiah but at the end of a three year ministry the religious leaders in Israel falsely accused him, Pilate the Roman Governor condemned him to death though he said that he had found no fault in him. Jesus was crucified, died, was buried and on the third day He arose from the dead! He commissioned his

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followers to go into all the world and preach the good news that Jesus had died once-for-all as the perfect, complete payment of sin and that He now lives to deliver all who will come to Him by faith. Jesus ascended to Heaven where He now rules and reigns. He is coming back at such time He will judge the earth in righteousness - he will condemn those who reject him to eternal punishment and gather those who are forgiven to be with him for all eternity.

C. The Purpose of the Bible.

The supreme purpose of the Scripture is the manifestation of the glory of God. The more man comprehends the glory of God the greater the blessings.

The heavens declare the glory of the Lord (Ps. 19:1)

*“Therefore... whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (I Cor. 10:31).
If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever (I Chr. 28:9b; Is. 55:6).*

CONCLUSION:

- A. The Bible is the authoritative Word of God, without error and cannot fail to come to pass.
- B. The Word of God is profitable: (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
 - 1. Doctrine - What is true, what we are to believe
 - 2. Reproof - Shows us where we believe something or act in a way that is wrong
 - 3. Correction - Shows us how to make it right
 - 4. Instruction - Shows us how to do what is right
- C. The Word of God produces:
 - 1. Mature child of God
 - 2. Equipped child of God