

You Can Trust The Bible or Can You Trust The Bible?

Introduction

- Religions are based on their holy book(s)
 - More than 300 so-called holy books in the world
 - The Christian faith is based on the Bible
- The Bible claims to be God's Word
 - How do we know that?
 - What evidence do we have for that?
 - The Bible claims to be God-breathed
 - **2 Tim. 3: 16-17**, All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.
 - Peter explains the process
 - **2 Pet. 1:21**, For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.
 - God has revealed His mind and given us His thoughts
 - How do we know this?
 - Why do we believe this?
 - **Is. 55:8-9**, For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.
 - But we have the mind of Christ
 - **1 Cor. 2:16**, For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?
- Skeptics make these claims about the Bible
 1. The Bible is a book of myths
 2. **Gen. 1** and **Gen. 2** are contradictory (2 different accounts)
 3. Isaiah written after the prophecies fulfilled (after the time of Christ)
 4. Sodom and Gomorrah never existed (myth)
 5. Moses could not write first 5 books of the Bible (no writing history)
 6. The science in the Bible is just fallacy (pre age of science)
 7. No evidence in the Bible, just faith (science is fact)
- Challenges as a believer and a scientist
 - If God is Who He says He is, His Creation must match His Word, i.e. Special Revelation and General Revelation must agree
 - Do science and the Bible agree with each other?
 - Does what I believe to be true match reality?
- Challenges to our youth
 - Indoctrinated in secularism and evolution
 - No answers to the hard questions from the church
- Recent polls taken, e.g. Already Gone
 - 70% +/- of our youth leave the church after entering the secular world

- Roadblocks to coming to Faith:
 1. Lack of Knowledge, **Hos. 4:6**; **Rom. 1:20**; **Rom. 2:15**
 2. Perceived hypocrisy, **Matt. 7:5**; **James 1:26**
 3. Faith requires turning away from sin, **Acts 3:19**
 4. If God is all-powerful and all-loving, why evil, pain and suffering?
 5. Perceived conflict between science and the Bible
 6. No answers from the Church to the hard questions
- **Hos. 4:6**, My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge;. ... And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.
- **Rom. 1:20**, For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.
- **Rom. 2:15**, They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them.
- **Matt. 7:5**, You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.
- **James 1:26**, If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless.
- **Acts 3:19**, Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out,
- What evidence supports the claim that the Bible is the Word of God?
 - Written by our sovereign God; its author is the Holy Spirit
 - Many sound evidences and convincing proofs that this is God's Word
 - We have rational support for this conviction
 - Our faith is built on evidence and facts
 - Our faith is rational
 - Still requires a step of faith, but a reasonable step of faith

1. Reliable Transmission of the Bible

- More than any other book of antiquity the Bible has been passed on to us with great precision
- Reliability of ancient texts is determined by two factors:
 - The number of copies we have of an ancient manuscript
 - The time span between when the original manuscript was written and the date of the earliest copy that we have of it
- Until the 20th century the oldest known OT manuscript was dated to the 10th century AD, a time gap from when the original document was written of about 1400 years
- Discovery of the **Dead Sea Scrolls** in 1947 by a shepherd boy when he tossed a stone into a cave – heard a thud inside the cave
- He investigated and found some scrolls with writing on them
- Subsequently archaeologists found scrolls in 11 different caves
- Found multiple copies of books and fragments of books of the Bible

- 2 copies of Isaiah, entire copy of the Psalms, 1 copy of Leviticus, thousands of fragments of books of the OT (all except Esther)
- Oldest OT manuscript **1000+ years earlier** than before (~ 100-200 BC)
- **Skeptics proven wrong** - Isaiah written in 700 BC, not in first century AD
- Affirmed the accuracy of the transmission of the books of the OT
- No other book of antiquity passed down to us so carefully
- The books of the NT were written from 48 AD to 95 AD
- Earliest fragment of the NT (some verses in John) dated to about 125 AD
 - Time gap of about 35 years from when the Gospel of John was written
- A copy of another book of the NT dated to about 250 AD
- The earliest copy of the whole NT is about 200 years after the books of the NT were written
- NT textual scholars concluded that:
 - 99.99 % of the original writings have been reclaimed
 - Nothing in the other 0.01% substantially affect any Christian doctrine
- The NT is also very accurately preserved
- 6000 copies of early Greek manuscripts of the NT
- 10,000 copies of the Latin Vulgate manuscripts
- Over 9200 other translations
- **25,000+ NT manuscripts**
 - Multiple copies in other Syriac and other Semitic languages
- Compare this with other ancient books written at the same time
 - Homer lived 900 BC – time gap between what Homer wrote (600+ copies) and the earliest copy of his manuscript is about 500 years
 - For Plato, the time gap is about 1300 years
 - For Caesar (10 copies) the time gap is about 1000 years
- This gives us unsurpassed confidence in the accuracy of the Word of God
- No other ancient book with this accuracy

2. Historical Accuracy of the Bible

- **NT Example:** Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts written by Dr. Luke
 - Used reports by **eyewitnesses** and **apostles**
 - **Luke 1:1-4**, Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.
 - **Acts 1:1-2**, In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the **apostles** whom he had chosen.
- FF Bruce wrote “The NT Documents – Are They Reliable?”
 - Luke names 32 countries, 54 cities, 9 islands

- History and geography documented in his writings are confirmed by archaeology and extra-biblical writings
- Luke is familiar with all of the proper titles of Roman officials mentioned in the gospel and the history recorded in Acts
- Titles of Roman officials are perfectly accurate
- Original Roman leaders' titles being changed
- Luke records their titles exactly right
- Never an error historically
- **Pool of Bethesda** – buried in the sand of time – discovered
 - **John 5:2**, Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades.
- **OT Example: Ebla tablets** found in northern Syria in 1974
 - Records of times 1000 years before Moses
 - Mentions 5000+ cities, places, nations, including 5 cities of the plains (Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, Zoar)
 - **Gen. 14:2**, These kings made war with Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar).
 - **Skeptics proven wrong** again on 5 cities of the plains
 - Confirmed the places, nations, cities named in the OT
- **Skeptics** said that Moses could not have written the first five books of the Bible because Moses could not even write in his day
 - Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
 - Confirmed that Moses could write first 5 books of the Bible
 - Postal system working at that time
- Archaeologists do not find mistakes in the Bible
 - Confirm history recorded in the Bible
 - Today archaeologists use the Bible as a guide
- No book in antiquity has the historical accuracy of the Bible
- The Bible is correct again, and always is

3. Fulfilled Prophecy of the Bible

- 27% of the Bible was prophetic at the time it was written
- Prophecy is prewritten history known only to God
- God knows the future – He has foreordained everything
- The Bible contains 1000+ prophecies – > 500+ already fulfilled
- There are about 300 prophecies about the Messiah in the OT - **Isaiah, Psalms, Micah, Malachi, Genesis**, etc.
- 109 of these are fulfilled in Jesus Christ's First Coming (birth)
 - e.g. birth place, born of a virgin, in line of David, garments divided
 - Born in Bethlehem, **Mic. 5:2**, But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.
 - Called Immanuel

- Called out of Egypt
- Preceded by a forerunner
- Anointed with the Holy Spirit
- Enter into his public ministry in Galilee
- Working miracles
- Entering into Jerusalem on a donkey
- Rejected by his own Jewish brethren
- Betrayed by a friend
- Sold for 30 pieces of silver, **Zech. 11:12**, Then I said to them, "If it seems good to you, give me my wages; but if not, keep them." And they weighed out as my wages thirty pieces of silver."
- Forsaken by God
- Gall and vinegar offered to him
- Died but no bone broken
- Numbered among the transgressors
- **Ps. 22:18**, they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.
- Buried with the rich
- Raised from the dead
- Ascend back to the right hand of God the Father
- All recorded long before Jesus entered this world
- Most of these prophecies fulfilled by His enemies, not by His friends
- Probability of all these prophecies being fulfilled in one man is so small
 - e.g. cover Texas with 2 feet of silver dollars, mark one, find that one
- The others are yet to be fulfilled in Jesus Christ's Second Coming
- The Bible also has many predictions about kings, nations, and cities
 - Many of these have already been fulfilled
 - Abraham would have a son
 - The fall of Babylon was foretold, **Jer. 50-51**
 - The destruction of Tyre in **Ezek. 26** – 7 specific prophecies fulfilled
 - **Is. 44:28**, Cyrus predicted as a ruler 100 years beforehand
 - Cyrus would be a ruler one hundred years later, **Is. 45:1**
 - Can we name future presidents of the US?
- The Bible has many predictions about the Jewish people, the Israelites
 - Some of these have already been fulfilled
 - e.g. dispersion (**Deut. 28:64**) and re-gathering of Israel (**Is. 11:11-12**)
- What is the probability that these prophecies came to pass by chance?
ZERO/NIL/NADA
- The reliability of the Bible is confirmed by the accuracy of its prophecies
 - 500+ of the 1000+ prophecies have already been fulfilled
- **Is. 61:1-2** (Proclaim the favorable year of the Lord + day of vengeance);
Luke 4:18-19a (Proclaim favorable year of the Lord);
 - confirmed by the **Dead Sea Scrolls**

4. Scientific Accuracy of the Bible

- We would expect that every matter that God addresses in the Bible be accurately described; the Bible is true in all matters that it addresses
- The Bible is not a book of science, but does make scientific statements
- Reliability of the Bible established by (extra-biblical) history, geography, archaeology, prophecy
- We trust the Bible for spiritual truth
- Do we trust it for truth in other areas? e.g scientific disciplines?
- Biblical references to astronomy, geophysics, geology, hydrology, meteorology, oceanography, physics, biology: accurate statements, in some cases anticipated scientific discoveries of the last few 100 years
- Herbert Spencer in 1903 stated that everything in the universe fits into **one of five categories** – matter, space, time, force, action
- **Gen. 1:1**, In the beginning (*time*) God (*force*) created (*action*) the heavens (*space*) and the earth (*matter*).
- Greek philosophy – everything explained by air, water, earth, fire
- God is assumed; proof of God is not necessary
- The very first verse of the Bible is scientifically accurate
- Moses, trained in Egyptian wisdom/mythology, got it exactly right
- **Acts 7:22**, And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and deeds.
- Number of stars in the heavens declared to be uncountable in the Bible
- In ~ 150 BC Hipparchus counted the stars in the universe to be 1022
- In ~ 200 AD Ptolemy counted 1056 stars
- In ~ 1600 AD Kepler counted 1005 stars
- In 1610 Galileo invented the telescope and saw an inestimable number of stars in the universe
- Today we know that there are about 100 billion galaxies, each having about 100 billion stars -> 10^{22} stars (~ the same order of magnitude as the number of grains of sand)
- What does the Bible say?
- **Jer. 33:22**, As the host of heaven cannot be numbered and the sands of the sea cannot be measured, so I will multiply the offspring of David my servant, and the Levitical priests who minister to me.
- **Is. 40:22**, It is He who sits above the circle of the earth. ...
 - Earth as a sphere – written 2700 years ago
- **Job 26:7**, He stretches out the north over the void and hangs the earth on nothing.
 - Earth suspended in space – written about 4000 years ago
 - Early people thought that the earth rested on shoulders of Atlas
 - Early myths – earth rested on the back of a turtle or of an elephant
- **Job 38:14**, It is changed like clay under the seal, and its features stand out like a garment.
 - Earth is spinning on its axis rotating around the sun (heliocentric)

- Sun is circling in the Milky Way
 - **Eccl 1:7**, All streams run to the sea, but the sea is not full; to the place where the streams flow, there they flow again.
 - Hydrologic cycle recorded long before being discovered by scientists
 - Ocean -> evaporation -> clouds -> rain -> river -> ocean
 - **Lev. 17:11**, For the life of the flesh is in the blood, ...
 - Blood circulation – life is in the blood
 - George Washington was bled to death to get diseased blood out
 - **Lev. 12:3**, On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.
 - Blood clotting element prothrombin is above 100% on day 8
 - The immune system is at its peak on day 8
 - These scientific statements are accurate
 - The Laws of science are consistent with the Bible (**Gen. 1:1**)
 - **Cause and Effect, Biogenesis, 1st and 2nd Laws of Thermodynamics**
 - Scientific disciplines established largely by Bible-believing scientists
 - Kepler, Pasteur, Newton, Linnaeus, Kelvin (Thermodynamics)
 - Why do we not read scientific myths in the Bible? Inspired Word of God
 - **Evolution is NOT science**; it is a philosophy/worldview
- Scientific disciplines established by Bible-believing scientists

5. The Bible IS Trustworthy

Skeptics Claims Refuted

1. The Bible is not a book of myths
2. **Gen. 1 & 2** agree; **Gen. 2** focuses on the Creation of man
3. Isaiah prophecies true and fulfilled - confirmed by Dead Sea Scrolls
4. Sodom and Gomorrah confirmed by Ebla tablets
5. Moses could write - confirmed by Ebla tablets
6. True scientific statements - some discovered in last few 100's of years
7. The Faith is based on sound evidence

The Bible is **God's Word** and is **reliably transmitted, coherent, rational**

- The Bible is a book of spiritual truth
- The Bible is inspired, inerrant, infallible, sovereign, indestructible
- The Bible is sufficient, immutable, unchanging, complete, final
- The Bible is authoritative in all matters that it addresses
- Confirmed by archaeology, history, geography, prophecy
- Scientific statements are true

The Bible is **God's Word** and is the **basis of our faith**

- For believers - strengthened in The Faith
- For skeptics - a challenge to what they believe to be true
- Does what you believe to be true match reality?

Evidence for Biblical truth claims

- Bible is the **Word of God** - Special Revelation [Creator]
- Creation is the **Work of God** - General Revelation [Creation]
- The two must agree - if God is who He says He is

- Shown many sound evidences and convincing proofs

Test of a true prophet

- **Deut. 18:18-23**, false prophecy does not agree with God's Word

Nostradamus, 16th century "prophet"

- Many false prophecies
- Vague and general
- No one prophecy proven
- General "prophecies" in other "religious" books
- Not one true prophecy in them - Buddha, Confucius, Hindu Veda, Bhagavad Gita, Book of Mormon, other Mormon books, Koran

Mormon Journal of Discourse

- Smith and Young
- Inhabitants on moon/sun,
- Live to 1000 years, 6 feet tall, dressed like Quakers
- Predicted that Brigham Young would be President of the US

Jehovah's Witnesses

- Russell (Founder) predicted that Christ would return in 1914, 1916, 1918
- Rutherford predicted that Christ would return in 1925, 1946
- Many other false prophecies

Bible Prophecies

- 27% of Bible; 31,000 verses
- City of Tyre, Cyrus named as a ruler 100 years before
- Jewish dispersion and re-gathering
- More than 500 of 1000+ prophecies fulfilled

Do we take the Bible as Truth?

- Be a Berean, **Acts 17:11**; **1 Th. 5:21**
- Live like you do, obey His Word
- Be an ambassador

Do you have questions about the Bible?

- Ask a mature believer
- Search for answer in Bible and online
- Investigate the answer yourself
- The most important question you can ask for your eternal destiny!

The Bible

- Is authoritative in all matters that it addresses
- Is sufficient for our needs
- Will accomplish what it promises
- Provides the assurance of our salvation

Apologetics Message for today [for all, not just church leaders]

- Know what you believe
- Know why you believe what you believe
- Know how to defend what you believe
- **Know It! Live It! Share It! Defend It!**

THE BIBLE

- This book contains: the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers.
- Its doctrine is holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be saved, and practice it to be holy.
- It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter. Here heaven is open, and the gates of hell are disclosed.
- Christ is the grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet.
- Read it slowly, frequently, and prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, health to the soul, and a river of pleasure. It is given to you here in this life, will be opened at the judgment, and is established forever.
- It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labor, and condemn all who trifle with its contents.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO STUDY THE BIBLE?

Why is God's Word so important? Because it contains God's mind and will for your life (**2 Tim. 3:16, 17**). It is the only source of absolute divine authority for you as a servant of Jesus Christ.

- *It is infallible in its totality:* "The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple" (**Ps. 19:7**).
- *It is inerrant in its parts:* "Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him. Do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar" (**Prov. 30:5, 6**).
- *It is complete:* "For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (**Rev. 22:18, 19**).
- *It is authoritative and final:* "Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven" (**Ps. 119:89**).
- *It is totally sufficient for your needs:* ". . . that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (**2 Tim. 3:16, 17**).
- *It will accomplish what it promises:* "So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it" (**Is. 55:11**).
- *It provides the assurance of your salvation:* "He who is of God hears God's words..." (**John 8:47; 20:31**).